

# Ex-Basketball Player

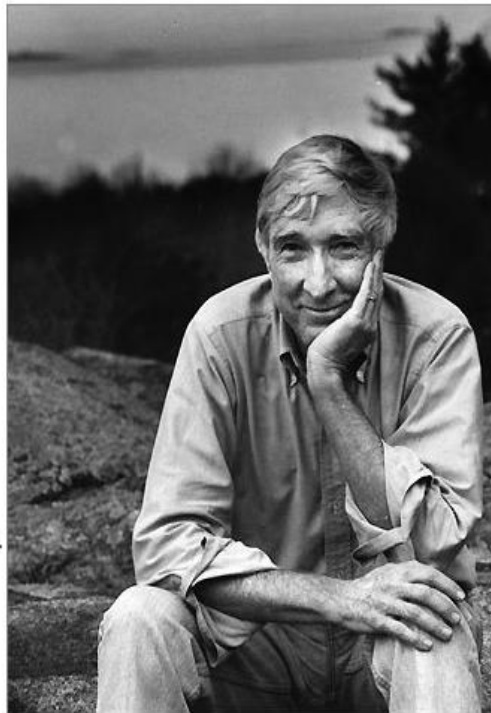
<http://prezi.com/0mfewclhalm3/ex-basketball-player-john-updike/> SOAPST Prezi of the poem

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY56NUwm36Y> (Ex-Basketball Player YouTube)

## Ex-Basketball Player

BY JOHN UPDIKE

Pearl Avenue runs past the high-school lot,  
Bends with the trolley tracks, and stops, cut off  
Before it has a chance to go two blocks,  
At Colonel McComsky Plaza. Berth's Garage  
Is on the corner facing west, and there,  
Most days, you'll find Flick Webb, who helps Berth out.  
Flick stands tall among the idiot pumps—  
Five on a side, the old bubble-head style,  
Their rubber elbows hanging loose and low.  
One's nostrils are two S's, and his eyes  
An E and O. And one is squat, without  
A head at all—more of a football type.  
Once Flick played for the high-school team, the Wizards.  
He was good: in fact, the best. In '46  
He bucketed three hundred ninety points,  
A county record still. The ball loved Flick.  
I saw him rack up thirty-eight or forty  
In one home game. His hands were like wild birds.  
He never learned a trade, he just sells gas,  
Checks oil, and changes flats. Once in a while,  
As a gag, he dribbles an inner tube,  
But most of us remember anyway.  
His hands are fine and nervous on the lug wrench.  
It makes no difference to the lug wrench, though.  
Off work, he hangs around Mae's Luncheonette.  
Grease-gray and kind of coiled, he plays pinball,  
Sips lemon cokes, and smokes those thin cigars;  
Flick seldom speaks to Mae, just sits and nods  
Beyond her face toward bright applauding tiers  
Of Necco Wafers, Nibs, and Juju Beads.



"A narrative is like a room on whose walls a number of false doors have been painted; while within the narrative, we have many apparent choices of exit, but when the author leads us to one particular door, we know it is the right one because it opens."



**How is an excellent talent pretty bad if education and preparation are not priorities? Let's talk about that.**