

My Dear Daughter . . .

Dear Daughter at O.U.:

HOMETOWN, Okla.

Aren't you the same girl who shrieked with jeering laughter at my old Sooner Yearbook picture, along about 1924-26, I think it was? Aren't you the very one who rolled on the rug in raucous disbelief at my spicurls and "that awful bucket hat, MOTHER"?

Now, my darling, aren't you the girl with the side spicurls I saw in front of your sorority house last weekend when I brought down your winter skirts? My how time flies. Same haircut, same cloche hat, only now it isn't funny, but chic as the front cover of Vogue.

I was glancing through the new Harper's this morning. The house is quieter somehow, this autumn, and I frequently sit down with a magazine, unaccountably at leisure (and not necessarily enjoying it, my dear) as there are fewer cars honking on the drive and almost no telephone calls. Mrs. Grimsby did call for that Damson plum preserve recipe this morning and the league phoned yesterday to ask for volunteers in the blood bank drive.

However, to get on with my point. I was sitting there with the fashion magazine, like I said, and here were these 1953 model glamor girls, with hairdos like mine at O.U. you-know-when, and I couldn't help remembering your jibes. I think Patsy and Ellen were with you when you passed an afternoon plundering through my old Sooner Yearbooks, pointing at pictures of me and my contemporaries, incredulous at our hairdos. "You couldn't have been popular, any of you, with those awful spicurls, MOTHER," I recall the remark. Now, you're wearing them, and probably paid \$1.50 for your new Italian haircut. Not that I mind, especially, but I just thought I'd mention how strange is the cycle of fashion.

Those new cocoon coats I saw in the magazine worried me a bit, too, and the "lost waistline" on some of the new college clothes I see in the ads. It all comes back with a rush. I think I have just such a sack coat, with a back half belt oddly placed, somewhere in the attic storage closet, in a nice buff color, if you decide you want me to send it down for this winter. The lines are about right, and I think I could weave in the moth holes until you'd scarcely notice. I have a middy outfit, in navy flannel, put away somewhere, if you want it. Some like it are smart as paint now, the style book said.

You mentioned wanting to keep the car until Thanksgiving, and how far it is to the Quad from classes. Not that I mind walking to the grocery, as it is only a couple of blocks and lots of times Mrs. Mathers takes me, but I got nostalgic on the car business, too, when your card came. I recall when I was down there we had a no-car rule for all students, and I don't remember riding in a taxi or many automobiles during four years at Norman. We danced downtown at Davis Hall, a vast second floor hall, rented for Friday and Saturday nights by the student council. I think we and our dates mostly walked from our dorms or houses. Fraternity dances, I remember, were almost invariably at one of three spots, the Varsity or College shops above what you now call Campus Corner, and the old Tepee, where that book store is. Each frat used a lot of twisted crepe paper in their colors and covered up the walls and ceilings and stashed the chaperons behind some potted palms. It wasn't fancy, but it was fun.

Now you have that gorgeous ballroom in the Union and the old crepe

paper motifs are long forgotten. I think we must have been generally noisier then. We waved felt pennants more, I suppose, and freshmen went through the beanie hat period. Nobody called US the silent generation. The Jazz Hounds sold 'mums and peanuts at the football games, while the Ruf Neks paddled latecoming game students. What ever became of DDMC? You never heard of it, I suppose, but I just got to thinking. Ask an old alum sometime.

The North Oval was the heart of things and the place where your dorms are was open field in those days. I don't suppose there was a sliding door closet with built-in dressing table in Norman then, and I KNOW no houses had spare closets with extra high rods for girls to hang their fluffy formals.

You mentioned you and Joan were a little crowded for closet space, and your study lamp bulb burned out. I think about 15 of us girls lived in a third floor attic-bedroom adaptation my freshman year, with three community closets and a single bath.

That was the fall when skirts dropped, I'll never forget. I came to school, with short skirts and found the others in ankle length things, mostly pleated skirts, and sweaters with the waistline at the hips. I wrote mother tearfully I was all out of style and all the new things she'd made and bought me that summer would not do. I think it must have been Christmas by the time I got geared to the whim of fashion and my hems dragging like the other girls.

Do they still have those open houses at girls' houses, when boys from all their houses come on Sunday afternoons in droves, willy-nilly, introducing themselves absurdly as Hart, Schaffner & Marx in trios, or as Hale & Hearty, etc. I suppose those forays were a prehistoric version of those carefully planned "blind date" schedules you now have in the early fall. Doubtless the same "mix and match" system results now in the same proportion of subsequent serious romances. Only we didn't call our less attractive girls "beasts." I think they were "pills."

Do you know where the spoonholder is on the campus? Do they still wear flabby gray cotton tank suits, the girls in swim classes? I'll never forget the relief of getting to wear a black Jantzen, cut daringly three inches below the armpit, with the back scooped down to the shoulderblades, when I made Ducks club. I think we wore black bloomers in gym, "Flop" Luster would remember.

I have digressed. I started out to tell you I think your new spit-curls are cute, and not FUNNY. However, I do feel I may caution you that with your new haircut, YOUR daughter may someday shriek with giggles and disbelief when she finds your picture in the 1954 Sooner.

I'm not the vengeful type, as you will recall, I was most understanding when you borrowed my waist pincher without permission for your first high school formal and you had that awful tummyache all the next day. Or the time your crowd ate all the sandwiches I'd made for the Friday tea when your aunt from Sioux City was here. Just don't laugh at my hairdos in those old Sooners, darling.

Daddy said to tell you you are overdrawn \$13.56 at the bank and your allowance is not due until next week. I suggest you put off buying the lavender cloche hat to match that cardigan until after the first of the month.

We both think you might write more than postcards, darling. Especially we'd rather you talked about money in LETTERS, not on cards, if you don't mind.

Lovingly,

Mother