

FATHER AND SON

1

I must be shrinking.

 He seems
much taller than he was
a year ago.

 And wiser.

He has his mother's kindness
and the gift of spotting fakery
at sight.

 He works at what
he loves where clocks have no
credentials.

 His music lasts
like love, and those who play it
tell him that.

 Though
family means most, completing
what needs doing ranks first
with him.

 That's why I love him
as the son-husband-father
who's exceeded every hope
I dared to have.

 He's all
I wanted most but more
than I deserve.

 Though two,
we're one enough to know what's
dearer than love of friend
for friend or brother for brother.

That's ours now and always.

2

We pitched and caught with mitts
we never could dispose of—
their weathered leather supple

after thirty years, their pockets
shaped by pitches gloved
as strikes, their webbings frayed,
their colors curing into faded
tans obscured with dirt
that scuffed their trademarks
to a smudge but still left readable
the names of Campanella and the great
DiMaggio before each man
was chosen for the Hall of Fame,
then claimed in turn by paraplegia
and infarction after Brooklyn opted
for Los Angeles while Stengel's Yankees
kept their pinstripes in the Bronx,
and we survived to treasure
two outdated mitts now good
for nothing but nostalgia every time
we flex our fingers in them
to be sure the past still fits.