The Grain of the World

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Overview

On the surface of Duskara everything has a direction, and the direction does not change.

What	Comes from	Goes to
Light	The day side	
Heat	The day side	
Wind at the ground	The night side	The day side
Water	The ice of the night side	The salt flats of the Dayward Edge
The ground	High under the ice	Low toward the day side
The dead	They live in the wind	

Light and heat come from one side. Wind, water and the ancestors come from the other. People live on the strip where the two cross.

- **Nobody is lost in ordinary weather.** A person who faces the light has the wind at the back. Grain, grass and smoke all lean the same way. To be lost is a thing of storms, mist, caves and closed rooms, and it frightens a Duskaran more than it would frighten a person of Earth.
- **Nightward is the hard way.** It is uphill, upwind and upstream, into the cold and the dark. Water comes from there. Dayward is downhill, downwind and downstream: the easy way, and the place where water ends.
- **The word for what is right is *sawa*, balanced.** The Central band is *Daŋa-Sawa*, the balanced edge. The blessing is *Heri hanga zi ja sawa*, "may your wind be balanced". Too much of the day and too much of the night are equal faults.
- **Directions serve at every size.** Creole has no east or west. It uses the four directions of the belt for small things too: the nightward shelf, the dayward stair, the nightward tower, the up-belt end of a table. Left and right are for the two hands and for nothing else.

Figures of Speech

People talk in the grain of the world.

Saying	Meaning
It went dayward	It is lost or wasted and will not come back. Water that reaches the salt does not return.
To go nightward for it	To take the hard way; to go to the source of a matter.
Upwind of it	Before it; not yet touched by it.
Downwind of them	Living with the results of what other people do.
To give someone your lee (*toa kinga*)	To put yourself between a person and what is hard for them.
To sweep nightward	To do useless work.
Side-on	Not fighting a thing and not giving way to it.

What People Compare Things To

A Duskaran compares things to what they know: water in a channel (slack, current, set, weir); loads (to carry, to bear, to give way); the wind (lee, lean, line, side-on); counting (short, over, a tally that does not close); cloth, knots and cord; the grain (to head, to lie over, a slow row); stone and slate.

Some figures of Earth do not work here.

- **The sea.** The Bahari is the only sea. It has short waves and no tide, so nobody speaks of a tide that turns or of surf.
- **Light and dark.** Light is not good and dark is not bad. The day side burns and the night side gives water.
- **Return.** The sun does not move, and no part of the Cycle comes back in the weather. "After the rain, the sun" means nothing on the belt: the sun was there all along.
- **The striking hour.** A clock does not strike. The bell does, and the bell is people.

The Exception of the Rift

In the rift of the heartland the river and the cold current of the floor run along the belt, not across it. Heartlanders are the only Duskarans who see water go sideways for a long distance. A person from another region who comes to the Bahari stands and looks at the river for some time.