

4504 WEST SECOND AVENUE
VANCOUVER 8, BRITISH COLUMBIA

December 30, 1970

Dear Carolyn:

I'm sorry to be so long in writing to let you know what we are doing with the flowers. By the time your article arrived, Helen was sickening with something which turned out to be a two week bout with measles, and by the time she recovered the university had ~~been~~ packed up and we were rushing to catch up with delayed Christmas projects. Now she's buried in marking that piled up while she was sick and trying to find time as well for writing lectures for the opening of term. The holiday is inhumanly short this year. The UBC gallery will be open again next week, and Helen will take the ~~x~~ pictures out then with the article. As soon after that as I can manage it, we'll finally choose ~~two~~ for ourselves and mail the others back to you.

As soon as Helen began to feel half human again, I came ~~down~~ down with a heavy cold; so we rather limped into festivities, refusing most ~~invitations~~ invitations to save energy for our own ~~two~~ parties, a tree decorating supper on the 23rd and dinner for 8 on Christmas day, parties which finally merged into each other since half the gang simply decided not to go home. We had a young crowd this year, people who usually go east or south to families but for various reasons decided not to this year. They are people who use this house as home base, ~~staying~~ staying with us after summers away until they find new digs, coming here when they are sick or tired of ~~be~~ being on their own or in need of somebody to talk with. Among them was only one rather newish friend, and, when she phoned to ~~thank~~ thank us on the 26th, she asked rather wryly I thought, "Do you ~~every~~ give a party from which everyone goes home?" Well, there's always room, and we never run out of orange juice for breakfast. I'd rather be firm about people not driving when they've had a lot to drink and cope with a houseful the next day than worry once they've gone. It got a bit hectic with Ted's goats tethered out in the blackberries, with Haron's bread baking and yogert making, with all the guitar playing, but we love this madcap, outlandish generation, and it was a grandly happy Christmas for us. When I finally looked ~~down~~ the handsome table, elegant with grandparental china and silver, at beards and love beads and ragged shirts, I liked very much the incongruity of living, Helen white haired and gentle faced in candle light serving up great plate fulls of food.

Even without so much pressure of work, we usually cancel out of the week after Christmas, liking a quiet time for year end chores and reading. This year the Christmas books will have to wait a bit, and I see friends while Helen stays behind. I'm not trying to get into my own working rhythm until she goes back to UBC next week. By now the new book pushes a bit, but it can wait as patiently for me as I have for it.

I'll write again when Helen's been out to the gallery.

Happy new year.

Jana