

This is a sneak peak into *Shawls to Play With*,  
a pattern collection centered around 4 simple shawls,  
designed to open up a world of shawl knitting possibility.

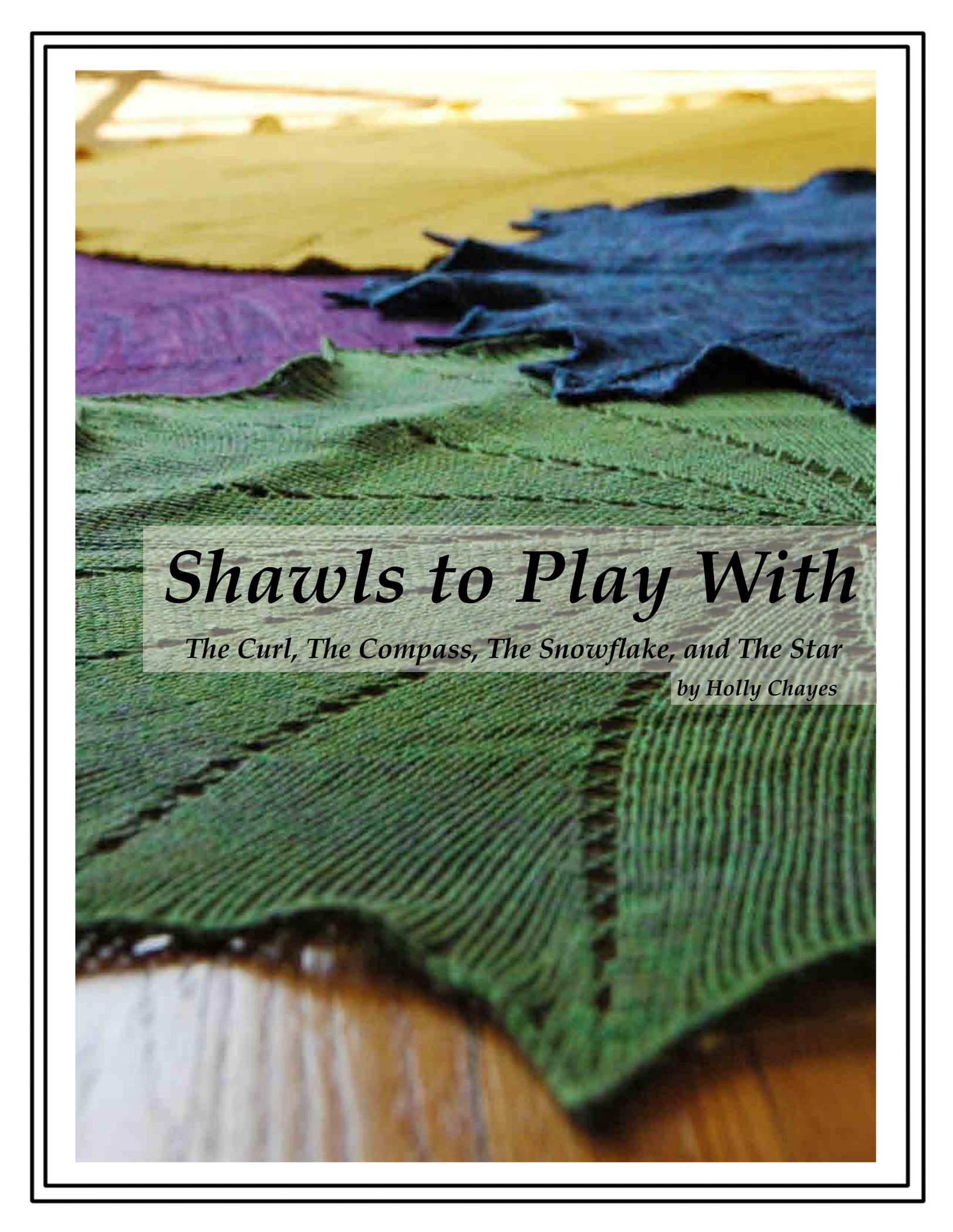
*If you like this preview, don't forget to buy the book here.*



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updated: April 2, 2014



# *Shawls to Play With*

*The Curl, The Compass, The Snowflake, and The Star*

by Holly Chayes

***Shawls to Play With*** is about adventure.

*Adventure.* An adventure in expanding ideas and broadening horizons.

