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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, January 12, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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January 12, 1951

Dear John:

Your old galoshes are on their way to you. Grandma had one of her spells of clairvoyance and kicked up such a smell that Daddy finally got them mailed. I hope you will have the courage to wear them because even a very slight foot dampness has a bad effect on persons as much inclined to colds as you and I are. So, do whatever you can to keep your feet dry. Whenever I have had a cold I thought I was being punished for one of my many transgressions. But you, hard-working positive soul, why should you have a cold? I'm so sorry.

A man is at this very moment in the cellar trying to pacify the iron monster. The noises it was making finally became a symbol of all my misery and something had to be done. Your poor father will probably be the one to which most will be done (in the way of a bill from Luppold's) but I, at least, am having the fun of keeping a man in the cellar for a while. Knight Rupert seems to have been relieved of that kind of meniality. He certainly was ripe for it on his last visit here, wasn't he?

Daddy took a beating of another sort yesterday at the hands of Mr. Geiss. Do pray that Ponce de Leon brings enough money to make Daddy feel that he doesn't have to teach for the Shillington school board. If he didn't know that he has to do it, the thing might be a little easier for him. And if Daddy ever escaped from Mr. Hemmig I think that old buzzard would die the death he's had coming all these years. This is what they did to Daddy yesterday: After Daddy had given what he hoped was a wonderful demonstration of his teaching skill, Mr. Geiss took over. He either deliberately made the eighth-graders laugh by giving the oral questions too fast or accidentally did it. At any rate the kids laughed at the county superintendent. There wasn't much for your father to do but take the tongue lashing that gentleman promptly gave him for being a poor disciplinarian. Daddy took it hard and I don't blame him. Of course your father sometimes is not very considerate of the pride of otherseither. Do you think he suffers more than he deserves? I really ought to know.

A checkbook is on its way to you, too, and in a few days we should be able to deposit some money to your account. The men from the Whip-poor-will farm took away two loads of hay yesterday and probably will bring a check for it one of these fine days. So, finances are picking up. AND THE BLOWER IS QUIET FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN A YEAR. You have no idea how happy that makes me, half believing all this while that the noise was in my head. Love,

mother