

## **Inanna**

### **A Commentary on Scenes of the Play**

#### **What is an Archetype?**

‘Archetype’ defies simple definition. The word comes from the Greek *arche* and *tupos*. *Arche* means ‘first principle’ i.e. the creative source which cannot be seen directly. *Tupos* means ‘impression’ i.e. one of many manifestations of the first principle.

Carl Jung said:

... their origin can only be explained by assuming them to be deposits [in the unconscious] of the constantly repeated experiences of humanity.  
(CW7:109)

It is an inherited tendency of the human mind to form representations of mythological motifs ... that vary a great deal without losing their basic pattern ... this tendency is instinctive, like the specific impulse of nest-building, migration, etc. in birds.  
(CW18:52)

The collective unconscious comprises in itself the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings. It is the matrix of all conscious psychic occurrences.  
(CW 8: 230)

The contents of the collective unconscious are not only residues of archaic specifically human modes of functioning, but also the residues of functions from [our] animal ancestry ...  
(CW7:159)

Inanna and the pantheon of gods and goddesses are universally imagined concepts that emerge from the silt of the Unconscious. They serve as beacons that point the way in a life that is vast and lonely. From the beginning of time, humans have dreamt with desire and fear about their forebears: their mothers, fathers and children; their wise elders, their kings and queens, heroes, princes and princesses; martyrs, saints, demons and fools. The procession of emotionally laden images is endless. However, if one looks carefully there are only three archetypes from which the rest are derived: Mother, Father and non-gender specific It - i.e. the old person and the child.

#### **History**

The story of Inanna emerged from Neolithic “New Stone Age” culture, ca. 8000 BC in the Middle East. The Samarran Culture which existed ca. 5500-4800 BC venerated an earth-hugging snake symbol. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolithic>

The Ubaid culture followed the Samarran culture. The principle Ubaid goddess was a slender snake-headed figure with a high bitumen crown. Often she held a snake baby to her breast. Her striking dark crown and human figure suggest regal and authoritative nature. See Inanna site-Images of Sumer/Paleolithic and [http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Samarran\\_Culture](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Samarran_Culture).

Eventually, metal tools were conceived – giving rise to the Copper & Bronze Age ca. 4000 BC when the civilization of Sumer rose from the Ubaid culture.  
See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubaid\\_period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubaid_period)

## **Scene 1: The First Lesson: The Song of Creation**

*(Italicized Passages are Commentary on the Scenes)*

### **Background:**

The myth of creation goes as follows:

The goddess Nammu is the still primordial salt ocean.<sup>1</sup>

An, the sky god, is born with Ki, the Earth. They are born together, undifferentiated, without benefit of a father. They reach for each other. They are each other. In the conjoined love there is an act of creativity (*see Myth of the Divine Mother for another explanation of this interdependency/non-differentiation*). Enlil is born. He differentiates them, separates them. Sky becomes the Sky, as we know it and Earth becomes the Earth, as we know it.

Enlil stays with his mother and awakens her potential gift for Life-giving. Ki is the goddess of birth. As she gives life to flowers and meadows and hills and mountains and birds and animals, Enlil nestles close to her. When she has created all living things (but not humans) Enlil leaves and helps his father An, scatter the seeds of stars and planets.

An may be interpreted as the still-point where the potential of creativity exists. He represents the archetypal father, aloof, unknown, and all seeing, lawgiver, nurturer, and provider. His offspring (Enlil) is the active principle. Enlil invents all the valuable implements: plow, water wheel and so on, gives gods & goddesses all the various job posts that keep the world turning, keeps the fecundity of Life ... well, fecund. He is the problem-solver god.

Enki was the first-born child of Nammu. He is the precursor of Poseidon in Greek mythology. He organizes the gods' and goddesses' responsibilities, makes the river waters fertile, and makes all living things organized and beautiful so they can fulfill their destinies. He is the god of wisdom. He knows how all things work, is kindly, patient engineer and, like most geniuses, a bit dotty. He and his wife, Ninmah, invent human beings together. They create men, women and children all day long. By the time evening comes around they are tired and start drinking a lot of beer. After that, humans come out looking a little cock-eyed with missing parts and odd shaped bits. The only human they can't find a destiny for is the dying old man.

