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I Recognized the Mitten

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I Recognized the Mitten

David Schelhaas

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.