Dear Arlene and Walter: March 20, 1982

My warmest thanks for your gift of "The Eighth Day of Creation." I have read every word of it, even the appendices and footnotes. This has been one of the most enjoyable reading experiences of my life. Throughout the book wander a host of persons whom I knew personally or through their works; and as they each appear my recollection of them is a vivid accompaniment of the author's narrative. Maurice Wilkins, for example, appeared to me as the scrawny Englishman who rode with me and the Vendrelys as I made a trip into the White Mountains on a vacant afternoon from a Gordon Conference on Nucleic Acids. Maurice never once would look up, even to "The Old Man of the Mountain"; instead he kept boring us with a persistent monologue about his X-ray diffraction patterns from nucleic acids (this was many years before the famous DNA model). Of course Erwin Chargaff reappeared with his similar obsession with the base ratios. This book makes clear the point I indignantly made in a note to Erwin at the time of the Nobel award that they never could have made the model without his underlying abundant proof that DNA was not the monotonous polymer postulated by P.A. Levene's tetranucleotide hypothesis. When Avery's name appeared early in the narrative, I recalled the "quiet little man who was at the luncheon table

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with Mirsky, Hotchkiss, Rous and others on the dais
I worked at Rockefeller with Alfred — so quiet
was Avery that I had to see his picture in
the "Creation" book to remember what he
looked like. Of course, I was pleased to note
that Mirsky was mentioned only as the die-
hard opponent of the view that DNA could be
the gene; "it had to be a protein". In an aside,
note that the source of G. E. M.'s stand on this
point was merely Rockefeller politics; both
he and Avery were struggling to attain the
permanent status of Member of the staff —
hence Alfred must belittle Avery's contribution.
Even in the less enthralling section on
hemoglobin there are many people whom
I met or heard lecture. It would take a
small notebook to enumerate my reactions
to this marvellous volume. Do you know
anything about the Author? He is indeed a
most remarkable Science writer — the
only one I ever read who seems to
have been able to get inside the skin
and brain of the scientific personality.

If all goes well, we will be back
in Pennsylvania (311 Broad St, Harleysville,
PA. 19438 Tel. 215-256-9466 [or Son Jim 6498])
and would welcome a visit.

Thanks again and warm regards,

Arthur Pollister