



Hooking Rugs and Ice Fishing

He volunteered with a dying patient
expecting to go through the five stages of grief
at the first meeting. Instead
she talked about hooking rugs:

the needle, the thread, the cloth,
the rhythmic movement of the hands.
He tried other matters in conversation-
she talked of hooking rugs.

On the next visit she spoke of the intricacies
and hardships of ice-fishing that her husband
had done before his death. Week after week,
hooking rugs and ice-fishing.

Angered, he said to friends,
"I can't go on with this
interminable hooking rugs
and ice fishing."

One day as they sat
in the hospital cafeteria,
she going on, he bored and vexed
with hooking rugs and ice-fishing

the room
went silent, air turned
a luminous shade of green, hooking
rugs and ice

fishing stopped. She leaned over and said,
"I could not have done this
without you,"
then on again with hooking rugs

and ice-fishing. Soon after she died. At the funeral
relatives said to him, "Thank you,
all she ever spoke about
was you."

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