

Prayer Shawl

by [Suzanne Underwood Rhodes](#) in the [January 2023](#) issue

The work of a prayer shawl
is to love the weight it holds,
the blue yarns heavy with the ache
of shoulders, of cold like winter rain,
the gray yarns grave as tears. A voice struggles
to rise from the wool, but the cry fails and falls
and the hurt breast is unconsolated.

But the Galilee ladies who gather on Sundays
to knit their prayers into a woman's fear
and hug her prayers into theirs, know
that in the diamond honeycomb stitch,
or the hurdle and purl ridge stitches,
hope turns and casts on the heart's fibers
and the ladies believe, needles flashing.