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Srínawésin: The Language of the Kindred

Section VIII:

Draconic Speech

Dialogues, Songs and Conversations

8.1. Overview

This section includes a selection of dialogues, songs, poems and conversations which Davis recorded in his notes, all of which he had with or heard from his sources. I have chosen these dialogues primarily because they are fairly short and simplistic in their grammar and vocabulary, a perfect introduction to the way the Kindred actually speak to one another but without being overly complex or difficult, especially for me to translate or the reader to understand. In order to make these sections as understandable as possible I have chosen to translate them into the closest possible colloquial English sentences rather than the exact literal translation.

For instance the first phrase in the dialogue immediately below is “*Tsyenyáru’qs, xišuthéš*” which literally translates to ‘I definitely do not know you/him/her (Class I Kindred), O one-who-is-strange-to-himself/herself.’ Although this is technically accurate and a fair representation of what the utterance truly means, I have translated it simply as ‘I do not know you, stranger’ to make it more understandable. Various unspoken aspects of the conversations such as assumed or understood verbs, objects, subjects and so forth are indicated either by () or simply not at all in order to keep the flow of the English translations. Actions, events or other notes which Howard wrote down in his notes within the dialogues are indicated by the brackets [].

It is important to note that as Howard’s researches into Srínawésin continued he began to simply record most of the songs and conversations that he heard from his sources in the original language and neglected to provide any English translation whatsoever. Several of these selections are in the sections below and I translated them personally. Any and all mistakes or mistranslations are my own rather than those of Davis or his sources.

8.2. A Dialogue between Bloody Face, Howard Davis and Ash Tongue

Davis records this dialogue as happening on September 16th although he does not include the year. He and Bloody Face were sitting on a mountainside, enjoying the autumn sun when the red dragon suddenly sniffed the air, turned his head and glared to the east for a long time. Eventually Davis saw what he was looking at, a small speck which slowly began to grow larger and finally assume the form of a very large, deep-gray male dragon winging their way. The stranger landed a respectable distance from the pair and the two dragons looked at each other for several moments before Bloody Face spoke up:

Bloody Face: *Tsyenyáru’qs, xišuthéš.*
I do not know you, stranger.

Ash Tongue: *Tswalsháthunwéts unneWátsí sa Qxítsúqx tsnuhasa, shuRíhánha sa Wanáqx shuHáqsáqx thésúqxéyész’n.*
I am called Ash Tongue, son of Obsidian Claw and Shadow.

Bloody Face: *Iš... Anneqxíhasés’lá. Xisráhéš nitsitsír sa xáhá nirúnáwéha ixínuwaha’x, xix?*
Ah, yes. I have heard of you. You live to the north-east in the mountains along the Great Ice, don’t you?

Ash Tongue: *Xišuthéš xi? tsiqxewálišáha’x?*
(I do.) And you, stranger? Whose land is this?

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Bloody Face: *Tsišáqsúha'n. Tsnuhasa tswatsháthunwéts unneSláya sa Snaréš. ShuŠátha sa Qxúhusu shuTsuwášáréšáwéts thésúqxéyész'n. Tsišáqsúha rikusárhásin sa nansíthrasu sríxéqxíqseha sa sáthinha'n.*

Mine. I am Bloody Face son of Black Honey and Stargazer. My territory is from the dusk's ocean over there to the edge of the plains.

Ash Tongue: *Ší...annehasés'lá, Xiskinéš. Xútsithí sa qxnéhírésashiwéts úqxísáhátháqx sa shúnész'lá... [Looks at David with a sneer]...Šyathagsún qsyux qsinhuqsánir'n...*

And I have heard of you, comrade. It has been said that you on this island often treat with the Chatterers...[looks at Davis with a sneer]...I did not think it was true until now.¹

Bloody Face: *Saxúhá sa xesíš qxaRetsí sa Sáhátháqx', XiWátsí sa Qxítsúqx?*
Why have you flown to the Jagged Isle², Ash Tongue?

Ash Tongue: *Xyašnarír nahú!*
A Blood Hunt!

Bloody Face: *Xyašnarír'x? Xútsithí sa sléyusláyar húlán inneqsunrís—*
A Blood Hunt? I have heard this will often bleed its holder as its owner—

Ash Tongue: *Tsiléšúruúts qxihasa liqs! [Calms down after a moment] Tsýúxšáwáwéqx innetsérin sa théhasláyéš isíwašáwáqx, Innethéhalayúth isíwaqxítsúqx tsinihwán tsišíwaqsunríséru nin!*
Do not tell me these things! [Calms down after a moment] My eyes see only blood, my tongue tastes only poison and I smell nothing but my prey!

Bloody Face: *Ssssss....axán xiskinéš, tsithéhaqsunrísu xihú?*
And who—pray tell—bears this Blood Hunt against you?

Ash Tongue: *TsiSewé sa Swéhésin nin! Sníša sa Shányéš shán Qsírwanéš thésúqxéyéhuqseshá'n!*
Frost Song, rodent-spawn of Glacier Dipper and Under the Claw!

Bloody Face: *Tsihuhaséš xihú! Íšhú, tsihánsé sa shaná'qs!*
Frost Song! I must say I am not really very surprised!

Ash Tongue: *Tsyenyárúch? Innethéhalíšáha'x?*
You know of her? Her lands?

Bloody Face: *Xúnihú. Saqxéyé sa xesíš qxaRetsí sa Sáhátháqx'n...tsanheshúqx sa wálesin na.*
I do indeed. She is newly come here to the Jagged Isle...perhaps a clawful of seasons past.

Ash Tongue: *Íšhú! Tsašathíš ratúhasa nan!*
Ha! She has been fleeing from me like prey flees from a predator!

¹ I have translated the phrase *qsinhuqsánir* as “until now” although it literally means “until this moon,” which is usually the smallest unit of time the Shúna will keep track of.

² Britain, on account of its shape

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- Bloody Face:** *Xinuxéš, tsyenhaqsún annesa xíšathíš ríúxúhéš wíša'qs.*
I do not think that Frost Song would flee from anyone, friend³
- Ash Tongue:** *Tsíxétsínísu tsithéhalíšáha'x? Xíshéxúwéshalets ninanłusaha'x? Innexasúnéš xi?*
Where are her lands?⁴ Does she have allies here? A mate?
- Bloody Face:** [Snorts]
- Ash Tongue:** *Xyixúhísu'x? Tsixúhá sa sithšúrúts qsix? Tsisrenúš xi?*
What? Why do you not tell me? Are you her ally?
- Bloody Face:** *Qsyux, tsitsítsiya'qs. Tsitsašúru innesa tsiltréš théhašáhínwéqx qsisa xyisa tsisayisu qsisa'qs*
No, but neither am I yours. I will not tell the business of one who is not my enemy to one who is not my friend.
- Ash Tongue:** *Tsitsatsira inne—*
I only wish that—
- Bloody Face:** *Huxhú, Xílišáha qxitsitsír sa xłsaha nirúnáwéha shán niháxuwésu qxeyaxniyaha'lá. Xísrahéš níxéxniyawéha xyithíxíwésu'lá. Rú tsihusna sa qsúléš qxitsitsír sa xłsasín ríúxútsusín tsinsárhásín nítú tsixesíš níxéłusaha'n. Rú tsixesíš tsintsitsír sa xłsaha sa warsúwésu nítú iwéwáhínáqx tsiháséš'n.*
However, I have heard her lands are to the north in the Land of Mountains and Lakes [Scotland]. She lives there because there are many fields of ice there. If you fly north from dawn to dusk you shall reach it. If you come 'till the northern sea, you have gone too far.
- Ash Tongue:** *Tsihání'n, xistínéš...*
I am hungry, friend...
[More or less asking for permission to hunt]
- Bloody Face:** *Tsiwáhínha išáqsúha srítsitsír sa hurúha sríwáraha'n nisáthinha nyán šixéłusaha tsiQsánir sa Qxéyéš sa xinawéha'n. Hux niSewe sa Swéhésin sa lišáwéha tsiháqsarén tsihuxérén'lá.*
My lands end to the east where the plains begin and beyond that towards the dawn are the lands of my ally, Moonchild. But I have heard there are many deer in Frost Song's lands.

