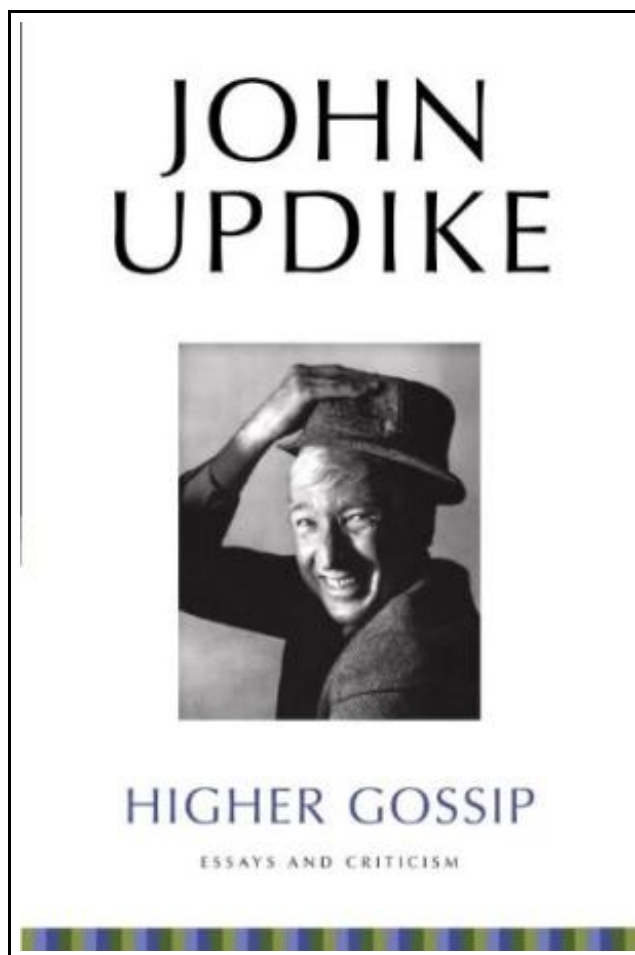


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Random House. 1 Paperback(s), 2012. soft. Book Condition: New. In this follow-up to his earlier book of essays and reviews *Hugging the Shore*, which won a National Book Critics Circle Award, this posthumous collection of miscellaneous prose from John Updike opens with a self-portrait of the writer in winter as Prospero who, though he fears his greatest work is behind him, reveals himself to be in deep conversation with the sources of his magic. It is followed by stories and poems, a pageant of scenes from 17th-century Massachusetts, five late "golf dreams," and commentaries on his own work. At the heart of the book are matchless reviews of John Cheever, Ann Patchett, Toni Morrison, William Maxwell, and John le Carré, with essays on Aimee Semple McPherson, Max Factor, and Albert Einstein. Also included are two decades of art criticism on Chardin, El Greco, Blake, Turner, Van Gogh, Max Ernst, and others and finally, a moving meditation on a modern world robbed of imagination, a world without religion, without art and on the difficulties of faith in a disbelieving age. "For my money . . . the late John Updike was the best American novelist ever, and *Higher Gossip* . . . confirms everything I've believed about his brilliance, his versatility, and his depth." Larry McMurty "Updike was that rare creature: an all-around man of letters, a literary decathlete who brought to his criticism an insider's understanding of craft and technique; a first-class appreciator of talent, capable of describing other artists' work with nimble, pictorial brilliance; an ebullient observer, who could bring to essays about dinosaurs or golf or even the theory of relativity a contagious, boyish sense of wonder." *NYTimes* 502.

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