

JUNE 3, 1980

DEAR TED,

AS YOU GUESSED, I JUST FINISHED EXAMS ON THURSDAY (PHYSIOLOGY, ORGAN HISTOLOGY, AND EMERGENCY MEDICINE). (I'VE BEEN PUTTING IN ORDER ALL THOSE NONACADEMIC MATTERS THAT ONE IGNORES TOWARDS THE END OF A QUARTER - CHANGING OIL ON MY CAR, BRINGING MY CAR IN FOR A CHECKUP, CLEANING MY ROOM, PAYING OFF BILLS, ETC... ALSO, I'VE BEEN RELAXING A BIT - ATLANTIC CITY, JOGGING, "THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK," EATING OUT.

THE HEAT & HUMIDITY ARE UNBEARABLE IN BALTIMORE TODAY, SO I'VE ESCAPED TO THE AIR-CONDITIONED RELIEF OF THE LIBRARY. ALSO, I'VE REGAINED MY APETITE FOR WORK, AND AM ANXIOUS TO READ PAPERS + "BONE UP" FOR MY SUMMER LAB WORK.

AND, YET, THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF ANXIETY AS I FACE THE SUMMER AHEAD. I HAVEN'T EVER BEEN ABLE TO ATTAIN THE SAME LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY IN LAB AS IN CLASSES. PERHAPS, IT'S BECAUSE I'VE ALWAYS BEEN BURNED OUT FROM A YEAR OF CLASSES BY THE TIME I'VE STARTED WORK IN A LAB. OR, PERHAPS, I'VE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MOTIVATE MYSELF IN THE SOLITUDE OF LAB IN THE SAME AUTOMATIC SENSE THAT GRADES AND PROFESSOR-IMPOSED STANDARDS MOTIVATE ME. WHATEVER, I'M AN UNPROVEN BET - I'M A BIT UNSURE. CERTAINLY AFTER THE THESIS I DID LAST YEAR WHICH WAS A MINOR DISASTER.

AND, TO TOP IT OFF, I'M NOT QUITE SURE I'LL EVER FIND THE RIGHT FIELD. I'LL ALWAYS WANT TO BE A BIT MATHEMATICAL, A BIT PHYSICAL - AND, HAVE THE SAME RELEVANCE OF A BIOLOGIST. SO, I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DO PHYSIOLOGY LAST SUMMER, BUT IT SEEMS LIKE YOU JUST CAN'T PROVE THAT MUCH WORKING ON THE MACROSCOPIC LEVEL. SO THIS SUMMER, I TRIED TO FIND A MOLECULAR PROBLEM W/ PHYSICS + MATH ~ "BIOPHYSICS." UNFORTUNATELY, HOPKINS IS A FAIRLY WEAK SCHOOL IN BIOPHYSICS. SO, I'VE HAD TO SETTLE FOR WORKING FOR A BIOPHYSICIST WHOSE WORKING ON MOLECULAR GENETICS - W/O A BIOPHYSICS ANGLE ON THE PROBLEM AS OF THE PRESENT. WHAT I HOPE TO DO AFTER ACQUAINTING MYSELF WITH THE FIELD OF BATTLE IS TO DEVELOP A BIOPHYSICS ANGLE ON THE SITUATION - A TALL ORDER, A DEFINITE MAYBE, AND PROBABLY A NAIVE DREAM. BUT, I'M BANKING ON IT.

SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I'M DOING MD-PhD. I THINK THAT I MIGHT BE MUCH HAPPIER AS A PhD STUDENT IN A SCHOOL WITH STRONG BIOPHYSICS. BUT, I WAS JUST TOO CONFUSED AT THE TIME I HAD TO MAKE DECISIONS; HINDSIGHT ALWAYS SEEMS A BIT CLEARER.

AND, YET, ASIDE FROM ALL THE UNCERTAINTY, THE ANXIETY, THERE IS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL. SCIENCE IS STILL A MIND-BLOWING ADVENTURE AT TIMES. THAT POTENTIAL EXCITEMENT IS PROBABLY WHAT HAS KEPT ME, UNCONSCIOUSLY, ON THE PATH I FOLLOW.

ONE CANNOT CHART A PERFECT COURSE BY CAREFUL PLANNING AT EACH MOMENT OF THE VOYAGE. THERE ARE TOO MANY WINDS, TOO MANY STORMS, TOO MANY CURRENTS. AFTER ALL, THERE IS GOD, AND I AM BUT MAN. IF I THINK AND PLAN TOO MUCH, I JUST BECOME DEPRESSED AND FRUSTRATED AS HELL BECAUSE I CAN'T DECIDE JUST WHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO GO, AND, EVEN IF I KNEW, I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO REACH THAT UTOPIAN ISLAND BEYOND THE HORIZON. THE ~~ONLY~~^{BEST} I CAN DO IS TO GET THE BEST SENSE OF WHAT I WANT TO DO AND ~~POINT~~ POINT THE BOW IN THAT DIRECTION. I CANNOT DESPAIR OVER THE MILLION OTHER FATES THAT COULD HAVE BEEN — I CAN ONLY HAVE FAITH THAT THE SHORE UPON WHICH I FINALLY LAND IS ~~a~~ FERTILE — AS FERTILE AS I MAKE IT.

SO, WHEREVER ONE FINDS HIMSELF, THERE IS ALWAYS AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO FRET OVER THE MILLION COULD HAVE BEENS. BUT THE ONLY REALITY IS WHAT IS — AND WHAT ONE MAKES IT TO BE. POINT YOUR BOW, AND ENJOY THAT SURPRISING, UNCERTAIN PATH KNOWN AS LIFE.

THERE WAS TREMENDOUS COMFORT IN HIGH SCHOOL; ALL OUR BRIDGES REMAINED, MORE OR LESS, UNBORN — LEAVING AN INFINITE PLETHORA OF FUTURES W/E REACH. BUT WE'VE HAD TO CROSS SO MANY, BORN SO MANY, AND SEEN SO MANY DESTROYED. NOW, WE ARE NO LONGER TWO BOYS IN A NAIVE WORLD OF FANTASY. WE ARE MEN — WHOSE FUTURES ARE LIMITED BY ~~THE~~ ABILITY TO BRING THE WONDER OF DREAMS TO THE CONFINES OF ~~AN~~ AN EVER MORE APPARENT REALITY. FOR ME, I HOPE TO BRING THE SUBLENT MAGESITY OF PHYSICS & MATH TO THE HARD CORE REALITY OF THE HOSPITAL — THAT'S THE DIRECTION IN WHICH I POINT MY BOW. AS FOR YOU, YOU MUSTN'T ~~REMEMBER~~ ^{LET} WHAT COULD BE DESTROY THE DREAMT WONDER OF WHAT IS AND WHAT WILL BE. KEEP YOUR BOW POINTED — GOOD LUCK.

LOVE, *David*