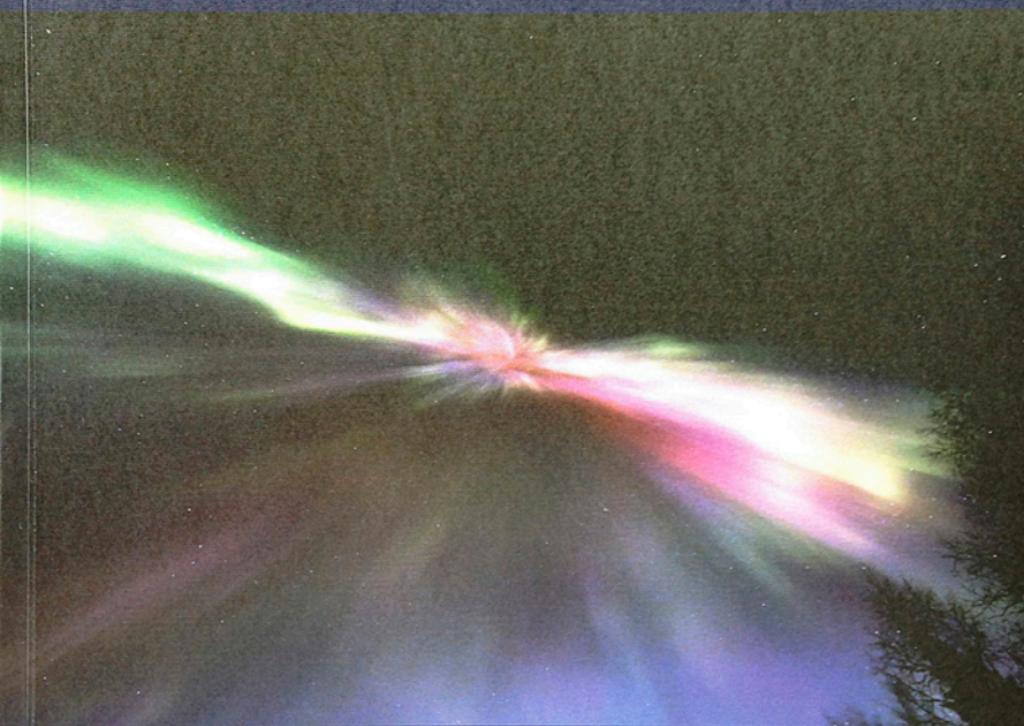


SÁPMI SKYAR

SÁPMI SKIES



Myter och vetenskap över svenska Lappland

Myth and science over Swedish Lapland

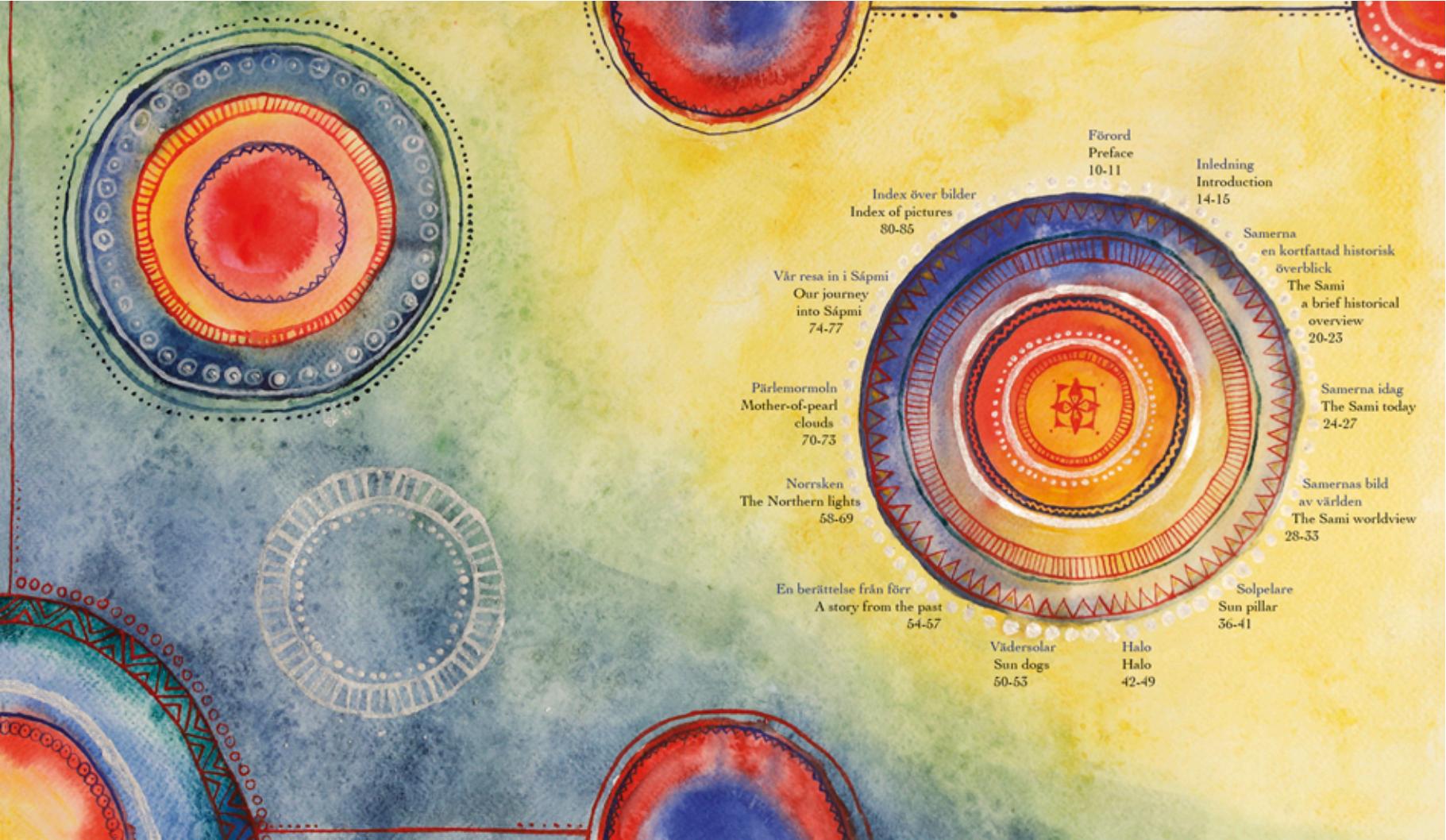


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en kortfattad historisk
överblick
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a brief historical
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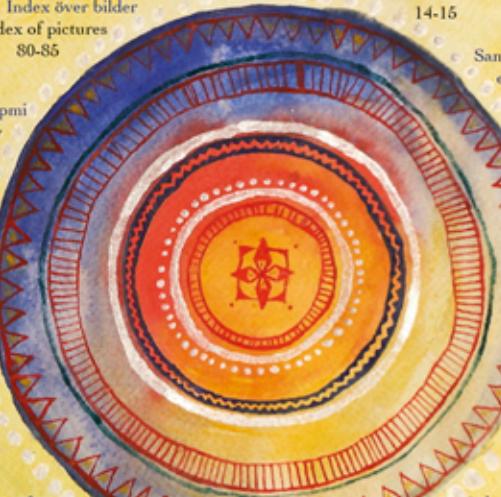
