

"Contemplation"

Liz Bushman

The moon is lovely tonight; it's a clear, cool shade of sunlight, infinitely kinder and gentler than the warm brilliance of the sun.

I carefully rest one foot on the slant of the roof between the bars of the railing and swing my other leg over. With some tricky maneuvering I end up with both feet on the other side of the railing and balance freely, Harajuku bag of yarn and pair of knitting needles with the beginning of a scarf in one hand.

I hike up the slant of dark-gray roofing, stumbling briefly as my flip-flop catches on a seam. Around the warm red-orange skylight that shines with the light of the living room where my parents are watching a movie. The moon is so bright I can clearly see where I'm putting my feet; I'm surprised at the ease I feel walking around on a slanted surface twenty feet above ground.

I pause for a moment at the peak-between-peaks and look around. To the south is the orange glow of light pollution; to the west, our neighbor beyond the easement-road has his house light up like a chandelier; to the east is darkness; and across the river to the north I see the twinkling of the Children's Hospital.

I go up a little more to the peak-above-peaks and sink down to straddle the ridge where the east slant meets the west slant. To one side is a vent that provides a relatively un-slanted surface, where I place my bag. I arrange my needles so that the one with the first row is in my left hand, the bare needle in my right, and the bag of yarn on the side of the bare needle. I begin another row.

The moon gleams softly on the light blue yarn. It adds an ethereal glow to it, gilding the blue yarn with silver. The needles flash softly.

The thing I love about knitting is that it is something I can do without having to think about it, something that frees up my conscience and allows me to think. The first thing that comes to mind, as it nearly always does, is my current crush. So nice, so intelligent, so handsome... I wish he was sharing the night with me now. The moment is

stilled with beauty that should be shared.

Sprinklers start somewhere. The wind off the river starts to gust a little with a tangible wind chill factor. I am the misnomic Californian, wearing two sweatshirts with the hoods up, a pair of jeans, and flip-flops. My hands, with no gloves, swiftly feel the chill. I continue to knit.

I am caught in the moment of it all. The moon, the roof, the faintly clacking needles, the flashing yarn. The glow of golden lights to my right. Wind swishing, a motor humming, a water fixture burbling.

It does not last long. The suspended moment begins to crack when I realize how cold I really am. I knit another couple of stitches. I'll go down after this row. Stitch, stitch, stitch. I start another row before I think about it, and another, and another.

Finally, with the grand total of an inch and a fourth of scarf, I stop. I put it in the bag and ease myself up, balancing on one foot as I make a 90 degree turn. Back to the peak-above-peaks, then the peak-between-peaks, down the slant towards the chimney. Drop the bag on the balcony. Careful leverage over the railing, landing lightly. I pick up my bag and walk slowly back to the door. I step inside. The door closes.