

The Perfect Storm  
Non Fiction Narrative  
Word Count: 736

The sun was setting slowly over the distant mountains and for a split second the orange and pink glow of the sky illuminated the brown earth below. Standing by the cold glass door I could see everything in detail: the dusty earth dotted with yucca plants and cacti no longer in bloom. The gray fence behind my grandfathers' gray trailer. The neighbors pulling in for the night. As I sauntered over to my room I glanced out the window towards the back of the house, the darkness began descending as I caught a glimpse of sagebrush and darting jack rabbits that slid into their holes. I ambled into the kitchen with the smell of hot soup luring me in. The flavors meshed together in the air--stewing meat, starchy potatoes, soft and bitter zucchinis--all bubbling happily. *Mh, just for me*, I thought hungrily. As I wandered around, the cold scent of the rainy autumn sky permeated our house, enmeshing itself with the warm fragrance of fresh caldo. I sat down at the kitchen table and the sky rumbled. My mom walked into the kitchen from her room. "Grandpa called, he said we should start closing up, there's supposed to be a really big storm," she said as she lifted the clanking lid and began stirring the delicious liquid in our giant metal pot. I glanced outside toward the cold window and watched as it started rattling, shaking with nature's fury. I turned and saw my mother ladle the soup into a ceramic flowered bowl, wipe the sides, and set it in front of me. I slurped up all of its warm goodness and munched happily, tortilla in hand, and watched the angry sky grow black.

I sat in the living room watching the fire from our hearth reflecting and dancing on the blue cover of my book--Dr. Seuss' *Cat in the Hat*. And as I was listening to the crackle of the fire, the *schloop* of the pages, and the vehement rumble of the thunder, it began to rain. Suddenly and torrentially, the roof began to clink, clank, clink, clank. The rain got harder and harder and

began to shake the house. “Well, I guess it’s time to close the door,” my mom said as she slapped the door shut and clicked the lock. “Your dad says it’s raining really hard in Fremont.” I was minimally concerned about my dad ‘the truck driver,’ until I imagined him in my mind’s eye hauling a giant lumbering beast over onto the off ramp. Slowly pulling into a truck stop with its eerie blue lights, the windshield wipers vigorously cleaning off the blurry windows. My worry morphed into genuine concern as I looked up at her. She swept back my hair and said, “No te preocupes, don’t worry, he said he’ll be okay. Besides it shouldn’t be too bad.”

As the night wore on the storm grew worse. I yawned as sleep started descending upon me like the night itself. Suddenly the lights went out. And for a moment I was alone. Completely alone and listening to the tempest outside. The house was shaking. The windows began bending in and out, back and forth, shaking and rattling, buckling under the weight of hail being hurled from the sky. Then a flashlight came on. My breath was shallow and labored as I found that I had not been breathing. As I crouched beneath the couch my mom lit some candles and I could see the glow flickering warmly on her face. It looked like peace, and she looked at me and smiled.

In what seemed like hours later the storm began to rumble silently and quietly. Then, edge into stillness. It was perfect: the warmth of my bed that I had not realized that I had been lain in; the smell of the wet earth which crept in cold through my bedroom window; the distant gray clouds receding away from a pink and orange sky. I sat up and looked out my window and saw the jack rabbits slowly peeking out of their holes. The wet sagebrush looking bright and dark sea foam green. The wet wooden posts standing like sentinels holding up barbed wire; overgrown with weeds that extended out towards the horizon. And in that moment, before I lay back down to sleep, I knew that I was safe and everything was okay.