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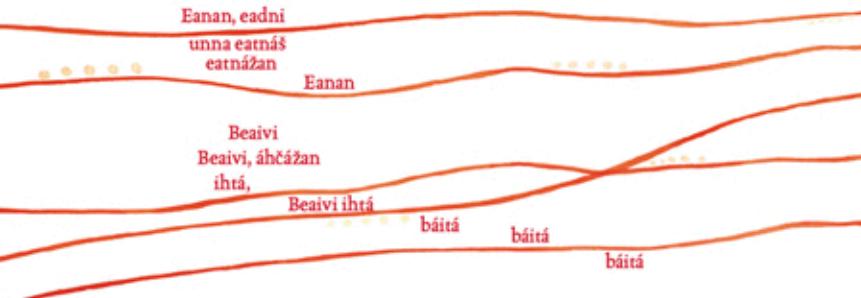
Samerna menade att alla varelser härstammar från föreningen mellan Bievvve, solgudinnan, och Jubmel, överguden. I sitt manuskript *Descriptio Lapponiae* (cirka 1670) hänvisar sameprästen, Nicolai Lundius, till solens centrala plats i samernas liv och trosövertygelser i Ume- och Lule-området:

Solen betraktas som moder till alla levande varelser. (Lundius [1905]1983: 15).

