



2-26-1951

Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, February 26, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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February 26, 1951

Dear John:

I had planned a letter to you while making the soup for lunch but so much has happened in the last half hour. Truthfully, I don't even know what happened. Your grandfather and I are beginning to be a little bored with the "book" and you might as well remember that as we go along. The house is too warm and the crows are cavorting in the meadow. Against that background imagine your grandfather after a strenuous session with Mr. Moyer, in his chair twirling his feet while the soup cooks. I asked him whether his feet were hurting and he said they didn't. But when at last the soup was on, your grandfather seemed to be having a seizure of some sort. Thinking it might be a heart attack, I fixed spirits of ammonia which he valiantly refused to drink. I offered to call the doctor. This he also refused and with his soup untouched retired to his bed. I suppose we'll never know what really happened. But he wasn't too sick to mutter something to grandma about his feet hurting. If that man's last words are not designed to put someone, preferably his daughter, in the wrong, he's going to have a miserable death. It's no use, John, I can't get his viewpoint. In weakly excuse for both of us, I repeat the "book" is beginning to be a chore that has lost its initial novelty. To add to the burden, the office supply place no longer carries this kind of paper: Southworth's four star bond in the twenty pound weight. Like most good paper, it is made in Mass. Do you think you could find some of it in one of the Cambridge stores? I could use a box of it. And enclose check.

Thanks for sending the Lamppoon. Or wasn't that your fine Spencerian hand on the envelope? We read it with great care, every word, drawing, and punctuation mark. The man looking at himself in the bathroom mirror is still funny. I haven't seen enough (or any) of the movies mentioned to know whether the nominations should be taken standing up or sitting down. I shudder to think what will be said about Margaret Obrein next year.

(Grandma is now carrying Grandpa's soup up the stairs. O death where is thy sting?)

Your father has the last swimming meet of the season tonight and is glad of it. Willi Brosi (the barber who doesn't get his hair cut) is going to buy some of the hay this week. And the mail man is due. If I had any thing of importance to say, I've forgotten it. My life with father is really too confusing. At the moment, he is wandering about in the kitchen with his empty soup bowl, looking pathetically ready for more soup. But he doesn't look particularly fit and I wish he'd stay away from the old Adam. Good luck.

Mother

Morning shadows rose like dark water on the sides of the build-
February 28, 1931

ings as they rode through the narrow streets. Stepping carefully on
the slippery cobblestones, their horses turned their little curved
ears for the sign that did not come

I had planned a letter to you while making the soup for lunch
but so much has happened in the last few days that I am beginning to be
know what happened. Your grandfather and I are beginning to be
boxed with the "book" and you might as well remember that as we go along.
The house is too warm and the cows are cavorting in the meadow. Against
that background imagine your grandfather after a strenuous season with
Mr. Meyer, in his chair twirling his feet while the soup cooks. I asked
him whether the feet were hurting and he said they didn't. But when at
last the soup was on, your grandfather seemed to be having a seizure of
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monia which he valiantly refused to drink. I offered to call the doctor.
This he also refused and with his soup untouched retired to his bed. I
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sitting down. I shudder to think what will be said about Margaret O'Brien
next year.

(Grandpa is now carrying Grandpa's soup up the stairs. O death
where is thy sting?)

Your father has the last remaining meat of the season tonight and
is glad of it. Will Grand (the barber who doesn't get his hair cut) is
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the kitchen with his empty soup bowl, looking pathetically ready for more
soup. But he doesn't look particularly fit and I wish he'd stay away
from the old Adam. Good luck.

Walter