



by Clara Parkes

Consider the sweater. Perched on our shoulders are tens of thousands, who are we kidding, *millions* of stitches in a garment that could, depending on the yarn, weigh upwards of a kilo. The fabric is expected to move and flex and breathe with us, withstand the slings and arrows of everyday wear, and, at the end of the day, still look as fresh and beautiful as the day it was born. Not every yarn can do this.

For this column, I decided to use Amy Herzog's [Megunticook](#) cardigan as our teaching tool. I've always been partial to trinity stitch. It formed the body of my favorite blankie when I was little, and it runs along the cuffs and trim of Herzog's sweater. The rest of the garment is smooth, simple stockinette.

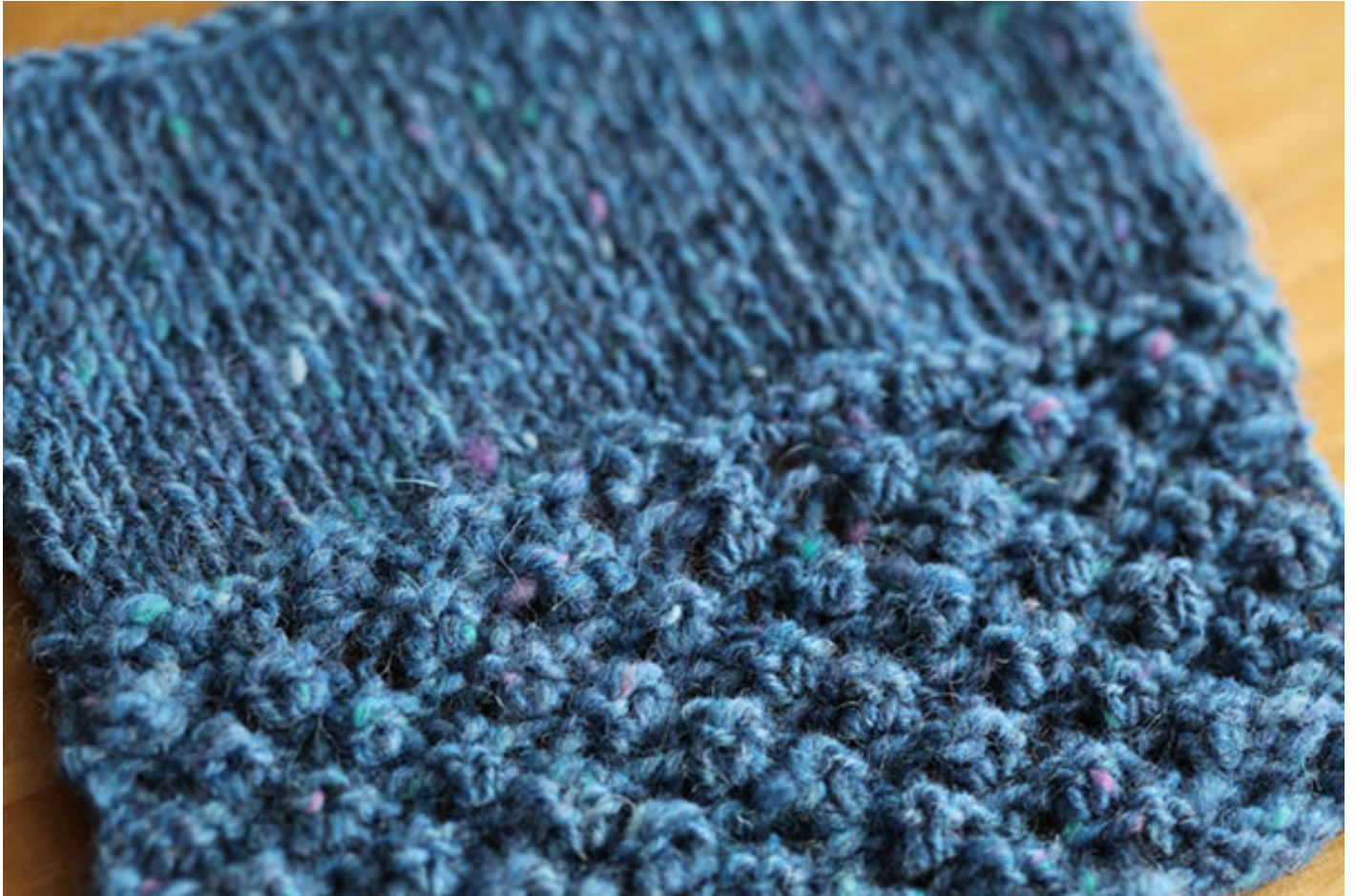
This sweater needs a yarn that will display attractive fields of stockinette while also complementing the trinity stitch. Lest we forget, we also need this yarn to hold up well under regular wear and tear.

