

KRÚMMI (The Raven)

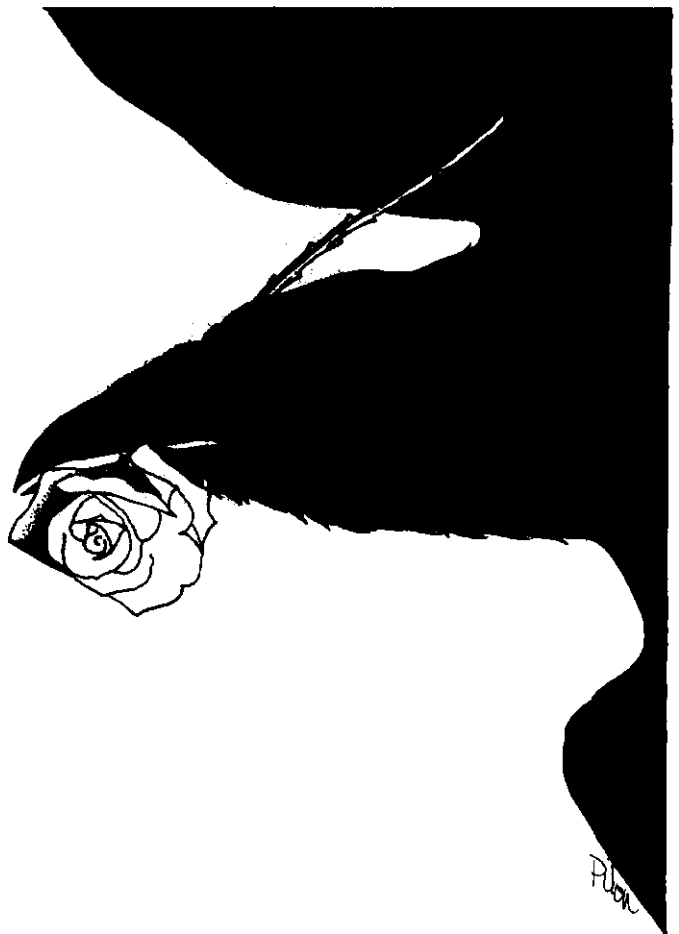
This traditional Icelandic greeting song has a text over two hundred stanzas long. When a traveler visited one of the remote homesteads, before he was invited into the house, he would stand at the doorstep and trade verses with the would-be host. The dialogue would include the perils of the journey, news of other farmsteads, and brave tales and boastings about all manner of things seen, heard or imagined. When the host was satisfied with the traveler's story-telling, he invited him into the house by singing a verse that likened the traveler to the raven who must spend his winter's night huddled against a cold mountain cliff.

The tune's initial (and traditional) scale uses a flatted second and a perfect fifth, found only in the Phrygian mode. Our arrangement retains the traditional sound by beginning the song in a Hyperaeolian scale (an Aeolian-scale tuning whose melody begins and ends a fifth above the tonic). After establishing the melody we move the song's key-center down to include the perfect second of the Aeolian scale. This improvisational departure is the result of the recorded version's interweaving with the mridangam of Guruvayru Dorai. Imparting a technique of the raga, we build our individual themes toward the "sam" (coming together). A final refrain is played during which the verse is sung.

LYRICS

Krummi swaff e kletta giow —
Kaldri, vetrar, nottur ow.
Verthur margth ath maynee,
Verthur margth ath maynee.

The raven sleeps on the
side of the cliff
on a cold winter's night.
There are many things
that bring grief to the soul.



Krummi Svaf í Klettagjá

Krummi svaf í klettagjá
kaldri vetrarnóttu á,
verthur margt ath meini.
--verthur margt ath meini.

Fyrr enn dagur fagur rann
frethith nefith dregur hann
undan stórum steini.
--undan stórum steini.

Allt er frosith úti gor,
ekkert fæst vith ströndu mor
svengd er metti mína.
--svengd er metti mína.

Ef ath húsum heim ég fer
heimafrakkur bannar mér
seppi´ úr sorp ath tína.
--seppi´ úr sorp ath tína.

Á sér krummi fthi stél,
einnig brþndi gogginn vel,
flaug úr fjalla gjótum.
--flaug úr fjalla gjótum.

Lítur yfir byggth og bú,
á bæjum fyrr en vakna hjú;
veifar vængjum skjótum.
--veifar vængjum skjótum.

Sálathur á síthu lá
sauthur feitur garthi hjá
fyrrum frá á velli.
--fyrrum frá á velli.

Krunk, krunk! nafnar, komith
krunk, krunk! flví oss búin er
krás á köldu svelli.
--krás á köldu svelli.

Modern Icelandic is akin to ninth century German-- the language of Beowulf. Remember Grendel, his mom, and that crowd? In Icelandic there are five different ways to pronounce the sound, “th”. Their alphabet has each included as separate characters which I have largely removed from the above text and substituted “th” as joined consonants. When in doubt as to a pronunciation, start with your tongue slightly protruding and barely clamped down between your teeth and give it a go. That’s one of the most used forms of “thoth”. The “r” consonants are rolled similar to Spanish. Words ending with “á” have the sound, “ow”; non-accented “a” is pronounced, “uh”. The language is not sung in a lilt as is Swedish, being closer to the glottal stops of its Germanic roots.

KRÜMMI (The Raven)

Icelandic Traditional

By Force & d'Ossché

Key: A Phrygian

tuning: ccAD

D⁵ drone...

KAUM- MI	SWAFF E	KLET- TA	GIOW -
5 6	5 4	4 5	5

KAL- DRI	VE- TRAR	NO- TUR	OW.
5 7	7 8	8 7 8 7	5

VER- THUR	MARGTH ATH	MAY-	NI - ,
5 6	5 4	5 6	7 8

VER- THUR	MARGTH ATH	MAY-	NEE.
9 9	8 7 8 7	5	5