

To: 1969 non-donors

Greetings from Now-Thawed-Out Austin, Texas: Y'all know by now that a Berkshire Winter came to Texas last week. More like an Alberta Winter.

I am happy to report that we did not lose power in our home, unlike hundreds of thousands of my fellow Austinites and millions of fellow Texans. When we lost water (for three days), I shoveled up snow from our backyard into our dogs' wading pool on the back porch. We then transferred the snow (it did not melt in the pool, inasmuch as the temperature stayed below freezing for six days, which used to be illegal in Texas) to large pots to melt on the stove (the gas stayed on, too). This we used to fill our toilet tanks. We had stocked up on Topo Chico, agua mineral muy famosa de Mexico, so we had plenty of very nice drinking and cooking water for ourselves and our three dogs. The water came back on, in fits and starts, and soon the snow was gone. The temperature returned to the 60s and 70s during the day, as God his very own self intended it to be.

I did not learn from Don Gifford and Fred Stocking in English 101-102 to write like this. That skill came later, when I acquired Texan as a second language during graduate school in Philosophy at The University here, starting 50 years ago. Hence, "God his very own self."

As I worked on shoveling the snow, unhappy childhood memories of clearing our very, very long driveway in Needham at first came to mind. But then I recalled that Whitney Stoddard, Bill Pierson, and Lane Faison taught me – and many of you -- that the impressionists were right: snow is not white but takes on the colors reflected onto it by objects around it. As I shoveled the snow, I looked to see if it was sky-blue and rose-pink, like Monet's snow in the grain-stacks series (at the MFA in Boston, where I studied during spring break junior year for the final in Lane's French art course) or night-sky-green like Remington's winter painting of horses, menaced by wolves, calling for help (at the MFAH in Houston, where I spent many happy hours during 28 years in that great city). The snow was not these colors, however. It was more the quiet green and yellow and gray snow in Pissarro's winter paintings at The Clark. The colors evanesced on the stove top. Whitney, Bill, and Lane – and their Impressionist friends – prepared me for the Berkshires and Alberta in Texas. I am confident that you can tell a similar story about how Williams prepared you in your life for the unexpected that you then made familiar – and tamed – by calling to mind what our professors taught us in the lecture halls, seminar rooms, and laboratories, as well as in sports (coaches were and still are faculty), so many years ago.

A College that does that for its students is worth supporting. This is my second solicitation of the 2020-2021 Alumni Fund. As of this writing, our classmates have contributed more than \$90,000 toward our goal of \$115,000! On behalf of the College's faculty, staff, and students, I want to thank all those who have contributed. I also want to thank, very much indeed, classmates who have contributed to the College for other purposes, especially to fulfill pledges toward our 50th reunion gifts.

I am writing now to ask those of you who have not contributed to this year's Alumni Fund to please consider doing so. In the COVID-19 era we all continue to face many unexpected demands, particularly from family members who have taken non-trivial financial hits. So, if you can make a contribution, good on you (another instance of Texan as my second language). If you need to husband your resources for others, good on you for doing that, too.

Here is how you can contribute.

All the best from sunny (once again) Austin, Texas.

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