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### Nature's Spectacle

I have always had an obsession with thunderstorms. None of my family members can understand why storms fascinate me, but something about a summer afternoon thunderstorm in Southern Louisiana is beautiful, romantic, and frightening all at the same time. Short rainstorms are amazing demonstrations of nature's one-of-a-kind beauty.

Living in the South, my family spends many summer afternoons on the wide bayou behind our house. Almost every day, around two o'clock in the afternoon, a cool wind breaks through the thick, humid Louisiana air. Ominous, dark, billowy clouds roll in from the distance, and low thunder is heard echoing through the dark green cypress marsh along the bayou. Everyone knows the signs: a storm is quickly approaching. The inner tube is pulled in and the boat docked and tied up securely. As my family unloads the heaps of colorful towels, flip-flops, and ice chests from our dilapidated, but trusty, old boat, the first drops of rain begin to fall.

Everyone rushes inside to eat lunch, safe from the rain and thunder. I linger on the screen porch alone – this is my absolute favorite part of the day. I can close my eyes and experience a miraculous Louisiana thunderstorm. First, the strengthening cool breeze chills me thoroughly in my still-wet swimsuit. The well-known smell of rain, musty but comforting, surrounds me completely as the raindrops fall harder and harder on the thin roof of the screen porch. Fat raindrops splatter on the broad leaves of the trees on their journey down to Earth, and those drops that make it all the way to the surface of the bayou create miniature explosions as they strike the glassy surface of the water.

Lightening flashes, sharp and bright, across the black stormy sky. As its white light fades from my eyes, my heart begins to beat wildly in anticipation of the event sure to follow. The ground-shaking thunder takes its turn next, rumbling softly at first, but quickly increasing in strength, crashing and clapping like a wet towel being whipped across the sky. At the peak of the storm, I run outside to stand in the rain and feel the cool drops against my skin. The deafening claps of thunder shake the air particles around me. The blinding white flashes of light periodically illuminate the black sky. As I stand, fully vulnerable to Mother Nature's strength, I admire the awesome show she has put on.

I have watched thunderstorms hundreds of times, but they never lose their intrigue. This fleeting occurrence is a glorious reminder of nature's power and strength. While some people may be content tucked away inside, I am happier in the heart of the storm, watching its amazing spectacles and feeling its reverberations firsthand.