

## The So Anyways of Fair Isle Knitting

*'... to make something – whether it's a poem, a family, a garden or a prototype rocket – is always to go beyond the limits of what you are.'* Fiona Sampson

With muffled metronomic clicks she flicks a two-ended pin,  
aluminium smooth, throwing wools the varied greys of Scottish skies.

She slides round and round a spiral, never turning at row ends —  
they never come – there's no need to purl, she says. She's expert

in the circular, patterned staircases that grow and grow,  
interspersing this work with *So anyways ....* in her Montrose burr

while she turns and turns around her way. So anyways, the next row  
of a story, working from welt to breast, she tells the tales

of other women makers in her life; mother, sisters, grandmothers —  
the socks, the heels, the shawls, the mitts, the jumpers —

the need to occupy two idle hands. So anyways, they thought,  
by this stitching the devil would find no work – they made, they built,

they wrapped in warmth, they left a thing or two behind. So anyways,  
I now possess all that she once loved – and a bag of double-pointed pins.