

## The Day Arrives - Friday October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005 4:00 AM

We awoke at 4:00 AM, without setting an alarm clock, both of us ready to begin our journey. We had been packed for several days, checked and double checked. We had coffee and read the newspaper, made phone calls to family, telling them goodbye. We paced the apartment. I did last minute checks on all of our plants, those inside and on both of the patios. I was glad that we didn't have any pets to make arrangements for. The moments ticked by, and it was 8:30 A.M. before we knew it. Hauling the luggage outside to the curb, we stood waiting for David and Rachel, who were our ride to [San Jose International](#). Five minutes passed, ten minutes, then fifteen. Was our ride going to arrive in time? Yes!!! There they were, racing down the driveway towards us, huge smiles on their faces. David and Rachel both got out of the car to help us put the luggage in the trunk. We all got into the car, and it was off to the airport to catch the first flight, [American Airlines](#) #1820 to Chicago, which departed at 11:31 A.M.



We made it to the airport just a little after 9:00 AM. They dropped us off at the check-in point, and went to park their car.

We walked to the counter, checked our tickets and two pieces of luggage, then went to the receiving area to wait for David and Rachel. About ten minutes later they showed up. They had



wanted to have coffee with us before we left, but there was not a coffee shop close by. We ended up having to say goodbye earlier than we had anticipated, then we were off to the first security check point, which was very quick and easy.



We walked down the long corridor, finally finding our gate. Tom left me there for a few minutes in order to buy some coffee for both of us. We had over an hour to wait. There was only one other person, a man, waiting to board when we sat down. We asked him if he would take our photo, the first of over a thousand photos which would document our journey. We also took each others photo's. We were surprised to see a former resident of the apartments we manage walking towards us. He was just as surprised to see us. He

told us that he was traveling to Chicago to see a baseball game and visit with his family for the weekend. He asked where we were traveling to, and when we told him Ireland, we were recounted with his visits there. It was quite entertaining, and helped to pass the time while we waited to board the plane. We knew that we wouldn't be fed on the flight, so we bought two sandwiches from a kiosk, one corned beef, the other turkey. We had brought our own water containers, so we didn't buy anything to drink.





Our flight to Chicago was announced, and we waited for our group (#3) to be called to board the plane. We had chosen seats 22-A & 22-B for both the flight to from Chicago. The seats were situated over the left wing of the plane. In a way, I kind of regretted picking those seats, since any photographic opportunities were mostly blocked by the wing. I was able to get a few good photos, however they were not of the quality I would have wanted. Oh well..... We read magazines, I took photos, and we ate our sandwiches. We didn't try to snooze, since this was only a four hour flight. But even though it was

a short flight, Toms' rear became very sensitive, which meant that the remainder of the trip was going to be very uncomfortable for him. We padded him with as many pillows as we could, trying to make the time a bit easier.

By the time we arrived in Chicago the sun was setting. We grabbed our carry-ons, slowly lumbering down the aisle, pressed about on all sides by other travelers. We were eager to embark on the second leg of our flight. We already knew that we would have to physically leave terminal three and take a ground transport to the terminal five, from which all international flights departed. It took a while for us to find the landing where we could board the transit, which we were given direction for by one of the airport employees. We both wanted a cigarette, and asked the same man where we could smoke. He



directed us to an area on the second level which had little alcoves set up for cigarette smokers. We took several quick drags, then set out to catch the transit. Once on the transit, I began to frantically search for our boarding passes for Aer Lingus, (I often searched frantically for things while on our journey!) which would be our air carrier to Dublin. The transit took off with a sudden lurch, and because there was nothing for me to cling to I almost ended up on the floor! I grabbed hold of the counter to maintain my balance. Tom braced me up with one hand while holding onto

our luggage with the other. Quite frightening!

The transit came to a stop more than a mile away. We disembarked, feeling kind of bewildered. We entered the terminal, where we once more were required to go through a security check point. Afterwards, we asked one of the staff where the check-in for [Aer Lingus](#) was, and were pointed in the right direction. We successfully checked in, with about an hour to wait before boarding. We sat in the boarding area, read, and watched the other travelers.

Traveling Eastward is odd, in that you "lose" hours. By the time we arrived in [Chicago O'Hare International](#), we had lost two hours. Before we landed in Ireland, we would "lose" another six hours.

Our flight was announced, and our group was finally called. We boarded Aer Lingus Flight #124, stowed our luggage, and took our seats, 18 F & G. We were in the middle row, with four seats abreast. The rows on each side of the cabin were



two seats deep. Tom sat in the outer seat. I had one seat between myself and another passenger, an engaging older woman from Shannon. She was quietly weeping as she took her seat. She told us that she had been on a visit to see her daughter, and that it was always very difficult to leave. She stored her bags, then tried to find a comfortable position in her seat. We chatted a bit. She told me that she had grown up on the Aran Isles, which is really quite beautiful. She wondered if we were going to visit there, and was disappointed when I told her no. She said that we would love it, and suggested that we do visit when we returned to Ireland. She asked if my husband was an artist, to which I replied yes. She was very proud of herself, telling me that she knew it, she could tell just by looking at him. She was a nice woman.

We had a long flight ahead of us. Seven and a half hours, much of it over the Atlantic Ocean, and nighttime at that. We were not able to take any photos, as it was pitch black outside for most of the flight, and besides that, we were not in window seats. The flight attendants all looked rather exhausted, as if they had been up for days. They did, however, do their best to provide us with good service on the flight. Tom and I made several fruitless attempts to sleep, but could never do much more than ten or fifteen minutes at a time. About a third of the way through our flight we were served a small meal. Green salad, hard roll and butter, a main course, and dessert. Tom had chicken and I had roast Irish beef. Tea and coffee came next, and the tea was really good. After eating, we both tried to rest. It was difficult, since there wasn't a lot of space in our seating. We leaned on each other, tried the special neck pillows we had purchased for this trip, turned to the side, but nothing really helped. We did manage to catch a bit of sleep. Between rests, we engaged in conversation with each other, and with the older woman.