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August 21, 1990

Dear Carolyn:

Thanks for the news clip and your note. I trust you haven't had to move quite yet. Perhaps with the real estate market stalled there and elsewhere it may not happen in too much of a hurry.

I'm glad about the publishing news. Writing is a life of stalls and starts. More and more I don't watch all that much, let things happen as they will without its interfering with real life.

And 'real life' goes on much more obviously in summer. We have a short gap just now, but we'll be back to our hotel schedule next week. I think the last guests of the season will be my niece, Alison, and a new friend, Roberta, over the Labor Day weekend. The month began with an old friend's son and his girl, here on holiday from England. He's the last of that generation still in college and free to take real holidays in the summer, and I do like having that age around, climbing over their long legs as they lie about reading or listening to music, staying up too late to reform the world according to their new found politics. Helen and I spent so much of our time with that age for twenty years that we miss them and are glad of such occasional reminders. Rick Bebout, my old editor at The Body Politic, has just been here for a week. He's working full time in AIDS education now, HIV + himself as are almost all of the old gang from the paper. Rick is still relatively well, but he's watched too many friends* die and gone to too many memorials. Michael Lynch gets frailer and frailer though he's still working hard when he can. Rick took a stroll to our little graveyard, came back wondering about two new graves of relatively young men. "A car accident?" "AIDS," I had to say. There is by now nowhere to get away from it. I'd suggested Rick come out for the gay games in Vancouver, but he hadn't the heart for it. Also large crowds aren't such a great idea for people with weakened immune systems. So he came after the games just to see us.

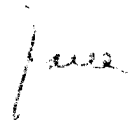
There was a modest literary festival to compliment the games, and I went in for the opening and a forum on censorship the next day. I was fretting about the walking and standing I might be required to do because I have, along with the whole degenerative condition, a very bad hip. So I decided to do it with a volunteer and wheelchair. It was wonderful except for the saddened faces of old friends. I've been using wheel chairs in airports for years and think everyone should. I now think they're the only way to deal with stand up crowds. The censorship discussion was enlivened by discussion of all the self censoring that went on at the events. The board are conservative, allowed the city to change the name from gay games to celebration 90, told a group of women artists they couldn't call themselves "Queers in Art", told the media no one would see drag queens or leather people this time round. A lot of angry people got to speak their minds to cheering crowds. If it had been any other time of year, I would have stayed for more of it. Alan Hollinghurst, whose novel, The Swimming Pool Library, has been so successful in England, was one of the guests.

July was a busy month at the pool. The last two weeks in August are never very busy, kids away at camp or on holiday with families, or simply bored with summer, and the weather, which has been unusually hot, has now turned round to grey and cool. I'll close the pool to the kids after the Labor Day weekend and probably watch no more than half a dozen a day before that.

I don't have to go to Toronto this fall, and I hope for a long mild one so that we can swim into October as we did last year. We probably won't be going to the desert either. Helen may be coming up for cataract operations, and, now that the desert doesn't really any longer work its magic on my bones, both of us look forward to being here through the quiet of winter.

I may have retired. I'll know better when I see what I do this winter.

Much love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Allen".