

Idle Hands

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My grandmother...and everyone else's grandmother...used to say that "Idle hands are the devil's playthings" I am not sure I believe that.

Nonetheless, these days when I seem to turn on the news every night...and then fall into despair, watching, but am not able to STOP watching....I needed something to do with my hands. So I have started knitting again. I used to knit a lot. Then, after Martin died six years ago and the dog fell into a depression..someone suggested that I get a kitten. Which I did. And it solved the dog's despair; he was thrilled to have a playful companion.

But it meant that I couldn't knit any more, for obvious reasons. The kitten, whose name was Lulu, found my knitting to be the most amazing, wonderful toy she could imagine. It seemed a small price to pay, a fairly easy trade-off: a sweet kitten (soon to be a cat); and no more un-needed sweaters or scarves or hats.

Then, two years ago, I met Howard. Re-met, actually, because Martin and I had known Howard and his wife, who had died a few months after Martin died. Howard and I began to do things together: dinner sometimes; bridge once a week with another couple who had a summer home near both of ours.

We began to make plans. (I wrote about this in the newly updated memoir **LOOKING BACK**: that we decided to go together to Botswana). Just for the record: when you go to Botswana with someone (and we did that last spring)....you are making a serious commitment. It is not a trip for sissies.

But along the way, I began to notice, whenever Howard was at my house...he sneaked off into another room and took a pill. Oh dear, I thought: a drug problem? This lovely man, himself an MD, a Harvard alum, a reputable human being...and he is sneaking away to pop pills? Of course that wasn't the case. He was simply allergic to Lulu.

Easy decision. I found a new home for Lulu and Howard has made a new home in my life, one that I thought would be solitary for my remaining years.

And now I can knit again. Not that I need any more sweaters or scarves. But still: I do love the wonderful colors of yarns; I love seeing things take shape (sometimes bad shapes! I never use patterns, and that is risky) Here (above) you can see a sweater-in-progress, a project that has gotten me through a lot of grim news shows lately. I don't know why this photo is sideways. I swear it was right side up when I started this post.



My Mother and I in Cape Town, South Africa. We had a lot of fun taking pictures and enjoying the view.