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"But it is so beautiful"

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Quad 136



But it is so beautiful

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“But it is so beautiful”

T. S. Eliot writes in the first line of *The Waste Land*, “April is the cruellest month.”

He was making an emotional argument, rather than a meteorological one. I suspect for most Minnesotans, March is often the cruelest month. Winter has been around for four months and the end is not even necessarily in sight. Temperatures are creeping up but often only enough to make for a grey, soupy, muddy mess. And storms still threaten from the Great Plains. The real possibility of flooding remains ahead. Baseball, golf and picnics seem remote.

I was thinking such thoughts over the past couple weeks when two separate encounters with non-Minnesotans brought me up short and reminded me not to take the natural world around us for granted.

The morning after a recent snowfall I was walking in Flyntown and met another walker coming out of the Collegeville Institute driveway. He looked a bit perplexed, so I asked if he needed directions. “No, I am just going for a walk.” He paused and added, “This is amazing,” as he looked around. “Is it always like this? I am from Italy, and we don’t have scenery such as this.”

I explained that while we usually had a winter snow cover, the brilliant fresh snow surrounding him and blanketing the trees and buildings had arrived in the last 24 hours. What he was admiring was not typical.

Another day I was driving to campus from our home on Fruit Farm Road. I saw a student making his way toward upper campus, and I offered him a ride. We chatted, and I discovered he was a senior from Texas. The day was bright and quite chilly, like many days in the last couple months,

and I said, “This winter must be especially tough for a Texan.”

The Johnnie looked at me, and said with genuine wonder, “But it is so beautiful.”

And so it is.























By [Michael Hemesath](#) | March 15th, 2019 | Categories: [Campus](#) | [1 Comment](#)

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Michael Hemesath is the 13th president of Saint John's University. A 1981 SJU graduate, Hemesath is the first layperson appointed to a full presidential term at SJU. You can find him on Twitter [at] [PrezHemesath](#).