

# I Should Not Have Rushed You Through The Rain

*by* Linda Simoni-Wastila

At the hospital, we know the routine. I haul out my laptop, emailing students, writing papers no one reads. You stare at the same first page of the John Grisham you've carted here for weeks. An hour passes. A nurse finally walks you to the bathroom to pee in a cup. Another hour. The phlebotomist ambles in and pricks your arm. Blood fills the tubes, purple and thick. Three hours. No doctor, no saline drip, no reassurances of 'soon, soon'. On the way out for coffee, I blast the woman behind reception. I should realize when she says pharmacy hasn't received orders to prep your erlotinib. But I don't. I fume through the hospital lobby, paging the clinical trial coordinator, rescheduling lectures and exams, scowling at my watch.

When I return, the doc stands over you scrunched in the arm chair. He taps an x-ray and shakes his head. You push yourself up, using the armrests for leverage. It takes three tries, but at last you waver on your feet, hand extended. You thank him. The doctor leaves, not recognizing me when he passes, and you collapse. What looks like tears on your cheeks is sweat.

I wheel you down to valet parking. It's late afternoon, the ride home will be hell. You reach back for my hand, squeeze it. A fine cool mist falls from the opaque sky and splatters crystals in your hair. You smile and try to say something, but the car arrives.

