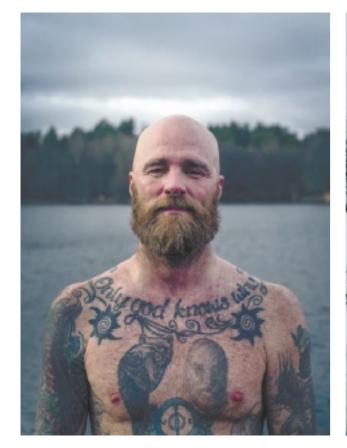
Monday, December 18, 2017 | Haaretz

## **GALLERY** הירוא







All photographs by Daniel Tchetchik heat, and the surrender to

the enormous power of na-

ture, which every year takes over the space without anv-

**Daniel Tchetchik** and David Stavrou

ptimists say after every disaster, "The sun will still rise tomorrow." Even if the skies fall, even if the world seems to be against us, people comforting us insist on telling us that the sun will always rise again, and with it bring new hope. The sun shining every day is a comfort wrapped up in the natural order of things and in the feeling of security granted us by the laws of nature. It allows us to keep believing. Whether faith or the laws of nature are of the highest order for us, the rising of the sun gives us the confidence to get up every morning anew and to do our part in the world.

But things aren't so simple for the four million people living north of the Arctic Circle. In the frigid months of November and December, residents of the Arctic region lose several minutes of daylight with each passing day. Each day is shorter than the one before, and in most of the cities, towns and villages above 66.5 degrees north — the line of latitude that demarcates the Circle. residents begin preparing for the very long nights already in late October.

In addition to increasingly shorter periods of weakening light at dusk, nighttime will last in Bar-

# In extraordinary photos: The Swedes say a long goodbye to sunlight

The sun has set in northern Sweden, not to return until the new year. Haaretz captured the lives of four million people north of the Arctic Circle, in the last glimpses of light



row, Alaska, for example, a in mid-January. little more than two months. In the cities of Tromso, Norway, and Norilsk, Russia, the darkness descended at the end of last month, and the sun will rise again only

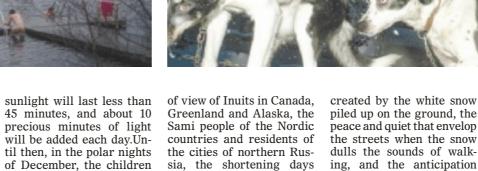
The sun set this week in north Sweden, and the next sunrise will be visible only in the next calendar year. During that first day, in early January, the precious minutes of light will be added each day.Until then, in the polar nights of December, the children will go to school and return from it in the dark, just as their parents will go to and from work. The playground games and sports competitions will take place under artificial light, and streetlights will be lit around the clock. Thousands of candles

will light dinner tables. "Av is dead/ So, too, Elul/ And their heat is gone," wrote Shmuel Hanagid, the Spanish Hebrew poet, 1,000 years ago. Like Shmuel Hanagid, northern cultures, and perhaps with even greater vigor, dedicate mythological chapters, folktales and art works to the changing of the seasons and to nature's great drama.

In Norse mythology, the Fimbulvetr, the long and difficult winter, constitutes the first stage of the twilight of the gods and destruction of the world. The northern winter also reverberates in the great 19th-century Russian novels, in 20th-century American literature, in the Swedish director Ingmar Bergman's films and in the canvases of the Norwegian painter Edvard Munch.

The changing of the seasons is a catalyst for the evolution of tales and the shaping of the internal world of their characters. It makes the vegetation grow, animals wander and humans change the way they live. But life in the northern countries is different from that of the Middle East not only in movies and literature, but also in real life. Cars need special winter tires. Snow must be cleared daily from sidewalks, roofs and roads. Parents give babies vitamin D drops, which children in countries closer to the equator derive from exposure to sunlight. And, many youth suffer from seasonal affective disorder, aka SAD.