For the sample you see in this issue, Amy used Sundara Fingering Silky Merino. This classic three-ply construction blends 50/50 Merino and silk fibers. The mix is then hand-dyed in Sundara's trademark flickering semisolid style. It's an exquisite choice for a garment that will drape while still hugging, reflect color brilliantly, and feel exquisite against your bare skin.

But we aren't here to use the yarn specified in the pattern, are we? No. So I immediately set out to find a very different yarn. I found it in Rowan Fine Tweed, a delicate singles that comes in adorable 25-gram dumplings of just 98 yards each.



With just one strand of twisted fiber, this 100% wool yarn is faintly irregular in a way that gave an earthy wobble to my stockinette. Stitches were plump, the fabric pleasantly muted, with a slightly blurred surface and heathered coloring. My only real concern with this yarn choice would be durability, especially if you're the kind who wears through elbows quickly. One strand of twisted fiber may not be enough to hold together under duress.



With an eye toward wearability, I switched back over to a multiple-ply yarn. But this time, instead of Merino and silk, I picked a British gem of a yarn called Titus. It combines 50% Wensleydale wool, 20% Bluefaced Leicester wool, and 30% alpaca—with all the fibers sourced from the U.K.



Immediately, stitches took on the far smoother, more stable look of a plied yarn. The color—a solid, somewhat muted pale blue—kept quiet so that the eye could focus on a truly spectacular sheen. Most of the gloss came from the Wensleydale, but I suspect some also came from the BFL and even possibly from the alpaca, depending on which kind they used.



The yarn's glossy appearance gave the trinity stitch a much more textured, almost bouclé effect than did the Rowan.

