

Safe at Home

by David Stanford Burr

I wriggle into my old glove today after quite the hiatus, but Gary Peters's Spalding Autograph Model Pro Web with that oil I rubbed in smells leather rich still. The cracked inner glove from old sweat takes me back forty years to summer camp, Massanutten Military Academy's Camp Lupton, on the south bank of the Shenandoah River, dripping in right field under the too hot eye of heaven, sporting a .490 average, playing the national pastime....

So when asked today by my ten-year-old daughter, who is just starting softball, I punch its stiff-creased body out, gird it on, broken thong between ring and middle, then we shamble to our diamond in the rough front yard. We take up our stances at a distance. She does not blink when I send it with heat or get lost under a fungo or fumble a grounder though a few get through, and suddenly I am coaching, surprised at my acumen while she avidly soaks it in, gets her pitch down, looks up to me—but myself a kid once who did not know all he did not know, learned he learned more than he showed, that he can Pop up, be a player—then she hurls it back with cheese, not quite in the zone and I see a bit of groundwork ahead for us as well as these blessed extra innings in her early spring and my Indian summer.