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CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
PASADENA

November 12, 1953

Dear Francis

I hear from John that you are thinking about coming here next year. You might therefore be interested in the following comments about Pasadena and Caltech. The first concerns living in Pasadena - so far I find it a living hell - largely though not entirely due to the smog. It is like living in a perpetual London Fog - My eyes are continuously smarting and at times it gives me a nervous feeling. The newspapers are full of talk about the wretchedness of the situation but as yet little is being done to control the oil refineries (the origin of most of the fumes). About 2-3 days out of the week, the skies clear, the nearby mountains appear and this seems like a very attractive place to dwell - however the smog regularly reappears and the region returns to its choking hellish atmosphere. Naturally the smog can be avoided by driving 100 miles into the desert but this proves impractical on most days. I thus conclude that Odile will not find Southern California as alluring as she might think.

Secondly I'll mention Caltech - so far my contacts have only been in Biology and Chemistry. In Biology there is Max, - otherwise fairly dull (from your viewpoint and also mine). In Chemistry - obviously the Great Man - however it is unlikely that you'll get lunch (et al.) with him and so I'd suspect you would tell him more than he would tell you. Then Coley - he is only nice and helpful but not in a theoretical way - this effectively leaves Vernon Schrammer who is very good and talkative - his interests however are not very biological and so he probably would not be intimately involved in what you're doing. So far I have not ~~met~~ come across any younger person who seems unusual in the sense of attempting intuitive work. This seems to be left to Pauling. I thus conclude that from the viewpoint of Protein Crystallography - Cambridge is more attractive - obviously experimentally - but also scientifically.

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Perhaps I being obscure in my opinion but I don't think you would find the equal of Max, John, Hugh, Tony Brode, etc in Pasadena.

My own future is very much in doubt. The Army is hot on my tail and it is very highly possible that I shall not be here next year. To escape the Army I may join the Public Health Service and be stationed in Bethesda (near Washington). I should have to serve three years and so the immediate future seems cloudy if not just plain dismal.

Experimentally we have done almost nothing - RNA interests me more than genetics and so a little effort has been along these lines. (With Alex Rich) we are able to repeat my Cambridge RNA picture - using RNA from calf liver - Hence a Unique RNA structure exists!!!!. However so far our photographs are largely powder (diffuse) and only yesterday did I obtain a picture with a-orientation (only slight) (specimen very birefringent) - This pattern is strongly affected by H<sub>2</sub>O content (nothing quantitative as yet) - whether  $\geq 2$  forms exist, I'm not sure. Naturally we tried model building and at times (including now) believe in learning something. By Christmas we should know how far a little.

I have just seen Maurice's note in Nature. It reads very well - I found the note on hydration by the Swedes (at Berkeley) unconvincing in its present form though obviously some such scheme must exist

Naturally my best regards to Odie - I should like to know how reactions to Brooklyn -

N.L.