

Left

By: Leslie A. Davidson

Today was sunny and cold. I borrowed cross-country skis from our daughter and dressed warmly before heading out to the golf course trail with friends. As I was putting on my gaiters I noticed one of them had been labeled. That must have happened sometime during the last winter in which Lincoln lived at home with me.

That was the winter we switched from skis to snowshoes.

That was the winter we spent 6 weeks in Revelstoke, trying out the new condo.

That was the winter I drove the Paulsen Pass behind the snowplow, while Lincoln fussed with the CD player and couldn't make it work and I couldn't help him; I didn't dare take my eyes off the road or my hands off the wheel.

That was the winter of the "imposter" Leslie, the malevolent stranger who, in Lincoln's eyes, looked just like me but was not me.

That was the winter of frantic visits to the doctor, to the Emergency Room, of re-thinking all our plans, of learning how to ask for help.

And that was the winter of friends rallying around, spending the night, taking him out, checking in on both of us, holding us close, and holding me together. That was the winter he must have labeled the gaiter. LEFT it says in black felt pen. LEFT it says in shaky, childlike printing.

Tomorrow, like today and every day, I will visit my husband. I wish I could share with him the story of the gaiter. I wish I could gently tease him and we could laugh together. Instead, I will hug him and tell him that we raised wonderful girls. I will tell him that we sometimes made each other crazy but we were never bored. I will tell him that he is the love of my life.

And though it doesn't matter, not one bit, which leg wears that labelled gaiter, I will always wear it on the left.