Samisk kosmologi var organisk och egalitär. Alla varelser, inklusive människan, är inte bara skapade av Bievvve och Jubmel, de härstammar också direkt från dem, något som gör alla väsen semi-gudomliga. Livet är ett resultat av både kvinnliga och manliga element, vilket innebär att kvinnor är jämlika männen. Solens Dotter, till exempel, är en mycket framstående figur inom samisk kosmologi, en välvillig ande som beskyddar samerna. Hon är 'samefolkets bästa ambassadör för solens mäktiga kraft' (Gaski 2003 s. 81).

Jordà, mor lille mor min mor	Solen Solen, min far står upp,
Jordà	Solen kommer til syne skinner skinner skinner

"Solen, min far" Nils-Aslak Valkeapää Áillobaš



"Beaví, Áhcážan" Nils-Aslak Valkeapää Áillobaš

The Sami believed that all beings are descended from the union of Bievvve, goddess of the sun, and Jubmel, the earth god. In his manuscript *Descriptio Lapponiae* (circa 1670), Nicolai Lundius, a Sami priest, refers to the central position of the sun in the lives and beliefs of the Sami in the Ume and Lule area:

The Sun is considered to be a mother of all living creatures. (Lundius [1905]1983: 15).

Sami cosmology was organic and egalitarian. All creatures, including man, are not only created by Bievvve and Jubmel, but they are also directly descended from them, making all beings semi-divine. Life is the result of the union of the female and male elements, thus implying that women are equal to men. The Daughter of the Sun, for instance, is a very prominent figure in Sami cosmology, a benevolent spirit that protects the Sami. She is 'the Sami people's best ambassador to the powerful force of the Sun' (Gaski 2003: 81).

Earth, mother dear mother my mother	The Sun The Sun, my father Sunrise, Earth rises shines shines
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"The Sun, my father" Nils-Aslak Valkeapää Áillobaš



Solpelare - *Ajlušvuosáđtu*

Samefolk anser att allt i naturen, krafterna och fenomenen, har ett själsligt innersta väsen. Många naturliga manifestationer som till exempel solpelare ansågs därför vara heliga händelser för vilka man visade största respekt.

Det är Johan som bekräftar att detta är ett utmärkande drag i samisk tro när han erinrar sig upplevelsen av solpelare som barn:

Solpelaren var en belig symbol. När jag var barn och... När jag fick syn på solpelaren, så fick jag inte lämna kojan! Vi var alla tvungna att vänta tills solen hade gått upp och vi kunde se den. Jag minns också, att när en solpelare blev synlig över horisonten, var det strängt förbjudet att visla eller skrika. Solpelaren var en belig symbol; något i naturen man inte kan förstå och för vilken man brukade visa stor respekt.

Även om Johan har varit luthersk präst under många år, anser han inte att hans tro på naturfenomen som heliga symboler är profant. För honom, kan de båda världarna samexistera, fridfullt, utan att utesluta varandra.

Vi brukade visa respekt för naturen. Vi visar respekt för naturen, en natur som ger oss allt vi behöver för att leva. Att visa respekt för naturen tycker jag också är bra i den kristna religionen.

Johan pausar kort. Han ler. Tankarna leder honom tillbaka till tiden då han var student vid Uppsala universitet. Där kom Johan i kontakt med en annan syn på världen, det svenska mainstreamsamhällets. En värld som inte kunde förstå samernas syn på naturen och dess skapelse, en värld som helt enkelt avfärdade samernas övertygelse som rena vidskepelser:

Mina kollegor på Uppsala universitet gjorde narr av mig... de kunde aldrig förstå det faktum att jag såg solpelaren som en belig symbol och att dessa himmelska fenomen hade potentialen att skada en om man visslade eller skrek åt dem.

