



# Who can we be? Weaving and untangling through craft and creativity on a doctoral journey

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***“I am being worked on as much as I'm doing the work.”***

*-Robert Romanyshyn, The Wounded Researcher: Research with Soul in Mind (2020)*

*“There is a sort of dance of knowledge, a weaving and unravelling of what I understand and do not ... moving from clarity to blurred focus and then a reconstructing and reattaching, re-stitching”*

# Creativity over time and process

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- Creativity as reflexive practice
- Creativity as data creation and co-creation
- Creativity as knowledge dissemination



# Where it began...

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- Midlife doctoral studies alongside practice  
(Bachman, 1992; Heinrich, 2000; Stone, 2001; Wendover, 2006, Thomas et al., 2023)
- Crochet project: embodied, expressive, reflexive, well-being  
(Sjöberg & Porko-Hudd, 2019; Pöllänen, 2015; Corkhill et al., 2014)
- Documenting a journey through creative practice  
(Leavy, 2020; Kara, 2020)
- Multi-modal, iterative, living inquiry  
(Irwin et al., 2018; LeBlanc et al, 2024)



- **Autoethnography, reflexivity**

(Etherington, 2004; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Holmes, 2020; Adams & Herrmann, 2023)

- **Midlife, transitions**

(Bridges & Bridges, 2019; Feiler, 2020; Infurna et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2023)

- **Arts-based research and embodied practice**

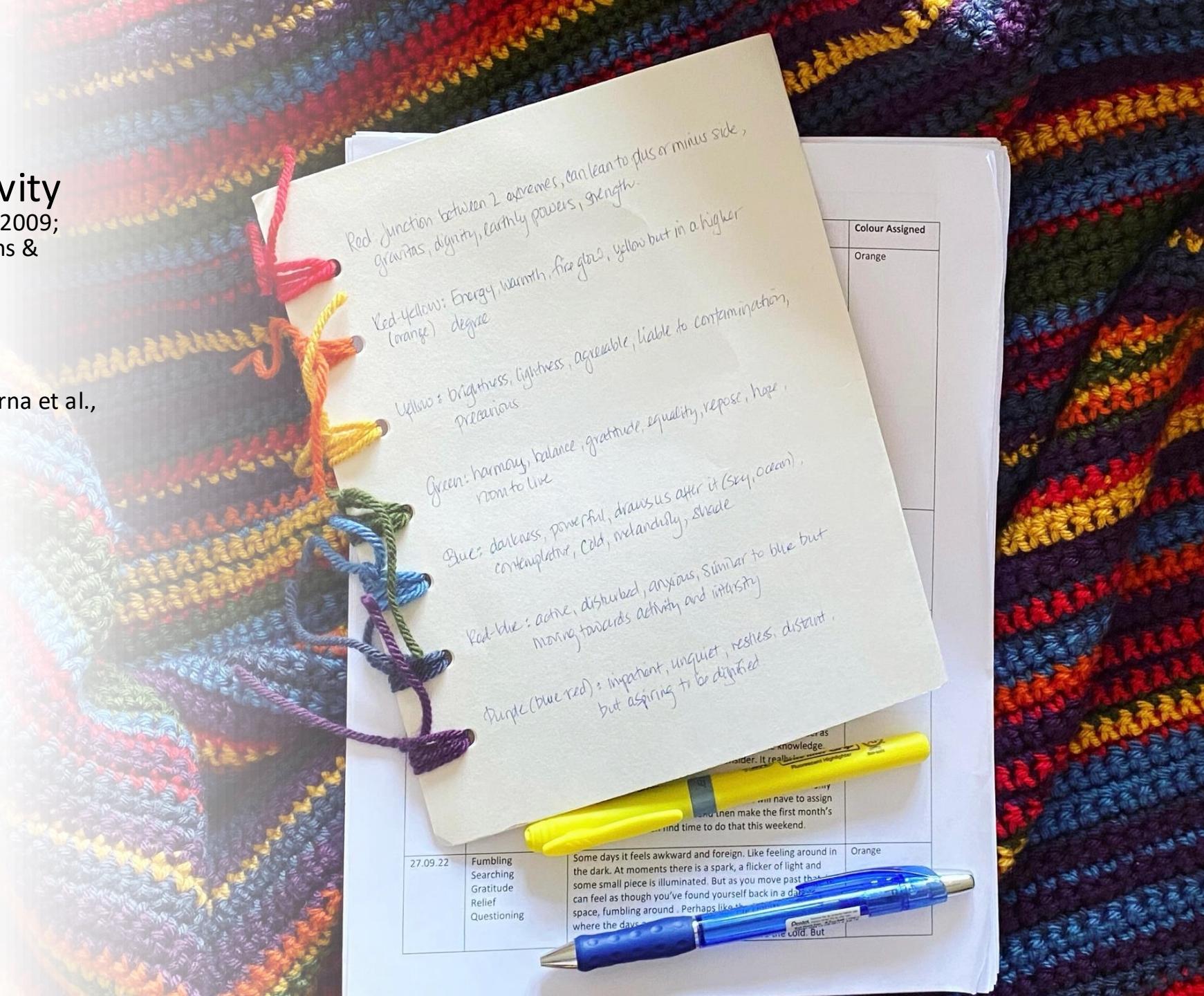
(Leavy, 2015; Kara, 2020; Reitsma, 2022)