*Curiosity.* Opening doors that might have been hidden in plain sight.

It's about seeing things, not only as they are, but also as they could be.

*Elegance.* It's elegance. But not effortlessness.

*Simplicity.* Starting simply. Then getting even simpler.

*Flexibility.* It's playing, experimenting, and questioning.

Seeing something. Then wondering "what if..."

*Expansiveness.* Playing with the idea.

*Adaptation.* Beginning with one thing. Then making it your own.

*Play.*

***Shawls to Play With*** is about dancing within constraints.

*adventure. curiosity. elegance. simplicity. flexibility. expansiveness. adaptation. play.*

*Play. Knitting is meant to be played with.*



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## ABOUT THE DESIGNER - Holly Chayes



*I'm an artist, designer, and knitter,  
with a background in costuming.*

*Ultimately my work comes out of a desire to  
make magic - turn one thing into another.*

*I write knitting patterns and books that invite  
knitters to become magicians, and ask "what if..."*

*You can find me and my patterns  
at [hollychayes.com](http://hollychayes.com),  
on Ravelry as [hollychayes](#)  
on Twitter as [hollychayes](#)  
and on Instagram as [hollychayes](#).*

*I've also written three other knitting books:*

*[Shawl Geometry I: the math of shaping shawls for non mathy people](#)*

*[Shawl Geometry II: the unique and funky, 19 more shawl shapes to knit with](#)*

*[Shawl Geometry III: the relationships behind the numbers](#)*

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## LETS TALK YARN

You're at a yarn shop, wandering around looking at an amazing array of colors and fibers. A skein catches your eye, you pick it off the shelf, and fall in love. Madly, madly in love. Repeat. Before you know it, your basket is full, you've checked out, and are on your way home with your haul, including a skein or two of lace weight that you didn't mean to pick up, but that were too pretty to resist. Those skeins hang around your stash, until you finally do a yarn cleanse and pass them along to a lace knitting friend.

*Sound familiar?* A substantial portion of my stash is lace weight yarn passed along from friends who realized they would never, ever, knit with it. I'm happy to take beautiful yarn off your hands. But I'd be even happier spreading the lace weight love.

I get it. *tiny yarn + tiny needles + big shawl + crazy lace = eep!*

However, lace shawls are divine. They're light, airy, drapey, ethereal, and well worth the headache. But I concede, sometimes they're a headache.

One of the most straight forward ways to reduce some of the headache of lace is to scale the project up. Many scale their lace projects up by using sock or fingering weight yarns. This does make the project less intimidating, however, most easily accessible thick yarns (especially sock yarns), are designed for durability instead of for drape. This makes them great for sturdy socks, but not so great for drapey shawls. When you use sock yarns for lace shawls, you're exchanging the drape of lace yarns for the durability of sock yarns.

There's nothing wrong with fingering weight yarns for lace shawls. It's been done many times with great success. However, you will never get an ethereal shawl out of sock yarn. Sock yarn just isn't ethereal.

Instead I would suggest holding multiple strands of lace weight yarn together.

By holding multiple strands of lace weight together, you keep the drapey properties of lace yarn, while simultaneously being able to go up needle sizes. Of course not all of the properties of lace weight yarn scale up one hundred percent, but many of them do.

## **The shawls in this collection are perfect for...**

### **...that special skein you've been hoarding**

We all have very special skeins of yarn that we have no idea what to do with.  
Maybe it comes with special memories.  
Maybe it's too variegated.  
Maybe it's not quite your color but is still breathtaking.

