



Dear Carolyn:

We were very glad to get your letter and know you had got over your bout with blood pressure, and what a good thing that the summer was so fine though it's minorly daunting to think you may disappear into Germany next year. Can't your friend come to Canada?

Yes, Denyse called, as she will have told you. I'm afraid I was less than welcoming. Helen and I, after a summer of people, are both working flat out. Since we could offer her no more than a couple of hours for a drink, since she didn't have a car, since the weather was foul, she decided not to come, and I was relieved. I simply hate not being hospitable, but, if I didn't cordon off some months, the work simply wouldn't get done. I did feel really sorry. Marian phoned after she'd had dinner with you, and we had a really good visit. She sounded to me in very good spirits and sober. I am a bit worried about her trying to deal with Will at home. I hope he's grown up enough to handle it.

Our greatest adventure of the fall was going up to Prince Rupert and back on the ferry with Hoppy right after her show opening, which was frighteningly successful. 43 of the 46 paintings sold in the first half hour, and people were snatching name tags off the wall to keep other people from buying paintings they wanted. Xiza and Paul were having a fight about how to run things; so I finally got behind the counter and worked the whole evening. So the trip up the inland waterway was a good escape, beautiful weather, beautiful country. Now Hoppy is talking about having a show in Toronto in May.

No, I didn't see the film on the school. I've had some odd dealings with the outfit that borrowed the school for an episode in a t.v. program, during which time Hoppy's painting disappeared. She understood that they wanted her to paint another for nothing. So I went through the roof, and there were flurries of telephone calls. Another will be

bought to replace the one stolen, and apparently there was never any question of not paying for it. Hoppy does get things mixed up on the phone, and I have a short fuse for any whiff of exploitation.

Helen's working flat out on the long essay on my work. I haven't yet got a handle into a new book, prowl restlessly, distract myself too often with other work. Winter has settled down on our heads. We cheer ourselves up with plans for Arizona in February.

Alice Munro came for the day with Audrey Thomas, who went up to her place for the afternoon, leaving Alice and me to talk about what it's like to be fifty, to wonder if we are at the end or beginning of our careers. Alice thinks maybe autobiography is the only point. I do envy Mary Meigs, who has also been here, her life right there in front of her to work on, but fiction is the only thing that keeps me honest. I'd be a self-justifying bore writing about myself. Reading Adrienne Rich's latest and beautiful collection of poems, I think I lack, fundamentally lack, remorse. Reading Kate Millet on Iran, I think I lack confidence in my political understanding in the face of world events. So back to the bedrooms of the nation, where I belong!

We're having a quiet Christmas, since Rick, Deb and the baby will be in California, Haron and Shelagh with Shelagh's mother; they'll come over for New Year's probably.

Have a good holiday. Get some rest if you can.

Love from us both,

