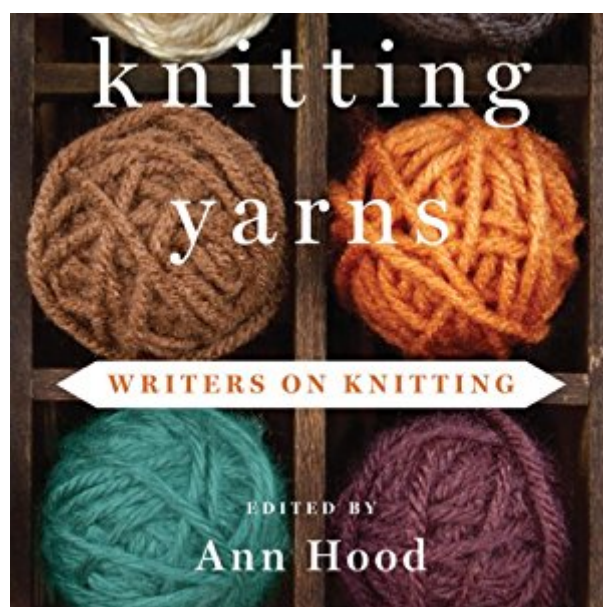


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# Knitting Yarns: Writers On Knitting



## Synopsis

A collection of poignant essays about the transformative power of knitting by twenty-seven extraordinary writers. "The impressive collection of writers here have contributed essays that celebrate knitting and knitters. They share their knitting triumphs and disasters as well as their life triumphs and disasters. . . . These essays will break your heart. They will have you laughing out loud." (Ann Hood, from the introduction) Why does knitting occupy a place in the hearts of so many writers? What's so magical and transformative about yarn and needles? How does knitting help us get through life-changing events and inspire joy? In *Knitting Yarns*, twenty-seven writers tell stories about how knitting healed, challenged, or helped them to grow. Barbara Kingsolver describes sheering a sheep for yarn. Elizabeth Berg writes about her frustration at failing to knit. Ann Patchett traces her life through her knitting, writing about the scarf that knits together the women she's loved and lost. Knitting a Christmas gift for his blind aunt helped Andre Dubus III knit an understanding with his girlfriend. Kaylie Jones finds the woman who used knitting to help raise her in France and heals old wounds. Sue Grafton writes about her passion for knitting. Also included are five original knitting patterns created by Helen Bingham. Poignant, funny, and moving, *Knitting Yarns* is sure to delight knitting enthusiasts and lovers of literature alike.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a lifelong knitter and longtime teacher of literature, the idea of a collection of essays about knitting penned by such talented writers as Joyce Maynard, Elizabeth Berg, and Jane Smiley, to

name but a few, is pure joy. Much like knitting itself, which these essays celebrate. Now that I have embarked on a second career as the owner of Stash Knits, a LYS (local yarn shop) near Philadelphia, I find that I have even greater insight into and appreciation for the sentiments expressed here. Many of the essays connect the process of knitting with significant life events, others with significant people in the author's lives. This is fitting. In my experience as a shop owner, I have encountered dozens of women (and a few men) who sought and found solace in knitting during life crises. One woman, who had recently lost her husband of 61 years, wandered in with the idea to make a baby hat for her first soon-to-be-born great grandchild. The hat needed 11 months to be born, and during that time, we watched its knitter pass through many stages of grief and emerge on the other side. Another, slightly younger woman found us after a frightening diagnosis and an order to quit smoking. The needles and yarn occupied her hands; following the pattern occupied her mind. Just as often, people seem to take up or return to knitting in response to joyful milestones and memories--the birth of a first child, a desire to connect with a loved one who is (or was) a knitter. And there are many other stories. So many that the essays in this volume not only ring true, they feel like conversations, from a week ago or perhaps to be had next week. And the patterns! The book wisely includes directions for five beautiful projects, none of which the reader need make to appreciate. Rather, they are food for the celebration that is knitting. Though I might just need to cast on for those Banks fingerless mittens. You know, once I finish this hat. And those blanket squares.

This is topping my list of preferred gifts for 2013, I have always been in the company of knitters but didn't understand the mystique until now. I may not pick up yarn and needles in December but I know the book will be enjoyed by my vast "knitting circle" when they open it on Christmas morning. Stephen Borkowski, Chair Provincetown Art Commission

As both writer and knitter, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. Reading it was like pulling on a warm, cozy knit sweater on a winter day. I laughed, I cried, I knitted.

I liked this book. I loved some of the essays--such as "turning straw into gold"--while others (endless variations on "I cannot knit, so here is a lot of complaining about that") were less interesting. My complaint is that the Kindle version does not provide photographs of the included knitting patterns. A big omission...and so not enticing to make, which seems a waste. I went onto Ravelry to see project photos from some of the test knitters and readers of the book.

I loved this book! It combined my love of reading with my love of knitting. I look forward all day to sitting down in the evening when everything is finally done and getting out my knitting. Sometimes I am too tired to knit so I would read this book and it gave me the same relaxing feeling that I get when I knit.

This is a book that kept me reading despite the urge to put it down. How many ways can you explore the same theme? It seems each author is a writer who is all thumbs but has picked up knitting to try to solve some existential problem, knits copious amounts of misshapen items because, despite almost constant practice, the skill level never increases. Strangers make remarks on the poor quality of the knitted goods, but the intrepid writer soldiers on because the meditative quality of the physical act of knitting solves grief/lowers blood pressure/helps the transition out of bad marriages, etc. It's like the editor issued a template. Except for Barbara Kingsolver, whose prose is so purple as to be impenetrable. So why did I keep reading? Every few pages, there would be a sentence so brilliant as to give me chills. It would have been nice to cultivate contributors who were skilled in knitting and didn't use it as therapy. After all, everyone used to knit; men, women, children. I'm on the fence about passing this book along after I'm done. I think I will, with the proviso that it becomes bogged down once in a while, but it's ok to skip some essays. I'm unable to not read every work of a book I've purchased, but some others may be.

Somewhat disappointing. I'd expect some of the really good writers featured in this book to step up & provide thoughtful insight into an age-old craft with modern popularity...much more than they did.

This was a gift for someone who rarely has hands empty of a knitting project. I skimmed it before giving it and found it to be a delightful collection of essays. And who knew that all these literate people were knitters?

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