These shawls are for the skein that won't play second fiddle to an intricate lace pattern.  
No complex stitch patterns to steal the show, just an expanse of stockinette and strategically placed increases, so these patterns let the yarn shine.

### **...combining colors or mixing fibers & textures**

Holding multiple strands together lets you easily mix colors. Or fibers.  
And because the yarn is the star of these patterns there's no lacework to obscure.

It means you can concentrate on your colors and textures and fibers.  
Mix colors, or textures, or both.  
The possibilities and combinations are limitless.



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## THE PATTERNS

*Counterintuitive as it may be, constraints breed creativity.  
They force us to reexamine ideas. Expectations. Assumptions.  
They force us to find (for better or worse) creative solutions, instead of easy ones.*

*This collection is: four shawls, all in the round, all in stockinette stitch, all variations on circular shawls, all with minimal shaping and no additional patterning, all knit with lace weight yarns, and all knit on different needle sizes. These constraints called for elegant design.*

*Elegance.  
Simplicity at its most divine.  
Not a lack of effort.*

*Just the right amount of effort, applied in just the right way.*

*Elegance is not effortless.*



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# Gratia

Designed by: Holly Chayes

## Skills Used:

casting on, binding off, knitting  
working in the round on circulars and DPNs  
k2tog, yo  
weaving in ends, blocking lace

## Yarn:

840 yards (768 meters), lace weight

## Sample Shown in:

Madeline Tosh, "Prairie"  
1 skein, 840 yards (768 meters)/skein,  
colorway 'flashdance,'  
100% superwash merino

## Needles:

US size 3 (3.25 mm)  
1 set of 5 DPNs (optional)  
1 32 inch (80 cm) circular (optional)  
1 40 inch (100 cm) circular

*use needles needed to obtain gauge*

**Notions:** stitch markers (8)  
tapestry or yarn needle

**Gauge:** 25 sts/4 inch (10 cm);  
42 rnds/4 inch (10 cm)  
in washed and blocked stockinette stitch

## Blocked Dimensions:

32 inches (81 cm) in diameter, blocked  
(exact dimensions may vary depending on  
how aggressively the piece is blocked and  
how many repeats you knit)



## Description:

A twist. A swirl. A curl.

*Gratia*- "grace" in Latin.

*Gratia* takes the traditional concentric circle and adds a curl to create a spiral that swirls across your back.



# Xylia

Designed by: Holly Chayes

## Skills Used:

casting on, binding off, knitting  
working in the round on circulars and DPNs  
yo  
weaving in ends, blocking lace

## Yarn:

1,570 yards (1,435 meters), lace weight

## Sample Shown in:

Cascade Yarns, "Forest Hills"

2 balls, 785 yards (717.5 meters)/skein,

colorway '09-Nugget Gold,'

51% silk, 49% merino wool

*This piece is worked holding 2 strands of yarn together. Keep this in mind if you're substituting yarns.*

## Needles:

US size 5 (3.75 mm)

1 set of 5 DPNs (optional)

1 32 inch (80 cm) circular (optional)

1 40 inch (100 cm) circular

*use needles needed to obtain gauge*

**Notions:** stitch markers (8)

tapestry or yarn needle

**Gauge:** 20 sts/4 inch (10 cm);

32 rnds/4 inch (10 cm)

in washed and blocked stockinette stitch

## Blocked Dimensions:

35 inches (89 cm) in diameter, blocked  
(exact dimensions may vary depending on how aggressively the piece is blocked and how many repeats you knit)

## Description:

Nicknamed "the compass," *Xylia* straightens and balances the spokes of the traditional wedge circular shawl.

Eight rays radiating outward, mirroring the points on a compass.

*Xylia* is a variation on *xylon* which means "of the forest" in Greek. I chose this name because, perhaps unsurprisingly, I couldn't find a name I liked that played off of the compass imagery.