- **Thematic analysis**

(Braun & Clark, 2021, Seldaña, 2021)

- **A/r/tography**

(Springgay et al., 2005; Irwin et al., 2018)



- How does it feel to be a middle-aged woman returning to higher education?
- How does it feel to be a remote student?
- How does this relate to my own work as a student, as an emerging researcher, as a practitioner?
- How and where do I find community?



# Data

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## Year One (Prep)

- Daily journal and meta-notes: 26,144 words
- Daily keywords: 347
- Crocheted blanket
- Music
- Poem





Potential...

# Year Two

## (1st in-person PhD Year)

- Daily journal and meta-notes: 33,984 words
- Daily keywords/phrases: 1,047
- Crocheted blanket
- Music
- Poetry



self-compassionate, peaceful, contemplative, grounded, grateful, connected, balanced

optimistic, hopeful, aspirational, wonder, engaged, excited, courageous

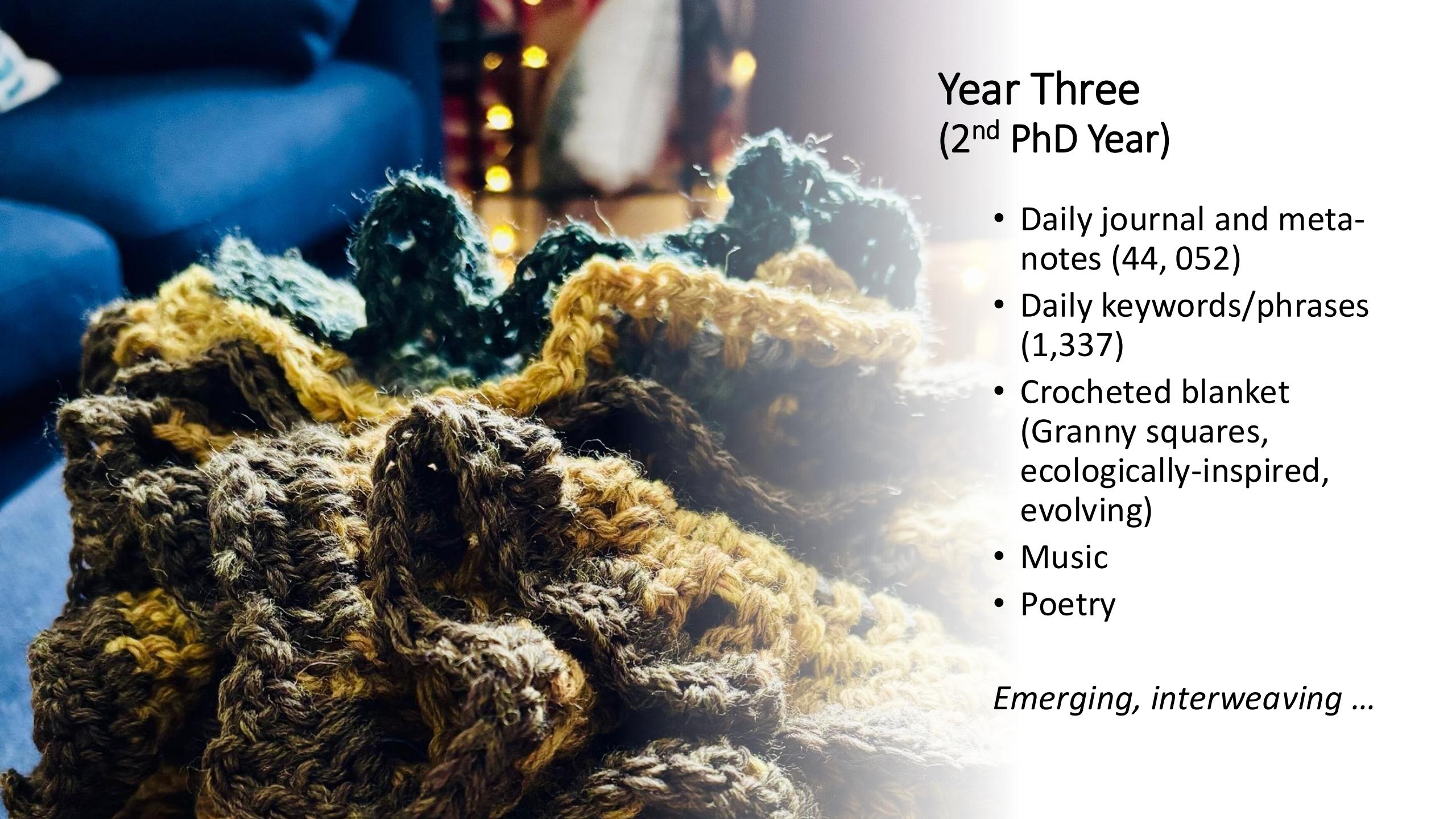
accomplished, satisfied, creative, curious, focused, productive, interested

