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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, January 10, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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January 10, 1951

Dear John:

The sun shines warm on my writing table and I have a new page of Dear Juan to show for each of the days you've been gone. Besides, the dog story has been retyped and sent to The New Yorker in your name. I'd like to work on the bird watcher story, too. But already the familiar heaps of newspapers and magazines and discarded letters are gathering on all sides. The living room floor is getting its fourth coat of wax today. Otherwise December's attempt at housecleaning does not show very clearly. The dirt mustn't be allowed to pile too high, however, because the Greenwich blondes are planning to visit us in the early spring, in your vacation most likely (which will suit me fine, if it does you.) By the way, have you thanked them for your Christmas gift? If you haven't, be as quick about it as your burdens allow you to be. We had a letter from Mary yesterday that made our little box of candy and stockings sound much more exciting than it was. It seems to have given Mary the urge to give me another one of Aunt Bess's kimonos. This one she says is better looking than the other. How lucky can I get? I was just beginning to get over the other one. But your father somehow manages to be greatly pleased with gifts of all kinds and sizes and I suppose I might as well learn to be. Aunt Martie thanked us, too, for the ten dollars as though it were a fortune. It's a gift to be grateful for a gift, I guess.

And that reminds me to tell you to expect a small box of laundry and cookies. Unfortunately the nut dish sat too close to the brick on which I oped them and the cookies seem to have a sprinkling of shells in them. So chew lightly on them.

How goes the reading period? Mary thought your appearance in the Lampoon was pretty amazing. In fact Mary is pretty curious about Harvard in general. She asked a number of questions that should give me ample scope for saying the wrong thing. And I'm weighing all sorts of literary compositions in my mind. I feel that all of us must weigh our words but, having weighed them, what?

Your grandparents are throwing an atmosphere that must be investigated. Good luck.

P.S. Have you tried giving up milk? My skin troubles are suddenly better and I don't know why. We have quit using the canned milk and changed our brand of coffee. But if you could stop drinking milk from now until Easter, it might be a help, Dr. High said. Or did I tell you?