

Welcome to Holland

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When you are going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip- to Italy. You buy a bunch of guidebooks and make wonderful plans. The Coliseum, The Michelangelo David, The Gondolas of Venice. You learn some handy phrases in Italian. It is all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland??" you ask. "What do you mean **HOLLAND?** I signed up for a trip to Italy!! I am supposed to be in Italy. All my life I have dreamed of going to Italy!"

But there has been a change in the flight plan. You landed in Holland and here you must stay.

The important thing to remember is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place of pestilence, famine and disease.

It's just a different place.

So now you must go out and buy all new guidebooks. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met before.

It's just a different place. It's slower paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around, and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills. Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts. But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy, and they're bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say, "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I planned." The pain of that will never, ever go away, because a loss of a dream is a significant loss.

*But if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things
Holland.*

