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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, September 24, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

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September 24, 1950
At home by the fire
place on Sunday night

Dear John:

Daddy found this article on Gibbs and sends it with his love.

Doctor High called this evening to say that you should have treatment for your allergies and that the Harvard medical school is the best place in the world to get such treatment. His theory is that you do not have psoriasis at all but an allergy that involves the skin. This of course is essentially what the Siroil manufacturers say and born out by our experience. The disturbing note is the probable cost of treatment since top notch allergists value their ~~opinion~~ opinions very highly, for instance a thousand dollars for one set of skin tests (surely a very thick-skinned person). Nevertheless Dr. High gave us two names: Dr. Francis Rackeman and Dr. Ethan Allan Brown. Both of these gentlemen are allergists extraordinary and professors in the Harvard Medical School. Since you will be examined soon for athletic participation and general health he thought you might be referred to the medical school's allergy clinic where treatment would be comparatively inexpensive. At any rate, Dr. High has considerable faith in your ability to get control over your nasal discomfort now that you are away from the dogs and own a sponge pillow. Being fond of the dogs and knowing that Christopher lacks a sponge pillow, I have a doubt or two. Yet, like you and Dr. High, I think we should make a serious effort to find out the cause or causes of your nose and skin troubles and try to remove them. And for Jolson's sake, let's remember that you had trouble with your skin and nose long before we had long-haired dogs. So, consider the matter carefully before you become a guinea pig or go into debt for treatment.

Unless your examining doctor insist upon your being treated at once, I think it might be a good idea to wait and see what the change in food and environment does for you. Let us know what he says anyway and, whatever you decide to do, be sure you have a fairly clear idea of its cost before you do it. And don't let them give you arsenic or old lace. I know they're bad. ~~fax~~

We left Greenwich sometime before nine this morning, after an especially good breakfast. Don complained about getting up so early until I told him that his coughing woke me up. That fixed him. And we got off to a good start. But your father went "hog wild" and tore down to Trenton to see the Drakes and the Sharps and finally the Clarkes in Philadelphia. The latter were pretty excited about your going to school and wish you the best of good luck. John is quite gray-haired and Elizabeth seemed to be having her own version of Updike's botch and doesn't look well at all. The Sharps had gone to the shore for the day and the Drakes were on their way to see Don and Mary. After having us on their hands four days I can imagine the welcome Don gave them. Wouldn't you have liked to have heard him? Jean had promised to furnish the sandwiches for a party of seventeen at the church. Poor Don was just beginning to digest that blow to his purse as we left. So, I wouldn't have wanted to be in Peggy's shoes when they finally caught up with him. It probably was just at dinner time.

This is some of the strangest typing in the world, thanks to a pair of good gray eyes and a pair of dim living room lights. I do hope your blanket will be on its way to you soon. Our thermometer says "40" and its feels like zero.

Goodnight,

