

4504 WEST SECOND AVENUE  
VANCOUVER 8, BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 23, 1970

Dear Carolyn:

A three martini cocktail hour, not sure why except it's our last night to be so indulgent before my parents arrive, some time before dinner tomorrow if their driving luck is good. And now I'm having a brandy, and it's not even eight o'clock. I must be moving toward an early night.

Ah, I would have loved a chance to wander through the old house you described. One never really need apologize for invading another's privacy if one goes with enough courteous passion to know. What I more often want to apologize for is calling up the social mask, the defense which always seems to say, "You could not understand. You would judge. You would find wanting." I'm nearly plagued with a sense of Doris Lessing's latest book, her occult description of what seems to me so ordinary, that ~~xx~~ hearing of the under voices, which is often clearest when the people aren't even in the rooms they inhabit. Furniture does speak. All objects chosen do.

I'm glad Cath bought a ~~xxxx~~ (well, go ahead, Jane, say 'sale', it was, as well as 'sail') boat, the best sort of launching on that possible other day. I wish I were young enough to learn. I've been sailing only several times in my life, once out of Boston with a singularly unattractive (in spirit, not shape) lawyer, whose ambition it was to humiliate his female crew. We showed great restraint in not letting him get knocked overboard when we came about. I liked it, even then. Once off ~~Guxxx~~ Guernsey, an experience any sailor would envy, in a sailing ship built by a tomato growing islander and his sons as a gesture after they were reunited after the war, called 'the ~~xxxxx~~ saint'. He had hidden the mast and the timbers all through the war when even the floor boards of his house were being torn up for fuel. A remarkable day in those extraordinary waters, which ~~have~~ always seemed to me more mythical than the claimed myth off Sicilly and Greece. But still I don't know how. I sit at my desk and watch sails in this bay, wondering why I have a temperament to attempt nothing I wasn't ~~am~~ taught as a child. It's partly a profound mistrust of the body, a premature fossil, ca~~s~~ified by a nervous system operating at unregulated speeds. Well, I hope you are involved in the sail as well as the sale; it sounds lovely.

No, haven't seen that four name picture. We go very rarely. But perhaps we will now or soon in the easy ~~yx~~ summer.

First five copies of THIS IS NOT FOR YOU arrived early this week, and I've been doing everything one handed since. I do think it's mostly a handsome job of book making, and the fact of it is for me awesome. Advanced reviews, which I haven't seen (publisher is very protective), I hear are bloody, but ~~xxx~~ that I have expected. Nothing gets in the way of its being. Helen is reading the ~~xx~~ book now. An odd experience for us both. She always reads bits to me while I'm working, sometimes half a dozen times when I need to hear revisions, but often when I do the last draft, I don't need to hear and she therefore doesn't see it at all. So her experience of this book ~~xx~~ is five years old and very fragmentary. She carries it to the hair dresser's and the dentist's, blatantly showing it off, which

of course, delights me. All the pleasure is now. I don't know when mailing list will be dealt with, perhaps soon, but anyway, you should have a copy well before publication date in the middle of June. You can get drunk and phone if you like, but it's expensive. I suggest a drunken or hung over letter instead. If the book's any good, it should make you said. That wasn't really my intention, but one doesn't have intentions about readers at the time. The subject, its shape, its meaning are the focus. Then afterwards one sees how comic, sad, whatever it is. That's not quite ~~xxx~~ right. I am not myself moved one way or the other until a piece of work is done, that's all. Anyway, my drunken stranger from New York said, "I wan you t'know i don often cry..."

We are now praying that the other five copies due me arrive before the second when we have a book party. Otherwise some friends will be fighting with other friends over who is to wait, who to ~~xxxx~~ claim first privilege.

On the 4th of May, parents will depart, and I will have the gift of the summer in my hands. I am impatient for that, though, once it arrives, I will probably be restless and baffled for a time. Now, anticipating without taking responsibility for, ~~xx~~ I think of flying language like a kite out over this windy shore. It's never like that, but it's a nice idea.

Yes, of course, the rain check can be held as long as is necessary though I hope it won't be very long. I am a much better hostess than guest and traveler, and I would like that. I keep meaning to say if Cath travels here again on business, I hope she'll find time to come for a drink or meal or something of the sort. Perhaps I should know her whole name, though I suppose I have done and forgotten.

Affectionately,

