

Valuable Book Group, LLC
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Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

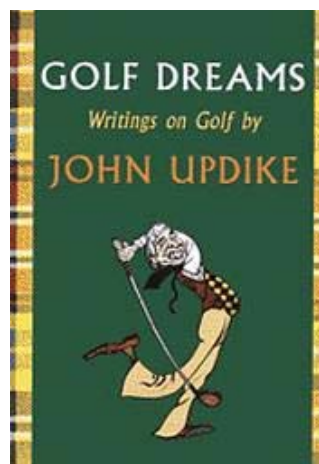
John Updike

When world-class writers outside the game of golf take up writing about the game, we think it is worth taking notice. John Updike is one such writer.

A Harvard graduate, Updike is a Pulitzer Prize winner and has published over fifty titles. He was a writer for both *The New Yorker* and *Golf Digest* among other publications. John plays his golf at Myopia Hunt Club, the historic course outside of Boston.

We like Updike because he captures better than anyone the life-long struggles of every golfer in their quest to perfect their swing. Although he has only two golf titles to his credit he is one of the best selling golf book writers on all time. His *Golf Dreams* has sold over one million copies. When reading Updike we suggest keeping a dictionary handy – his vocabulary is extraordinary.

To better understand Updike's writing it helps to be familiar with the character Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom. Rabbit Angstrom is the main character in four of John Updike's novels. Updike's Rabbit Series (*Rabbit*, *Run*, *Rabbit Redux*, *Rabbit Is Rich*, *Rabbit at Rest*, *Rabbit Remembered*) follows Angstrom over the course of his lifetime as he struggles with many of the problems of middle-class American men. Essentially, Angstrom is used as the construct to find life's purpose and to the character's significance within it. Updike is a very witty writer and we find his writing style easy to read and enjoyable.



“I had spent my youth in a cloistered precinct of the middle class where golf was a rumored something, like champagne breakfasts and divorce, that the rich did.”

Golf Dreams: Writings on Golf was first published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1996. As mentioned, it is one of the best selling golf books of all times. A U.K. edition was published in 1997 by Hamish Hamilton. There were many reprints in both hard copy and paperback. The book is a collection of thirty chapters, each of which was a previously published article written by Updike for one of fifteen different periodicals over the span of five decades.

Some gems from *Golf Dreams*, “All swing thoughts decay, like radium. What burned up the course on Wednesday has turned to lead on Sunday. A swing thought is the golfer's equivalent of the rock climber's *Don't Look Down*”. And, “Choking is the one aspect of golf that, from the start, came naturally to me.” Insightful, wise and funny, reading Updike is virtually guaranteed to put a smile on your face and to bring back good and bad memories of your own game.



In Love with a Wanton. Published in 2005 by Thornwillow Press is a limited edition of 250, each is signed by John Updike on the half title page. Each book is also signed by the illustrator, Tania Lee and by Luke Ives Pontifell who produced the book by hand. The books are extremely high quality, produced with half leather brown morocco and paste paper, each was custom crafted. The books were published with a black cloth solander box. Read the title carefully, it is derived from one of the four stories and does not refer to the Chinese noodle but rather to Updike's essay comparing the game to a lascivious woman. The book is short at only 37 pages, but it is brilliant! Given its high quality and limited edition, it is bound to become collectible.

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