



N O T I O N S

ONE OF MY FONDEST CHILDHOOD MEMORIES is of the day my grandmother took me to the public library to get my very own library card. It became my most valued possession, and I've had a library card ever since, wherever I've lived.

I read voraciously, as often as I can find a spare moment. Reading is my stress reliever, my hobby, my joy. There's at least one book in every room in my house as well as others in the car and in my briefcase—I never know when I may be trapped somewhere! Needless to say, I'm pleased to present this issue of *PieceWork*, which is dedicated to needlework in literature.

When we first talked about this as a theme, I began to compile a list of literary works containing needlework references. Colleagues helped me to discover even more. Among my favorites (so far) are *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, *Caramelo* by Sandra Cisneros (especially lyrical are the passages about a silk rebozo), William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, *The Shipping News* by E. Annie Proulx, and Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*. I hope you will enjoy our choices for this issue. Below are a few highlights:

- If you know a child or children (from read-aloud-to age to teens), check out Julia Baratta's "Needlework in Children's Literature" annotated list (page 48). For some books, the needlework aspect is clear from the title, but for others, it's less evident. And who would ever guess that the hero of Jessica Day George's *Princess of the Midnight Ball* would be a knitter! The books span many time periods and cultures, and each is a delight.
- In our nod to Jane Austen, you can do more than just read about needlework: We've published an excerpt from Jennifer Forest's *Jane Austen's Sewing Box* (page 14) along with two of the book's projects—a lovely netted coin purse and a miser's purse.
- The word "knitting" in the title of Elizabeth Cobbe's article, "Knitting Gloves in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa*" (page 30), has a double meaning, referring not only to the role that this activity plays in the lives of the characters but also to the way in which it is accomplished, performance after performance, onstage.
- And more!

If you know of other books with substantive needlework references, please let me know (contact information is in the masthead at right). I've had so much fun researching this topic that I'm eager to revisit it in a future issue.

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PIECEWORK

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