



3-9-1951

## Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, March 9, 1951

Linda Grace Hoyer

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### Recommended Citation

Hoyer, Linda Grace, "Letter from Linda Grace Hoyer to John Updike, March 9, 1951" (1951). *Linda Grace Hoyer Family Correspondence*. 75.

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March 9, 1951

Dear John:

The paper arrived on Wednesday. It is the right kind. The box in which it was packed, however, had disintegrated in a most peculiar fashion. Luckily the paper was tougher than the box and is practically undented, just a little dog-eared. I've reached page two hundred, Guadeloupe, and the totally unfounded feeling that "the book" is finished. Thanks for all your contributions to it.

The hay is sold. Few things give you a closer insight into the human soul, I guess, than the selling of hay. Some day when my own problems seem smaller I may undertake an essay on the forces that lead men and women to buy hay (It is always men and women, never one or the other.) Apparently hay is something that neither of the sexes feels equal to alone. Of course none of the wives has equalled Mrs. Ellis in bulk or persuasiveness. With the exception of Mrs. Rimby who considers Mr. Rimby's hay-buying propensities very childish, the women seemed to approach the hay with a sort of religious fervor and, with the possible exception of Mrs. Ellis (who approaches Mr. Ellis with a kind of religious fervor) mistrust me deeply. And that they should. What, their eyes say, can be the matter here? All this hay and no cows? While I, brave soul that I am, have twenty-three cows and no hay? Seeing how their eyes snap, their husbands become very frantic, overload their trucks, and look at your father strolling playfully to and from the scene with respect, if not a little envy. And, if you will forgive a rather immodest remark, I shouldn't be surprised if some of the husbands wouldn't gladly trade a wife with twenty-three cows for this nice old lady with all the hay and no cows. Daddy is at his best and probably as proud of me as he has ever been when he faces these good men who have not only all of his problems but cows, too.

Your father, by the way, has been getting cards from some unknown woman. One was postmarked Chicago and the other Washington, D.C. She writes very much like I do and Mr. Brunner was very curious about my reactions to them. So Daddy and I are going to ask my friend in Piedmont (who also writes very much like I do) to send Mr. Brunner and a few of the bouncier males on the faculty some cards. Shrawder and Brunner and Kohl have been getting these strange missives, according to Daddy. Or is Daddy really pulling the wool over my eyes? Two Saturdays ago, he went to town with a very small list of errands and he came back at noon without anything I had asked him to get. Naturally, I was curious. His explanation was that he had been in the police station all that time, got a ticket for parking at the wrong place and the man wouldn't take his dollar off ~~of~~ him. If you ever need an excuse, that one should win a prize in any woman's kitchen. Then you question his intelligence. How can you? Fred made the Haverford News, or whatever they call it. I think I have some unfinished gossip to tell. But isn't this enough?

*Happy Mrs. Birthday to you!  
Mother*

March 9, 1951

"I hope the celestial city will be unchanged," Christobal said.

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*Christobal*  
*John*