De kunde helt enkelt inte förstå det...





Sun pillar - *Ajliavuoasáðus*

Sami folk believe that all of nature, its forces and phenomena possess a spiritual essence. Hence many natural manifestations such as sun pillars were considered sacred events for which one had to show the utmost respect.

It is Johan who confirms this characteristic of Sami beliefs when he recalls his encounter with sun pillars as a child:

A sun pillar was a sacred sign. When I was a child and... I would spot the sun pillar, I was not allowed to leave the kojan! We all had to wait until the sun came up and until we could see the sun. I also remember that, when a sun pillar appeared over the horizon, it was strictly forbidden to whistle or to scream. The sun pillar was a sacred sign; something in nature that one cannot understand and for which one used to show great respect.

Johan, despite having been a Lutheran priest for many years, never found his belief in natural phenomena as sacred signs to be profane. To him, both worlds could coexist, peacefully, without mutual exclusion.

We used to show respect for nature. We show respect for nature, nature that gives us everything we need to live. I think that being respectful of nature is also good in the Christian religion.

Johan pauses briefly. He smiles. His thoughts take him back in time to when he was a young student at the University of Uppsala. There Johan came into contact with a different worldview, that of mainstream Swedish society. A world that would not understand the Sami view of nature and its beings, a world that would simply dismiss Sami beliefs as mere superstition:

My colleagues at the University of Uppsala would make fun of me... they could never understand the fact that I considered the sun pillar a sacred sign and that these heavenly phenomena had the potential to harm you if you whistled or screamed at them. They simply could not understand that...