[More or less telling Ash Tongue to fuck off and don't mess with Moonchild's hunting territory either]
- Ash Tongue:** *Šíhusna'n.*
Then I leave.
- Bloody Face:** *Tsihítsá sa qsuwéts qxitsitsír sa xłsaha ríth.*
Good hunting to the north.

³ I have translated the root *nuxe-* or “unexpected guest” as “friend” because it sounds better in English in this usage but it is far less friendly or welcoming than the term “friend” in English.

⁴ The term *tsíxétsínísu* literally means “what horizon” instead of “where” in this context but has the meaning of “upon which horizon is the direction her lands are in?”

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[Ash Tongue flies away towards the north]

Howard: *Tsixúhár shisa šnarír sa'x?*
What is a “Blood Hunt?”

Bloody Face: *Słatsú xyáwsun sa šáhínáqx xasiháqsuwéts asihéš tsanranéth na.*
When a Kindred hunts another until death reaches either one or the other for some act.

Howard: *Sahusún sa sráhéš shaSewe sa Swéhésin wáx.*
Whatever Frost Song did it must have been bad.

Bloody Face: *Ssssss...saensheyets anneWátsí sa Qxítsúqx théhaxrasúnéš anneQxátsixúnéš'lá*
Mmmmm....I heard it said that she slew Ash Tongue's mate, Bone Scrapper.

Howard: *Oh...innexúháqx. Tsahítsá sa sithšúruqx na.*
Ah, I see. That explains it very well!

Bloody Face: *Nahú, nan. Rú xusráhéts úsyátsú xusleyúšlinets rúth.*
It does indeed. If you want to live, then beware a dragon on a Blood Hunt.

8.3. *The Song of the Moon*⁵ by Scatterlight

Davis records this song he heard from Scatterlight one night. They had been sitting out on several cliffs by the sea and the Sihá looked up at the full moon overhead and suddenly began to speak a soft poem, and Davis did his best to record it. I include it in this section because it does not have a huge number of the complex poetical *Xániwésin* forms noted previously in this paper.

Srínawésin
Xiqsánixráxár!
Nusuhúth sa qsánir šúríhán sa hansásin'!
Ruhútsúhúr qxusyáhur, ruhúšáthar qxuxráxár, ruhúxráxár qxušáthar'n!

Unnéxéhášér xahátséwír tsusuhúth sa wáhínar,
Xútsúlárér uwášárér nuxahásusír'n,
XurŠúrir'n, šúŠátha sa Yánár'n,
Ruhúsárhásin qxuxútsusin nwán ruhúxútsusin qxusárhásin nuhú!

XiTsúhúr xaháYanar!
Tsusuhúth sa uqshíšrír unnexahásyáhu sa snarer nun,
Tsuwáhínar šúXéryur'n!

Nuxahásusír tsuxráxá sa yátsínrér tsunyanar sa xéryur'n
Usa Xúqsuwér ShuTsúhúr nusa xutsúlár nuxahásusír úsyá,

⁵ Although Davis calls this *The Song of the Moon*, he noted that it was a *wánsa*- or “poem” (see §7.10. *Xániwésin Poetry and Poetical Forms* for specific terminology on draconic poetic forms) and would thus not have a tune to it so it would be more accurate to call this *The Poem of the Moon*, but I will retain Davis' (or perhaps Scatterlight's?) original title for the sake of simplicity.

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*Nurúsa tsuqswánar nusa, Xiqxáxaxráxár, xúqsháláthar nwán xústáya sa uqsláshár nu,
Tsunsá xuháláthar shuhasar nusán xuhálátháqx uqsuwétsúhúr xahásharánáqx xyuXráxár nihú!*

*XiQxéyé sa Shínyir, XiHúqsa sa Šúrír shán XiSulúth sa Qsúlar!⁶
Tsuqxnílar rúsú! Tsutséyar rúsú! Hux xúšerná sa syáhu sa xahínar rúth,
Xyusa tsixesiwén iháqsawén ihuxéwén nisán xyusa tsixinix sa níxqsáthi nisa rúth!*

English

O Silver Moon!

*How quickly you change across the obsidian sky!
From dark to full, black to silver, silver to black!*

*Swiftly you climb the walls of heaven above,
The innumerable stars trailing behind you,
Along the Glittering Span, over the Black Pit,
From dusk ‘till dawn and from dawn ‘till dusk!*

O Light of Darkness!

*Swiftly you hide your bright face!
As you travel across the Hunting Trail of the Sky!*

*Your silver scales drop off behind you in a trail of light,
Letting the Hunting Dark follow behind,
‘Till she catches you, tears you open and kills you bloodily, Silvery One,
Until you free yourself and her jaws open wide again for you!*

*O New-Born Claw, Arch of White and Swift, Darting Flyer!
Tarry not! Do not rest! But grow big and round,
So the innumerable prey animals will come and I may eat!*

8.4. Dialogue between Bloody Face, Moonchild and Howard Davis

This dialogue was recorded earlier in this paper, albeit in English. It regards the story of how Frost Song drove off Stormflyer from her hunting territory and why none of the Kindred in the area did anything or really cared about it.

Davis: *Tsishanáqx nihú! Áwsunwéš annexúháqx?*
That’s terrible. What did everyone else do?

Bloody Face: *Xa?*
What do you mean?

Davis: *Sawíra sa Sewe sa Swéhéqxnílawéts áwsunwéš xa? TsaXuqsúlés Rútháhéwésin xyašáhínáqx qsahú!
Tsahušáhínhaqsúnwéché?*
Didn’t anyone try and stop Frost Song? She was picking on Stormflyer without a reason!
Didn’t anyone have a problem with that?

⁶ I have translated the term *XiSulúth sa Qsúlar!* as “O Quick, Darting Flyer!” but it is interesting that Scatterlight uses the root *qsúla-* which implies *draconic flight* rather than a bird’s, bat’s or insects’ flight, implying that Scatterlight imagined or is referring to the moon as a Sihá, which makes sense given the draconic belief that the moon was an “icy egg” of the Night Mother and thus is a distant relative of all Shúna.

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Moonchild: *Annesneyéqx'?* *SaXúQsúlés Rútháhéwésin théhasneyéqx na! Shašawaxráxés na!*
A problem? The problem was with Stormflyer! The fool!

Davis: *Xahú!?*
What!?

Moonchild: *Saenxinxets annesa saxesís shaSewe sa Swéhésin xánlišáha nán sawanałwánets nasán saenqxnílets qsaqs! Sałšátsaswéts nawx saehewánets aSewe sa Swéhésin'qs. Tsitsaqxnílawéts xyixúháqx ísyáx?*
She allowed Frost Song to come into her land and take her prey and did not stop her. She lost her own land, Frost Song didn't take it. Why would anyone want to stop that?

Davis: *Šasithšúrúts átsisa xíšernés iwéSewe sa Swéhésin hínaXuqsúlés Rútháhéwésin híłasa nax?*
I thought you said that Stormflyer wasn't strong enough to fight Frost Song?

Bloody Face: *Išhú! Rú sasralés shaXúQsúlés Rútháhéwésin natsú saxahín sa ensralets wáx'qs. ISewe sa Swéhésin tsitsatsirets innesa saensralets annewsun sa shúnés xánranéth nasa'qs, Xísarúš qsyux tsíšawés'qs.*
Hah! If she had put up a fight, Frost Song wouldn't have pushed her too far. Not even she would have wanted a fight to the death with another Sihá, she's not that smart, but she isn't a fool.