meandering, tired, searching, stretching, questioning, wandering, foggy, open

struggling, fearful, vulnerable, worried, insecure, uneasy, uncertain, uncomfortable, tense, doubtful

resigned, helpless, frustrated, overwhelmed, negative, stuck, disheartened, pressured, melancholic

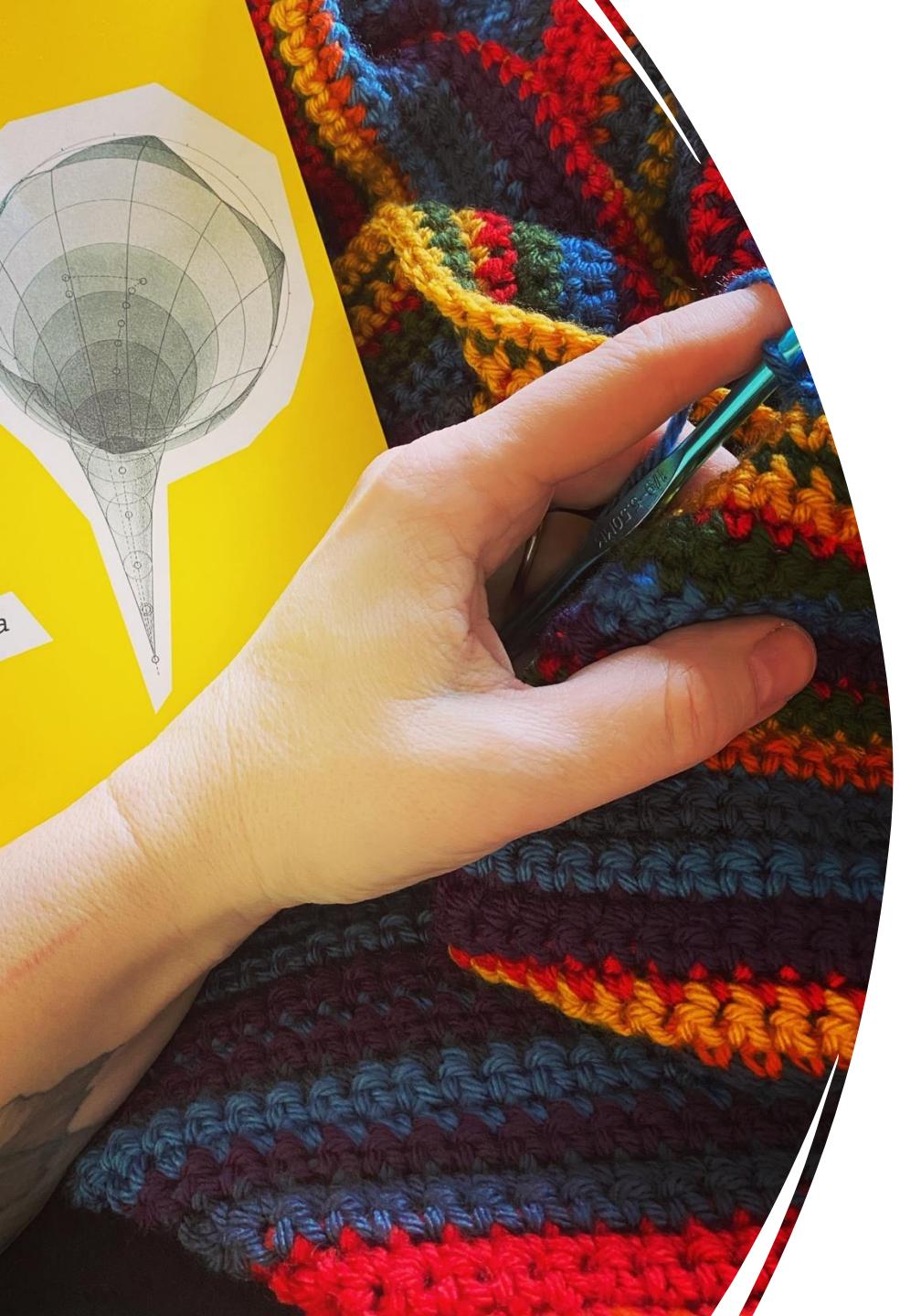




## Year Three (2<sup>nd</sup> PhD Year)

- Daily journal and meta-notes (44, 052)
- Daily keywords/phrases (1,337)
- Crocheted blanket (Granny squares, ecologically-inspired, evolving)
- Music
- Poetry

*Emerging, interweaving ...*



# Early findings

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- Vulnerability and uncertainty
- Belonging and (dis)connectedness
- Transitions and identities
- Optimism and reflexive practice
- Ritual and reflection

Kinnunen, C. (2024). [Weaving and untangling identities: exploration of a midlife journey as a practitioner-researcher-student.](#) *Transform: New Voices in Community Music*. York St. John. 122-139.



# Ritual and reflection

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- Importance of ritual
- Care, contemplation
  - Weaving ends
  - Control, grip
  - Weight, carrying



# Multimodal stages

- Unfinished, iterative
- Multiplicities of meanings
- Edges (where do we end?)
  - Temporal
  - Technological
  - Tactile
  - Meaning-making

# Creativity over time and process

- Creativity as reflexive practice
- Creativity as data creation and co-creation
- Creativity as knowledge dissemination



# Moving forward

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# unravelling the edge of me

*\*Poem and musical clip published in [unpsychology magazine, issue 10 \(Edges\)](#)*

vibration, fibre, colour, marrow ... where do they intersect?  
in a temporal space that becomes an amalgam of a year  
an aging and an emerging  
a liminal calendar across planes  
seen, felt, contemplated but still changing even after, always  
where does this time end?  
where do I end?

between the struggle to weave these impossible emotions  
together  
to accept the reality of what was  
and its presence in what still is



