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Dear Carolyn:

I am very much enjoying Forgotten Graces as is everyone else who comes to the house. It must be an enormous satisfaction to you, having discovered such a treasure, to offer it to the world in such an attractive package. There is something miraculous and also simply hopeful about the recovering of a life time's work in a state of preservation and abandonment, reminding us that an artist's motivation is rarely ambition, rather the love of the work itself, the gift it may be simply to those close to the artist. I'm always amazed at the range of your interests, the variety of projects you involve yourself with. Thank you.

We are in the season of high winds and power failures which daunt me more the older I get. Faced with the woodstove, I find myself wondering about putting myself in care. Instead, loving neighbors come to help me cope, and I know how little able I'd be to adjust to impersonal dependence. There are already buds on the daffodils.

After having resisted for some years, I've given in to teaching an 8 week workshop on memoir writing and had my first meeting last Monday night. Most of the students are unknown to me, newcomers to the island, and I'm glad of a few new faces. I also like encountering people to accomplish something, and they like being threatened with being taken seriously for a few weeks which has always seemed to me the basis of good teaching.

Before the last election I let the house be used for political meetings, and the level of discourse so depressed me I'm relieved to turn my attention to literary matters. I have always resisted the Christian message that the only good use of free will is to surrender it to God, the benevolent dictator, but there seems little more virtue in voting for Screwtape year after year.

My niece, Alison, and her new partner, Ali, have decided they want to marry. I haven't discussed it with them yet (I was informed by a postcard ~~for~~ New York City where they were for a few days). I assume they'll need to marry in Canada, and that means I should probably be involved. I am so little enthusiastic that I need to time to put my own prejudices aside to be the doting, compliant aunt I'm supposed to be.

A young man who owes me money which he can't repay is working for me a couple of hours a week in my endless attempt to get rid of THINGS. I sold some books in the fall, and so we've been moving the remaining ones around and going through records, CDs, DVDs, etc. Fifty year old canned goods and spices have also been thrown out. But I do something like this every winter and still find myself in a house full of stuff. I found a change apron John and Eileen Koerner

made me for the launch of Desert of the Heart which says "royalties", then pockets of Canada, U.S.A, England. It sits on top of the hood for my honorary doctorate from UBC. Why can't I throw such things out? I'm terribly grateful the UBC archives want things like photograph albums, but really they are the least of my worries. I never play records any more, but I couldn't make myself put Bessie Smith in the give-away pile. And I still have a wind up victrola and my great grandmother's records in my study. In my younger life, moving taught me to be ruthless, but I've lived here now for thirty years. It's obvious.

My happiest distractions are weekend visitors. Shelagh and Gwen are due this coming weekend, Alison and Ali a couple of weekends after that. And already the summer reservations are coming in. I tell people I don't so much plan any more as hope.

I do wish you'd have a reason to come west before too long. I miss you.

Love,

Jane