Moonchild: *Nan, rú xíłaríš hínehasés nyán saxinix sa ensralets qsatsú saxinix sa husnéš qxáwsunwés nasa xásráhawés náxéxniyawéha nasán saxensayets'n. Unnesa xíwásúsráléts ístisa tsihusnéš nixinaha ríthsa, xwáłqxítsú'n!*
Besides, even if she (Stormflyer) was weaker than her (Frost Song) and couldn't face her, she should have gone to another in the area and forged an alliance. 'Fight an invasion by going to a friend's,' I always say.

Bloody Face: *Rú xánqsánir sa xhísawéha tsaensayawéts ásyá!*
As if any of the others to the north would want to be her ally!

Davis: *Iš, sáwsunšáhínwéts qsax?*
So no one did anything?

Bloody Face: *Saxenqxnéhits' aSewe sa Swéhésin wáx. Saehewánets annesa xúxahínha uwéłišáha húnewsunwés sa líšáwéha nasa'n. Tsýusunwéslinets xyihasés ríth! Tsíqsúłá xínqsánir sa xhísaha ísyán tsíxéxniyawána xyihasa ísyáhu!*
They were probably annoyed with Frost Song. She had a territory twice as big as anyone else's. She better beware of the others. I wouldn't mind flying north and taking some of those lands for myself!

Moonchild: *Nin! Tsihítsá sa hínerín, tsishúnérín, tsitsáqxúrin híłán tsíqsawínrin—⁸*
Indeed! Great fishing, many seals and even some walrus—

⁷ Bloody Faces uses *qxnéhi-*, the same root used to refer to humans as “to annoy,” an insight into how the big red dragon saw humanity in general.

⁸ Normally the terms for ‘fish, seal and walrus’ would be in Class V Aquatic but Moonchild uses Class III Large Prey Animal, probably to emphasize their edibility rather than their aquatic nature.

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Bloody Face: *Qsi, tsiqsawínrín tsiyašúrín'qs...* [Looks at Davis] *Saxésiréx shaqxnérex xánRetsí sa Sáhátháqx nán sarana sa níxqsuwérex na.*

No, the walruses are all gone. Ever since... [Looks at Davis] ..the Qxnérex came to the Jagged Isle and hunted them away.

Davis: *Tsisithyáru ríth. Sahaqsúnwéš aSewe sa Swéhésin'x?*

So let me get this straight. You don't have a problem with what Frost Song did?

Both: *Qsi.*

No.

Davis: *Axá tsixenšáhínwéts innéwsun sa shúnéš ísyáru tsitsaxinixwéš wíx?*

And you would do it to another Sihá if you had the chance?

Both: *Nihú.*

Absolutely.

Bloody Face: *Rú tsišawa sa tsaxinixets innesa tsithéhašáwánets ýusunéš⁹ nisatsú tsyenshasúš ríthéhašáwéha innesa shisihá sa XúQsúléš Rútháhéwésin nasa ríth!*

If someone is so foolish to allow another to take one's land, they deserve to be chased off just like Stormflyer.

8.5. Draconic Wise Sayings

These sayings Davis jotted down on a single piece of paper, separate from the rest of his notes. They also occur in several places during dialogues and the fact that Howard recorded them separately seems to indicate that he considered them common or wise sayings amongst all the Shúna, although he does not state this explicitly. They certainly express the particular way in which the Kindred see and interact with the world, however. It is important to note that these sayings are often modified to include relevant animals and plants in the speaker's vicinity and therefore terms and class endings often change depending upon the animals the speaker wishes to reference.

Unnelariwén xúyxiqsuwéwéts usarúwéš nux unnetsastuwén'qs.

"The wise hunt the wounded but not the dying."

This seems to be the draconic equivalent of "Well begun is half done."

Xúlášáwésu uqxéhasánuwésu'n.

"All fires burn themselves out."

Nothing lasts forever. Good things fade eventually and bad things will end.

Hixíwánawír ixráxawít innexinsisrušawén'

"Even foolish predators sometimes catch their prey."

Fairly obvious.

Tsinrashesu xihíneqsuwéts rísí.

"Don't hunt for fish in a muddy pool."

Don't look for something in the wrong place and expect to get a good result.

⁹ Ýusunéš in this case parses as *i+úsun+éš* or "another dragon"

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Utséthéwín xúqéqsáthiwín nux xúnixqsáthiwíl unnehítsáwén.

“Scavengers eat regularly but hunters eat well.”

Fairly obvious.

Xúqsewalets ritúlasesin utsérin sa xráxés'n.

“Only a fool strikes from upwind.”

Also obvious.

Išawatserinwéš tsiqsáwerawéš nirú tsuxesiwér shutsitsír shuqsánir'n.

“Only fools worry if the sun and moon will rise.”

Don't worry about things that will take care of themselves. They don't need you and worrying about it will get you exactly nowhere.

Rú tsihanáthéš nitsú tsiqxníléš ríth. Srúshinewéš xúxesir usruhir nux xúšathír ruhúsyawuwéš'n.

“When in doubt, wait. Opportunity comes again to the patient but flees before the impatient.”

Obvious, although this is a biased opinion by a species that has virtually forever to wait.

Xíhítsá sa enshalets inneshaswáasarúš nyux innesayaxráxés'lá. Xyénsalets syirhítsáhen inneshaswáxráxés innesayasarúš nihú.

“It is better to have a wise enemy than a foolish friend. It is better still to have a foolish enemy and a wise friend.”

A wise enemy knows not to attack foolishly so is better than a foolish friend. The second half is pretty obvious, even to me.

Xíníshúthéwésin išathawésin innehalin sa srušil'n.

“Mist hides the prey as well as the hunter.”

What benefits you also can benefit your prey.

Unnesa tsuqxéyéwéyatsuwéhen usléxuwéhen nusa, unnesléyúš, unnewéyáwén, unnesáhewén unnexráxawéš...

“Mothers guarding their children, one of the Sihá on a Blood Hunt, badgers and fools...”

...Are the most dangerous things in the world to fight

Rú xúsráhéts úsyátsú xúsleyúslinets ríth.

“If one wants to live, beware a dragon on a Blood Hunt.”

Don't mess with a dragon who is on a Blood Hunt.

Xíwásúsrálets ítsisa tsihusnéš nixinaha ríthsa ríth!

“Fight an invasion by going to a friend's!”

When in real trouble, numbers are nice.

Xíhawálásáwéqx atshinwéqx arisawéqx qsiwx xíshínyets linathéharinasin xyixúhísu nihú!

“Claws and teeth do not kill one's food but how you use your mind to stalk it!”

Strength, speed and power do not benefit someone who doesn't use their mind.

Hux xíshathíwéš ritúyursúš qsiqs!

“But no one flees before the humble!”

This was Bloody Face's response to Howard when he (rather foolishly in my opinion) said to the red dragon “Pride goeth before the fall.” The English words *timid* and *humble* both translate to *yursu-* and are considered to be the same thing by the Shúna.

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Rú tsisukúth sa enhutsets nihútsú tsysithwásúts isihúsunéš¹⁰ qsiwixhú!

“Strike back swiftly and you will not be challenged later!”

This saying refers to the various types of territorial challenges which a dragon often faces from his or her neighbors. Essentially it means don't take any shit from anyone and you won't get any from anyone else.

Unneqxítsúhatháqx xútsalatse tsúnqxíyárúsyánúqx nu...

“I always find an angry tongue in a foolish head...”

I think the meaning of this is fairly obvious although when Black Honey said this Stargazer snorted and finished by saying the phrase just below:

...Axán xútsalatséts unneyárúsyánúqx ušisihéth nun!