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# Yuki

Designed by: Holly Chayes

## Skills Used:

casting on, binding off, knitting  
working in the round on circulars and DPNs  
yo  
weaving in ends, blocking lace

## Yarn:

1,410 yards (1,290 meters), lace weight

## Sample Shown in:

Malabrigo, "Lace"

3 skeins, 420 yards (430 meters)/skein,  
colorways (1 skein each)

'Whales Road (247)'

'Emerald Blue (137)'

'Broadway Blue'

100% baby merino wool

*This piece is worked holding 3 strands of yarn together. Keep this in mind if you're substituting yarns.*

## Needles:

US size 7 (4.5 mm)

1 set of 5 DPNs (optional)

1 32 inch (80 cm) circular (optional)

1 40 inch (100 cm) circular

*use needles needed to obtain gauge*

**Notions:** stitch markers (8)

tapestry or yarn needle

**Gauge:** 16 sts/4 inch (10 cm);

30 rnds/4 inch (10 cm)

in washed and blocked stockinette stitch

## Blocked Dimensions:

34 inches (86 cm) diameter, point to point,  
blocked (exact dimensions may vary depending  
on how aggressively the piece is blocked)



## Description:

Snowflakes tumbling down.

"Yuki" - snow and happiness in Japanese.

*Yuki* plays with the increases in the traditional square and blocking to create a shawl that mirrors the patterning of a snowflake, it was also on the list of possible names for *Gratia*.

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# Idril

Designed by: Holly Chayes

## Skills Used:

casting on, binding off, knitting  
working in the round on circulars and DPNs  
yo  
weaving in ends, blocking lace

## Yarn:

2,571 yards (2351 meters), lace weight

## Sample Shown in:

MC: Yarn Place, "Graceful Lace Yarn"

2 balls, 903 yards (825.5 meters)/ball,  
colorway '609218' 100% merino

CC: Sweet Georgia, "Merino Silk Lace"

1 skein, 765 yards (700 meters)/skein,  
colorway 'Savory' 50% silk, 50% merino

*This piece is worked holding 5 strands of  
yarn together. Keep this in mind if you're  
substituting yarns.*

## Needles:

US size 9 (5.5 mm)

1 set of 5 DPNs (optional)

1 32 inch (80 cm) circular (optional)

1 40 inch (100 cm) circular

*use needles needed to obtain gauge*

**Notions:** stitch markers (16)

tapestry or yarn needle

**Gauge:** 13 sts/4 inch (10 cm);

24 rnds/4 inch (10 cm)

in washed and blocked stockinette stitch

## Blocked Dimensions:

35 inches (89 cm) in diameter, blocked  
(exact dimensions may vary depending on  
how aggressively the piece is blocked and  
how many repeats you knit)



## Description:

*Idril* is kind of a combination of the traditional wedge circle and the concentric circle, which creates sixteen beams shooting out of the center of your shawl.

Nicknamed "the star," *Idril* means "sparkle, brilliance" in Sindarin.

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## EXPERIMENT! PLAY! MOVE THINGS AROUND!

On the surface this is a collection of four simple, easy, elegant, accessible, stockinette shawls.

But really, the patterns are just a jumping off point.

This book is about bringing more play, more adventure, and more fun into your knitting. In that vein, the collection is designed to be experimented with.

These patterns all call for lace weight yarns, but you could mix that up.

Hold two fingering weight yarns together to recreate a heavier *Xylia*, a fingering weight yarn and a lace weight to create *Yuki*, a worsted and a lace weight to create *Idril*, or any other number of yarn weight combinations.

*Adaptation.* Beginning with one thing, and making it your own.

Grab the yarns you want.

Grab the needles that make sense.

Pick the pattern you're most drawn to.

And go to town.

If you run out of yarn before the pattern ends, bind off.

If you have more yarn than the pattern calls for, keep going.

If you're happy with the size before the pattern is finished, bind off.

