

Cypress C-3  
Stanford 94305

12-14

Dear Pa --

The books, both of them, arrived in good order as I mentioned on the phone, as did the surplus prints from Africa. The consensus among the kids is that the bird pictures are better reproduced.

Stanford is in recess right now which leaves me indolent, but not comfortably so. Like a child, my morale is better when I'm being goaded into activity than when I'm being thrown upon my own resources. Which is a terrible confession to have to make.

We took the kids skiing last weekend (cross country, which is sort of like hiking and quite unlike the more artificial, high technology downhill kind) and we stayed at the Sierra Club's lodge in Donner Pass where I ran into one of the young Browners. Kenneth, I think he said his name was. He seemed like a nice youngster, less intense and more humorous than his pa and said he had pleasant memories of the Island. I gathered, thought he did not tell me so ~~directly~~ directly, that Friends of the Earth is not going well, which doesn't surprise me.

The environmental movement, or whatever you choose to call it, is probably more healthy now than it has ever been, but in a less spectacular way than a few years ago. At least that is what the election results suggest. In California and New York voters approved major conservationist referenda despite huge amounts of campaign money spent by the opposition, and despite the fact that at the same time they voted for Nixon. At the same time, the Sierra Club -- and I'm sure the FOE as well -- is losing members at least as fast as its getting new ones, all of which suggests to me that conservation has matured from a trend to a habit of mind, which the public separates from other political issues.

It is fashionable, I suppose, to be holistic and say that Nixon himself is an environmental issue and that if we really understood the nature of the crisis we would vote against him. Well, I don't believe the public has attained that level of sophistication, if that's what it is, and furthermore, it seems to me it would be uncharacteristic of Americans ever to do so. We like to separate our issues so that we can form our coalitions before election, at the convention, rather than afterwards, in the formation of the government, as they do in, say, France. Anyone who tries to advance an ideological master plan, no matter how well-meaning, will destroy his coalition. And isn't that what happened to McGovern?

What a hell of a sometimes wonder if

All of which is just a windy way of saying I get awfully tried with the ideologues -- especially ~~including~~ the zealots of the Sierra Club who display an odious degree of intellectual hauteur. They complain that crass materialism, encouraged by Pacific Gas & Electric and Standard Oil of California, is what prevents the club of getting more members and yet I have yet to see a black at a club function. <sup>They're</sup> Their like Jesuits: so sure of their own salvation they refuse to be even civil to the infidels.

Everyone is well, with reservations. E. F. did so well on an exam given nationally to high schoolers last spring that at least one small college has asked him to enter next ~~fall~~ fall -- even though he won't graduate from high school until 1974 -- and many more, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ including West Point and Colorado Springs, have written asking him to come and visit. But E. F. is having ~~xxxxxx~~ troubles of the heart about a girl in St. Louis who calls him long distance from time to time. I think she teases a little.

Jack, of course, still lives most of his life in an ~~xxxxx~~ unseen world, but is getting a little more confident and extroverted. I think a lot of it has to do with physical size, simply. He's grown a lot in the last year and is no longer small for his age.

Boxie, whose emotions are several orders of magnitude greater than most people -- sort of like a character in an Italian opera -- is happier when he's happy and unhappier when he's unhappy. He has a paper route which gets him out of bed at 4:30 every morning and makes vast amounts of money: about \$80 a month, I believe.

Anne and Alexander are probably the least changed. They are still little children, fundamentally, and still delightfully unconcerned about independence and dignity and those factors which seem to torment adolescents.

I envy ~~you~~ your journey to Egypt, a place I've always yearned to visit. Love to Aline and to Pat, when you catch up with him.

## B

ps -- I have neither J&Z's nor S&M's addresses. I must have left them in St. L. Could you send them

pps -- the encl. is something I thought you might be interested in, just because it seems so current