“...and she usually finds a foolish head on a dead dragon's body!”

Again, obvious, although slightly terrifying.

Rú xúsúhúsanúx luxuxúhunsin uswéthax húlatsa tsínwánír iqseharit wix. Rú xúqseharsanúx luxuhushisu uswéthax húlatsa tsínwánír isúhít wix.

“The female rabbit who watches the sky for the diving hawk is caught by the fox. The female rabbit who watches the forest for the fox is caught by the diving hawk.”

Davis originally thought that this meant simply that “the rabbit is just out of luck,” but Dawnglow told him that his assumption was wrong. The saying (according to Dawnglow) simply means “the wise rabbit watches the sky *and* the forest.” This phrase often occurs with different animals and other locations depending upon the Sihá's environment and neighboring prey animals.

Tsitsithí sa sánuréqsáthihen tsinsínisu'n.

“In the end, everything is eaten by something.”

This particularly predatory bit of draconic wisdom has some interesting features which partially explains its meaning. I have translated the root *sína-* as “end” to match typical English speaking conventions but it literally has the meaning of “being chased into a dead end without possibility of escape.” But since it appears as *tsinsínisu* (*tsin* “at”+*sína* “dead end”+*isu* Class XIII Unknown/Varia) it has the meaning of “At an unknown or mysterious dead end without possibility of escape” and therefore seems to refer to death in general. It seems to mean not that everything is literally eaten (although for dragons this is often the case) but that all things die, including dragons, and are eaten by Death or by the Night Mother.

Hirusu sa šeréth ixítséth wix.

“Sometimes even fallen trees will flower.”

Davis recorded this saying on the corner of one of his lexicon pages and didn't supply any interpretation to it. My guess would be that either it means that there is hope even in bleak times or that something can be essentially dead and not know it yet. Since this saying was spoken by Ash Tongue I would guess the latter interpretation sounds more likely.

Hixinix sa sráhashá shithešáhá wixux xihúshashá qsiya xihitsashá'qs!

“A bird with a broken wing may live but not for a long time or very well!”

I thought that this saying was fairly self explanatory but Davis—being the obsessive compulsive type of person that he obviously was—asked Twisted Smoke what this meant and the dragon replied

¹⁰ The term *isihúsunéš* is parsed as *i+sihá+úsun+éš* or ‘another dragon’ but for sound-change reasons collapses into *isihúsunéš*.

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“It means that living does not matter if you can’t be what you really are.” I am glad Howard was as detail oriented as he was or I might have totally misunderstood this phrase.

Xúqšáhínéts unnehúrúnar nurúsa tsuxinix sa rinawéxwéshéš nusa’n...

“Bravery is what you do when plans fail...”

I particularly like this little draconic gem of wisdom because it stresses the opinion that a true hunter does not need to be brave but strikes quickly from a position of unassailable strength rather than seeks to fight another creature. A hunter is looking for an *meal* rather than a *fight*. Still, I think that it is strange that a dragon would hold this position. After all, what other creature is almost *always* unassailably strong in comparison to other creatures, especially its food? I suppose that this saying might be a reference to attacking another dragon or some other creature which might pose a danger to a dragon (perhaps giants?), but I have no direct evidence for this.

Urinaqsúhárésin xúsihárésin unnesa tsúxnéwiréshá tsuntsúhúsín nusa’n.

“Worried thoughts are like squirrels in the wintertime.”

Davis laughed when he heard Black Honey pronounce this and when he asked what it meant she replied “Do you know how many you have to have before you get anything good out of it?” This appears to be Black Honey’s way of saying “Don’t worry, be happy.”

Rú tsihítséš ísyátsú tsishanéš qsiqs!

“If you want to be right, don’t be wrong!”

Literally this means “If you want to be good, don’t be bad!” but the roots *hítsá-* “good, tasty” and *shana-* “bad, nasty” have the connotations of “right” and “wrong” respectively. I enjoy this saying very much and I use it all the time with my husband. He hates it.

*Tsyalhíšáx innešáthí sa srínasin’x? Wix...innesa atserin sa šawax tsisiháthíhúx línasrínaxráxawéqx nisa nihú!
Xíxráxáx’, xiXútsithí sa Qxéxúnáx?*

“You want to know a wise saying? Try this: Only a foolish prey-thing asks a dragon too many stupid questions! Are you a fool, Always Scratching at Something?”

I think this remark from Obsidian Claw is fairly self-explanatory and certainly is a good indicator of his “troublesome personality.”

8.6. The Night Mother and the Earth Father, a Traditional Draconic Song

Davis heard the following song from at least two different widely separated dragons so he believed that this is a “traditional” song, one which most of the Shúna seem to know in one way or another. He did not know who was the original author, but he believed that it was ancient (even for the Shúna), possibly several draconic generations old, which makes it possibly *half a million years old*. This song is an example of a *sliši-* type of song, one with a traditional set of lyrics but whose melody varies depending on the singer.

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*Xúsánu sa sráharísu luxuStéxurahar húlán
UšiXatíršáthíha qsúrxiyaréha’n.*

*Shusrušásánurísu shúhātušaréha shúhātušarésin nuhú,
StúhaTsúhúr xaháStéxur xaháwášá sa tsáhírér xahášátha sa syéthur’n
StúhaXniya nixaXatirha shúhanixaraha sa sułuthwéha shúhanixatsithí sa qxéhawésu’n
Xúsráharísu shułasurén shułasuréx shušáwáwér usíthrarésu shushúnéš’n.*

XiŠúriwášár’hú! xiTsáhíríhánar’hú!

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Xútsithí sa sánusuluthar lunaxahásyéthuraha nu,
Xútsúhú sa qxéqsuwér unneyanar unnewásárér nu,
Rulúhasar xúqsínrar utsúhúr nwán rulúhasar xúšathíth unneranéth nuhú!

XiŠawaswéhéréha'hú! xiYaweqxéhasu'hú!
Qsúrsánurísu xútséyaha nwán hurusu sa réshúha xyuhasarísu qsuhú!
Slátsu lunahasaha xútséyarísu urúnaréha usíthrarésu'n
Xúhátha sa tsithí sa háxuha slúhaqxátsiréha nu, xiSrušasánurísu sa sušaha'hú!

Xúsánu sa sráharísu luxuSléxuraha húlán
UšiXatíršáthíha qsúrxniyaréha'n.

Xíqxéqsuwé qsírxahásyéthur'n, xiSléxur,
Xíhawaréshínya rítheriwésu išinixahúnqséha'n, xiXatírha,
Xísyéthu slíhaxahánunasin sa shusu sa nunarésin', xiTsúhúr,
Axán xítséya tsinnixasuluth sa hátha sa hawaréha'n, xiSušuha.

Xiqsuwésléwár'hú! Xúxenshínyar unneshúnasánúš nuhú!
Rú saxenswánsar sráshúnasánúš na, xiTsúhú sa Šúrír,
Slátsa tsixenwalar wíxán tsitsaháláthar innexahárana sa yánár wíxán.
Tsisulúth sa tsawánar innesíwasráhaqx ítsisa xítsahánír wíša'n.

XiXatirtséyaha'hú! XiŠáthi sa xniyaha nixaháqsruha'hú!
Nirúsa tsisarú sa háláthha inixasuluthwéha nisa xyihasa'n,
Axán tsisíwahawasrínáha xínqxéharésu wíx ratúsa saháláth nasa'n
Axán xútséya tsunxniyaha nixatsúhú sa háthaha na.

Xúsánu sa sráharísu luxuSléxuraha húlán
UšiXatíršáthíha qsúrxniyaréha'n.

