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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, February 7, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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February 7, 1951

Dear John:

The rain is raining all around: on Garndpa who has just returned from Moyer's with the park chops, on the inside of the mailbox where this letter will soon be afloat, on the African violets, and just the other side of Dear Juan.

I hope Mr. Langmuir took kindly to our willingness to let him help with the book and produces the information, if any, on Don Perez pretty quickly. As I have him pictured now, he is a nebulous character who is practically everywhere of importance and always says the right thing. Of course we can throw light (or mud) on him almost any time if he should turn out to be a terrible character. I mean Don Perez and not Mr. Langmuir.

This is the day for Daddy's trip to Lancaster with his swimming team and he will not be home until the middle of the night. There is, consequently, an extra amount of activity in the other members of the family, a kind of compensation, as it were, for daddy's absence. Grandma is breathing especially hard into the dishpan and grandpa's feet are giving the old gray carpet heck. You may be glad to know, however, that I have tried to get his viewpoint ever since you gave me advice on the subject and there has been a greater aimability. One day, he actually submitted to a reading of one of the new chapters from "the book" and smiled broadly. Can it be that he didn't hear a word of it? No, he ~~said~~ said it was "interesting" and had a notion to say it was going to sell. But he swallowed those words at the last and went back to his perusal of Dorothy Dix.

We are looking forward to getting your grades from "the best university in the country." Can't you describe the cartoons for Kenman? And what has happened to Ed French? I listened to Bishop Pardieu (of the Episcopal church) on Town Meeting last night and could not tell whether he had ever done any fasting or not. He seemed surprisingly sure of himself and God and I speak without malice. After while, I'll be speaking like Isabel's old friend, the archbishop of Toledo or Don Fernando himself. Certainly they offer me a great deal in the way of escape. It is wonderful to feel so close to a family of people without being able to hear them. Perhaps the real reason novels are written is the wish for familiarity without contempt.

Don't worry about getting your scholarship renewed. As I've said before, the ravens love us. Since you seem to enjoy your cartooning more than anything else, why not open a sign shop next year instead of signing up for feeding somebody's furnace or minding their twins? We're all very hopeful at the moment and hope you are too.

Walter