

7, *Shepherds' Close*
Shepherds' Hill
London. N. 6

August 10, 1969

Dear Carolyn:

Since Michael is taking his holiday now, I don't imagine you'll get this letter until the end of the month, but I probably won't have time at the end of the month to write anything but business mail- so I'll send this now for welcoming you home.

Yes, we printed the paper in the spring and sent it to Nancy Martin, who owns the house, a supply that would last us for the summer and leave a good bit for her after we've gone. We were printing up presents for a lot of English Friends and so decided to treat ourselves and Nancy as well while we were at it.

No, I haven't seen *The Prime of Miss Jean Brody*. I read the book when it first came out in the *New Yorker* and was much impressed with it as I am with a lot of Muriel Spark's work. I'd like to see the film. We're very bad about getting to movies, make an effort for live theatre, think we'll get round to films and often don't. And I was once a private school girl and know I would enjoy it. My own school career was so various and patchy, there's hardly a kind I can't identify with. I'd been to 23 by the time I left highschool at fifteen without having graduated because I didn't have the required years of physical education. I was finally sent a high school diploma in my second year of college because someone who cared about such things wrote some indignant letters. I was never much for credentials, though I guess it's fortunate other people were since they've been moderately useful to me since. I spent about three years in private school, three different ones, and was kicked out of two of them ~~xxx~~ over wars of principle with the principal. Now, whenever I have a particularly scrappy, irritating student, the sort of all justice and no ~~xxxx~~ mercy sort with more horse than steering power, I am patient.

The book is finished under the very tentative title, *AGAINST THE SEASON*, and the American copy has been mailed, the English copy delivered. I'm irritated enough with Canadian publishing to have signed away Canadian rights for the last one to the American publisher, and, I suppose if they want this book, I'll do the same. Finishing a book is always a bit baffling, more like sinking than launching a ship, and suddenly I realize how very tired I am, how little I've slept or taken

ease for months, but it is hard to put it down right away. Still, great good luck to have finished it with three weeks to spare, and I am beginning to relax, though what I really want to do now is cram all I can into these weeks before we leave my beloved London. Compromise is one day of wild activity and one day of goofing off. Today is goofing off. It is intensely hot. I got up and went out for Sunday papers, a morning's worth. Then after lunch we went to the ladies' only pond on the Heath to swim. I've been swimming more this summer than I have in years, and I love it, being a fresh water addict. As we get acquainted with (by sight, not conversation) the regulars, my note books begin to fill and Helen gets more absorbed in Jane Austen or whatever else she takes to keep the public world out of her line of vision. Home for dinner, and in a few minutes, if Helen has the energy, we may walk up the hill to close our favorite pub, The Wrestlers. Yesterday was a long day of visiting friends in Surrey- we didn't get home until one in the morning, and tomorrow is book shopping day, then theatre in the evening. We also have to get to Sussex this coming week and up to Cambridge, next week back to Dorset for a couple of days. I hope the heat holds because there we can really bake in the sun. But I look at the list of all we want to do and know that these last two weeks are not enough. And we mustn't be too crazy about spending energy because once home we have only a few days to turn the house around before term begins. Helen has, though the time of my working, had a real rest, exploring what she felt like, reading, lazing in the sun, but I am very tired. Fortunately, the fall can be a bit low geared for me for some weeks where for Helen it will be very long and demanding days.

You speak of making choices between people, places. I suppose this summer underlines for me how little I've ever been able to gracefully. I always want time to be everywhere I love with everyone I love, and, as the years pass, that gets increasingly difficult, particularly when I have to lock myself up for months at a time with work and seem to be not very present with anyone. This summer I have taken time for several friends I may not see again for years, but fortunately they are so well established over twenty years that there needs no beginning, and we learn to ~~sig~~ ignore the sharpness of saying good by. I am willful, shockingly so to a good many people I suppose, but I have never felt I had the time to be casual about the people and places I care about, and gradually the people I know well accept an insistent I have for beginning in the ~~xxxx~~ middle, with body, mind, event. I haven't time for many of the moral and social conventions.. and probably simply too much appetite of all sorts.

But I do have to know that now I'll begin to burn low for a while. I'll resent it, but energy isn't endless.

You'll come home marvelously refreshed. Welcome to it.

Jane