

To margareta waterman

Jim Andrews
2313 Esther Pl.
Victoria, B.C.
V9B 2E5, Canada

November 10/93

Hi margareta,

A color inkjet huh. You've probably seen the output? Not too bad for such a price, but the resolution is not all that good. They tend(ed?) to be used by realtors who do a great deal of work with photos of houses. The realtors seem to be quite influential in these matters because, of course, there are a lot of dollars riding on the sales documents they prepare regularly, and they're always looking to stay one step ahead of the competition. I went to a computer show where they had a color laser integrated with a color photocopier and the silly thing went for \$50,000. Appearances being as they are, realtors and other businesses that commonly rely on public, graphical documents to generate a lot of money cannot afford to be too low down in state-of-the-technology printers, etc. It's funny to think of color printing technology being driven by pictures of houses.

So, you got some ace typefaces. Great. Too bad they probably don't convert to the PC... I'm jealous now margareta.

I quit university. It was very dull and very difficult and I was doing too much writing (what a bad habit) and I can't see myself in a position that absolutely requires that infernal piece of paper anyway... I was really sick of it. So I'm back on the job search and writing up a storm. All those explicit sets and empty relationships in the course on databases just tuckered me right out.

I've been getting the Victoria and Vancouver papers and the Post-Intelligencer and firing away resumes. Interesting to note the difference between the jobs section in Vancouver and Seattle: Seattle's is *much* more interesting, diverse and numerous. Even though the cities are more or less the same size. It also points out to me the degree to which our economy is based on the extraction of raw resources. This is a big problem for B.C. and Canada also.

You heard about our election, no doubt, which the Liberals won. The Reform Party, which is from the west and has aspirations toward "a new federalism" is nonetheless almost entirely regional (the west) in its support and has 52 seats in the House of Commons. Previous to this election, the Reform Party had 1 seat. The party has only been around for several years.

The official opposition is the Bloc Quebecois, which has 54 seats. All of the members elected from that party are in Quebec. The Bloc did not have candidates running outside of Quebec: they advocate a sovereign Quebec, the separation of Quebec from Canada. The Reformers basically say 'if they holler let them go.' The Bloc was formed from disaffected members of the Conservative party (which

was previously in power federally) during the Mulroney years. The separatists are the official opposition party in the nation.

The Progressive Conservatives, who were previously in power, now have only 2 seats in the entire country (out of about 293) and the future of the party is in question. The New Democratic Party, which previously had maybe twenty or thirty seats and which is known in the U.S. as “the socialist party” (Al Gore) but which is really better described as liberals in a hurry, gained only nine seats. You need twelve to be recognized as having official status as a party (and all the machinery that goes with that).

The Liberals, who won the election, have 177 seats, a strong majority. They are led by Jean Cretien, who was a member of Pierre Eliot Trudeau’s Liberal government for many years. The Liberals have always presented a relatively strong form of federalism.

So although there has been a major shift in Canadian politics and the two major opposition parties in the country are almost exclusively regional in their perspectives, the strong federalists were nonetheless granted a strong majority. The support for the Liberals came primarily from Ontario (which has a relatively large population, as does Quebec) though not exclusively so.

During the Mulroney years (1983-93), the Conservatives transferred more power to the provinces than had previously been the case and consequently weakened the power of the federal government. Also, they attempted to bring Quebec into the constitution. Trudeau, during his years in power (68 to 82) brought the constitution back from England—we had been, at least on paper, basically a colony until then—but did not succeed in having Quebec sign the new constitution. The rest of the provinces agreed, but Quebec *still* is outside the constitution.

Part of the reason that Mulroney transferred more power to the provinces was in an attempt to acquire support for his constitution, which ultimately failed to win approval not only from Quebec but from the rest of the nation. The day after the Blue Jays last won the World Series (last year), the whole nation told Mulroney to forget his constitutional plans in a nation-wide referendum that was the preliminary round to the drubbing the Conservatives received the day after the Blue Jays won their next World Series. (I heard Billy Bragg, a British musician on TV the other day. He was touring Canada and the US. When asked by the Canadian interviewer how he felt being in Canada, he said “Ah, well, you know you can say all sorts of things here that you can’t say in the States. Like ‘how bout those Blue Jays!’) I suppose the Conservative plan had been to ride on the good feeling it gives Canadians to beat the Americans for a change. Well it didn’t work and everybody knows the Blue Jays are mostly from the States anyway.

