

fortitude to unfurl myself from the chair and walked back in, I found that someone else had. They now illuminated my best friend, who had been next to me as Pea Eye stumbled and fell to stillness; my mom, who

was putting the finishing touches on what I now realized was a collection of comfort foods; and my dad, who had just minutes before let me know I wasn't alone. △

## Watching the Storm Pass By

Amelia Pope

My favorite season is summer.  
Not for the weeds blooming flowers on the side of the road  
or for the lightning bugs dancing all night  
but for the thunderstorms.  
When I was little, my grandpa taught me to count  
between the booms and the flashes of light,  
divide by five and I would always know where the storm was.  
I could never keep count.  
I always got lost staring at the dark clouds or wondering  
where the lightning had struck,  
and before I knew it the storm was gone,  
leaving behind cool air, moist grass, and myself sitting  
on a bench—  
where I would sit for hours thinking about all the lighting I had saw.  
*Where did it strike?*  
*Was anyone hurt?*  
*What if that was us in the middle of the storm?*  
But soon my worries would be calmed by the weatherman on the 5 o'clock news,  
who would use big words like *doppler radar* and *cold front*—  
to tell us the bad weather was gone for the week.  
So, I would wait until the next storm to practice counting in between the flashes and booms,  
and then dividing by five.



## As the Snow Falls

Alex Wallace

Second Place, Photography