

4504 WEST SECOND AVENUE
VANCOUVER 8, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Dear Carolyn:

I perfectly understand about anyone's reluctance to be a houseguest. I have it myself, a quirky claustrophobia if I am not certain of quiet spaces in a day. ~~As~~ I love to fill this house up with people because I know where I can go when I need to, provide space for other people as well. Of course, I do visit other people, though rarely on my own. Helen is so elegant a guest that I can usually manage it if she's with me. And there are certain friends-- I think particularly of Monica and Pamela in a cottage in Dorset-- who know me well enough so that I don't have to apologize for my odd rhythms. In Dorset last time we were there I had not turned round in time from Vancouver, woke every morning at five and could climb up to the study at the top of the house and write for four hours before anyone else stirred. Then, if we were home rather than beach combing or walking the cliffs, Pamela ~~xxxxxx~~ sent us to our room in mid afternoon for a rest with pieces of fruit to keep us quiet for at least an hour, often longer. They don't eat ~~a~~ breakfast; we aren't much interested in lunch; so we could have one ceremonial meal a day at dinner, which is the way this house works, everyone inventing his own eating schedule until cocktail time. But, if Cath decides a hotel is more comfortable, I will know exactly why, in my own bones.

I know you both have other friends to see; so simply set up your schedule when you can and we'll save whatever time there is. Friday and Saturday nights are good for us if we know in advance, and I've blanked out both the 2nd and 3rd of April. My nephew, who will not let me know when he's coming, whether or not his girl is coming with him, will probably not turn up until that Sunday, if his holiday is before Easter rather than after. In any case, his being around is no problem since he'll have his own eighteen-year-old restless roaming to do. Come for dinner and the evening either or both nights. The scotch will hold out, I promise. I buy it by the case. And, if Cath ~~xx~~ decides she can bear it, spend the nights as well.

AGAINST THE SEASON is due out in March, what ~~xxx~~ date I'm not sure. Last time everything was very prompt and organized, but Hy Cohen, my beloved editor, along with half the staff, was fired in December~~x~~, part of a melodrama going on in a lot of publishing houses after a bad year. I feel very gloomy about the book's having any life at all without Hy's concern. The same thing happened to the first book in the States, well, worse, since none of the work had been done. At least this is ready to go, but to go where is the question. I teach myself a certain distance

from all these public griefs. It's necessary. Anyway, I've sent in the mailing list, and, if there is anyone there to take care of it, you should have a copy some time before you come out. And I'll have the pleasure of holding the book in my hands and giving it to people who might care about it, which is the point for me. The rest-- to be suffered with as much indifference as possible. I've seen the first ~~advance~~ review from the Virginia Kirkus reviewing service, which is always very bad news for me. It begins, "Jane Rule's earlier DESERT OF THE HEART and THIS IS NOT FOR YOU were about anything but sisterly and no so gay liberation.." and gets worse. The only recognizable thing about the book is the title. I am irritated only because I thought I had another six weeks of silence before I had to brace myself for the junk.

Meanwhile, I wrestle with the opening of the new book, hoping my head can be entirely full of it so that little else gets in. Whether and where it will ever be published are concerns I put off until such time when it turns itself into a book asking for answers of that sort. Maybe Hy will turn up at another publishing company and persuade them to try another minor disaster.

No, I didn't see the article in Chatelaine on Margaret. I had a letter from her last week, a last gesture before the postal strike cut her off ~~xxx~~ from the world. She's had 14 false starts on her new book and sounds dazed enough by failure to be almost ready to begin. We are a strange tribe, but a tribe and that's a real comfort. Also heard from Peggy Atwood, who had just spent the week-end with Margaret. Peg says her new book of poems, POWER POLITICS, is drastic and dire and she's glad to be out of Canada for it's publication. She also says I'm not to worry about her when I read it; she thinks she's ~~already~~ all right now. She's stuck in the middle rather than in the beginning of her second novel. And young Don Bailey, the boy whose work I discovered when I was judge for that contest for convicts all across Canada, has just sent me SOUNDINGS, the new Anansi collection of new poets, a good chunk of his work included. I'm praying his Canada Council comes through this spring to free him to finish his book. But meanwhile he publishes articles and stories and poems everywhere, and he sounds steady and happy. Also Fred Booker, the tall, black preacher who visited us this summer, has just sent ANOTHER POETRY MAGAZINE with his first published poems and a happy note. Phyllis Webb's selected poems should be out with Talon Books next month. That's going to be a lovely thing to own, particularly since all her other books have been out of print for a couple of years.

I must get the house organized for a meeting tonight and plan the week's shopping since I've got to have people for coffee in the morning and won't have time then. It's a cluttered week, not the kind I like, but next week looks quiet and open for a new try on Chapter II.

Affectionately,

Jane