If you want a larger shawl, keep going.

It's about you, taking control of your projects. Your stash. Your knitting.

Don't like US 3s? Double the yarn and use 5s.

Have a bunch of smaller skeins? Hold them together and use 7s, 8s, 9s, or even 10s.

If you're hesitant about combining colors. Hold two or more strands of the same yarn, in the same color together. Or what about holding different dye lots of the same color together?

You could keep your yarns within one hue. Hold three blues, or two purples together.

You could combine a neutral color with one strand of a bright color.

What about a light, medium, and dark of one shade?

Like a light brown, medium brown, and dark brown.

Or do the same with grays.

Don't like 3s, 5s, 7s, or 9s? (or are all your pairs in projects already?) Use 2s, 4s, 6s, 8s, or 10s.

Don't want a full circle? Make it a half circle. Or 3/4 of a circle.

***Shawls to Play With*** is about combinations and seeing unexpected possibilities.

Reorganizing things, and rearranging them.

It's thinking about your knitting in a new way.

Opening up doors and windows.

It's about bringing flexibility into your knitting.

Listen to the yarn, what's going to let it shine?

Listen to yourself, what do you want to knit right now?

Listen to your life, what do you have the time and space to work on?

*Find the doors hidden in plain sight.  
Keep things simple. And then get even simpler.*

*Because simplicity is elegant.  
But elegance isn't a lack of effort.*

*Constraints breed creativity.  
And to find an answer, you have to have a question.*



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## 21 reasons to swatch.

We all know we should swatch before every project. Yet, many of us don't. Myself included.

I don't swatch for every project. But I love swatching. *Love. Love. Love.*

I love swatching because of how useful a tool it is.

I don't swatch because I *should*.

I swatch because I have a question, and swatching gets me an answer.

I swatch...

- ... to find my gauge.
- ... to figure out how large a piece will be.
- ... to determine which needle to use.
- ... to see how the final fabric will feel.
- ... to try a stitch pattern.
- ... to try a yarn.
- ... to try a technique.
- ... to try a construction.
- ... to test an idea.
- ... to demonstrate a technique for a friend or student.
- ... to clarify a design.
- ... to see if I really want to put this stitch pattern next to that one.
- ... to work out the transitions between stitch patterns.
- ... to demonstrate an idea to a publisher, yarn company, or friend.
- ... to have a record of an idea I don't have time for at the moment.
- ... to try out color combinations.
- ... to try out yarn combinations.
- ... to see the size of a stitch pattern.
- ... to work out proportions.
- ... to scale a stitch up or down.
- ... to play.

I swatch to play.

I have a question. I knit a swatch to find the answer.

I have a problem. I swatch to find the solution.

Swatching is a tool. Just like needles, and rulers, and books.

Do we use every tool at our disposal for every project? No.

But we certainly shouldn't scorn a tool because it takes a little bit of time away from our main project, or because it's gotten a bad rap.

Swatching is a place to play. A place to experiment. A place to try new things.

There's no wrong way to swatch, but plenty of right ways.



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## FINAL LOVE LETTER

I want to live in a world where we bring play and curiosity to our knitting.  
I'm tired of living in a world where knitters are scared...

...of their stashes.

...of their patterns.

...of messing up.

Knitting is an adventure.

Yea, you may screw something up.

But you can always rip it back, or toss it out and start over.

There's always more yarn.

On one level this book is a collection of four patterns and five articles.

But really it's about helping you give yourself permission.