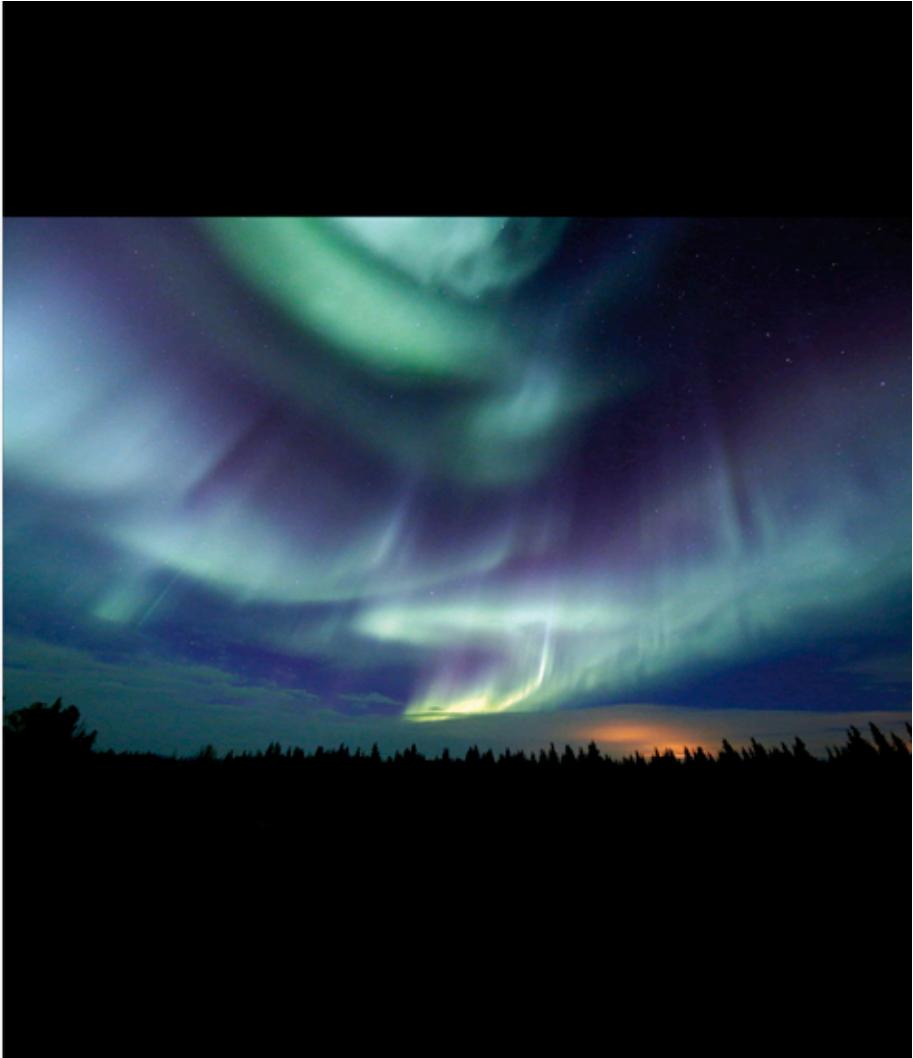
Aurora Borealis - the Northern lights

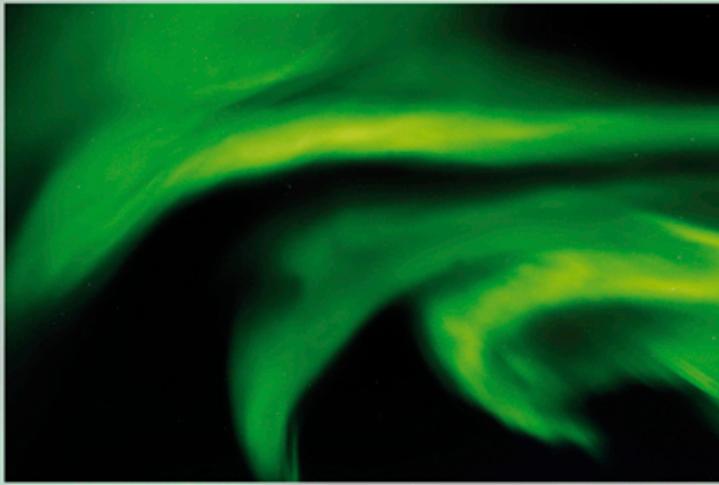
The aurora borealis is the best-known light phenomenon in the skies of Sápmi. The aurora can also be seen in the southern hemisphere, where it is called the aurora australis. Linked to activity of the sun, on clear nights it produces colourful displays in the sky. The sun, which is our star, provides us with the light and heat we need for life on Earth. In addition, the sun emits charged particles – predominantly electrons and protons – into space. These particles are ejected from explosions on the sun's hot surface and travel away from the sun in what is referred to as the solar wind.

Those charged particles of the solar wind that stream towards Earth interact with Earth's magnetic field, which deflects them from their original path. Consequently, most of these charged particles will not hit the Earth but go around it. However, as the solar wind goes around the Earth, it transfers energy into Earth's magnetic field, which can then accelerate some of the charged particles that are already within its magnetic field towards the magnetic poles. As the particles get closer and closer to the poles, they start to descend into the Earth's atmosphere, where they collide with atoms and molecules in the atmosphere. During these collisions the atoms and molecules absorb energy from these fast-moving charged particles and then release it as visible light in a colour of the aurora. The most common of these colours is green, which is produced by oxygen atoms at altitudes of approximately 110 to 180 kilometres. The red of the aurora also originates from oxygen atoms. This red appears much more faintly than the green, and when we see the red in a strong aurora, it will have been generated at higher altitudes, above an altitude of approximately 200 kilometres. Nitrogen molecules which have been ionised by the charged particles release the energy absorbed in these collisions as a blue light. At lower altitudes of around 80 to 110 kilometres, the blue from the nitrogen may be visible in auroras caused by a high level of solar activity.

