K'OOLTSAAH TS'IN'

Go k'udaa gisak yoo yaan' k'aa k'agheedaak ts'uh
gin huyil todiniy ts'in'.

Ts'a hal koon yuh zeeyuh huyineetisleet ts'uh
doogh yaga donla' k'ilodok'oodineedaal ts'in'
yeenslin. Go k'udaa gisak yooyaan' k'aak'agheedaak
ts'uh gin huyil todiniy ts'in' k'udaa.

Go yoogh don hohaa haghodohaghadineeghaltok ts'a
hal k'ooltshaah hahadnee ts'a hal koon go dzaan
kuh yee hal neeits'a k'ahooghaltsaah.
KOYUKON RIDDLES

Because everybody is taking after the white man's way of life, nobody probably will remember this. But I just want to record it because I get lonesome. I'm hoping that someday someone will learn them. This is the way they used to entertain each other a long time ago by riddling each other.

They used to riddle each other around New Year's.

Chief Henry
Huslia, Alaska
1976
"Tłaatšaa k'aaghas-aanaa k'its'a sodiyiytł ts'idnee dahugh dits'inolyo," hadnee. Dibaa hootozeeł ts'in'. Go ahdin zo huyíł hadniy ts'a hoko nahayoodilzee'. Huts'uhu huhoozee ta koon "Hakhu" hadnee.
dilodzoy

Ts'uhu k'udaa koon dahadnee.
"Tlaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa yahoohaa yahoohaa,"
hadnee.
tł'eełł'ool doyeeega'

Go hał go k'odeet dibaa zokuł
huyił eediniyaa ts'in'. Ts'uh yuk
hadnee koonoo.
"Tłaatsaa k'aaqghas-aanaa yoo-oo
k'its'a-otsin nilaatł'aagha neeltl'ooł
k'a dik'eet'aa," hadnee.
k′idzonul k′uł
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa yoo-oo
k'its'a-ots'in sakaay ghun
dodilniy k'a dik'idnee.
hulín  doyeega'
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa yoo-oo
k'its'a-ots'in tso k'inokaal
k'a dik'eet'aa.
kotł
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa ḥutl'o taadikin dinaaneekaan k'a dik'eet'aa.
gaaga doghodla’
Tlaatsaa k’aaghas-aanaa ḥutl'o
nitsaabaay kugheelin k’a dik’eet’aa.
tlaghalbaaya ts'ida'

Nidaats'a zokul k'its'its'a dahadiłnee-aa. Go huts'uhu hoozeeyin koon "hakhu" ahadnee. Go huts'uhu hadnee ta gheelhee. Ts'a hał yoogh don hukanaaga t'eeegho ahootsole. Doogh eeseĆ eey nooyooogh gisak yoo hanoił kanaak hahadnee ts'a gheelhee.
Tłaaatsaa k'aaqgasa-aana yoo-oo
k'its'a-ots'in neeldidaak'eelyo
k'a dik'eet'aa.
k'uydliy diloyula'
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa ada

hodinaaghasikin da hodinaaghasikin.
k’ikin bahutádaadaalee
Tłaatsaa k’aaqhas-aanaa ŝee ek
toliš altl’aah k’a dik’it’aan.
kun’ tloola’

Yaga እወድንትልክ ውል ወዳጋ
gheel eey kun’ yineek’idee.
? 

Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa k'eeey
diloyul k'a dik'eet'aa.
teekon kaa'}
Tłaatsaa k'aaqg̱aas-aanaa
tsaabakoł k'a dik'eet'aa.
gūh dots’in tleek’a

Nooyoogh gūh dots’in gheel-eey
iron kok’a k’a dahoot’aa hee.
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aaanaa tlídon yints'eełgaats.

13
Tlaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa tlidon yooyeentl'ots'itł-o.
dołoghaaltona

(dołohaaghaaltona)
Tlaatsaa k'aaqhas-aanaa neelk'aa taayo eelghaan k'a dik'eet'a.
Doghon yooyeeskghazoldiñ.
(Yoogh don ło yoozagheelyeesk.)
k'eeey tolusga'

(K'eeytolusga gheel eey bideets'iy ta yoodilyeessk k'aadneehee.)
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa yobaagh
nok'idzeedaadliyo k'a dik'eet'aa.
k'ínool baagha
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa
yaats'in nots'ah dok'ahagha
dineeghusagudza yaats'in
nots'ah dok'ahagha dineeghasinaał.

18
neełk’aa ḥanodzaan
doditeel ts’in’
¿

Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa dibee
da-aakyee neełk'ots'a dots'idlinuts.

