

a geriatric mother they write on my chart

but I'm thirty-nine I say voice rising at the end like a question I can't see the doctor who is behind me he just snaps his gloves instead of answering then the kind-eyed nurse besides the bed put her hand on my arm for a moment I think she's signalling me to stay quiet but the valium kicks in and I take a breath look at the ceiling not at the shining steel equipment and try to think of relaxing places like a babbling brook and oh crap now I need to do a nervous wee I wonder if they'll let me but the doctor's cold gloves hands are suddenly between my legs and I do a quick kegel to keep my geriatric bladder obedient and the kind-eyed nurse must think my scrunched face is fear as she's back next to me telling me to relax so I just smile and count my breaths in-two-three-out-two-three-four while the doctor puts the shining steel inside me even colder than his hands and I watch on the screen as teeny-weeny eggs are retrieved and the doctor and nurse count out loud and check each one under a microscope and label the little dishes while I lie there and try not to jump when it hurts like a hot poker I am already bruised on the outside from the weeks of needles and I can't think of the babbling brook because I'm wondering the whole time if my teeny-weeny geriatric eggs will have a chance at a life beyond their dishes