



★ **Spirits in the Sky: Northern Lights Photography**

Paul Zizka

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Spirits in the Sky showcases photographer Paul Zizka's stunning portraits of the aurora borealis in places including Banff National Park, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland.

The Northern Lights have long been the subject of Finnish and Inuit legends. Although Zizka gives a succinct explanation of the science behind the phenomenon, it remains mysterious, and the unearthly green, white, and purple swirls that populate his photographs are enrapturing. There are long exposures and self-portraits against breathtaking landscapes of mountains and lakes; other people appear climbing glaciers or in ice caves, revealing the true scale of the aurora. Animals are captured, too, including a horned owl and wood bison. Cave mouths frame memorable shots. The book's human-made structures, including an abandoned truck and Zizka's tent, are all the more striking in contrast with the impressionistic colors above.

The book also represents a behind-the-scenes look at a photographer's work. If the weather and viewing conditions allow—if “the data is good,” as in Zizka's shorthand—Zizka knows he'll be going out in the wee hours. One “needs to be committed to a long, potentially sleepless night,” he notes. His family's understanding is a given, and his toddler daughter's first glimpse of the aurora makes for a poignant ending.

The gorgeous photographs of the northern lights in *Spirits in the Sky* are magical and transportive.

REBECCA FOSTER (May / June 2022)

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