**Excerpts from “Thirteen Ways of Looking at the Masters” by John Updike**

**1. As an Event in Augusta, Georgia**

In the Middle of downtown Broad Street a tall white monument—like an immensely heightened wedding cake save that in place of the bride and groom stands a dignified Confederate officer—proffers the thought that

*No nation rose so white and fair*

*None fell so pure of crime.*

Within a few steps of the monument, a movie theater, during Masters Week in 1979, was showing *Hair*, full of cheerful miscegenation and anti-military song and dance.

….The Augusta National Golf Club is away from the business end of town, in a region of big brick houses embowered in magnolia and dogwood. A lot of people retire to Augusta, and one of the reasons that Bobby Jones wanted to build a gold course here, instead of near his native Atlanta, was the distinctly milder climate….

**2. As an Event Not in Augusta, Georgia**

How many Augusta citizens are members of the Augusta National Golf Club? The question, clearly in bad taste, brought raised eyebrows and a muttered “Very few” or, more spaciously, “Thirty-eight or forty.” The initial membership fee is rumored to be $50,000, there is a waiting list five years’ long, and most of the members seem to be national Beautiful People, Golf Subspecies, who jet in for an occasional round during the six months the course is open….

**4. As a Rite of Spring**

“It’s become a rite of spring,” a man told me with a growl, “like the Derby.” Like Fort Lauderdale. Like Opening Day at a dozen ballparks. Spring is was, especially for us Northerners who had left our gray skies, brown lawns, salt-strewn highways, and plucky little croci for the efflorescence of azaleas….

**5. As a Fashion Show**

Female fashions, my wife pointed out, came in three strata. First, young women decked out as if going to a garden party—makeup, flowing dresses, sandals. Next, the trim, leathery generation of the mothers, dressed as if they themselves were playing golf—short skirts, sun visors, cleated two-toned shoes. Last, the generation of the grandmothers, in immaculately blued hair and amply filled pants in shades we might call electric pastel or Day-Glo azalea.

**6. As Race Relations**

A Martian skimming overhead in his saucer would have to conclude that white Earthlings hit the ball and black Earthlings fetch it, that white men swing the sticks and black men carry them. The black caddies of Augusta, in their white coveralls, are a tradition that needs a symbolic breaking, the converse of Lee Elder’s playing in the tournament.

To be fair, these caddies are specialists of a high order, who take a cheerful pride in their expertise, and who are, especially during Masters Week, well paid for it….

**13. As a Religious Experience**

The four days of 1979’s Masters fell on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. On Good Friday, fittingly, the skies darkened, tornadoes were predicted, and thousands of sinners ran for cover. My good wife, who had gone to divine services, was prevented from returning to the course by the flood of departing cars, and the clear moral is one propounded from many of pulpit: golf and churchgoing do not mix. Easter Sunday also happened to be the anniversary of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the sinking of the *Titanic*, and it wasn’t a good day for Ed Sneed either….