The charged particles accelerated in Earth's magnetic field will travel down into the atmosphere to a ring-shaped region around the magnetic pole where the auroras are generated. This region, the auroral oval, is continuously changing its shape and location under the influence of Earth's changing magnetic field and the varying strength of the solar wind. As the northern parts of Sápmi are often beneath or near the auroral oval, this region is often blessed with beautiful auroras. The changing shape of the auroral oval gives rise to different types of aurora. The solar wind particles that dive down into the atmosphere to the auroral oval produce a curtain-like aurora. This curtain can make waving motions just like a real curtain waving in the wind. Depending on the auroral oval's location relative to the observer, you may perceive this waving in different ways. If the auroral oval is far away, the waving can scarcely be seen. The closer it is, the better you can make out the waving motions and the higher up in the sky you must look to see them. When you are directly beneath the auroral oval, its motions create dramatic effects: strong waving, growing and collapsing structures, and at time beams of light that appear to shoot straight towards you.

Variations in solar wind and Earth's magnetic field mean that auroras are ever changing. Among other things, the magnetic field is affected by the Earth rotating while being enveloped in the steady solar wind. This provides a general explanation as to why the aurora can be seen better at certain times of day than others. For Sápmi, this means that in the evening hours one can often see the auroral oval slowly rising above the northern horizon, occasionally giving rise to a colourful display later in the evening. As the aurora can be highly unpredictable, it can also be worthwhile gazing at the Sápmi skies at other times. The aurora can be a very impressive phenomenon, but as its light is generally weak, we can see the aurora only in the darkness of the Nordic night. Between late spring and early autumn, when the Sápmi nights do not get dark, we must enjoy other sky phenomena and the ever-changing light and colours of the midnight sun or the long dawns at night.





Det samiska namnet för norrsken är *Guovvagied*, som betyder 'det hörbara ljuset'. Johan erkänner att det är svårare att höra norrskenen nu förtiden på grund av omfattande ljudföroreningarna från bilar, flygplan, och snöskotrar, men förr i tiden när han var renskötare kunde han höra dem.

Thomas är synnerligen intresserad av Johans uttalande, och frågar honom vilket ljud auroran alstrar. Först är Johan osäker på hur han ska beskriva ljudet han brukade höra. Sen tittar han på oss och ansiktet lyser upp

I bland låter norrskenen 'grancb', som ett elektriskt ljud!

Den gamla renskötaren och vetenskapsmannen ser på varandra och skrattar, båda är överens om att ljudet från norrskenen är en av de naturmanifestationer som deras respektive världsälskändningar än så länge inte riktigt begriper sig på.

The Northern lights - *Guovvagied*

Standing on top of a snowy hill, a young girl gazes at a house in the desolate valley. A grey, wispy mist comes up out of the chimney. The smoke soon turns into a plume of lively, iridescent green currents that swirl upwards, illuminating everything. These are the *Guovvagied*, the Northern Lights! The girl is frightened. The mischievous *Stalla* is inside the house concocting his evil magic, and the Northern Lights may be some of his potions leaking out of the house through the chimney. The girl knows that she must be quiet and still so as not to disturb the lights, which may otherwise come after her and take her up into the sky.

The young girl is Inga-Wiktoria, the Sami artist who has pictorially interpreted the stories in this book. Inga-Wiktoria has reached back into her childhood memories to portray the Northern Lights. Inga-Wiktoria remembers that when she was a child, her grandmother, Inga Idivuoma, would tell her that the Northern Lights were the smoke that came out of the house of *Stalla*, one of the Sami's most feared enemies, and would warn her and the other children to go inside as soon as the *Guovvagied* appeared in the sky.

The Sami respect and fear the *Guovvagied*. Those who dare to provoke them will most likely face consequences for their acts.

Johan recalls his parents' scorn when he would not listen to them and whistled disrespectfully at the lights in the sky. Now, many years later, he has learnt to respect the 'living lights' and he thanks them every time they appear in the sky

Thank you for shining!

