Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, December 7, 1950

Linda Grace Hoyer

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December 7, 1950

Dear John:

I bought a new ribbon in order to start the poem off in proper style. What did you want me to call it? Unlike Lilith, I chose a name and am prepared to take the consequences.

Both of your reactions to the "aney letters, however, took me off guard. I'm sorry, John, about the second letter. Kit and I have no business finding fault with Nancy. First of all, there are too many unknowns in the equation. And, even if there were not, you have not asked us to solve it for you. Sometimes, my swipes at her are inspired by a kind of jealousy. Sometimes, it is only curiosity about your progress with the problem. The first letter probably was inspired by the second of these mental states, the second by the former. But my state of mind in connection with "aney is not important. Re. Uzzell made that very clear. It is your opinion of Nancy that matters. If you find her attractive or comforting or both, Kit and I will have to take your word for it. The mistake none of us, including you, should make is to underestimate her. Daddy suspects her of being a kind of super woman and sincerely fears her even though her clothes, her legs, and her father's salary fascinate him. Mr. Richards thinks she writes the best doggone editorials ever written in the Chatterbox and Thelma finds her "impudent". So prepare yourself for a trying holiday season.

The fifty-dollar-a-month allowance Daddy has given you does not seem to be enough. Yet the bank balance is not too discouraging when you remember that it was less than nine hundred dollars when you left home. No one's money buys anything these days. Try not to worry about it. We have the biggest and cleanest strawberry patch we've ever had and the greenest hay fields in Penn's Woods and these crops should help to offset what the growing inflation is doing to Daddy's salary. As a famous man once said: "Things could be worse."

Daddy has been bleeding through the skin at odd times ever since we met. He thinks it establishes his descent from royalty and I think it proves his eventual canonization. At any rate, he does not lose enough blood to worry him and it should not worry you. He is, at the moment, presiding over a Sabbath School Association meeting as its president.

The rains have come again and press against the windows with all the cheerful little noises that make a room seem warm and safe. The dogs sleep. And Korea seems impossible. When you have lived to see the nightmares of your childhood become realities, you have lived a long time and that is what your mother has done. How you manage to prepare your lessons with all the current bewilderment, I'll never know. So, forgive my trespasses, I am more than a little inclined to go about blindfolded.

[Signature]