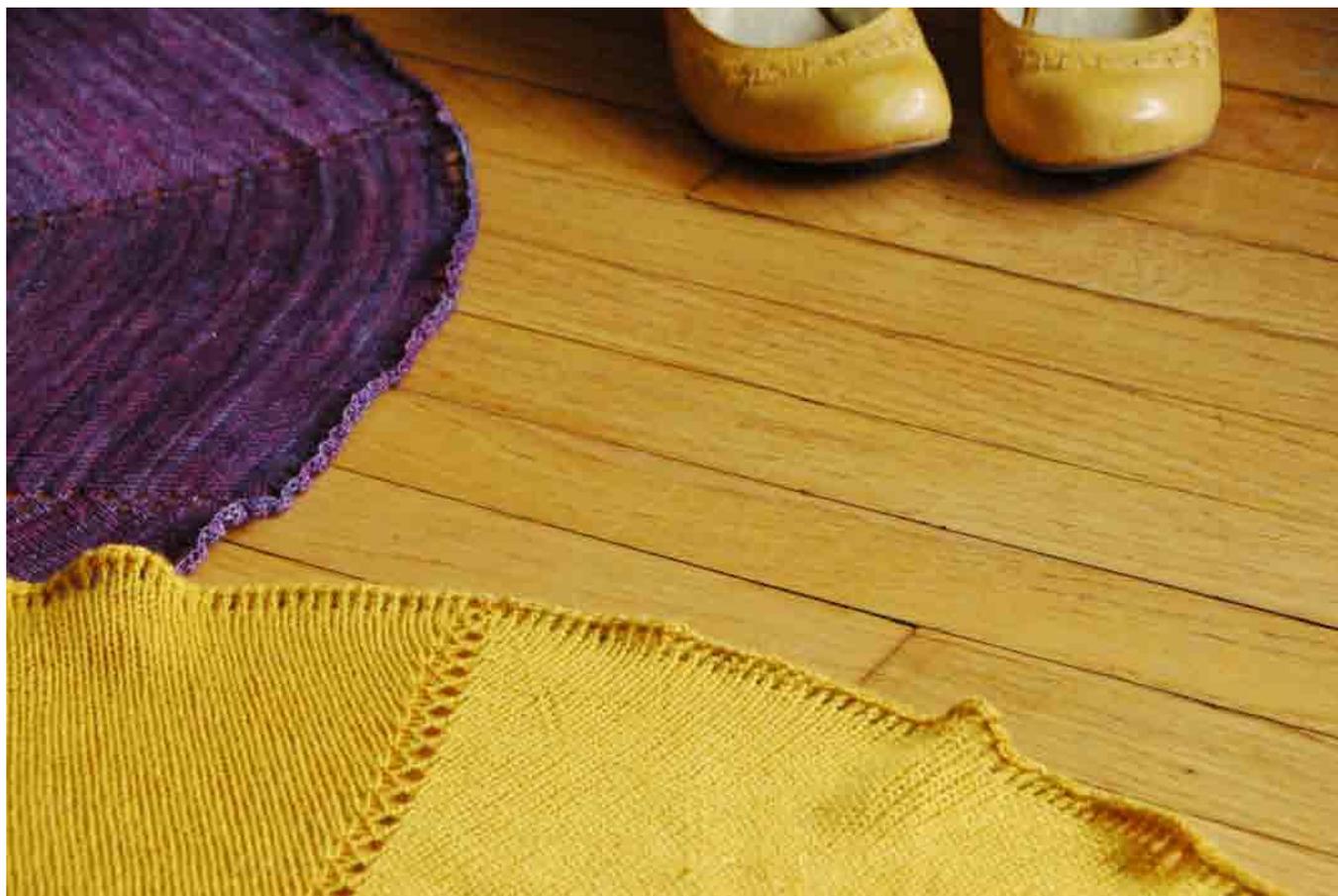
To play. To experiment. To say "yea, I do like that."

Or "nope, I really hate that popular thing."

Or "yea, I do love that thing I not supposed to like."

It's your knitting.

What's the point of making it, if you don't love it?



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a pattern collection centered around 4 simple shawls,  
designed to open up a world of shawl knitting possibility,  
and help you approach your knitting with,  
less fear,  
more play,  
less agony,  
more curiosity.

[If you liked this preview, don't forget to buy the book here.](#)



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