The following old Sami tale collected by the Norwegian ethnographer Just Knut Qvigstad in the 1920s earnestly admonishes one not to play around with the powerful and irritable lights in the sky

Once two youngsters provoked the Northern Lights so that eventually they came down and took away a calf out of the byre and when the people came they only found some drops of blood on the snow; the calf was gone. (Qvigstad 1920: 67 in Séamas Ó Catháin 1998: 169)

Besides its destructive power and the need for the Sami to be respectful and behave properly in its presence, the Northern Lights were also useful to Sami reindeer herders. Johan was always grateful when the lights illuminated the otherwise dark and scary winter night

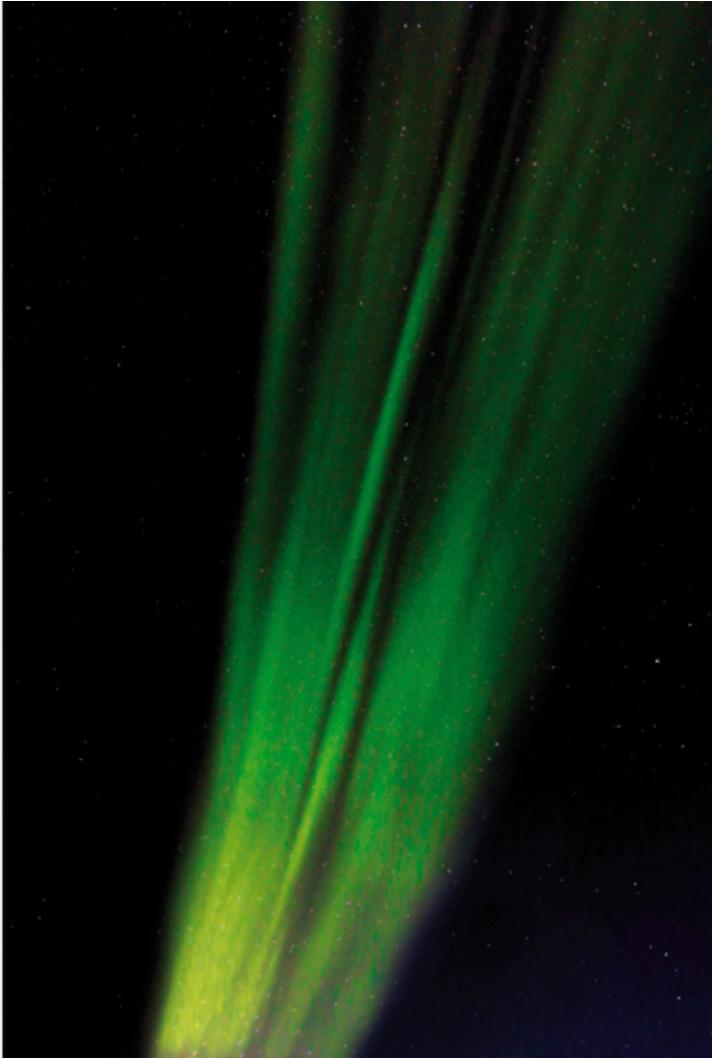
One time, I had to move three mil (50 km) with my reindeer over a lake and I was very happy that the Northern Lights were there to show me the way...

The Sami name for the Northern Lights is *Guovvajávd*, which means 'the audible light'. Johan admits that it is more difficult to hear the Northern Lights nowadays because of the widespread auditory pollution from cars, airplanes, and snowmobiles, but back in his day as a reindeer herder he could hear them.

Thomas is particularly intrigued by Johan's statement, and asks him what kind of sound the aurora produces. Johan is at first unsure how to describe the sound he used to hear. Then he looks at us and his face brightens

Sometimes the Northern Lights sound like 'granch', an electric sound!

The old Sami reindeer herder and the scientist look at each other and laugh, and they both agree that the sound of the Northern Lights is one of those natural manifestations that their respective worldviews have not yet fully grasped.





Jag vet nog
att du väntar en morgon
en vacker förunderlig framtid

Inte vill jag nega dig det
drömmen är ju livets
gåva

"Vidderna inom mig"

I know
that you are waiting for a dawn
a wondrously beautiful future

I don't want to deny you that
because dreaming is the gift
of life

"Trekways of the Wind"

Gal mun diedán
ahte vuorddát idida
čäppa imaslaš boahittevuo da

Inge hálit dan gieldit dus
niehkuhan lea eallima
niggodat

"Ruoktu Väimus"
Nils-Aslak Valkeapää Áillohaš



X
VARDA

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