Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, October 20, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer
It does not have to be a Lutheran church, although a Boston Lutheran and a Plov ville Lutheran may not be too much alike. You might take a strong liking to the Boston kind. Most any kind of church will do. I believe God gets around to them all occasionally. Go easy on Buddhism, however, on account of getting contemplative to the point of neglecting your Latin. Daddy goes around bragging a good deal about your Latin Prowess and I would if I thought Roy Geiger and Maurice Moyer cared. As a middle-aged representative of the silly college era, my unsolicited and unbiased opinion is: "It pays to take your lessons to heart. After all, you might learn something you really wanted to know." Thanks for listening. Love

October 20, 1950

Dear John:

The novel has had to give its time on the last two evenings to the making of apple sauce and church going. Tonight promises to be another apple sauce night. Your father's food storing instinct has become a threat to my way of life. Most of the chestnuts and pears have been sold at the auction in Alleghenyville. But a disturbing amount of good things still rots on the back porch. This too, as you say, will pass.
The United Evangelical Lutheran Church (not to be confused with the Missouri Lutheran church of which your roommate probably is a member) has become sufficiently disturbed by the growth of confusion to put on a full scale "witnessing" program of its own. Daddy and I were at the church last night to get the "answers". Harvard, it seems, is not the only place where unchurched and skeptical people are talking too much and throwing beer cans. (What is a Reinhart Riot?) So the Lutheran intelligentsia have written and printed a lot of little leaflets intended to answer the commoner accusations and excuses made by the persons who would belittle church going. As soon as I've studied them, I shall report to you. Of course the fact that ninety-five percent of the juvenile delinquency in this country is accomplished by youngsters who do not go to church or Sunday school is almost enough evidence for me. So, although you are busy and more Christian in your behaviour than I will ever be, I hope you will take time to go to church. The words "lost" and "saved" seem to be a little ridiculous in the years when our resources were newly discovered and unassailed. Now, these words, through our new understanding of the human mind, have returned to something like their original significance. To be lost in these days is as easy as it was when the Roman empire fell apart and then, I'm afraid, it was almost impossible not to be.