There are gods present before Creation whose birth is not an issue. They simply exist although some do have stories of origin. Ereshkigal was originally a grain goddess. Hers is a complex story (see the *The Story of Ereshkigal* for that account). She & Enlil fell in

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<sup>1</sup> Nammu's mate, Apsu (mentioned in the Akkadian myths) is the sweet water of the rivers. Either there is no mention of a consort in Sumerian mythology or the tablets have not been found or perhaps destroyed by bombing and looting. The Tigris (East) & Euphrates (West) Rivers pour into the Persian Gulf. Eridu, the sea home of Enki, is situated in ancient times at the sacred meeting place of salt and sweet waters. (See map in [Images of Sumer File](#) for original route of the rivers.)

love. But Enlil was not a very communicative god. He took what he wanted. He did what he wanted. Ereshkigal comes out an unfortunate loser ... but ... she also claims her pain and her queendom. Her Underworld is a large estate with palaces of considerable proportion and beauty for the gods and judges. The infertile dry dust et. al. the dead mortal souls experience is not necessarily the queendom the visiting or residing gods experience. She has claimed her space and has earned the *me* of the Underworld and perfected them.

*The “song” is my invention to move the story of creation along. The song is the primordial tone, the spirit, the living presence of Life; it breathes and soars. It emerges from the universal ground of Silence and connects with the ground of Silence within the listener. Meditation, contemplation, even reverie is a way to listen. In Eastern philosophies – the tone that awakens Life, fertilizes Life into manifestation is the “OM” – (again refer to the Myth of the Divine Mother” on Inanna site/Research). The song is the tone that calls for Life to emerge and constellate.*

### **Inanna - According to the spiritual understanding of the Sumerians**

All Nature is imbued with the presence of Inanna. She is *in* the divine matter. She is the sustainer god – she sustains the ebb and flow, the relentless paradoxical reality of the natural world. She and the other gods exist in a threshold world, a liminal, twilight world of the mind.

She exists between Blessing and curse  
Light and dark  
Plenty and want  
Goodness and malevolence  
Life and death

She is the *Real* every living being must encounter. She is *Divine* matter. She is Nanna (the moon) that illumines the night – or the darkness of ignorance. This is a complex task.

Implicit in her presence is the divine plan, sacred order and meaning. She embodies the system of opposites, the duality in Nature. She is fecundity and death. She sings poems to herself expressing delight in her sexuality. She speaks out to herself with audacious lust. She can turn her enemies to dust with a sound, a look.

She embodies the cycle of Life and Death in all its waxing/waning phases as daughter of the Moon. She resides near the moon as the planet Venus. Her planet’s journey represents the ever-constant cyclical movement of seasons and the tides of oceans and in people’s bodies & psyches.

As Venus, she is the constant burning planet in the sky. Venus sinks beneath the horizon each year for three days and nights and returns bright to climb the sky once more. Her dip below the horizon and her return represents the journey from Life to Death in the Underworld and Resurrection – a reassuring cycle for all who observed the Heavens.

Inanna’s destiny includes ruling the realms of Heaven, Earth and the Netherworld of her own psyche. She is ambitious and plans to take the *me* of the Netherworld. As the

prototypical Solar Hero, she earns her Life and Wisdom by experiencing the mystery of Death. Her success, born of courage, empowers her to bring civilizing order to the Universe with wisdom, authority and compassion. The hero becomes the good Queen. And as all heroes who listen, she has help getting to rulership.

All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes. This is particularly true of religious ideas, but the central concepts of science, philosophy, and ethics are no exception to this rule. In their present form they are variants of archetypal ideas created by consciously applying and adapting these ideas to reality. For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but to translate into visible reality the world within us. (CW8, 342).

## **Scene 2 “The Initiation”**

As Inanna walks along the banks of the Euphrates – she is afraid. Ninurta, the god of the South Wind – think: the stormy south wind whips in from the Persian Gulf.<sup>2</sup> She rescues the Huluppu tree from the unconscious destructiveness of primordial Nature.

We meet her at the foot of her Huluppu tree (thought to be a kind of willow). She is a young girl not yet old enough to know her powers. She saved the Huluppu tree from being swept away by river’s torrent. She planted her tree in the sheepfold. She tends the tree very carefully to be sure it will grow.

*The sheepfold signifies the cultural transition from nomadic culture to herding and farming. To herd and farm there must be safety. And there must be a ruler who can provide safety. Shepherds guard the sheep, keeping them from harm.*

*The Huluppu tree is the World Tree. The spine of the people’s spirit grows protected in the sheepfold of Inanna. It is hers and she is it. (The world tree of the Maya grows up through the center of the temple.)*

Despite her tending, the Anzu bird lives in its branches. Lilith lives in its trunk. The snake is coiled amongst its roots. None will leave.

