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Magnetars Storm the Earth

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Magnetars are a class of young neutron stars that appear to be powered by their ultrahigh magnetic fields, on the order of 10^{14} - 10^{15} G on their surfaces, the highest magnetic fields yet known in the Universe. These amazing sources produce erratic X-ray and gamma-ray bursts, the brightest of which have actually observably impacted the Earth's atmosphere from clear across the Galaxy. In this talk I will review what we know about magnetars, including their observational properties and the current thinking about the physical origins of their dramatic behavior.