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4 Danvers Street
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Mr. Christopher Alexander
Center for Environmental Structure
2701 Shasta Road
Berkeley, CA 94708

Dear Mr. Alexander:

I went to see your collection of pile carpets so many times that I came to think of several of the carpets as dear friends. One, which was described by a De Young tour guide as being like a chess board, seemed to me to be a history, an enormous complexity, a story, a cosmology--a Big Teacher. Is it too anthropomorphic to say that I miss their company? On several occasions, I wondered how you managed to part with the carpets for the purposes of the exhibition. Did you sneak into the museum just to visit with them? I would have. In any event, please accept my gratitude. Seeing them, especially the ones from the Konya District, has brought me great joy.

One of the tour guides expressed a certain sadness over the fact that you did not wish to donate the carpets to the De Young. I thought about your desire to create the correct architectural space for the carpets and decided that although it may take a while, ultimately such an environment would enhance the effect of the carpets themselves, an effect that would be perhaps hard to achieve in a space like the De Young. I myself have spent some glorious time with the Mevlevi dervishes in Konya and seeing them "turn" in a basketball stadium amid talking tourists instead of in Mevlana's small spectacular mausoleum was heartbreaking.

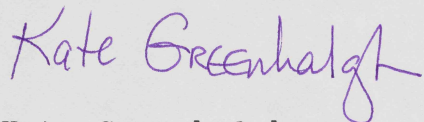
At present, my finances do not permit me to purchase your book. I assume that I will be able to order it from the Oxford University Press later in the year. I will do so when circumstances permit.

I was so spiritually bereft after the carpets left the De Young that I started to hunt out other sources of what I hoped would give me the same type of direct experience that your collection had done. Apparently, I ran into an old adversary/friend/schoolmate of yours: Roger Cavanna. He visited the De Young as many times as I did. He's thinking of writing you a letter. I asked him if he knew where I

could find carpets like the ones in your collection. He said, "Oh, well, we're all looking for carpets like those!" I understood the sentiment. Nonetheless, I felt discouraged. It's not so much that I want to own one of them---Mr. Cavanna seems to have a real interest in collecting in itself---rather, I want to study them, be affected by them, learn from them, and from those who made them. Again, and perhaps I really am anthropomorphizing here, I am not sure one could ever own one of those carpets, in the same way that I do not think it is possible to really own a pet. The consciousness of the other prohibits such silliness.

In closing, on a creative level I feel stimulated and rejuvenated (and set in order) by the carpets. I am, among other things a published fantasy writer. I suspect that a carpet or carpet design will find its way into my next book. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Sincerely,



Kate Greenhalgh