The Arctic winter perhaps sounds cruel and depressing, but from the point



cvcle The weather may influence the mood, but in contrast to what some may assume, suicide rates in northern countries are far from being the highest in the world. "Why do those

and low temperatures are

a natural part of the annual

The real power of the Arctic winter is to remind us that we are in no sense the creators of the world.

who live in the south talk all the time about winter depression?" an acquaintance living hundreds of kilometers north of Stockholm asked me. "Those who live in the south perhaps feel differently, but people here wait for the winter and are happy during it."

That's why many residents of the north anticipate the winter. They're used to it. They aren't afraid of it and don't hide from it in their homes. They make a living from it and even enjoy it: whether it's the light

created by the white snow peace and quiet that envelop the streets when the snow dulls the sounds of walking, and the anticipation of the winter holidays that clothe the natural darkness and cold in man-made light

A Swedish pop song from 1984 called "Vintersaga" describes the unique period when winter arrives. grabs a seat and settles in to stay. It's a description in small pictures from all over this huge Nordic country, which is so sparsely populated (Sweden is the third largest country in the European Union, but only in 13th place in terms of population)

and heat.

tion of the song, whose words and music are by Ted Strom, who also recorded it: A coastal tanker stomping through the pack ice in

Following is a transla-

the Quark, a workout at Ullevi in haze. Border station in Tornio

an old woman on a kicksled,

lighthouse

Landsort

where the snow storm sweeps in. Dense snow and sleet in the hills of Mariaberget,

hot and sweat at Statt in Härnösand. A truck in the whirling

snow between Kiruna and the distant. flickering lights in Visby

harbour.

It is then that the great

one being able to change it or influence it. And that in effect is the real power of the Arctic winter. It reminds us that we are in no sense the creators of the world. It's true that in the Arctic regions human

beings are engaged in the same activities as people in every other place. Still, there are those huge spaces without a single living soul. The forests, the icebergs, the endless snow-covered areas and the great and steadily increasing darkness are such a powerful backdrop that they sometimes cause human beings to get lost in them.

Political discussions and newspaper headlines, petty gossip and social struggles, making a living and relationships, are all covered by a thick blanket of tremendous forces that are not dependent on our wishes and our capabilities - the northern winds and the currents, the ice and snow, the darkness and the light.

It's not as though everything else is unimportant. it's simply a reminder that we are born, live and die and from the sea blows an within something greater than ourselves. Outside the In Malmö the mist is big cities of the temperate scratched by the ferries' zones, it's easier to remember that we are a part of the and on the other side of world, not its rulers.

In her poem "The Land that Is Not," the modernist Finnish-Swedish poet Edith Södergran writes about the land of the dead for which she longs. The poem was written during the period of her illness, which caused her death from tuberculosis at the age of 31, in 1923, and the land that is not, the kingdom of the dead, is reminiscent of the lands of the northern nights – it is dark, with endless fogs, and illuminated by the light of the moon and the stars.

I long for the land that is not,/ For all that is, I am weary of wanting./ The moon speaks to me in silvern runes/ About the land that is not./ The land where all our wishes become wondrously fulfilled,/ The land where all our fetters fall.

The photographer's trip was supported by the Swedish Embassy in Israel.

The Mediterranean Sea



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### Weather

melancholy rolls in

the strait the world begins.

the headwind on the Tjörn

Lapland train] bellows like

a wild beast through the

the farms turn off their

A storm-beaten Mar-

Stockholm City sways in

Love that lives between

*Is fueled by cheap wine.* 

It is then that the great

and from the sea blows an

This is the profound and

pensive melancholy, the sad-

ness and gloom of the Swed-

ish winter. It's the longing

for the sun, its light and its

the night shift and the dream

melancholy rolls in

icy bleak wind.

strand says its Pater Noster,

gives "Deliverance."

Lapplandspilen

A lonely Volvo rips in

the cinema in Pajala

icy bleak wind.

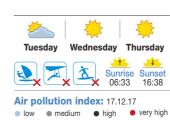
Bridge,

lights.

drunkenness.

#### Slightly cooler,

light rain possible Partly cloudy to cloudy Monday, with a chance of light rain; slightly cooler but still warmer than average for the season. Tuesday will be partly cloudy with no marked change in temperatures. Warmer Wednesday and even hotter Thursday.



Be'er Sheva Karmiel

