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January 3, 1974

Dear Gail,

Shock! Bouleversement! Identity crisis! While visiting grandmother over Christmas, saw results of recent research in the clerk's office of the ancestral home town near Rome, and it turns out that my great-great-great-great-grandfather (c. 1800) was an Austrian captain--the fragmented Italian states then being part of the Austrian empire and occupied by a standing army. The one vivifying drop of glacial intellectuality? (Cf. your one Indian drop of chthonic potency.) At any rate, this is perhaps the source of my pink paleness, which is unlike the skin color of others in the family. Other information from this research reveals that this captain's son or grandson was a raving liberal ("uno liberale fervente"), a friend of Mazzini's, ^{and was} jailed for seven years for political agitation in the mid-nineteenth-century Italian unification/liberation movement. One paterfamilias in the subsequent generation named three of his six children Marx, Darwin, and Engels! All of this has of course been suppressed in family memory, due to our instinctive peasant conservatism, I imagine.

Have fun in India--

Camille