*She meets the first guardians at the threshold who confront her. They foreshadow her eventual question – do you really want this destiny of rulership? Then fight for it. Show your stuff. Grow up.*

*The guardians at the threshold are the necessary obstacles that occur in Life to challenge genuine ownership of personal authority. The cruel professor, the narcissistic lover, the abusive parent, the entitled child, the SAT’s, a first bout with cancer, the second, the loss of a beloved person, city, culture, and so on. All obstacles confront with the challenge of continuing with integrity.*

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<sup>2</sup> It turns out Ninurta (the destructive South Wind) is none other than Nergal – the husband of Ereshkigal. Tablets are missing or sitting in disparate fragments in museums around the world that tell the story of how Nergal became Ninurta or why Ereshkigal sits alone in her Queendom.

*Inanna will be challenged three times: next, when she enters the Nether World and last when she confronts her husband, Dumuzi.*

*Each of the gods that inhabit the tree is a dual god. They are chaos that holds the shadow of creativity.*

*In this aspect the **Anzu** bird is stinking and griffin-like, perched as a predator. Yet, in his other aspect he is the spirit that is capable of soaring. He protects the sheep and the cattle. He is named after An, the sky god.*

***Lilith** lives in the spine of the tree. In this aspect, she is the rebellious spirit, the creator of chaos, she haunts as a disenfranchised being. She is sexual, powerful and malevolent. She is a clear example of a violent goddess: life giving, life taking, sexual, threatening, kindly yet terrifying. She has characteristics of the Anzu bird. Like Ereshkigal, she instructs Inanna.*

***The snake** lives at the root. It is possible he is **Kur** or a semblance of him. I chose to use the image of the snake throughout the story to unify all the elements. The snake is feared and respected. It is the predator and its reputation for immortality makes it mysterious.*

*Kur literally means “foreign land”, “mountain”. It was from the mountain range to the east and the foreign lands of Asia beyond that predatory, marauding hordes descended upon the people of Sumer. Kur is the prototypical Semitic Leviathan.*

*The Sky and the Nether World were cosmic realms of the gods. However, there was another cosmic realm that hovered just above the primordial ocean and just below the Netherworld. Kur lay coiled there as tyrant and protector. He also coiled around the heavens protecting the home of the gods.*

*Inanna does not have the authority or the maturity to make the unholy trinity leave. Once the tree is grown sturdy and wide, her first decision is to call her cousin Gilgamesh (a mortal & hero soon to be king) to chop it down. She will make her marriage bed from the tree, she will carve her throne from the tree, and she will make her crown from the tree.*

*Mythological themes often follow the psychic development of the hero. Myths may also be morality tales that teach the individual how to progress from child-like dependency to the freedom of awareness. Inanna and Gilgamesh are both young and untried.*

*Gilgamesh, as hero, is prototypical. His quickness to anger, rash behavior, and impulse to be the savior/destroyer are heroic traits. Like the Greek hero Theseus who slew the Minotaur, Asterion (He of the Celestial Sphere), heroes sometimes make serious mistakes.*

<http://www.mythweb.com/encyc/entries/labyrinth.html>

### **Scene 3: Transfer of the Arts of Civilization**

*Inanna has the lineage but she is not getting the respect of appointment to a specific function that offers a destiny. She does not suffer the dotting patronizing of her*

grandfather and takes her destiny. It certainly is not going to be given to her. From her point of view, he is in love with himself and his sweet water of life and she is happy for him to go on ... but in the meantime she has to define herself. She is immortal – not a life span to take for granted.

*Taking the me from the engineer who created them is a significant political message in the story. The discerning people of Sumer are shown the me no longer exclusively belong to Enki and the city of Eridu. The arts of civilization can be shared, learned and implemented in other cities.*

*Also, the belief that birthrights are given willingly and consciously by parents or their surrogates is untrue. Legends, myths and personal experience show birthrights are usually taken. This action can be tricky because the action of taking a birthright needs to be accompanied by a willingness to be initiated (tested and anointed) by a trusted mentor.*

*When Arthur Miller wrote Death of a Salesman, he imaged Biff sliding down his father's body in despair. Biff said – "You have to see me as a dime a day man..." In other words, see me, as I am - not what you dream me to be. Birthright: "Give me the power to have my own integrity". His father is not willing or able to do that. If Biff is willing to get up off his knees and "listen to the Great Below" i.e. choose independence from his father's approval and listen to his own soul – he has a good chance of succeeding.*

