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Leonardo da Vinci  
Casa di Leonardo  
Near the Church of Santa Croce  
Florence  
Republic of Florence (c. 1500)

14 July 1903

Dear Leonardo da Vinci,

I have received your latest letter—delivered, I assume, by whatever ingenious flying machine you are currently testing—and feel compelled to clarify a few scientific misunderstandings before you accidentally remove yourself from the timeline.

First, while your enthusiasm for ‘radiant essences’ is admirable, radioactivity is not a universal power source. Your idea for a “self-illuminating mechanical bird, animated by glowing stones” is creative, but such stones would send you flying only toward the afterlife. Please wear gloves—preferably very thick ones.

Second, I examined the sketch you enclosed, a contraption somewhere between a wind-mill, a cauldron, and an umbrella. I cannot determine its purpose, but I urge caution. If it is meant to rotate, do not sit inside it. If it is meant to boil, do not sit inside it. If it is meant to do both... absolutely do not sit inside it.

Lastly, you asked whether radioactive materials might accelerate human creativity. A flattering thought, but the glow around me is scientific, not – as you suggested – ‘proof of a supernatural muse.’ Should you begin to glow, I advise stepping away quickly.

I remain deeply impressed by your mind, your sketches, and your relentless curiosity. Should you need help with physics—or with identifying substances that should not go into flying machines—I remain at your service.

With great scientific affection,



Marie Skłodowska Curie

PS: How did you manage to withstand the ravages of time? You should have been dead for 384 years by now.