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SHORTGRASS

Huge windows and mirrors surround my waiting point. I'm in the new air terminal between Fort Worth and Dallas. Travelers are dragging through the halls in big herds. Haircuts and shaves are out of fashion. Hombres backed by the biggest elbows have the right-of-way.

Costumes of the people run from a lady dressed in a toga and turban to kids wearing tattered blue jean shorts. Manufacturers of steam irons aren't sharing in the trade. Wrinkled clothes are very much in vogue. Foreigners would think that our country is suffering a severe shortage of laundry soap and starch. Only the greybeards are well dressed.

Public relations men have been making a big splash about the new "no frills" policy adopted by the airlines. Blabber-easys have been mighty busy lauding the reduction in service to allow for a cheaper rate. Railroads and bus lines, I'm sure, are jealous, as they have been giving no-frill service as a studied and deliberate policy without changing their rates.

On afternoon flights, the stewardess continues to pass out packages of salted peanuts, compliments of the house. Right behind the peanut handout, another girl takes orders for liquid refreshments at \$2 per plastic glass.

Passengers aren't supposed to notice that the desalting of their tongues is costing as much as a big day on a peanut farm. I do admire the chain reaction swindler. I've always wishes that the cow people could branch into making toothpicks or steak knives. We never have been diversified enough.

Lots of rules are necessary to run an airline. I was ordered to put my brief case under the seat in front of me. Five seconds later, I was told that I couldn't cross my hindlegs because my boot was sticking out in the aisle. Safety instructions in the seat pocket showed an old boy doubled over with his chin on his knees. I suppose that was the position that was acceptable. I was afraid to ask the blue skirted constable. She'd already given me a warning frown.

Weather turbulence kept the seat belt sign on. I don't subscribe to the idea of apiece of three inch webbing being much protection at 20,000 feet, moving at 550 miles per hour ground speed. Mainly, the seat belts are to keep down the crowds at the restroom and the bar. I don't want to ride with an airplane driver who is so reckless that he's apt to throw everyone from their seat. The science of horses and saddles taught man a long not to be tied to anything. I don't suppose a 707 would drag a fellow, but he'd sure be in a wreck if it did.

Fort Worth and Dallas were squabbling about this airport when I was a kid. Folks are sure warlike that's fight over such a complicated piece of asphalt. They would be mean if they owned a good ranch or farm. I wouldn't call out the relief street cleaners to defend the whole airport. City people are strange.

Young mothers pass by, hand herding little kids. Alien odors drift through the air.
Two millions acres of land are lost each year to travel systems and housing developments.
Man, in the future, may have to live from the reflections of the sun.