

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE AURORA IN VERSE

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As the nights grow longer, displays of the aurora borealis will occasionally attract attention in the northern United States and in Canada. Here are the reactions of some of the poets to this weird and beautiful phenomenon:

"As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds."

Milton. Paradise Lost.

"...a colour and a light
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night."

Tennyson. Locksley Hall.

"The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my red beard
Blown by the night wind,
Affrighting the nations."

Longfellow. The Challenge of Thor.

"The upper air burst into life
A thousand fireflags sheen,
And to and fro and in and out
The wan stars danced between."

Coleridge. The Ancient Mariner.

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