First, get some yellow yarn
(it’s her favorite color)
About 20 thousand yards
Load it into the back of a rented pickup and park it in your parents’ driveway
Wrap one loop of the yarn around your waist
Get a navy blue schoolbag, a uniform with a pleated skirt, a lunchbox
Make sure that in the lunchbox there is some lunch
(although there will be no time to eat)
And make sure that the yarn is tied tight
Then, start walking

From your chair at the kitchen table then out the front door
Back to your chair at the kitchen table then to the kitchen sink
Then, from the kitchen sink to your bedroom
From your bedroom to the desk where you do your homework
From the desk to the couch in the living room
From the living room couch to the TV
From the TV down to the basement, then back upstairs to the kitchen
From the kitchen to the backdoor, and back, and repeat
Sometimes you may go as far as the mailbox
Sometimes out to the Japanese maple there by the driveway where the rented pickup is parked
So you may double-check once again that the yarn is still back there,
unwinding smoothly

Remember, the yarn must be able to follow you as you retrace your own footsteps
You walked for years through these rooms
You paced and paced
You walked that way and this
You had routines and purposes
You may stop to sip water from your thermos but the appliances are still not for you to touch
You may flatten a curl or adjust a pleat on your uniform skirt
The textbooks in your schoolbag may shift
Do not stop to read
The exact number of times you must retrace your steps will not be clear
Nor will the sequence be important after a while
Though you must try to uphold your sense of a sequence
Your sense of what should follow what
Your sense of responsibility for the orderly distribution of the yarn
But most important:
Stay in motion
Keep walking
Retrace
Follow the designated routes
Faithfully, and within the limits of space and time that have been devised

Now, as you do this, the yarn whose end you must keep tied around your waist
Will build up
Remember, it has been following your every step
And with your every step, you let more of it out
Even now, it is unspooling from the giant ball in the back of the pickup truck
You will not be sure how you are going to keep walking with all that yarn following you and with all that yarn in your direct path
But that is another of the important parts—
No matter how tangled, or how resistant the conditions made by the yarn
You must struggle ahead
You must stay the course
You must keep walking
Every once in a while, you may crawl behind the couch
You may even go to your mother’s closet and borrow something:
an embroidered handkerchief, the yellow angora turtleneck
Just not her sewing scissors
Remind yourself (again) that yellow is her favorite color
Remind yourself that you are wearing a navy blue plaid uniform
As you encounter more and more the yarn’s resistance, you must weave your whole body through it

If necessary, you will squat down and crawl
You may have to hunch over as if carrying a pack with all your worldly possessions into the face of inhospitable winds.

Regardless of the difficulty, you must push with all your might.

No matter how thick the yarn,
You must not give up.

You will feel hopeless and wish to abandon the project, you will be tempted to run away.

But you must not run away because of the yarn,
And because of the yarn, it is impossible to run away.