



December 1, 1977

Dear Carolyn:

I've decided against cards this year, just Christmas notes to good friends far away. I'll have to go back to cards next year because Elisabeth Hopkins' painting has been accepted by UNICEF.

Aside from a two line put down in the Globe and Mail, all her press so far has been excellent and abundant. The Painted Cougar is selling very well in these parts, and David is doing a good job of across Canada advertising. We have lived through most of the publicity, I sometimes wondering how I got myself into the act when I won't do anything of the sort for my own books. I've trailed around after her to Vancouver and Victoria, even to Saltspring Island for an autographing party at the book store there. She has to go into Vancouver once again, but she's on her own this time. I don't know where she gets the energy. In the middle of all this she decided she had to move, not enough room in her tiny one room cabin. Fortunately our nearest neighbor was just fixing up a three room cabin on her land; so Elisabeth rented that. She is due to move in today, but the cottage isn't ready, due to snow storms, holidaying plumbers and electricians, etc., etc. I'd be surprised if it will be ready in a week, but Elisabeth can stay where she is until the time. I think Helen sometimes feels Elisabeth is more time consuming than a love affair. I suppose, in a way, she is a love affair of a permanent and sublimated sort. She's going to the desert with us on the 1st of January (we're going for two months this year) for the first two weeks and then will take off to Nevada with other friends for a more lively two weeks of gambling away all her surprise earnings.

The meetings are in Ottawa this coming May, and I think we'll go down to Boston after that because my oldest niece would like to look around at colleges in New England before she makes up her mind where to apply. She's a scholarly youngster, and I think she'd be happier

going to school in the east where to be bright and interested in your work is not considered outlandish. I think we probably will be in Toronto next fall if Elisabeth has a show there, and that seems to be in the works. But I'll let you know about that nearer the time.

I've just heard that a feminist press in Germany is to bring out Lesbian Images this coming year and then wants to do a novel a year until they are all available there. At the other extreme of writing news, I am to be one of this year's judges of the Miss Chatelaine fiction contest!

I've just been over to Victoria for three days to do some teaching, also a pannel discussion, "On Being a Woman Writer" with Phyllis Webb and Rona Murray (now Dexter). Phyllis played the solitary, Rona the much married mother, I the lesbian, and it was as silly as it sounds, but the teaching was, I think, useful. Anyway, I enjoyed it, but it underlined for me how glad I am not to have full time teaching commitments. I am teaching a course here one night a week, ten women ages ranging from 25 to 85, and that's pure pleasure.

Work on the new book goes slowly. It still has the same title, but everyone turns out to be 29 instead of 31, and that line doesn't come for some pages into the first section, a settled draft of which I've just finished. Since there are to be six sections, you can see that it's not a great accomplishment, and I feel, as I always do at this stage, very tentative. I hope to be well into section two before we leave for the desert, but December is always a hard month for work. We're having guests every week-end, a crowd over Christmas itself, and as treasurer of the Galiano Club I'm involved with everything from Christmas Bingo to the children's party, bake sales, art shows, weavers' shows, pot luck dinners, dances, etc. But I do want a sturdy beginning of the next section because it is easier than to keep going in a new environment. We've got a house this time so that I'll have a place to work out of the way of Helen and others, and there's no phone. I'm also hoping the dry heat and swimming will give me a bit more time at my desk. By this time of year here, I'm pretty creaky.

I didn't take French in highschool so even very simple books are beyond me. I've read a good deal about Romaine Brooks and Natalie Barney on the way of Lesbian Images, and I'd love to be able to read the book you mention. Gradually a lot more of these things are being translated; so maybe eventually I'll be in luck.

Marian and Carole sound lively friends, a good distraction for you during the last year of worrying about Cathy.

I'm glad that's sorted itself out. Having been the one in this household to cause similar consternation from time to time, I'm always very critical of anyone else who does it though quite tolerant of myself. The longer I live the less I understand about human relationship. I wonder if that will be evident in the new book. I've driven one character completely bonkers in fifty pages!

Helen, who claims she will never do a stroke of work again, is secretly writing an article. I don't know whether she'll burn it or bury it in a trunk or send it out when she's finished. It's oddly companionable to have her working on the upper floor while I peg away down here.

No, it's not the kiss of death to get a good review in The Sun. I am frankly bored with Toronto's pretensions in reviewing. A review should be a good description of a book or a real article dealing with an issue. Toronto reviews rarely do either under the guise of doing both. ~~As~~ I've said, not to be simply a griper, that I'd do some reviewing for The Globe and Mail, of the descriptive sort. I've recently done Heinrich Böll's collected essays. I've been paid for it, but of course I don't see that sort of thing.

I hope your book is doing well. It should, for one thing, have a good library sale, and, if the lending right thing ever gets organized, you might get a bit of money from that, too. I've plugged it with a number of people, particularly those who have an interest of one sort or another in independent schools.

Have a good Christmas holiday and do go to Greece. Audrey Thomas has made me homesick for it, talking about her year there last year. She's on the island now until January when she goes for four months to Montreal to teach at Concordia. I'm glad she'll be away from here for a while because she's involved in a messy divorce and custody fight for her youngest daughter.

Marian is enjoying Edmonton and likes being away from Toronto. The cover of Saturday Night was the end of that magazine for me, and Marian was upset by the article. I don't know why any writer would live in Toronto. The media thing there is really awful. Well, it's awful everywhere. I like having nothing but a monthly news letter!

Love,

*Jane*

