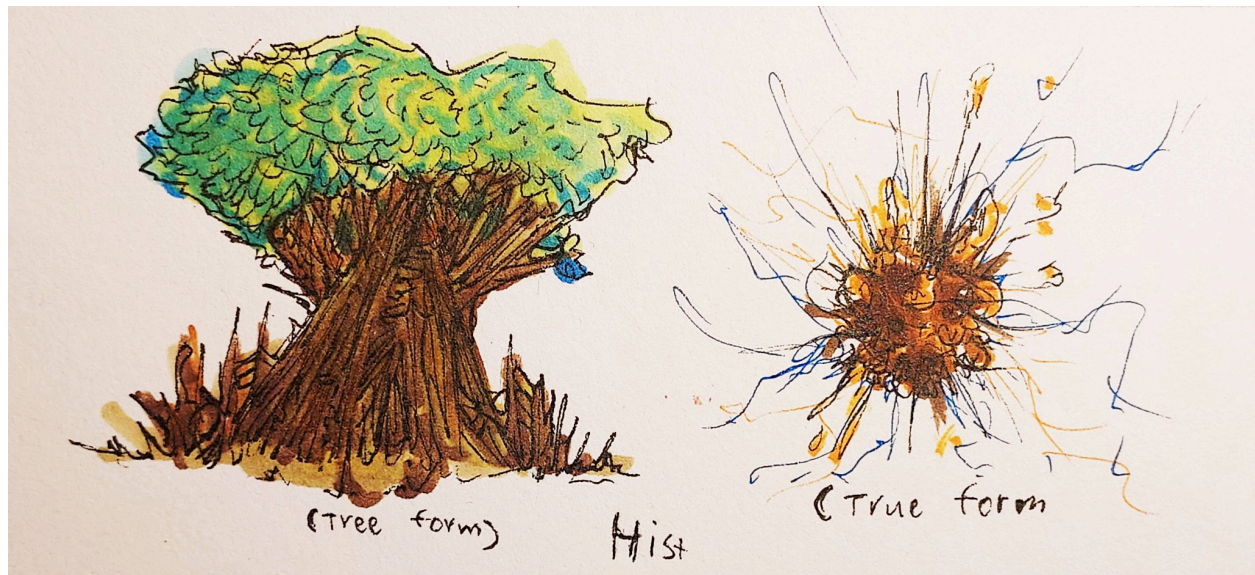


## The Hist as Beings

The Hist are not of this world. Scholars speculate that in the ancient and forgotten days of the Dawn, the primeval Nirn and the homeland of the Hist crashed into one another, a cataclysm that destroyed the latter world completely.

Amidst the apocalyptic rain of amber and rock that accompanied this collision between worlds, the surviving Hist were forced to adapt to different laws of physical reality. In the primordial world of the Hist, forces as fundamental to life as gravity, energy, time, and motion behaved in ways alien to the peoples of Nirn.



Art by *Tammilisäke*

## Argonians and the Hist

Argonians may feel the presence of the Hist in spiritual and physical ways, especially if they partake of the ritualized consumption of Hist sap that characterizes traditional Argonian “tree-worship”. However, long years away from the Marsh may dull or even deaden this connection. Most Argonian clans, though generally semi-nomadic, establish themselves semi-permanently around a Hist tree to avoid such degradation of this important spiritual link. Even clanless city Argonians may occasionally seek out Hist trees in the interior of the country to “refresh” their feeling of connection to the Marsh.

The people of Argonia find all of this very hard to explain to outsiders. Cyrodiils tend to describe Argonian religion as “tree-worship”, while the Dunmer derisively speak of demonic jungle spirits who cursed the Cantemiric Velothi. Some wild-eyed accounts even posit that Argonians are themselves extensions of the Hist’s inhuman alien will, puppets in a millennia-long stage play. None of these depictions are accurate. The connection between Argonian and Hist is complex,

yet subtle; it can be intense, but is more often comforting. Some Argonians find that they can best explain their faith to Westerners as “the feeling of being home”.

## **The Hist in History**

When the Hist arrived violently on Nirn, they also entered Mundus – a plane of existence extremely incompatible with their nature. In their native realm, the Hist were non-Euclidean, pulsating shapes of translucent, amber-colored soft matter, crackling with a kind of magic that does not exist in Mundus. Smashed into the surface of Nirn, the Hist rapidly became subject to three confining dimensions and the impositions of Dragon Time. In this new reality, Hist were smashed against the iron laws of Mundus like eggs dropped onto concrete, exploding into new, strange shapes.

The few Hist that survived the Amber Rain did not know it. Though they were physically warped into tree-like forms by their cataclysmic arrival in this world, the minds of the Hist were perhaps even more damaged. The vast ocean of Hist minds through which they had freely interfaced in their own world was gone, reduced to a handful of disconnected scraps. Worse, the oppressive drumbeat of Akatosh meant that their minds, at home outside of linear time, were now pressed into its rhythm. In response, the last Hist lost consciousness, and did not regain it for many millennia. Their dreams, however, never ceased.

The Hist awoke screaming to the Middle Dawn. With the Dragon broken, the shackles on Hist minds were thrown aside. They reached out to each other – tentatively at first, then joyously – consciously realizing at last that the Hist had not been destroyed by the loss of their world. But the Dragon Break did not free the Hist from their physical forms, and so they remained trees, rooted and sessile and straining under the impositions of Nirnic Earthbones.

It was at this time that the Hist first met the Argonians.

The south-eastern lands of what had become Tamriel were in earliest times inhabited by Ehlnofey, but the Aldmer of Argonia wiped themselves out long before the Hist awoke. In their place emerged a variety of pre-sapient creatures, who encountered the sap of the Hist trees. Little by little, over thousands of years, these creatures rapidly bootstrapped their collective awareness, building languages, communities, societies. Lizards became Saxhleel. Turtles became Tumnatu. Birds became Sarpa. Frogs became Paatru. Caimans became Agacephs. Adders became Naga. To their surprise, the Hist were greeted upon awakening by a chorus of beings who had grown up in the ashes of their world, nursed and enlightened by their own dreams.

Because of their circumstances, the Argonians knew much more about their gods than the Hist knew about their faithful. But the Hist quickly came to understand how the Argonians had cared for them in their long unconsciousness, venerating and protecting each tree. They now looked out on a world in chaos, stripped of its marching orders by the Selectives upon their Tower. To

comfort the people who had shown them such love, the Hist returned the favor as best they could, by offering the Argonians access to their network of amber minds. Though it could not save their bodies from a rupture in time, the Argonians were able to retain their cultures and identities through the 1008 years of chaos by nestling their minds in the warm embrace of the trees.

When the Dawn finally ended, and the Hist once again returned to their coma, the Argonians did not forget what their gods had done for them. Nor did the promise of the Hist Sap expire. To this day, Argonian priests teach those who seek relief from the world how to join the amber dreams of their gods.

The Hist dreamt on for more centuries, until they were awoken again by the Warp in the West.