



51 YARNS TO SPIN BEFORE YOU CAST OFF by Jacey Boggs Faulkner, illustrated by Kirsten Slade. PLY Publishing, Box 3329, Kansas City, Missouri 66103. 2018. Softcover. 118 pages. \$24.00.

The latest book from Jacey Boggs Faulkner, author of *Spin Art* and founder and editor-in-chief of *PLY* Magazine, is a complete delight. A cheerful mix of spinning challenges are combined with a bucket list of yarns and whimsical illustrations that makes for an engaging, happy book that reads like part travelogue, part spinning coach, and part quirky anecdotes.

The structure and spinning technique of each of the fifty-one yarns are well described with colorful metaphors, many imaginative variations, and warnings about possible pitfalls. Most are accompanied by a touch of entertaining trivia (fiber related and not) or an amusing anecdote with accompanying fanciful illustrations. My favorite illustrations are of Stonehenge on page 11, and a cockatoo on the Golden Gate Bridge, found on page 51. Also included for each yarn is a drawing of a note card so that you can check the project off your bucket list, date it, and record your notes, a very satisfying and practical touch.

Amid all the fun, the content is as imaginative as the format. The author provides guidance in building your yarn-spinning repertoire in novel ways. There are definitions of different grades of wool (meaning fine, medium, etc.); woolen and worsted, and their more complex cousins, semi-woolen and semi-worsted; the characteristics of processed and grease-spun wool; and a chapter on singles, describing four different types of singles. The yarn structure chapter begins with an excellent description of a balanced yarn, typical of the author's lyrical writing style. "Your goal is to have it hang in a sweet, unswung loop after you finish it." Comprehensive descriptions of 2-, 3-, and 5-ply yarns, as well as chain-ply, cable, bouclé, core-spun, and coil-spun yarns follow. The color chapter begins with an introduction of the influence of culture, age, and gender in how color is perceived. The author teaches readers how to spin a variety of sophisticated yarns which are so unusual and chic, I would call them "couture," beginning with #26 Self-Striping, #27 Tweed, #28 Fractal (I'll need to spin that one to see the outcome), and #29 Gradient, or what I know as ombré. I'm looking forward to trying some of the color ideas presented as I think that they are accessible to a novice like me. The explanations of all fifty-one yarns are very clear, engaging, and beautifully written. With sophisticated concepts and no photos, the book is intended for spinners who have some experience, and for aspirational novices, like me. I found it so entertaining that I'm eager to share it with my weaving guild, and read it again. Right now.

*Reviewed by Gail Gondek
New York City, New York*