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Dear Mr. Barnes,

It was a great pleasure having lunch with you at Haystack. I don't know what fortuitous set of circumstances brought you to campus on the day that the students from New Mexico were there, but a fine bit of serendipity it was. I also enjoyed meeting your wife, Mary, and hearing her role in your work. She was obviously an important part of your career and life.

Did you notice how attentive the students were? I could just imagine their thinking that here they were, sitting by the fireplace in the dining room of this award-winning example of modern architecture with the man who designed it, and wondering how it all happened. A few of the students had never seen the ocean before. Imagine that the view from the stairway was your first glimpse of the ocean. Some said that the place was "too powerful" and that they felt "displaced." They were made to confront differences in the landscape that they could only imagine back in Albuquerque. It was just the kind of experience a teacher hopes to provide for students.

Was it your familiarity with Maine that allowed you to sense the importance of the landscape as you were designing the buildings? In understanding the fragility of the Maine landscape, you knew the importance of keeping a light footprint fifty years ago, before it was a cultural mandate. In fact, the buildings and walkways hovering above the ground have no footprint at all. You spoke of the process of designing Haystack, of trying to accommodate all of the requirements laid before you. I remember asking you when you knew what you were going to do, when you had the "aha" moment. You said that it was when you envisioned the central stairway. I didn't tell you then, but your saying that incited an "aha" moment in me. I realized that every creative act has a moment, a line, a motion, a hook, that defines the work. I recognized it in my own process for the first time. Thank you for your insight.

In describing your relationship with Haystack, you mentioned that you had been called upon over the years to approve various modifications and new construction. When asked if this were normal, you laughed warmly and said, "Oh, heavens, no!" You seemed to have enjoyed your long relationship with the school and appreciated the efforts to maintain the architectural integrity that you had conceived. But when one of the students asked whether they should keep in mind what you had done and integrate your design concepts into what they would design, you said, "Don't do what I did!"—letting them off the hook and encouraging them to create their own visions. It was a moment of wisdom coming from a true teacher. Thank you for your generosity.

I have done a little reading about you, you know. To me, you had always been the man with the musical name, one of the giants of twentieth-century architecture, the designer of Haystack. But you did so much more, creating dozens of buildings to meet the needs of function and place and beauty, each individual and seemingly without ego. To succeed so magnificently in a field that seems to exalt ego is a rare thing. For any artist, it is a rare thing. Thank you for your humility.

There is one question that I wish I had asked you at that lunch table. (Actually, there are many, but this one comes to mind.) How did you come to understand so well the use of these buildings? I imagine you were instructed as to the particular medium for each studio and the purposes of the other structures, sleeping, dining, etc. But how did you know how it should all fit together to make a community? For that is what it is, a community that reconstitutes itself each session. It is my belief that anyone can behave well for two weeks. Much longer? I'm not so sure. But at Haystack, people behave not only well, but admirably, beyond their own expectations. I can only attribute that to the place and to the mission that you saw so well. Thank you for your vision.



*Main deck and clay studio.*

Teacher, student, trustee. I am lucky to have been all three in the last twenty-five years. I have experienced Haystack from different points of view. While teaching, one hopes for inspiring surroundings, accommodating studio space, and a good night's sleep. Check. As a student, one hopes for the space to work with a good teacher, a community of challenging yet collegial fellow-students, and a supportive atmosphere. Check. As a trustee, one hopes for a cause that is of sufficient value that he or she can be a true and unqualified proponent. To have a physical manifestation of that cause that is so powerful...well, check. Thank you for all of that.

Among artists, architects have perhaps the biggest challenge. The process is long, the voices are many, and the outcome is there for all to see and judge. I hope it has given you great pleasure knowing that Haystack Mountain School of Crafts is seen as not just successful, but as transcendent, by those who encounter it. I have a feeling that you know that. I'm just honored to have been there.

My sincerest regards,

Lissa Hunter

