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

Linda Grace Hoyer

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March 12, 1951

Dear John:

We enjoyed your letter as much as you seem to have enjoyed "the muskrat letter." There are others who find the Chatterbox somewhat short of stimulating. Daddy doesn't even bring it home anymore. But this editorial on necking sounds interesting. For one of her age, I should consider Miss Wolf fairly competent to deal with the subject, wherever she meets it.

I found the enclosed two clippings reassuring although if I were told to say exactly why, I couldn't. Daddy claims to have had a hand in the Reedy write-up. But I'm not sure which hand it was. His father, that is Reedy's father, had some kind of inhibition about bragging, it seems, that your father removed. And rightly. It certainly would not be fair to the Updikes to allow them to do all the bragging being done in this county. And William definitely has something more than a fondness for food in his ensemble.

Your father met Earl Snyder one day last week and, since Charley is on the verge of something fearful, too, Mr. Snyder said you were absolutely right about the draft. Charley is enrolled at Middlebury in Vermont. For what reason? I don't know.

I'm going to start a cake in your direction sometime this week. Daddy was delegated to find a suitable metal box but had made no progress with the project, at our last meeting. And I have only a vague notion of the time it takes to send a parcel to you. So, look for the cake on Saturday but don't be surprised if it arrives a week later and in very small pieces.

Spring is coming along nicely. The pair of fox sparrows were at the food tree yesterday and that is a sure sign of another year's passage. And, of all the thousands of trees, they must have met on the way from Georgia to Manitoba, how did they remember our old pear tree? Grandpa evidently is not the only beast with a good memory. He and your father gave me a stormy week-end. Can that, too, be a sign of spring? They get on opposite ends of the davenport now and maintain two contradictory speeches until whoever happens to be listening begins to scream. Determined to be noble, I kept still until Sunday at noon when I really felt ill from it. I fear you will find none of us as much improved by our good intentions as we should be. Mr. Richards, I think, has taken hold of your father again and he was more confused and irritable on this week-end than he has been at any time this year. Tallulah says: "May the long and tender memories be the ones that will remain." And it's a lovely wish. Good luck and convey my best wishes to Mr. Ferry.

Mother

The golden blur of last year's hope had taken on the sharp reality of the reef between Espanola and the sea and, because of that reef, thirty-nine desperate men had been left to hold a new world for Spain.