

4504 West 2nd Ave.  
Vancouver 8, B.C.  
September 10, 1971

Dear Carolyn:

You need to know the saga of your letter, which finally reached me just a few days ago here in Vancouver, but to explain I have to begin very far back with ~~y~~ our arrival in England where we discovered that Jeff, 'head of the household', had decided to let Waki and the children go to the States by themselves. Since we'd been offered the house, he didn't mind if we stayed the summer, but he'd be there as well. If we'd planned to be on our own, we could have stayed or moved out without much difficulty either way, but we had guests arriving all summer long; so I answered an ad in the Times and on the fifth day I had rented a house in Wallington, Surrey, just half an hour by ~~an~~ train from the center of London, a marvelous place with built-in daily and gardener and plenty of room for everyone we had invited. But it was very awkward to explain to Jeff and Waki. Waki was anyway ready to kill Jeff, and Jeff volunteered to move to his club, belatedly seeing that perhaps his imperious presense in the house might not be as convenient for us as he supposed, but we stood amiable and firm, only agreeing to take a set of keys to use the house as a place to have a coke and put our feet up in the middle of a London day, also to pick up mail so that Jeff wouldn't have to bother. We didn't stop in more than every week or ten days, but about a week before we left, the keys wouldn't work, and, when we phoned Jeff's office, his secretary said all the locks had been changed because of 'lost keys'. Then Jeff phoned, very apologetic, wondering if we'd have dinner with him before we went, but our schedule was tight, and I was really fed up with him. There was one letter. I told him to send it over to my agent who would return it to me. It was your letter and it was carried about ten blocks from Egerton Crescent to Jubilee Place by the vast bank car and uniformed driver, presented to my agent with all due respect.

The whole drama of Waki and Jeff was a sad business. I've known them both for twenty years, and I am resigned to their present necessity, but I was not about to endure or make it necessary for Helen to endure being one of the accidental objects of their battles. We had other plans for the summer.

It's been a curious time, either very good or ~~xxx~~ very bad. Our adventures on long week-ends in Dorset and Wiltshire were glorious, to Essex sad and baffling. The theatre was almost entirely disappointing, the Bridget Riley show at the Hayward absolutely brilliant. I sold AGAINST THE SEASON to Peter Davies Publishers, and with part of the advance bought a Riley print for Helen's birthday, which is tomorrow.

Most of the Wallington experiment was lovely. Our friend Shelagh was with us nearly the whole time, and Avis came to join us for three weeks. The Korneres were supposed to spend about three days with us at the end, after Shelagh had gone and overlapping Avis only a day or two, but their flight was canceled; so they got an earlier plane and were with us for a week. Shelagh's departure was delayed a week, and finally they all left pretty much

together just three days before we left ourselves. They are not a group I would choose to gather under one roof, Shelagh a wild haired, mini skirted intellectual radical, Avis a near hermit who refuses to wear anything but blue jeans, a blue sweater and desert boots, the Korner's, of course, elegant, conservative and polite, but there was only one evening of hard hitting political argument, and we all went, dressed as variously as you can imagine, to dinner and the ~~xxxxx~~ theatre, to art galleries, to Canterbury, down to Lewes to explore Virginia Woolf territory. We were pleased but exhausted at the end.

Our flight was delayed five hours, and that time in Gatwick taught me only why paintings of hell are traditionally so crowded. My nephew met us at the airport. He and his girl had been at the house for about ten days, and Shelagh had gone home there, too, and, of course, our student, John, was also at home; so we were handsomely welcomed. But we had only Sunday and Monday to turn around in time before Helen started work getting 1000 students registered in the sections of the huge course she runs, and Rick's girl, Debbie, who wanted to go to UBC had been refused. Her ~~pa~~ parents arrived the same day we did to encourage her to go home to California. Helen wanted to take one last gamble to see if she could get Debbie in; so everyone has been hanging around waiting, kids in and out, parents in and out. The final 'no' came Wednesday night when everyone was here for dinner. Parents took Deb's car and extra luggage, and she flew home yesterday. Shelagh got her apartment cleaned up and liveable and has moved in there; so we have today only Rick left, and within a week I hope he's found some place to live. I am tempted, now that Deb's gone, to say he can stay with us, but I know that it isn't a good idea. He's a darling kid, helpful and ~~x~~ easy, but he'd take up too much psychic space for me to get the work done that I must, for Helen to have the margin of peace she needs. And fortunately we are both so stumbling tired, we know that we couldn't cope.

I've got the year planned more sanely than last year. If we can just get into it, we'll be all right.

Within a couple of weeks, I'll have the mind to contact Alvin at the gallery to see ~~xx~~ about a show for the flowers, and I'll let you ~~xxx~~ know then. Meanwhile, it's one resolute foot in front of the other to get there.

*Jane*