

The Fork  
Rte. 1  
Galiano, B.C. VON 1P0  
November 26, 1980

Dear Carolyn:

You'll probably get my Christmas note, scribbled a few days ago, in the same mail with this. I can't remember whether I wrote it before or after I became a great aunt. Rick and Deb had a girl on the 22nd of November, named McKensie, to be called Kensie. The choice has to do with Rick's wanting to be more Scot than Italian and liking rivers, with Debbie's not liking most girls names and wanting to encourage a daughter to be a tomboy. I like it. Elisabeth thinks it a scandal. Anyway, she and her parents will be here for Christmas. On the 24th Tom and Ann had a boy, James, to be called Jim, Jimmy, Jimbo, and I'm trying to persuade Ann that her crew should come for Christmas dinner. Her mother will be here, too, and Ann needs all the moral support she can get. Tom and Katie were here last night for dinner, and Katie and Yarah came over together after school today for brownies and milk and a variety of goofy games to give both fathers a bit of breathing space.

I have only one more bout of autographing, in Nanaimo on the 4th of December, and I'm through with what publicity I agreed to. I've done my Christmas note writing and most of my Christmas shopping and pretty well cleared my desk of various overdue promises. Finally I can settle down for a bit to new work. We aren't going to the desert until the second week in February and then only for a couple of weeks, mostly in Arizona to visit Helen's sisters, with a brief stop to see my parents on the way home. We can't go for long enough for me to really settle in with work, and I therefore don't want to take too much time off. Helen and I will be in Ottawa, Toronto and North Carolina in late April and early May; so we have quite enough tripping around planned.

My new book comes out in March in time for my 50th birthday, which Marie-Claire and Mary, Anne Sadlemeyer and Joan Caldwell are coming out to celebrate. I don't think I'll do any publicity for that, though I might get involved in a book signing or two. I don't really know what its status will be in Canada since Naiad only bought American rights. I haven't had a chance to sort that out yet. Since it is all lesbian in content, I'd just as soon by-pass the straight press and let it sell on the women's and gay bookstore chains as well as through the huge mailing list Naiad uses, many of the people on it never using bookstores or libraries.

I've had several bad reviews for Contract, but most of my press has been, to me, surprisingly positive. The first printing has sold out, but the publisher is reluctant to do another, fearing returns after Christmas. No paperback sale yet.

Donna Deitch has set up a huge fund raising occasion in New York for getting money to make the Desert film; so she's recovered enough from her split with Judy to get back to being stubborn about that dream. I haven't heard from her. It was my New York ~~editor~~ editor who told me, having been invited to it. She says a number of good and well known people have lent their names to the project; so it may finally one day get off the ground. I don't think about it.

Helen works away on her Ethel Wilson article, finally really pleased with it and how it's going; so she'll surely be ready with a paper to read in late April.

Hoppy is up and down. She went with us last week to Victoria to see Margaret Hollingsworth's new play, which is marvelous, both technically ambitious and very entertaining. ~~xx~~ She's had very good reviews, and it's the sort of play that should be taken up all across Canada because its appeal is wide. I worried that Hoppy finally wouldn't go because she had a very bad attack of angina the day before, but she managed and had as happy a time as I've seen her in some months. And she went to the auto-graphing I had to do at Munro's bookstore the next day and did a marvelous job of protecting me from the worst of the customers. There is one woman (Jean's met her) who has decided I'm a witch goddess who has stolen her soul, and she turns up everywhere it's announced I'll be. Hoppy's going over to Vancouver for several days tomorrow, has stayed in bed most of the week to have the energy. So she gets frailer and ~~xxxx~~ frailer but is still able to collect herself together to greet the world. I hope for her sake that she can keep doing that until one morning she just doesn't wake up. For myself, I dread the day she isn't part of our lives.

It's a long winter for you putting up at close range with all Michael's needy hostility and false hope. I hope it doesn't have to go on for too many more months before you can be free of it. I do think it's the right decision and the right time. You've said before you didn't want to put anyone else through anything while this was being sorted out, and that is certainly less complicating, though it can also feel pretty lonely at times I'm sure. Take as good care of yourself as you can.

Love,

