

# The Yellow Brick Road

Category: The Exam Room

written by Claudia Presto | September 8, 2025

Follow the blue brick-patterned rug to Elevator G. Press the button for the tenth floor. Stop at the check-in sign. Wait behind the do-not-cross-this-line sign. Finally, it's your turn. They strap a white bracelet on you—after you recite the secret passwords: Greta Garbo. 9/18/1905. 3135331.

Then you sit. You bury yourself in your phone, trying not to drink in all the misery around you. Everyone has something. Everyone is waiting. Everyone sits with their head bowed. Three seats down a guy is snoring—rip-ragged, chain-sawing, full-out snoring. No one wakes him.

Beep goes your phone. You head to the door that says "Daisy," as if you're going into a field of flowers. More like a field of dirt that you'll be buried under.

A smiling young person brings you to a gray, industrial room, where you sit in an oversized exam chair. Again, you recite the litany: Greta Garbo. 9/18/1905. 3135331.

The young person takes your blood pressure, weight, heartbeat. You take deep breaths.

She leaves. "They will be right with you," she says.

Fifteen minutes later, after a lot more deep breaths, if it's your lucky day, they walk through the door. They—the doctor and her assistants, residents, PA, nurse—whoever is dutifully waddling after her that day.

You'd told yourself to turn on your recorder, but the excitement and anxiety of finally seeing the Wizard of Oz, the one with all the answers, overwhelms all other thoughts, and you forget.

Minutes later, you are back out in the waiting room. Headed to the elevator. Off to the next wizard. One foot in front of the other along the blue brick-patterned rug.

*Claudia Presto*

*Kanab, Utah*