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Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, February 19, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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February 19, 1951

Dear John:

My failure to write to you last Monday has somehow thrown me off balance so that I don't when I've written or what I've said. If I happen to be especially repetitious now, that may be the reason. Sometime during the week I wrote a very punctilious letter to Mr. Dillon on the subject of your initiation into the Poonists' Guild and the results were a very prompt call by Mrs. Albright to Mr. Weik and this enclosed notice. Mr. Weik, it seemed, had not heard of your achievement but he was sufficiently moved by Mrs. Albright's enthusiasm to scold your father for his failure to inform the office of your doings. Daddy, I think, had done a very thorough job on the A in Math and was following up on the Lampon business when he hit someone who not only had never heard of the Lampon but seemed to be glad of it. So Daddy, always eager to please the "masses", said no more about you. The grand dames like Mrs. Albright, Mrs. Schevera, and that distinguished-looking old Mrs. Updike, however, are still rooting for you. Mrs. Schevera, in fact, almost talked me into apoplexy when we went to see Jackpot. She thinks Shillington should have more boys like you. She saw the commencement exercises, apparently, and was more than a little impressed by the medal you got for being generally helpful. I wonder if she ever connects your behaviour with your early and regular attendance at her husband's house of entertainment. Well, he still puts on the best show in the world for the least amount of money. He has a genius for rounding out a mediocre feature with such good short subjects that you quite forget whether the feature was good or bad. However, we did like Jackpot. Did you notice that Richard Haydn was the director of it? Or am I thinking of someone else? Isn't he the one who used to lecture on the Edgar Bergen program and was later so funny in Sitting Pretty?

I've been seeing too many movies, I fear, for a woman of great ambition. Yesterday, we saw All About Eve, Jackpot the night before and Kim the Saturday night before that. Now I'm going to stay away from them. No, I'll have to see Orson Welles' Hamlet (or is it Macbeth?) this week. Then I'm going to work. If you haven't seen All about Eve, see it. It is Mr. Uzzell's recipe for writing success in the flesh, very charming and convincing flesh even though Bette Davis certainly went farther out of her way than she should have to look "old".

The dog story is ready for its fifth trip. I believe that I've done better with the flashback to Copper's death in this version and am sending it to the The Montreal Standard (magazine section) which probably uses fifty two short-shorts a year. So, I wouldn't be real surprised if you got a check this time.

The pretzels were to have arrived on Valentine's Day. But Daddy confused the man who took his order at Quinlan's so that the pretzels finally turned up at the high school on Thursday. But perhaps he wasn't so confused, after all, the quantity was doubled and the man got his money before sending them instead of at the dimly distant date at which "father" intended to pay him.

P.S. How about sending us a copy of the Lampon?

mother