English

*I have heard it said that all the innumerable things live with the Great Mother above,
And atop the Old Father in the earth below.*

*All the innumerable things (live) between the places of the air and the places of the land.
Between the Night Mother's glittering scales and her black wings,
(and) between the Earth Father's great coils and his endless flames,
Live the herds of the large and small prey animals, the Moon, the Sun, the Seas and the Shúna.*

*O Glittering Span! O Obsidian Scales!
Endlessly you encircle everything with your great wings,
Darkly you hunt the light and the innumerable stars,
From you the night always cowers and from you death flees!*

*O Singing Stones! O Fiery Heart!
Beneath all things you sleep and when you stir it is not good for those who live upon you!
For by you do the innumerable mountains and many seas sleep,
You lay everlasting and below the bones of the earth, O Foundation of all Things!*

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*I have heard it said that all the innumerable things live with the Great Mother above
And atop the Old Father in the earth below.*

*I hunt many things beneath you, beneath your wings, Mother,
(And) I stalk (my) food through the brush on your back, Father.
I fly in the cold winds of your breath, Dark One,
And sleep in the deep stone of your coils, Original One.*

*O Awe-Inspiring Hunter! You hunt all the Kindred!
For once you gave us all (life) to ourselves, O Night Mother!
You will leap upon us and open up your deathly jaws,
Swiftly will you snatch away my life because you desire it.*

*O Sleeping Father! O Marrow of the Old Earth!
(Soon enough) you will open up your coils wide for me,
And pull my body back into the flames from which I came,
And I shall forever sleep in the Earth's dark depths.*

*I have heard it said that all the innumerable things live with the Great Mother above
And atop the Old Father in the earth below.*

8.7. Songbirds, by Moonchild

Although Moonchild had what Davis describes as ‘a difficult personality,’ she sometimes waxed poetic and even silly, although such moments were rare and Howard was extremely careful not to mention them lest her poetic feeling turn “poetically violent.” Davis once heard her sing a little song one fall day as the songbirds began to make their migration to the south and Moonchild lamented their departure. This song would technically be described as a *swéhé-* or ‘song’ as opposed to a poem or chant (see §7.10. *Xániwésin Poetry and Poetical Forms* for discussion of different terminologies of draconic poetic forms). Unfortunately, Davis did not note the melody to which this song was sung so its true nature is a mystery, albeit an intriguing one.

Srínawésin

*Xirihu sa suhunréshá, tsuwítwaréshá tsuhusnaréshá qxuxúháha’x?
Tsunsá xútséyáresú uxítsarésú nusa’x? Tsunsá xúhusnar shutsitsír ruhúháser nusa’x?
Tsuhasú sa húnqxenír utsitsír ruhúhasa’x?
Ruhúqseqsérésin xuhú? Ruhúsewerésú xuhú?
Ruhútsúhúsin sa hansásin’x? Ruhúnunawésin išanshusuwésin’x?*

*Tsuwítwaréshá qxusa xútsitsíwéha uwéhusawéha nusa’x?
Tsunsá innexniyawéha innesíthrarésú xíqxsitsísír nisa’x?¹¹
Tsunsá xitsitsí sa łálin sa nunarésin nisa’x?
Tsuwítwaréshá ruhútsitsír sa xúsháha iqxúswithíha qxitsitsísír’x?
Rihútsúhúsin šánwáhín sa tsúhúwér tsuwáhín sa husnawéshá’x?*

*Xisuhurwéshá’hú! Xirihu sa swéhéréshá’hú! Xirihu sa sayaréshá’hú!
Tsuxúhá sa šathíréshá xýán tsuyaqsuswéhéwéwánawíš ruhúhasa’x?
Tsitsayárúr itsitsír innesa tsuthrešár nusa shíháséyaqsuswéhéwésin łinaxúhísu’x?*

¹¹ The different tenses between the clause and the rest of the sentence indicate that Moonchild was referring to the birds leaving *right now* on their cyclical journey to the south.

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Tsitsayárúwésu išliwáwésu innesa tsuyarithawésu unnenarhashusuwésu nusa tinaxúhitsu'x?
Tsutsunqxníla unnerihu sa suhunréshá nuhú!

Tsutsunqxníla unnesa tsuxésiréshá nusa nuhú!

English¹²

*O Little Songbirds, where do you fly, where do you go?
When the trees go to sleep? When the Sun leaves the sky?
Does the Sun lead you to chase it away from me?
Away from the snows? Away from the frosts?
Away from the winter's clear skies? Away from the winds' chills?*

*Do you take wing to the warmer lands?
At the place where (the Sun) warms the land and the seas?
At the place where (the winds) blow warm and fragrant?
Do you fly from me, from the north towards the Sun?
Do you leave your long journey from winter's long nights?*

*O Songbirds! O Little Singers! O Little Friends!
Why do you flee and take your songs away from me?
How will the Sun know when to rise without your songs?
How will the dew know when to cover the cool grasses?*

I wait for you, little songbirds!

I wait for your return!

8.8. How the Shúna Came to Be (A Traditional Legend told by Black Honey)

This story is the “creation story” of the Shúna as told by Black Honey, the mother of Bloody Face. This story is related entirely in the context of the hearsay enclitic -'lá indicating the Black Honey was not alive to see these events herself and is relating what she was told. However, in order to keep the translation as natural and flowing as possible I have removed the “I have heard it said” that -'lá would translate to and simply related it as a natural narrative. Despite this, it is important to note that this story is described wholly as hearsay and not a personal experience of Black Honey's, despite how the English translation reads. This story appears to be virtually universal throughout the Kindred, although there seem to be some small alterations in the specifics. Howard heard this legend from several Shúna but he used Black Honey's narrative because she was one of the more patient dragons and did not mind telling him a story which “everyone knows already.” Hers was by far the most complete version of the story so I include it here as opposed to the disjointed version Davis records Moonchild as giving, or the nonsensical version Ash Tongue told him.

This story is divided up into two parts, one a dialogue between Black Honey and Howard when he initially asks her to relay the “creation story” of the Kindred to him and the second part is the story itself. I have included the dialogue because it has several interesting features. Firstly, Black Honey apparently did not enjoy the taste of humans as she refers to Davis as Class VI Inedible. Secondly, Davis was not fluent at this period of time and makes several mistakes in speaking, as well as sprinkling his conversation with

¹² For the sake of brevity and for the flow of the text I have removed the word ‘innumerable’ from the English translation of this song because it would simply be too cumbersome. However it is important to note that whenever the songbirds are referred to they are in the innumerable number rather than simply plural, indicating the totality of migrating songbirds rather than just a few.

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English words whenever he doesn't know the appropriate Srínawésin word. Lastly, I found *two different versions* of this dialogue in Davis' notes, one of which was the original and the second which Howard *corrected* and removed the various grammatical mistakes he made while speaking with Black Honey. This is interesting for I have to wonder how many of the written conversations he recorded are the originals or corrected versions of the originals! Since he was alive to complete his notes, he obviously did not make too many grammatical mistakes.

Davis: *Sahátríwéš áqxúxúháysu'x,*¹³ *xiŠátha sa Qxúhusu?*
Where did dragons come/emerge from, Black Honey?

Black Honey: *Áqxúshátsáqx haqsér!*
From dragon-eggs obviously!

Apparently Black Honey was not very concerned about insulting Howard as she uses the qsér enclitic repeatedly to him.

Davis: *Sanahux—!*
Yes, but—!

Black Honey: *Tsiqxnéhi sa hanxe sa tsalíhiš innesa áqxúxúhísu xáhátríwéq x shátsáwéq x xisa xix?* [Black Honey chortles]
Surely you're not going to insult me by asking where dragon-eggs come from, are you?

