

File name: _____
Holloway

DEPARTMENT OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



7 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

November 8, 1984

Mr. Robert Holloway
383 Tamarack Drive
Henderson, Nevada 89015

Dear Dr. Holloway:

Thank you very much for your letter of October 30 which I found very interesting. I do have a question. Can you say whether the pollen was contained in the rain drops or whether the pollen settled as a dust quite separate from the rainfall?

The yellow rain samples we have studied contain a preponderance of pollen from plants which are pollinated by bees. Such pollen is generally produced in small amounts and may be rather sticky in comparison to windborne pollen. Staining with Coomassie Blue shows that the yellow rain pollen, like the pollen in the bee feces, has very little protein inside. Windborne pollen stains strongly, indicating a high internal protein content. Passage through the digestive systems of the bee digests away the protein, leaving the exine or outer shell of the pollen grain. I include two items that you might be interested to see. It seems to me that the phenomenon you have observed is different from the yellow rain which has been mistaken for chemical warfare, but may be the same as the yellow rain discovered by Mrs. Darwin.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Matthew Meselson.

Matthew Meselson
Professor of Biochemistry
and Molecular Biology

MM/jbf
Encl.