

The Thunderstorm

I watched a thunderstorm, far out over the sea. It began quietly, and with nothing visible except tall dark clouds and a rolling tide. There was just a soft murmur of thunder as I watched the horizon from my balcony. Over the next few minutes, the clouds closed and reflected lightning set the rippling ocean aglow. The thunderheads had covered up the sun, shadowing the vista. It was peaceful for a long time.

I was looking up when the first clear thunderbolt struck. It blazed against the sky and sea; I could see its shape in perfect reverse colors when I blinked. More followed. The thunder rumbled and stuttered as if it could hardly keep up. There were openings in the cloud now, as if the sky were torn, and spots of brilliant blue shone above the shadowed sea.

I looked down then, watching the waves. Every bolt was answered by a moment of spreading light on the surface. The waves were getting rough, rising high and crashing hard enough that I could hear them.

Then came the rain. It came all at once and in sheets, soaking the sand, filling the sea. It was so dense I could only see the lightning as flashes of light. It came down so hard the thunder was drowned. Everything was rhythmic light and shadow, noise and silence, blending into a single experience of all five senses.

In an instant it stopped. The storm broke. The clouds came apart like curtains. The rain still fell, but softly now. It was as if there had never been a storm at all, except for a single signature. A rainbow, almost violently bright, spread above and across the water. I could see the horizon again.