Davis: *Qsiqs! Hux...sahátríwéš áqxúwáteqsáhiréha áqxúwáteqsáhirér'x? Áqxúxúhísu shasánu sa shúnéš shashúnahátrýés¹⁴ xa?*
No! But...from (what) innumerable earth ages and innumerable celestial ages past did (the Kindred) emerge from? Where did all the dragons, the original dragons, come from?

Black Honey: *Xíqseyáru'qs.* [Snorts]
I don't know.

Davis: *Xax? Unneqsáhi sa srínasarúwésin tsules—shálewéts¹⁵ úqxúšáthíwéš xu?*
What? Don't you have any wise old stories from Elders (about where you came from?)

Black Honey: *Xúqsér!*
Of course we do and always have!

Davis: *H—!*
Bu—!

Black Honey: *Hux annesa "xíqseyáru" qsisá sa srína nahwán tsihanxe sa qseyáru qsihán xásráha tsanwáteqsáhiréha qsaqs! Tsisrešu sa sráha'qs!*
But I said "I don't know" and I don't know for certain because I wasn't alive innumerable earth ages past! I'm not *that* old!

¹³ The term *áqxúxúháysu'x* is a mistake in Howard's part. It should be *áqxúxúhísu'x*.

¹⁴ Another mistake. This should be *shashúnahátríš* 'original dragons (reflexive subject).'

¹⁵ Howard obviously didn't know how to pronounce the combination of the sounds *s* and *sh* at this point so he simply pronounced and wrote them separately. Technically it should be *tsulešhalewéts*.

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Davis: Well...uh...hán tsixinix sa...legendšáth—
Well...uh...can you (tell me) the legend—

Black Honey: *Innesa “srúnsasin” nisa tsyalsaniš’n, xiXútsithí sa Qxéxúnáx.*
(The word) you’re looking for is –srúnsasin (legend,) Always Scratching at Something.

Davis: Ah! Yes! *Innesrúnsasin’hú! Tsixinix sa alšáthích?*
Ah! Yes! Legend! Can you instruct (me) about (the legend?)

Black Honey: *Qsér, xisayashá.*
Of course, my friend.

Again, Black Honey throws out another qsér, but this time softens it with “my friend.” Howard noticed that from his conversations with her Black Honey was simultaneously one of the politest dragons he ever spoke with and the most insulting to him.

[Several minutes pass and Davis sits and waits]

Davis: Well? *Tsyalsáthíts xyihasa ísyáx?*
Well? Are you going to tell me (the story?)

Black Honey: *Tsarusu sa srínawéreshú nan! Hiraha sa syanu sa húrúshá nihu!*
I was just thinking it over! You can be so impatiently ornery sometimes!

[Several more minutes pass and she begins the story...]

Saxenqxéyéwéhen áqxúqxéhawésu’lán tsixenyasuwéhen nirúqxéhawésu wix. Saxenqxéyéwéhen áqxúrúrínsu’lán tsixenyasuwéhen nirúrúrínsu wix. Saxenqxéyéwéhen aqxútsúhúqx’lán tsixenyasuwéhen nirútsúhúqx wix. Saxenqxéyéwéhen áqxúnunanárérésin’lán tsixenyasuwéhen nirúnunarésin wix.

Xúsléxutsúhúr shushúněš thésúsléxur, shuŠúriwášár, shuTsúhú sa Qsuwér, shuŠátha sa Yánáhanráqx nu. XúXniya nixaXatirha shushúněš thésúxatirha, shuYaweQxéhasu, shuŠáthi sa Tséyaha, shuRúnáréha níxínxnúyaha nu. Xútsithí sa suluthwísu nu, xútsithí sa šéhawísu shuhasawísu nwán xášiširésin anunarésin átsisa xátsaxésiwésu ašawaqxéhawésu annehusarúrínáqx nasa nán xásuqxísnarésu ahátirésu narúrúrínrésu nán xáqxéharéshasúrésin awenurésin nán xáqsáni sa hatiwalarésin anunaqxéharésin nu. Xáéhešéhar aStéxur xáhaTsúhúr anneXniya nixaXatirha nán xáwqšéhaha nán sashúnuwísu nasa sarúrínwéxésiwésu aqxéhawésu nasa shán nasa saléšésiweha annenunanáráwésin axniyawéha nasa nán saxenráhínwéhen anneraha sa shátsěš na.

Sashátsásuluthwísu aTsúhúr xaháStéxur aXniyaha nixaXatirha nán satsayatsuwísu tsanqxeyasuluthwéqx na. Áqxúsa sashusuwéqx ashátsáqx nasa satsaqxéhá aQsáhi sa Tséyaha nán sayaqxísnaha annesa hahusnawésu asewewésu nasa łananixaqxéhasu nasa saxúxušathawésu nasa nán xátsithí sa tsatsitsíha’n. Áqxúsa sasrešu sa tsatsitsíwéqx nasa sarúrín sa shátsánunar aTsúhú sa Qsuwér nán sayaswínar annehátsitsíwésu annesewewésu narúsa saxésiwésu ahátíwésu nasa nán sashátsáshususin axahánunasin na. Satsashalewísu tsanxeryahúsharéha sláhahasawísu nán saháxuweqx sláhaqxéhasu sláharúrínsu na, sláhaháłisu sláhaxniyaha na, sláhanunasin sláhahusashusur’n. Saháxuweqx natsúhútsitsíqix nałusarúrínwér narúsa saháláthwéqx nasa’n.

Sahúráwésin anunawésin’lá, sahašesin awenusin hálán sareshúwésu asíthrawésu hálawx saháláthwéqx hálán saxésiweš shaŠáthíweš qsansráháqx’lá. Sasléwá sa sráhašáwáwets’lá, annenatsa sa raha sa síthrawésu, annehúra sa qxéhawésu, annešerná sa rúnáwéha annewára sa qxíqsewéha sláhahítsáqx sláhaháníqx’lá. Saxenqłanéwísu aTsúhúr xaháStéxur aXniyaha nixaXatirha annesa tsanrúnha sa wáráwésu sasrasínwěš’lá tsanshěšusin saqsúławěš hálán saeheswathíwěts anneXatirha nixasraníha hálasa hálán saqxelatsewěts annewanatrén annewanatrėx annewanatrėn

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hálán sahiśsa sa qxeqsuwéwéts'lá. Asusawísu sahañin sa swatsáśáwáwéhen hálán annesa saháłáthwéth áwíxuhánwéth qsarhítsewéqx qsasa'lá. Axuhánsusawéth tsaranawéth hálán átsisa sasrešu sa ananunaha aXniyaha niXatirha anneqxéhawésu śaxuhánéth hálán sasrešu sa úxtsitsiħa hálasa átsisa sasrešu sa yanunar aTsúhúr xaháStéxur annenunarúrínwésin śaxuhánéth hálán sasrešu sa úxshusur hálása'lá.

Saxuhánwéqsáthir annesa shaŚáthiwéś saháłáthwéś rałúhíntsewéth hálása hálán xúqśáwáwéts ushúnéś unnexúxuxéhar unnexúxurúrinar uqxúxéqsánir rúxéháśér nwán xwáłsháthunwéts unneTsitsír srúhasar nwán xwáłsháthunwéts srúxúxurúrinar unneQsánir nun. RúxéthésúStéxur xaháqsáthir xúnxéháśér xúsráhar shuraha sa Tsitsír tsuntsitsísín nux xúsuhúth sa qsánir¹⁶ shuShusu¹⁷ sa Rúrín sa Xúxur nwán xúsuhúth sa sráhar uwéqsánir húnatsitsír nu. UxúStéxur xahásuhúthar unneŚáthiwéś thésúhíntsewéth xúthśáwáwéts nwán xwáłsháthunwéts tsnuhasawér unneShátsár nun.

