

4504 WEST SECOND AVENUE
VANCOUVER 8, BRITISH COLUMBIA

March 4, 1970

Dear Carolyn:

Alas, I never get out of one project without finding myself in half a dozen others. The collection of short stories is off, first to be read by the agent, then by the publisher. I've heard from the agent that she's read it and sent it on. I don't know how long it will take for Hy Cohen to react, and then I think we'll not settle anything (if he's interested at all) until there has been some indication of how THIS IS NOT FOR YOU is selling once it comes out in June. I find I'm not edgy about the collection as I am about a novel sent off. I'm not sure why. I suppose, even if it is accepted, I know it won't be published for a year or two, and by then I might add to it some. If Hy doesn't like it as it is, still there's the possibility of rearranging. So it doesn't seem the terrible irreversible investment a novel is. Anyway, that's more or less out of house and mind now.

But, the final notes from Hy have come about the novel I 'finished' this summer, and now I must clear the decks to face the last revision of that. It's also the last month of term with all the papers from students piling in, their incredible nerves over approaching exams (I don't give one); personal problems, etc., etc. And I'm into a much too ambitious printing project what with all my usual helpers away on leave and everything else I'm supposed to be doing. I got to talking with Fred Stockholder, a friend in the department, and I offered to do a tiny edition (75) of poems for him, eleven of them, not in a book but in an envelop because Tak, who left me the press, also left lots of tag ends of different kinds of paper. This would be a way of using them, also experimenting with different type faces. Fred was delighted. He writes for his own pleasure. Once he sent some poems off and got one rejection slip, and he's never tried again, which seems a shame. I thought maybe this half way between amateur and professional publication might give him new courage. But it takes two hours to set up a poem, another two to take it down, never mind the time for the actual printing. Helen is a marvelous help during printing, tends the inks and does the major cleaning up of the machine, but her trifocal lenses make it impossible for her to set or take down type, and that's the time consuming operation. We've now completed six poems. I've set four of the last five, still have all five also to print and then take down. Then I have to make some sort of design for the envelop. So I spend evenings when I'm not teaching in the cold basement where the press is (we call it Siberia by now). And it's income tax time. I gave up last year and called in an accountant for mine since expenses get more confusing every year, but I still do Helen's, which hasn't as many complications (~~as~~ I do all our investing, sometimes, I think, with more eye for nuisance on the tax form than for more sensible, long term considerations), but still it takes time. Then I had a letter from my mother wondering what she would do while Father goes off fishing for two weeks with my brother in Mexico. So I ~~had~~ phoned her and asked her if she wanted

to come up here. She's very good about entertaining herself, and she knows this is the busiest time of year for us; so she'll knit and read and be content, but I won't want to work twelve hours a day while she's here; so I'm trying to get at least some projects out of the way before she arrives a week from tomorrow. And finally this crazy weather has inspired the weeds and grass to begin growing a month early; so both Helen and I yearn toward the garden, but that will simply have to wait, wait, wait.

I do a great deal of grumbling about being too busy, too over-worked, but I really usually find I love most of the projects I'm involved in. And, as the years go by, I find I'm less and less interested in the social life of the city, find parties, except for small dinners, less and less interesting; so it's good to have the excuse of too much work. Helen turns away invitations with "Jané's ~~crossed~~ March off the calendar." Everyone is very understanding.

Ah, ~~thirty~~ five is a marvelous age. It seems to me anyway that this stretch between ~~thirty~~ five and forty is particularly happy. I only don't like the idea at the end of the month of being 39 since Jack Benny has made it a permanently silly age, but it gives me one more practice year before I give up the image of myself as an apprentice and get on with being a pro. And I'm glad of that.

Have I told you to take a look at Faith Baldwin's latest novel, TAKE WHAT YOU WANT? It'd dedicated to Helen and me, and about fifteen pages of it are set in our house. It's ~~what~~ she says it is, a frothy Cinderella story, but what an amazing old gal she is. She's published over 100 books in her life and is still turning out at least one a year. I ~~very~~ much hope we'll be able to see her when we go east.

I can't set dates about ~~that~~ yet, for trying to figure out who will be in ~~town~~ when so that we can see ~~any~~ as many people as possible, but I'll get round to that-- and finding the money-- in early May, after both Mother and Dad have been here~~xxx~~ for a week. We've also heard that a beloved friend, whose husband died last summer while we were in England, will be coming to see us in Vancouver this summer, and we may try to arrange to have her fly to Toronto, meet us there, and drive back across the country with us.

So now lunch, then type setting, then two or three hours of students tonight. They have got to the stage of not going home, always the mood of the last few weeks.

Hope house is free of mumps and everything back to normal by now. Do you do much translating? Wistan Auden says it is the only way to understand anything. Alas, with my lameness with languages, I will, therefore, be without understanding for the rest of my life. Helen has Italian as a real second language; she went to university in Italy, and she picks up other languages when we travel the way I do colds. I learn to be grateful rather than envious.

Affectionately,

Jane