

February 4, 2002

Dear Carolyn:

I'm sorry that phone call was so inadequate the other day, my driver pounding on the door to take me off swimming when I would have liked to spend a few more minutes with you, just to keep you company in that hard shock of new grief. I, of course, not having seen Kathy for years, keep her in my mind very much younger than she was, a flame of a girl, and have no clear idea of how old she was when she died, but too young certainly for herself and for us. It was cold but real comfort to me to know, when Helen died, that she was ready at 83 to call it quits, her body a bewildering chore, her mind often uncertain. I wasn't ready, but I never would have been, and perhaps we never are to let those go for whom we've given heart room.

I don't know whether it makes it easier or harder for you to have to comfort her partner. Other people's grief for Helen has often been a kind of company for me, but I sometimes find it hard now with people who haven't been here since she died confronting a grief much fresher than mine because it can threaten the fragile peace I'm trying to make with what my life is now.

Our lives having been so enriched by those we have loved, it seems almost an offense against that richness to grieve as much as we seem to need to, but it is hard to find the brightness again, to go on celebrating their lives as we must, spending love like the millionaires they taught us to be.

I know you have a richly loving world around you to help you bear the loss. I just want you to know that I'm there for you, too, even if so far away.

Love,

*Jane*