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Dear Carolyn:

You'd better scream if you can't read me because I'm leading in to so much typing I'll escape whenever I can for the next while. At the moment I'm more dead than alive with a heavy cold, which hasn't stopped me from involving myself in ridiculous amounts of work. I shouldn't have started on the bloody short story collection. I hadn't meant to until March, and then I've promised to take at least a month to it. But I'm obsessive. Once it's begun I'm desperate to get it off my back, so I plow on, over half way already and determined to be done in another week. Part of the pressure is real. I've had the first 150 pages of my new novel back from senior editor with 20 pages of notes, as many more promised within 2 weeks on the last 150. They are interesting, but dealing with them all is going to be a longer job than I imagined. So, first get the collection out of the way. This

morning I thought it was marvelous. Tonight I wonder what in hell I think I'm doing, and every day is like that.

Thanks for article about Margaret. She's doing a very good and generous job. I know one of the young writers she's working with. She supplies not only generous advice but as often dinner & drinks as well. In fact, she's working too hard, and she says it's the only way to get through the year. She was divorced at Christmas in England, ending a 22 year old marriage. Some idiot kid said to her

about the young couple (2 years married) looking after her youngest wife she's away." It will be good for your kids to be about a marriage that's worked." Well, that's what teaching involves you in continually: the terrible, incessant, inaccurate judgements of the young.

But I will be wearing a bright red jump suit - if I can find one. Barring that, royal blue with wild sash, which I've already got.

No, the photograph of me is on the cover - though few people recognize me since it's high contrast and without specs. Blue & Black with orange lettering, very elegant. Publisher is McCall Pub. Co. in New York. No Canadian publisher because I've got fed up with them. One job in Toronto may be, if I can face it, telling them why.

No, alas, we won't have time to get away from Toronto, but, if we can schedule our stop on the way back and you're still in town toward the end of June, I'd love to be shown something of the city because I don't know it at all.

I've never liked driving - or even much riding in a car, though I've resigned to it, I was in a couple of bad accidents as a passenger when I was in my wild teens, saw a couple of good friends killed; so I have an overdeveloped sense of the destructive power of the machine. Also, in temperament, I like to be warned. I have a comic notion of myself that I would be constantly in a car if I drove, not at all borne out in the couple of years when I did drive.

Helen likes to drive well enough and is a very good driver, surviving my nervousness with saintly good temper. But she doesn't get me into a car unless there's good reason. Still we've done a good deal of travelling by car. This will be the second time we've gone east, and we've been back and forth to California countless times.

It's not that I even like to walk. I'm nearly as close to a tree as it's possible for a human being to be, dreaming of being \* except in England.

"rooted in one view, perpetuated place."

I won't get round to planning later for another month or so. My usual New York editor is forwarding all sorts of adventures. We have an extraordinary correspondence - at least his side of it is. He asks "Does it embarrass you to be the victim of such unrestrained adoration?" No, I find it a comic novelty. But I do sometimes wonder what it will be like to be in the same room with him. I think we'll probably be a nervous talker. And I normally like that since it keeps me from being one. But I'll dread the first encounter just the same. Looking as I do with him creates an intimacy hard to deal with off paper, since we can't begin with less than the outlandish honesty we've already established between us. His Helen is a Greek, and she wants to cook us a Greek meal since they both know from my last 2 manuscripts that Greece is territory of mine. She and my Helen will save us, no doubt, with domestic and social decorum.

Morning: I stopped this to drink and brood and watch the news since we're without newspapers in Vancouver at the moment. Talked with Helen a little about problems with short story collection. It's the range of years, really. I got to one I wrote 13 years ago, published 11 years ago, and it seems to me repetitive and

clumsy, but it's nearly impossible to rewrite since I'm so far away for two story's insight or feeling so it should be left out of a first collection anyway.

Maybe.

And shall I let Red both consider a romantic novel I wrote in my mid thirties, which I know could be immediately improved by being cut in half.

And what am I doing knocking around with old work when I should be getting on with new things.

well, the way out is the way through. "Get on with it," as my impatient friend Monica advises about everything.

You can see what sort of company I am. Several friends accuse me of having taken secret vows of isolation. I explain that, if I have, it's for their sakes, not my own. And for yours, I'll send this complaint here, and get to work. I'll be a little more humorous in a couple of weeks.

Affectingly,

Jane