19
duhnooy
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa go neek'aahunaanga-o'.
tseetł dodeelnin k’a

Yoogh tseetł dodeelnin k’a
hoolaan k’aant’aa da huloy la-on.
Tłaatsaa k'aaqhas-aanaa gaagheeghik,
gaagheeghik.

21
deeguy
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa neelot
da ḥaak'itl-aytl.

22
dinaa noghaa
Tlaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa huts'ibaa dingheelyon k'a dik'eet'aa.
Doogh buhugheeëlsla-aayee.
taałeebaay doghoo'
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa
nik'idzooghootna nonok'itiszał.
diy neeyo hu
Tłaatsaa k'aaqhas-aanaa taahay
dinaadak'ay yee ḥats'eedaał.
toonts’oda
Tłaatsaa k'aaghas-aanaa
nitl̓inaatlk'idee ts'eey_
yee ḥats'eedaał.

26
noolaagha
Tłaatsaa k’aaghas-aanaa
go koon go koon go koon.

27
oy biłtł
Tłaatsaa k’aaghas-aanaa
nontotł naangiditł.
oy nitok'a
1. They would say, "Wait, I see something! Because we don't want to choke on smoke we're hiding our faces." Who is going to figure this out? At least at that time it was their own environment that they used as the basis for their riddles. They would name different things and try to figure them out. If they came close, the one who was riddling them would say, "Hakhu."

ANSWER: A clump of spruce cones curled under.

2. RIDDLE: And then they'd say, "Wait, I see something: twang, twang."

ANSWER: The noise of a bowstring. Of course, nobody knows what a bowstring noise is nowadays. If no one could guess the answer, they'd say "yuk."

3. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: In the other world it looks like their heads are braided together.

ANSWER: The neck of an American Widgeon duck.

4. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: It sounds like a lullaby is being sung to children in the other world.

ANSWER: The noise of a fast-moving current.

5. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: It looks like a cache that's leaning over in the other world.

ANSWER: Salmonberries.
6. **RIDDLE:** Wait, I see something: At the headwaters it looks like a cache of sticks sticking in the water.

   **ANSWER:** Beaver feed pile.

7. **RIDDLE:** Wait, I see something: Up at the headwaters it looks like water running over small white fish.

   **ANSWER:** Grayling's coat. They never make mistakes in their answers. And they say "Hakhu" to the one who comes closest to the right answer. I guess it means 'almost'. The old language is hard to understand. I guess that's what the white people call high words.

8. **RIDDLE:** Wait, I see something: It looks like some animals got their antlers tangled in the other world.

   **ANSWER:** A clump of dry willow branches.

9. **RIDDLE:** Wait, I see something: I stubbornly stick up in the same stubborn place.

   **ANSWER:** A stump the sled is always bumping.

10. **RIDDLE:** Wait, I see something: Something is acting like a dog that's lapping up broth.

    **ANSWER:** Fire flaring up and down. You know how when the fire flares up you see flames go way up.

11. **RIDDLE:** Wait, I see something: Something looks like a birch tree branching.

    **ANSWER:** Wolf tail.
12. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: Something looks like a spoon.

ANSWER: The marking down the center of a rabbit's back. You know how down the center of a rabbit's back his fur looks metallic.

13. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: We're all staring out from the edge of the bank.

ANSWER: Snares set along the bank.

14. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: We're all sticking our butts up in the air along the bank.

ANSWER: Spring-pole snares.

15. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: It looks like oil on water in both directions.

ANSWER: Sleigh runner track.

16. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: We're whistling along the edge of the bank. (But we never used to whistle a long time ago.)

ANSWER: The wind blowing on a half-detached piece of birchbark. You know how a half-detached piece of birchbark whistles when the wind is blowing against it.

17. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: It looks like cumulus clouds around the sky.

ANSWER: The fat around the edge of the fourth stomach of a caribou.
18. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: My hat is short on one side and long on the other.

ANSWER: The solstice.

19. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: We're sitting all puffed up, across from each other, in a sheepskin coat.

ANSWER: Snow on tree branches.

20. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: My track ends here.

ANSWER: The track of a snowball that rolled down a hill.


ANSWER: Gray hair.

22. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: I make something touch far away.

ANSWER: Our eyesight.

23. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: It looks like a stand of spruce trees. It's something we don't have around here.

ANSWER: Whale's whiskers.

24. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: I'm scratching back and forth across Silver Creek.

ANSWER: Spruce hen tracks.
25. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: We're all going up river in reddish colored boats.

   ANSWER: Suckers going up river.

26. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: We're all going up river in many-colored boats.

   ANSWER: Dog salmon going up river.

27. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something here and there, here and there.

   ANSWER: Snowshoe filler filling snowshoes.

28. RIDDLE: Wait, I see something: I'm all wound up across my forehead.

   ANSWER: Binding across the tip of snowshoes.