

4504 WEST SECOND AVENUE
VANCOUVER 8, BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 7, 1969

Dear Carolyn:

I write the date and suddenly remember December 7th, 1941, in St. Louis, Missouri-- A Sunday then, too. My brother and I had been to the movies. Our father told us on the way home that Pearl Harbor had been attacked and we were at war. It doesn't really seem twenty eight years ago. The vividness of it simply underlines for me how very different a world I grew up in from the world my students know, how much conscious sharing there has to be, how little assuming. And maybe today I'm more conscious of memory for having picked up and read Joan Baez' autobiography yesterday. I have always liked her voice, and I have admired her persistence in protesting war, the more so now that her husband is in jail and she's had a son. She's years younger than I, but not out of range of my experience, and she was, like me, a transient child, even served out the last of her high school term at the same school where I spent the last bleak months of my own high school requirement. She has a candor, arrogance, ordinariness that I like. Her latest record, for her husband, makes me feel freshly the bitter sorrow of the price exacted for the simplest of humane values. No one can enjoy the fact of martyrdom, but the choices are limited. I watch a president pridefully set up a lottery in order to be fair, to draw not even names but birthdates, which can seem star doomed, I suppose, but for me it is an outrage to play these games with human beings.

Well, I'm glad Mary is delivered, and I hope she can sort out a solution that will make sense for her. Twins seem both harder to keep and harder to give up somehow. I'm also glad Catherine has decided not to marry, if the decision sticks. From your description, even though you claimed it was frankly biased, it sounded a bad idea.

Yes, I'm passed all the medical tests and the decision is against surgery-- a real relief. Tomorrow night I have my last class, and Helen will be finished on Tuesday, except for marking. So we'll have about ten days to get sorted out before we leave for the desert on the 18th. We've already had two good nights of sleep, a shock to the system at first and inclined to make one feel worse rather than better, but, if we persist, we should be rested enough finally to enjoy the holiday, which is my determined plan. We do have a friend ~~lx~~ and her two children coming over the end of the week for several days. They are living this year on an island in the sound so that the husband can get on with research without being too close to university politics and without the financial expense of living in town, but they need occasionally to get the kids to dentists, and I suppose Lori will want to do some Christmas shopping as well, though she's the sort who probably is making rose hip jam and wine for everyone. Anyway, that visit should be fun, and, if it's also tiring, it will be a different sort than the weariness of schedule.

All our Christmas mailing is done. We have one afternoon's shopping to do, and I should spend another evening or two with the printing press, making book plates and writing paper and postcards for people here in town, though most of that is done, as well. I love the long fall of printing to get ready for Christmas, as I guess some people like baking or sewing. Since ~~Q~~ crowds always trouble me, I'm glad not to spend much time in stores. I get all my paper supplies from a wholesale house, go down only about twice a year, and I don't suppose I go into a department store more than two or three times a year. There are local shops for almost anything we need. So I tend to like Christmas however it shapes itself~~x~~. But I'm delighted to be ~~ga~~ taking a holiday from vast Christmas dinner. Helen likes decorating, but we'll help my sister and her kids decorate their tree when we're in L.A. before we drive over to the desert; so we'll miss none of the fun, in fact extend it since I so rarely have an opportunity to be with those particular children. The only bad thing will be coming back to two weeks of unanswered mail, but that's really minor.

I wonder if you're able now to begin to plan a spring holiday of skiing. When you are, please let me know about it. I don't think we'll leave town again until mid summer some time.

Yes, Anna and Bob Korner are cousins of John and Eileen, our good friends. We've met them both several times at large parties, family weddings, etc., but we don't really know them. The clan is vast, and they are a remarkably interesting bunch.

Time for me to fix Helen some lunch and then ship her off to pick up her godson, who has invited her, as his guest, to the aquarium, which seems both comic and dear. He's nine. I should think she'd be asked in for tea on the way home. His father teaches at UBC, and both his parents have been friends of mine since graduate school in England. I was invited as well~~x~~, but I felt I could refuse; and it's not raining, and there are leaves to be raked. It's a curious climate here, the possibility of two feet of snow or none. We haven't had a killing frost yet and are still ~~bringing~~ bringing in armloads of daisies and mums, and the daffodils are an inch out of the ground. But it begins to be cold, and I wonder. We may come back from the south to find ourselves ~~xxxx~~ snowed in.

I hope December is a good month for all of you.

Yours,

Jane