

My Very Own Disaster: A Snow Storm in Texas

January 28

Dear Mom and Dad,

As you know, since moving here to Central Texas last summer from Ontario I've experienced quite a few strange things: drive thru beer stores, unintelligible accents mesquite smoked Bar-B-Que and temperatures so high I thought I was going to melt. But today's events are...well unbelievable!

You see, the state completely shut down the University because of a threat of freezing rain! Last night's forecast called for "possible freezing rain and snow" so as a safety measure all state offices from Austin to San Antonio have been closed. Can you believe that! Of course, I didn't know any of this until after I walked to school this morning.

At school, a friend explained that Central Texas is not at all prepared for the occasional winter storm. The Department of Transportation, for instance, has no salting trucks or plows. The only preventative measures they employ is to throw sand onto bridges and overpasses form dump trucks and to tell people to stay off the roads. It's actually been scary to listen to the radio and watch TV. You'd think it was a major natural disaster. And you know the irony of it all? There's no ice anywhere! Yes, the temperature is hovering around 28 degrees but the streets are clear and empty.

Earlier this afternoon, I decided that since I had the day off I might as well see a matinee. I arrived at the theater only to find it closed "due to inclement weather." On my way home I stopped at the grocery store. What a mistake -- the place was packed with people buying batteries and canned goods. The soup aisle was barren.

I suppose people here are just reacting normally but it seems strange to me.

Yours...snowed in,

Michal

(Source: Lash, Jeff. 1996. Fictitious letter about a not-so-fictitious event in totally real Texas.)