Of course, another reason that Mulroney’s government gave up considerable power was in reaction to the pluralistic postmodernism that has had its influence globally. A reaction against big government, for instance. Let us hope that there is a similar reaction against the power of big corporations.

So Canada is still alive. The Liberals can basically do what they want because of their huge majority. Yet the official opposition parties are strictly regional. West and East. The Reform Party is led by Preston Manning, a Baptist preacher whose father led the Social Credit government of Alberta for many years. His party’s policies include cutting annual immigration numbers in half, spending less

on medicare, welfare, unemployment insurance, and many of our other social programs, and generally tend more toward the form of capitalism with which you are familiar.

My feeling is that until world governments can get together and place controls on the power of international corporations, Manning's predictions about the need to curtail social programs will be all too true.

Automation, increased population numbers, and diminished natural resources seem to indicate a future involving increasing unemployment. Unless the corporations are made to share the wealth and act according to the limitations placed on them both by regions and the wise management of dwindling resources, things will go to hell faster than they probably will anyway.

Only one party, the National Party, which won (maybe) one seat addressed the problem of international corporations as a major issue. Well perhaps their day will come.

Of course, there was also the—what the hell were they called?—the Yogic Flyers who promised to alleviate stress—and hence create a happy place—by having hundreds of meditators across the nation smooth out the national vibes.

So, margareta, there you have it. I can't believe I wrote the whole thing—shallow as it is. Politics: usually dull as dishwater. However, it was pretty interesting this time around, I thought. Also, it made me re-think my thoughts and feelings about Canada. There are less guns here, there's universal medical coverage, higher welfare rates that recognize the continuing reality of poverty, and the CBC which, for all its faults, still produces such radio shows as *Ideas*. These are significant differences. There is also an institutionalized mind-set here that makes for a lot of mediocrity. But I would regret the loss of so far-fetched and sunnily (if perversely) persevering an entity-without-identity as Canada.



Wow, margareta, sounds like you're going to march right into March! So, you might be going to Vancouver? If you do, let me know. I have some friends in Vancouver I could stay with. It sounds like you've got friends there too. We could meet and do the town. And—hey—with a name like “elizabeth windsor-taylor” you should run for Canadian politics! You'd be a shoe in! An English Queen+an American Star—you'd cream 'em. And, of course, with your natural dignity and charm—ahem!—you'd make an irresistible politician. Oh yes and wise policies and... *what a task that would be*. It seems so large and ungainly an undertaking, doesn't it? I suppose that the power that I seek (and have, for all that matter) is my own, when I am up to it. Not over others, but within myself. Power to render the chains we carry plain. Power even to put them aside, when we can. Power to speak with some relevance and force to the recurring and the new(s). So that what we say may be of some use and carry some beauty for others in their vision of what happens and how it feels when the cosmic drama comes to be known at noon, say, when the sun is high and you are on your way to lunch and could it be or has a waiting ended suddenly when, for instance, you saw him but did nothing, passed right by without a word even though you'd thought often of him? And were so distracted and perhaps even cowardly though there was little time to tell. But of course it does tend to all happen in a moment albeit a long and ending sequence of them—difficult to give them their due amidst thoughts of past and future ones even as they pass, difficult to understand that they have even arrived—linked, yes

but each with its own usually un-acted upon possibilities that require merely good sense or the relentless goad, the sharp hook that the noon light glints on goading us, in our knowledge that we cheat only ourselves if we don't do *something*, seize the day or grasp it awkwardly, perhaps, an idiot straight out of a comedy, perchance to drop it or Chaplinesque—but fuck Prufrock—bumble the bauble in utter ineptitude in the full ha-ha of our humanity *and even drop it*, yes, but be last seen in hot pursuit nonetheless...

Love,

Jim Andrews