Hux saranaqx alanín sa xúxúqx qsawx sashusu sa rusu sa huntúqx hálán satsasuhúthha aXatirha hálán satsaqxéhaha hálán tsaqxéhawéreshúha xyasa tsaxinix sa xúxutsitsiħa hálasa xyáséStéxur xahánunashusuwésin'lá. Tsitsayatsuha ĩnanixasuhúthwéqx hılán tsixétsaqxéhá tsinsa tsitséyaha hılasa hálán tsitsaqśáheha innesa tsiháłátháqx axán tsixésíś shithésúslatsésé hılasa'lá. Xúsráharısu shushúnéś shusa xútsithı sa qxéqsáthiwéts unnehasarén unnehasaréx unnehasarın nusa urúnha sa síthrawésu urúrınrésu uqsusérésin uhasharésin uxúhunwésin shusanurısu stúhanása sa Śúriwáśár stúhaháthaha sa Xatirqsáhiha hálán qsúrXatirha tsusráháqx uxúxuhuntúqx. UśithésúXatirha shushúnéś xúsráhawéś nwán xúqxéqsuwéwéts'án xúxenshúnuwéts'án xúqsulawéś'án xútséyawéś stúhaStéxur xahánunarésin nuhún!

English

The Kindred were born of fire and will one day be returned to the flames. The Kindred were born of ice and one day will be returned to the ice. The Kindred were born of darkness and will one day be returned to the darkness. The Kindred were born from the roaring winds and one day will be returned to the winds.

The Night Mother is the Mother of the Kindred, the Glittering Span, the Dark Hunter, the Black Yawning Mouth. The Earth Father is the Father of the Kindred, the Flaming Heart, the Old Sleeper, and the Sleeping Place of the Innumerable Mountains. They always coil 'round each other, always encircling themselves as the innumerable winds continually hissed as burning rock met frozen void and steam became frost and lightning chased flame and burning winds mercurially leapt upon boiling water. The Mother of the Night curled 'round the Earth Father and he around her and where the frosts met the flames and where the earth met the roaring winds they mated and made a great clutch of eggs.

The Night Mother and Earth Father wrapped around the eggs and kept them safe within their coils. When the eggs grew cold the Old Sleeper breathed fire upon them and banished the frost that grew upon them with his flames and always kept them warm. When the eggs grew too warm the Dark Hunter blew (her) icy breath on them, mixing warm flames and frosts until steam came forth and she cooled them with her breath. For many long life-ages of the world they (the Night Mother and Earth Father) kept them between themselves, and they (the eggs) lay between fire and ice, between boiling water and earth, between the wind and the void. They lay in the warm darkness and the icy void and then they burst forth and hatched.

Winds thundered, lightning danced (whirled about) and the seas trembled but they (the eggs) hatched and the Elders came forth into the world. (The Elders) beheld the world with wonder, (looking) on the great and cool seas, the rushing flames, the mighty mountains and the wide open plains with delight and desire. The Night Mother and Earth Father intently watched as the Elders dove into the deep seas, flew in the stormy skies and searched the depths of the Father and soon they found an abundance of large and small prey creatures and fish (to eat) and hunted well. But

¹⁶ This entire sentence is an example of the lyrical nature of Srínawésin's storytelling use and the creative ways the structure of the language works is used to create word-plays by its speakers. *Xúsuhúth sa qsánir* translates to "the celestial thing habitually and cyclically changes itself" in reference to *Shusu sa Rúrín sa Xúxur* "the Cold, Icy Egg" or the Moon. However *-qsánir* "It-Changes" is the root of "The Moon" so although the true-verb reads as "changing" it in fact incorporates the draconic word for "Moon" into it, cleverly creating a double-reference to the Moon, which the sentence is all about.

¹⁷ Normally this word would be spoken *shusu* reducing the two identical syllables *shu+shusu* into one word. This appears to be an exception to the rule, perhaps because it is a proper name, a form of address or simply in order to be formal and lyrical.

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when the pair looked back to the clutch of eggs (they saw) that several eggs had not hatched there among the broken eggs. A pair of unhatched eggs were dead, (one) because the Earth Father had breathed too much fire upon it and had heated it up too much, (the other one) because the Night Mother had breathed too much of her icy breath upon it and had cooled it down too much.

(The Night Mother) swallowed the broken shells from which the Elders had emerged and the dead, unhatched eggs and from that time (from that moon) the Kindred have seen and shall always see the fiery egg which (we) call the Sun and the icy egg we call the Moon. The Great Sun moves through (our) Mother's belly and across and through the unreachable vault of the sky every year but the cold, icy egg changes quickly (through the sky) and the Moon moves much faster than the Sun. The broken eggs of the Elders are now always seen next to the Mother's coils and they are called by the Kindred "the Clutch of Celestial Eggs."

But the remaining egg was not dead but only cold and sickly therefore the Father coiled around it and breathed fire upon it, stoking (mixing) (his) fires to that he could keep it warm from the Mother's cold breath. He still guards it within his coils and breathes on it (deep within him) while he sleeps and waits for it to hatch and for (our) hatch-mate to come forth. The Shúna, the innumerable large prey animals, the innumerable small prey animals, the fish (we eat), the deeps seas, the ice, the rains the weather, the skies and all (other) things live between the Glittering Span above and the Old Father below and beneath the Father is the fiery but sickly egg. The Kindred live, hunt, mate and sleep upon (our) Father and fly with (our) mother's breath as we always have and we always shall!

8.9. O Little Deerling, by Dawnglow

This song is an interesting example of draconic whimsy as well as being the only song (to my knowledge anyway) to which Howard wrote down the basic melody in musical notation, making it the only draconic song which anyone might have access to without going to see a dragon themselves, which is a very risky business to say the least. I have had some difficulty in getting this piece of music arranged into a workable sheet music format to present and I would like to include the melody for other people to enjoy at some point but since my own musical skills is restricted to knowing all the lyrics to every AD/DC song ever made, I cannot reproduce this piece at the moment. I have one of my more musically inclined friends helping me but his time is limited so *XiRihu sa Shahúx'hú* 'O Little Deerling' will have to remain lyrics for just the moment. Even once I figure out how to organize the sheet music for this song I doubt it will ever be on the Top 40 hit-list, although I don't think Dawnglow would really care one way or the other. This song is technically a *swéhé*- 'song' as it has a set melody and lyrics although it also might be a *qsláru*- 'traditional melody with differing lyrics'

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Tsišathíx ríth xirihu sa shahúx'hú!
Nisubúth sa háláthax rítherirésu ríth!
Síhaslaswewéha ríthán šisesuwésu ríth'hú!
Tsišathíx ríth, xiháqsa sa haxíx'hú!

Xíhansí sá qxíxúxhanríx innéwítsewíwéth rísí!
Níshashi sa xéryuxíryáx nisánhíha híla,
Tsitsitsax línašusaha línašálaha ríth,
Tsihusu sa husnax tsnihustéhuntíréth ríth!

Xishahúhúxhax'hú!
Xisłineslanex'hú!
Xinaširnašinréqx'hú
Nítsitsax níšathíx ríth,
Xisłháséhuxéqx'hú!
Tsisrísax tsixínéxax,

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Tsishane sa xwésháx ríth!

Ítsisa tsinanínshínya tsnitsitsexéryúqx nisa'n
Axán inneqsuwehítsáx ísyáhú!

English

Run away, O Little Deerling!
Swiftly burst out of the low brush!
Between the many hills and by the many creeks!
Run away, Weary Leaping One!

Do not keep looking at these old tracks behind you with excitement!
Rustling, I hear you have suddenly left your trail behind at the hollow!
So escape through the field of broken stone and by the valley!
May you go over the sickly, fallen leaves with a whisper!

