

This poignant essay was written by a client of mine during a clomid IUI cycle.

I stand outside in the parking lot, looking in. I'm nervous. The building is huge, looming. But it's beautiful. I see the waterfall through the glass entry doors. OK, I think. Maybe it's there to ground those who enter. I walk across the marble floor, over to the receptionist, who is seated behind a granite countertop. This is not a fancy hotel. She doesn't ask to take my bags. She directs me to the waiting room. Rows and rows of beautifully upholstered chairs. I sit and flip through a magazine, unaware of its title or contents. I'm not here on vacation. I'm here for a medical procedure. No, not for cosmetic surgery in Beverly Hills, though I'm tempted to check the address. I'm in Colorado, and I'm here to have an ultrasound of my ovaries. For five days, I've popped a little white pill of hope, a drug called Clomid, which is supposed to improve the quality and quantity of my egg production. I don't want a face lift or a boob job. I want a baby.

I go to the bathroom. More granite countertops. A sit-on-top-of-the-counter glass sink like I've only seen in Sushi restaurants. Clear blue glass tiles on the walls. Walking in the door to this building is guaranteed to cost you \$200. I see where the money goes.

Perhaps the building is supposed to make me feel nurtured. Held by something. Because in this place, humans are not doing the holding. My appointment is at 9:00am on a Sunday. At 9:01, I'm directed to an exam room by a person who fails to introduce herself or inquire about me. She puts a pink paper drape on an exam table, says she'll be back in a minute. I assume that's my cue to de-cloth from the waist down. A few minutes later, she knocks and enters, inserts the ultrasound wand into my vagina and has a look. At least she tells me about what she sees. Uterine lining is 8 millimeters. Whew, that's good, or good enough. Then on to the ovaries. Whoa, that looks big. It's a follicle. I have only one, already a disappointment. One shot. One chance. And it's 26 millimeters. Too big, and I know it. I say so. She says it's OK, a little big, but OK. She exits. I re-dress and go out the door. She directs me to a small room where I wait for a nurse. When the nurse enters, she lays out plans. She doesn't even mention the size of my follicle. I resist. In my mind I know things are not as they should be. My follicle should be at 20, not 26. Why is she saying to wait? We should trigger it now I think. A trigger shot tells my body to release the egg that waits inside the follicle. Within 36 hours, my body will do just that, release the egg. Precisely 36 hours after the shot is given to me, I'm supposed to be lying on another exam table, undressed from the waist down, legs open and ready to receive a vial full of my husband's sperm. They just might let him push the syringe. But if they give me the shot now, that won't work. That would mean I'd need to be inseminated at 9:00pm on Monday. Sorry, those aren't office hours. I'm asked to wait 12 more hours. To give myself the shot at 9:00pm this evening, so that I can be at their office at a reasonable 9:00am on Tuesday morning. I waiver, I'm not sure what to do. I ask for other options. Well, I could see if my body has produced the hormones I need to release the egg on its own, but that blood work will cost me. And I'd still need to wait until tomorrow for the procedure. I resign. I schedule the insemination for 11:30 am on Tuesday (9:00 am wasn't open). The nurse tells me it's perfect. I leave, feeling defeated and deflated. The little white pill of hope is no longer working – hope is gone. And it's 9:14.

Fourteen minutes. In total, I was in the office for 14 minutes. Fourteen minutes, with human contact for maybe half of that. Fourteen minutes for a situation that was less than optimal, where I had questions, I resisted the plan put before me, yet still I left and they had won. They had me on the books for the time that was just right for them. I don't want a face lift or a boob job. I want a baby. Is this the place I rest my hope? I figure I might as well go to that bathroom one more time. The sink is beautiful.

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Kelly is the mother of a beautiful four year old son. Her experience of secondary infertility has brought heartache, but has also brought many blessings, including friendships, personal exploration, and a deeper understanding of herself.

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