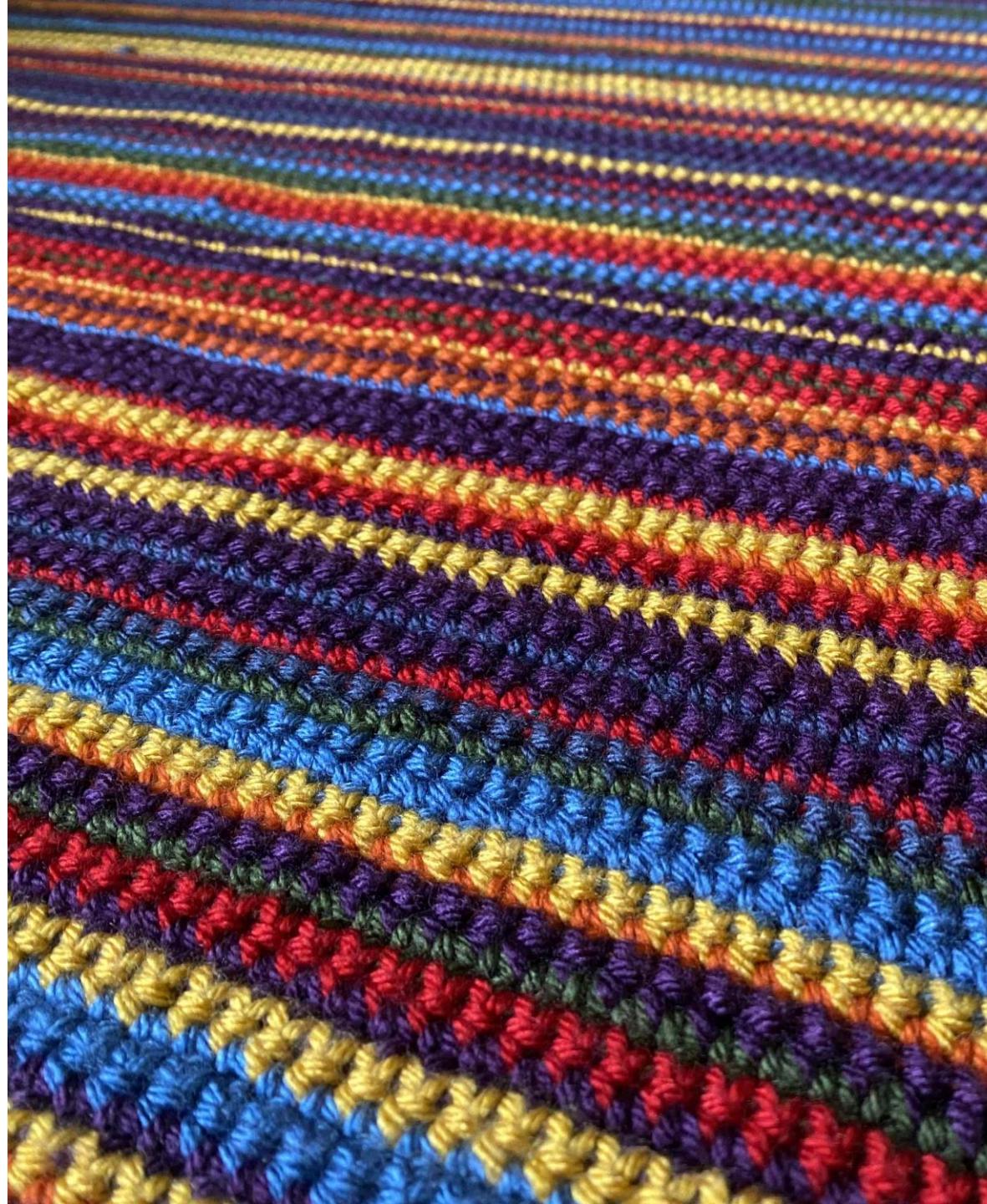
distant insecurities invoke shade and shadow  
hooked and pulled forth across time and essence  
bold tones, chosen with optimism  
indicators of hope in uncomfortable spaces  
over distances of geography  
of day  
of thought  
of urges to connect and be seen  
they sit exposed  
revealing their frustrating splay, damn them

denying  
defying  
not willing to be told  
they hold each other but can't fully commit  
their kinship perceived either fraying or clinging  
active  
impatient



every line,  
every hue an edge  
simultaneously gripping and letting go  
curling and singing,  
with the openness of an octave or two  
can harmony be here? can it cooperate?  
might the timbre  
of aging sound and body be present  
and hold it all?  
can a warmth, a fire glow even  
weave itself in  
and find residence ... resonance?

midlife makes moves we could never expect  
and so we still hold tight to threads and tones  
and tendrils  
the possibility of one moment and all moments  
in us and wherever we may end.





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unravelling weave and  
disconnect

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STITCH

Slow arpeggiated stitch beat

WEIGHT/GROUNDING

Synth bass

CONNECT/DISCONNECT/REACHING

Glitch vocals

IDENTITY/WAYFINDING

'Ukulele play and weave





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# Thank you!

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