O Laughing Deerling, O Sweet-Fleshed Cautious One!
O Brown Haired One, O Red-Tendoned One!
Escape, flee! O Hornless One!
Shy away, dodge, escape!

For I am stalking you not far away on your trail,
And I want a good hunt!

8.10. A Small Selection of Draconic Riddles and Verbal Games

This section is rather interesting not only because it deals specifically with certain aspects of *Xániwésin* or 'wordplay' but because it is an interesting window into how dragons think and what they consider to be what humans would call *síya-* or 'amusing.' Many of these questions follow the format of "I am (question)...what am I?" which is interesting linguistically because since the 1st Person suffix is either technically a null-suffix (Ø) or the subject or reflexive suffixes *-hí* and *rú* respectively, it alleviates the need to ask a question and have the class suffix on the true-verb give away part of the answer (what class the answer is at least). Davis' notes that these questions are often asked *with the class suffix attached* when speaking to younglings (or humans!) in order to make the question somewhat easier to answer by giving away part of the answer in the question.

Howard hated this, apparently.

Tsihúsin': *Xíšisil linasa tsisuluthreshá nisawx tsiséyáná'n.*¹⁸ *Xíxúhá'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Tsisa tsinunarésin xinxitsarésu nisa'n!*

Question: *I hiss like innumerable snakes but I have no mouth. What am I?*

Answer: *The wind through the trees!*

The answer to this riddle obviously refers to the sound of the wind rustling leaves although it seems a little opaque to most humans to whom I have asked the question.

Tsihúsin': *Tsiqxúshúru tsisa xúxinix sa šushu qsisá'n, hixyétsurú hišátharú hixtsírú'n xúshinsu kúnahaxlarésin'.*¹⁹ *Xíxúhá'x?*

¹⁸ This sentence is strange because it used the infix *'-sé* 'but not...' to indicate a negative meaning in the phrase *tsiséyáná'n?* 'but I do not (have) a mouth?' It is possible that *'-sé* 'but not...' once had a wider usage in *Srínawésin* which has been reduced in all but formalistic senses or sentences with patterns such as riddles, but I have no direct information for this.

¹⁹ Many of these questions employ the rarely used 1st Person suffixes *-rú* and *-hí*, probably to just cause a little less confusion.

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Tsiyesisin': *Tsíxéhášér nin!*

Question: *I am a robin's egg that never breaks, sometimes blue, sometimes black, sometimes gray and sprinkled with innumerable grains of sand. What am I?*

Answer: *The sky high above!*

This visually interesting riddle describes the sky as a upturned robin's egg and the differing colors refer to the different colors of the sky due to weather (black is night, blue is a clear day and gray is a cloudy day) while the "innumerable grains of sand" is a reference to the stars. I have yet to have a single person guess the answer correctly.

Tsihíhúsin': *Tsununarú nux tsusnúhirú'qs. Xíxuhárú'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Xínunarésin'!*

Question: *I breathe out but never in. What am I?*

Answer: *The wind!*

This is a somewhat simplistic riddle even though I believe that it could also be the reverse: "What breathes in but never out?"

Tsihíhúsin': *Tsinašin sa qsláwuré slišasa tsuxitsaréqx xúreshúréqx nusa tsinnunarésin nyux tsixitsarésu qsyux tsuxinix sa narharú qsu. Xíxúhárú'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Tsinaránaširréqx nin! Tsitsitsenaširréqx nin!*²⁰

Question: *I am a brown forest of innumerable sticks always blowing this way and that in the innumerable winds and yet I have no trees and I never turn green. What am I?*

Answer: *The fur of an animal!*

This is a fairly easy riddle and somewhat obvious to someone who is constantly outside and deal with animals on a similarly constant basis but again I have yet to have a single human guess the answer correctly. Either draconic riddles are essentially difficult to understand for humans or the culture gap between nearly immortal elemental creatures and modern humans is just too far.

Tsihíhúsin': *Tsisiwayánárisaréqx nyux xúlésqxítsúhí'qs. Tsisiwaqsáthirínléqx nyux xúsyurarú'qs. Tsishuxu nyux xútsaqsáthihí'qs. Tsiyísarú nyux xúsušurú'qs. Xíxúhá'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Xúqxíxniyaha!*²¹

Question: *I have innumerable fanged mouths but never speak. I have a rumbling stomach but am never hungry. I vomit but never eat. I roll but never walk. What am I?*

Answer: *The earth!*

This riddle refers to caves as fanged mouths (stalagmites and stalactites), the rumbling of the earth is the sound of a rumbling stomach, the earth vomits out lava and the reference to rolling is the motion of the earth during particularly bad earthquakes which move like waves. I have had at least one person say that each question could be answered separately but the pivotal connection is that they are all "of the earth" and so refer back to the earth. I have only had one person guess this riddle correctly and she is ten years old.

Tsihíhúsin': *Xúqxéqsáthihí unnesa tsusrušarísu tsunsiwarásháha nusa nyux xúxúšyubrahí unnetserin sa sréhušátharéth'n. Xíxúhárú'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Xúqxéharésu'n!*

Question: *I eat everything in my path but leave only black shit behind. What am I?*

²⁰ The answer to this question plays with the similarity of the descriptive adjective *našin*- 'brown' and *našir*- 'fur.' Also, technically the translation to the answer should be 'The fur of a large prey animal! The fur of a small prey animal!' but I have translated it simply as 'the fur of an animal' to keep things simpler.

²¹ The term *Xúqxíxniyaha nun!* literally means 'The earth right here all around!' as if to drive home the fact the answer was right there the entire time. Nobody ever said dragons couldn't be sadistic jerks.

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Answer: *Fire!*

I think this riddle is fairly self-explanatory.

Tsilihúsin': *Xúhusnarú qxulusarésin', qxuxáhisin, qxuxnálasin, qxusúthunsin, qxunásrísin hinyux qxunašasin', xúšúrirú qxúxéxyétsusin ni. Xúxúhá'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Tsuwašinsin'!*

Question: *I fly to many places in the sky, sometimes to the upper right front, sometimes to the upper left front, sometimes to the upper right back and sometimes to the upper left back but always up, reaching high up into the turquoise-like sky above. What am I?*

Answer: *Smoke!*

Again, I think this riddle is pretty self-evident although the riddle itself translates into English very poorly.

Tsilihúsin': *Tsushusu sa tsúhúru tsunsa tsutséya nusa nwán tsutsitsí sa lélathru tsunsa xúthrešáru nusa'n. Xúxúhá'x?*

Tsiyesisin': *Tsušerásin šantsitsíqx'n!*

Question: *I am like winter's cold when asleep and like summer's warmth when awake. What am I?*

Answer: *A spring day!*

I believe the logic behind this riddle is that spring days are warm like the summertime but frosty and cold in the wintertime. The answer is "day" in the sense of "a 24-hour period" rather than "day" as when the sun is up.

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Final Thoughts and Contact Information

For questions, comments, criticisms, concerns, queries, corrections or anything else regarding Srínawésin and this fascinating language and those who speak it anyone may feel free to contact me at:

E-mail: madelinpalmer13@gmail.com

I will do my best to answer any e-mails because if there is one thing I enjoy talking about it is draconic language and dragons in general.

Honestly, as I write these final words, I do not know what to think or feel. I have spent so long on this project all I can think of is that a real work of the heart is never truly done, one only stops working on it. I suppose that is true for both me and Howard Davis, wherever he is, and for whatever reason he worked so long and so hard on writing his notes. Personally, I do not care whether he was a madman, an imaginative and lonely person or somehow what he wrote was true and the Shúna do in fact exist in this world. Whatever the answer is, I am glad that his work and mine can be read by others, whether they laugh, and get excited or never think about it. It will not be lost.

But, I must say, learning about the Shúna and their remarkable world, the world would be a poorer place if dragons did not exist.