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I Recognized the Mitten

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I Recognized the Mitten

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I recognized the mitten
as soon as I saw it,
gray fuzzy leather
and a wide wristband
stitched with gold thread,
horizontal lines crossed with V's going up and down
around the band.
I must have dropped it there
sixty years ago
while checking to see
if my glasses were
in my pocket (they weren't, they were lost again)
as I walked home from school
in mid-December.

Of course it's not really the one I dropped—one of many I lost over the years—
it was dropped by some kid,
some forgetful kid whose mind was so full of plans for a snow fort
or the plot of a Hardy Boy book or the wonder of sailing ships like the three
Columbus sailed,
some kid, one of hundreds of kids all over the state
who lost a mitten yesterday
after the first snowfall of winter, kids who are constantly
driving their mothers crazy
because they lose their mittens and glasses
and forget
to take out the trash or feed the dog,
mothers who love their forgetful sons dearly even though they
threaten, whine, cajole—anything—
to get them to
develop a bit of consistency—
carry out a plan,
bring their homework home,
return an overdue library book.
These boys
have by now been diagnosed as ADD
and are probably taking medicine for it
or at least getting special strategy training to help them remember all
the terribly important things
they usually forget
like taking a pencil to class or putting their name on the paper or checking if

they have both mittens
before they head for home.
Shall I pick it up? The mitten?
Bring it to the school down the street?
I think I shall even though I know its owner will forget to check for it in the
lost and found tomorrow.
He may not even miss it for a day or two.
I wish I could talk to him, tell him it's not as bad as they think it is,
that once upon a time
before adults discovered ADHD, a boy would just be called forgetful
and though he would never quite grow out of it,
he could survive adulthood with it.
I'd say "Just keep having fun, keep doing your best.
You may freeze your fingers a few times or get
an F for not turning in the book-report you lost on the way to school.
But everything will be all right
in the end."