

The Washington Post
TRAVEL



Honorable mention ↻

Gabriel Lee, 66, Takoma, Wash.
Lee, a retired cardiologist, took this image on the Grand Canyon's South Rim during a lightning and monsoon photography workshop last August. The group checked the forecast, saw a thunder cell forming and drove to the location hoping to photograph it. Lee set up quickly and snapped this image around 6:40 p.m. after about 15 minutes of waiting. He used a Nikon Z7 II camera with a Nikon NIKKOR Z 14-24mm lens; he also used a lightning trigger, a gadget that activates the shutter when lightning strikes. He was taken with the cloud's mushroom shape and the contrast of the storm's microclimate and the blue sky. "There's something about capturing beautiful landscapes that's hard to describe and you want to preserve that memory," he said. "This lightning is probably 30 or 40 miles away, but even at that distance you can appreciate its tremendous force."

THE PHOTO CONTEST

With many pandemic-era travel restrictions in the rearview mirror, we are out in the world again. The winning entries in our 23rd annual photo contest were created all over the globe, but they are connected by a common thread — gratitude. They share an appreciation for life's everyday wonders, be they small (the tidiness of a shoeshine station or the shimmer of a fish's scales) or large (the thrill of a lightning strike or the vast expanse of a night sky). Travel hones our awareness of wonder at any scale. Here are the three top winners and 10 honorable mentions in this year's competition.