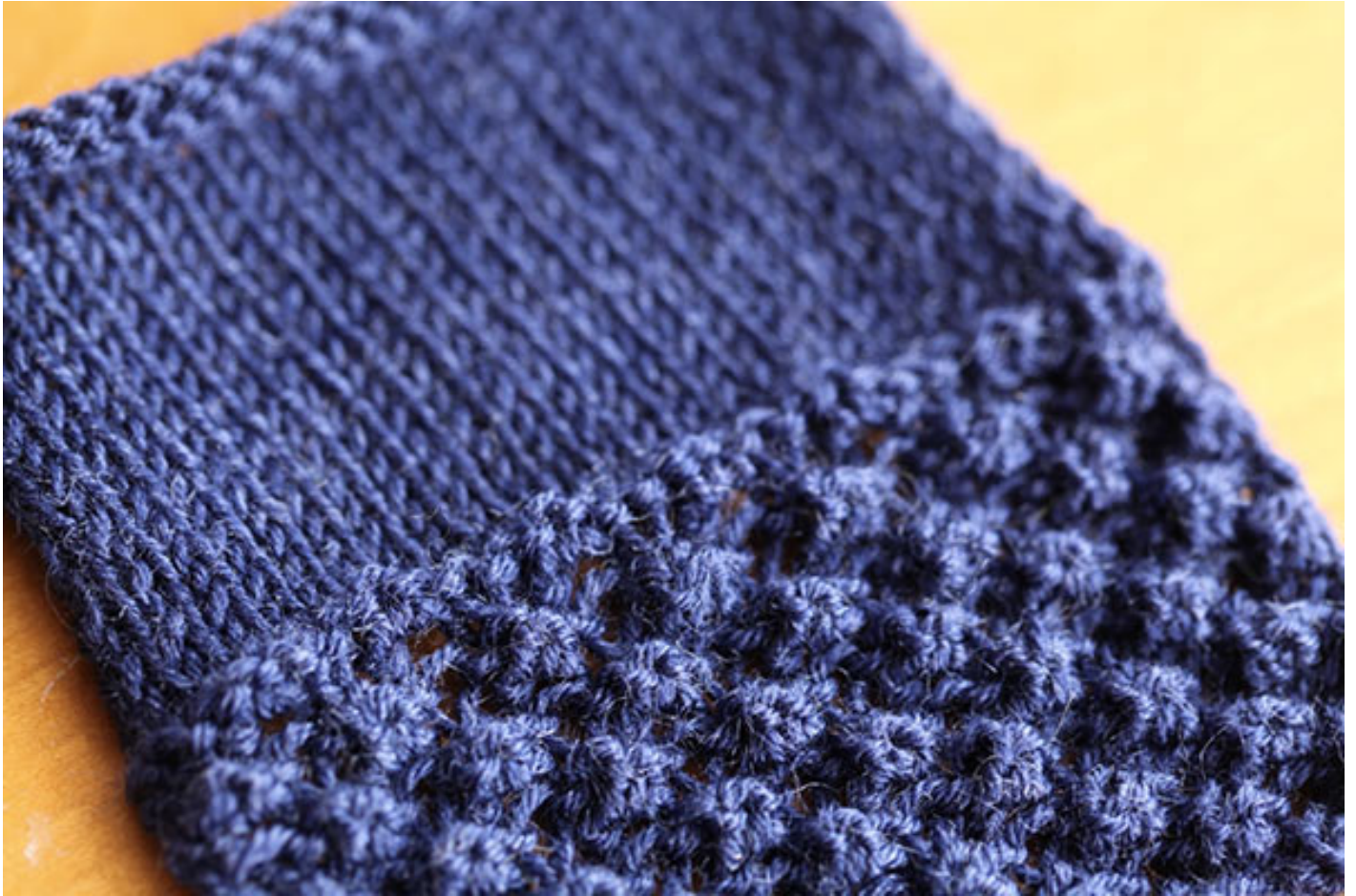
For all its beauty, Titus did lack a little in terms of bounce. While the fibers have far more body than cotton or silk, they don't have quite as much as you'd get from higher-crimp wool. On the positive side, Titus is composed of strong, long-staple fibers that will resist abrasion beautifully. If you love the fundamental structure of Herzog's design and want well-wearing fabric to be the main focus, rather than brightness of color, Titus could be an excellent choice.

I sought a bouncier yarn for my final swatch. I bypassed a traditional plied construction for an S-on-S cable-spun creation from Spud & Chloë called, fittingly, "Fine." This construction creates an

extremely round, springy yarn with excellent durability. A dusting of 20% silk gives the 80% superwash wool a welcome glow.



Such a well-rounded yarn tends to render stitchwork in high relief, and sure enough, it transformed the trinity stitch into truly three-dimensional, popcorn-like nubbins. My stockinette was smooth and even, with an upwards-tilting left stitch leg creating the telltale "corduroy" effect you always get with this type of yarn.



The only drawback: With so many plies upon plies all twisted together, this yarn occasionally wanted to snag when I was maneuvering the acrobatic P3togs and the knitting, purling, and knitting again into the same stitch. But I did love the clarity and definition of the results. Could I imagine a whole sweater of it? For the right occasion, yes.

All in all, it's nice to see a sweater design that allows freedom of texture, fiber, *and* coloring. Not all garments transfer from variegated to solid, but this one does.



Tell me. Which yarn would you use?

Clara Parkes is the brilliant mind behind knittersreview.com and the author of several fantastic fiber books.