

Gwyneth Lewis
from How To Knit A Poem

How To Knit A Poem

The whole thing starts with a single knot
 and needles. A word and pen. Tie a loop
 in nothing. Look at it. Cast on, repeat

the procedure till you have a line
 that you can work with.
 It's a pattern made of relation alone,

my patience, my rhythm, till empty bights
 create a fabric that can be worn,
 if you're lucky and practised. It's never too late

to pick up dropped stitches, each hole a clue
 to something that might be bothering you,
 though I link mine with ribbons and pretend

I meant them to happen. I make a net
 of meaning that I carry round
 portable, to work on sound

in trains and terrible waiting rooms.
 It's thought in action. It redeems
 odd corners of disposable time,

making them fashion. It's the kind of work
 that keeps you together. The neck's too tight,
 but tell me honestly: How do I look?