

Knitting Time
by Mary Hamilton

One summer night in 1858, a terrific rain fell. The next morning the residents of Frankfort, Kentucky discovered a vacant lot covered with knitting needles – each needle stuck straight into the ground as if placed there by hand. No one could explain where the needles had come from.

Some folks looked at the needles, cried out in fright, and ran. They believed the needles signified the end of the world was at hand. Others looked at the needles, pulled some from the ground, examined them, and concluded, “We could knit with these.” They carried needles away by the basket loads.

I’ve thought about this brief tale now and then for well over a year. I ran across it at the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives when I read the Franklin County files of the Writers Project American Life Series compiled during the Great Depression. Miss Elizabeth Hendrick, the worker with the Writers Project, heard the story from Mr. Frank Hutchinson, a man about eighty years old. Mr. Hutchinson said folks talked about the shower of needles for over half a century. He guessed that even as late as the 1930’s some of the needles were most likely still in use.

So why has the story returned to my thoughts?

Everyone saw the needles as coming from a source that could not be explained. Some ran, certain the needles were a curse. Others stayed, looked the situation over, and saw the needles as a gift. Perhaps, even some who ran at first overcame their fear and returned to receive the gift.

Is recognizing and accepting our talents as gifts, not curses, a task we must master to live a successful life? To not panic and run away from our abilities, especially if they prove different than we imagined?

Indeed, I believe it is our task to accept our gifts. But acceptance is not enough. We must then begin knitting to see what we can create with the gifts we’ve received. Whatever your gifts, may your knitting bring you great satisfaction.

Brief Bio: Mary Hamilton has earned her living telling stories and pondering how the art of storytelling works since 1983. www.maryhamilton.info