

4504 West Second Avenue Vancouver 8 British Columbia

March 4, 1971

Dear Carolyn:

Sorry to hear about your 'flu and hope you're recovered by now. We did get away, and it was grand, if not long enough by several weeks. We were in Phoenix four hours after we left Vancouver, and the motel-resort sent a car for us. I was tempted, though the desert is cool in the evening, to have a swim in the heated pool that evening, just as a fine free gesture, but Helen was very weary and not wanting to seem it; so we unpacked, dawdled, had a fine dinner, and slept early. In fact, Helen slept either in bed or in the sun for 48 hours, while I read and swam and watched people behind my novelist sunglasses. Then she came to, her eyes ready not for people but for birds in the palm trees, the light on the mountains... me. We came home with mildly peeling noses, our daffodils here in promising bud, ready to come out in a day or so, crocuses in bright pools all over the garden. Since then we've had three snow storms, and there's another promised for tomorrow. At first we thought it was funny; now our tempers flare at it, and Helen is fighting bronchitis. Still it was importantly better than nothing, and there are only five weeks more of classes. She will make it.

When I got back, my copies of AGAINST THE SEASON ~~W~~ had arrived, and I'm very pleased with the look of the book, not so elegant a piece of book making as the last, but they've got the price down a dollar, which matters to me. I suspect your copy will have arrived by now. I hope so. I'm having a book party on Sunday to give the book away to friends here. We've just filled the house with drink and food; so, if it snows, we'll be supplied, and most of our friends scheduled to come will get here on snow shoes if necessary, as glad to share the moment of joy with me as I am with them. The Korner's will be here. In fact, I waited until this week-end to be sure they'd be back from their month in Palm Springs. They are perhaps our oldest friends in Vancouver and have been at each book party. John made me a change apron for the first with pockets for royalties from England, Canada, and the United States, and last time they turned up with a whole wheel of cheese, on which was lettered, "This is not all for you." This is the first book party my parents will miss, and it's sad since this book is dedicated to them, but I've airmailed them a copy in New Zealand, and they'll have a party of their own on the same night to celebrate. Isn't it fortunate that I have parents who take delight as they do? The giving of the book is very important for me, the knowledge in the gesture that a book is a present, not a test. Once that is done, I can finally put it down and go on.

We will probably be home on Wednesday, the 31st, if you want to check in, but you'll find the boat schedule between the Island and the mainland easy so that you can get back to Vancouver as you want to. You will be about twenty five minutes from us by car at the Bayshore, and we can schedule dinner late if it's helpful for you. I am debating whether or not to cook for you or take you to the Faculty Club, which could be a bit of quiet, easy sight seeing.

Anyway, we'd have drinks at home first and afterwards. We'll see about timing.

It had better be spring by then, but you certainly won't have to worry about snow for skiing.

Our student has just come up to say he's heard on the radio that Trudeau was married here in Vancouver this evening. An odd bit of news. I think he can't be making a political gesture; so perhaps it's something joyful for ~~him~~ him. I hope so. I am restless with him in important ways, but I like the intelligent arrogance of the man, and I wish him well.

Actually, I find it a bit odd not to be saying we'll meet the ~~tax~~ plane and bring you home for the night of the 31st, but it's more ~~convenient~~ convenient for you, if you're going to rent a car, to be near the airport to catch the ferry the next day. It's just that I'm used to fetching and tending.

We had a women's Lib party here last Sunday night, expected about 30 and nearly 60 turned up, bringing their own food and drink; so no ~~problem~~. Lots of people in the group are either old and good friends or new and good friends; so it was a fine and friendly occasion. I find it extraordinary to be in a room with (well, house with since people spread out necessarily) 60 women who are not trying to be girls together, who are talking about themselves, their plans and hopes, the books they are reading, the work they are going to do. I would guess, again with a novelist's eye, that a quarter of the women are Lesbian, and there is no hang up for anyone about that, also extraordinary. Most of them don't drink, or don't drink much, and don't stay late for the pressure of work on Monday, but one student, also a very gifted young writer, tied into our scotch when her own wine was gone. She was promising a dozen people rides home with only a VW to accomplish the task, and I decided at about 1 a.m. that she wasn't driving anywhere. ~~Another~~ Another member of faculty therefore quickly organized a cab to take some of the people home, and we kept three here for the night. The grounded driver was obviously relieved, but she was disappointed to find that, even with three unexpected guests, we had enough beds so that she wasn't going to have the opportunity to sleep with ~~anyone~~. I ~~trundled~~ trundled her off to an isolated little bail out room downstairs, comforting her with the advice that she'd ruin her reputation as a great lover if she tried to prove it to anyone in the state she was in. But wasn't I even going to ~~her~~ kiss her good night? As it turned out, I had to undress her and roll her into bed, where she ~~slept~~ slept an once the way only kid drunks will. I got up early the next morning and cooked a good breakfast for everyone in a remarkable sunny morning, and that baby, who should have been hung over royally, was the first on deck, shining with the day, amazed at the view, happy as a bird waking. It all felt to me a very friendly enterprise. And it gave the courage for the evening's requirement: attending the introduction of a seminar on death and dying which seemed to me important.

Work doesn't surface ~~for~~ for me just now. I have to be patient. I am. When my head is rich enough, when my dreams are finally too urgent, I will write the next pages.

Both Helen and I are looking ~~for~~ forward to your arrival.

Affectionately,

By the way, Helen's last name is Jane
is BONTHOFF, pronounced without the H. Name both in the
phone book.