*When Inanna takes the me from Enki, she takes formal authority. She is willing to learn on the job. The arts of civilization, the me of the Above World, are about accomplishment and progress in a material world.*

*However, when Inanna attempts to take the me of the Nether World she discovers they complement the me of the Above World. They are intangible because they are about being and knowing. There is no room for hidden agenda or bravado in the Nether World. She is entirely stripped of material "artifice". The Nether World expresses its alliance with the Above World by making no allowance for anyone to lie. The solar hero must die to personal illusions. Hopes crash, grandiose ideas burn up, ambitions and loves disintegrate and the hero is challenged to come out the other side changed. The trick is – to emerge on the other side of death a better, wiser person. As one's tattered garments smoke from the experience we also hope the hero has developed a sense of humor.*

### **Isimud – the Janus faced god, Enki's messenger**

*Who can be more trusted than a messenger? One can but hope the messenger does not resent a servant's work and lack of fanfare. I think this is where we find the vocation, the "calling" to something higher for an intrinsic reward rather than the extrinsic reward of celebrity.*

## **Ninshubur – Goddess of the East, Warrior**

*Ninshubur provides a similar function. In the earliest translation, Ninshubur was a male lieutenant. I decided to take a later Sumerian translation, providing a female gender just for interest's sake. I pictured Ninshubur as Grace Jones might portray the character. She is a goddess, the Queen of the East, the Great Goddess' amazon lieutenant, Inanna's earthly executive arm. She vanquishes the monsters with a mighty roar (like Ereshkigal), does not get ruffled in combat, leads the royal bridegroom to the goddess' bed and prevails upon the sky gods when her mistress is held fast in death.*

*Her loyalty is not servile. She is independent, ironic and through her love for Inanna embodies the consciousness of Inanna – that functioning part of Inanna's psyche that witnesses from above the meaning of the events that happen below. Each of us has the gift of a strong, humble, functioning consciousness that permits life to continue; prevents psychotic episodes and loss of soul that helps us persist in our journeys to find what is necessary. Ninshubur is the spokeswoman of the Self. She is the model of woman's deepest reflective-of-the-Self, priestess function. She has no life of her own beyond her capacity to serve. She carries out precisely and competently what the goddess asks of her. She even dresses like a beggar at Inanna's bidding. Yet the story turns on her integrity, reverence and capacity for action. Because of her, Inanna is restored to the Above World. (Perera).*

## **Scene 4: The Courtship of Inanna**

Enkimdu is appointed a destiny by Enki: he is the farmer. Dumuzi is appointed the destiny of shepherd –

*These gods each represent agriculture and breeding. Dumuzi's description is written in the script.*

*“It becomes increasingly clear Dumuzi is capable of containing 2 opposing energies in one gesture – he is wildly instinctual and yet has a settled discernment – he shows this in one stride of his walking. He pours genuine ecstatic into others which is nourishing – as children do – or animals- or river – or rain.”*

*In mythology, Dumuzi represents the dying shepherd king. His name means “faithful son”. His mother is the sheep goddess and amongst the cattle herders, she is the goddess of wild cows. Dumuzi's father is Enki, the god who fertilizes the waters upon which the animals depend and the grain & grass upon which they feed.*

*He is a mortal king identified with the principle of immortality. Even though Inanna has decreed his fate as an immortal god-man, he is still in her service: he is protector of the land and he must die for earth's creation to renew itself. In this respect he is the prototypical savior-hero. Not fully a god, not just a man but granted the honor of both, he prefigures Abel and Christ. His human appetites are earthy and his god-like destiny is to peak, like harvests and animal fecundity, and then, like the dying seasons, painfully separate from life. He will be sacrificed in his prime.*

*In the play I devised the foreshadowing of his death: he unconsciously pins a symbol of his own identity: the shed skin of the king snake<sup>3</sup> to his door. Later, Ereshkigal commands Inanna's "glassen skin" to be hung by her Nether World palace door. By having both characters connected to the shed snakeskin, the strength of the relationship that is to grow between Inanna and Dumuzi is also foreshadowed. They find a space together where they can test each other. Dumuzi is not servile which allows Inanna to fully inhabit herself. He faces her down as an equal; he does not placate her. This allows her to cut through the goddess-mortal inequality. From him, she gains the profound respect of confrontation. Partnership does not need a mirroring voice, a mushy relatedness but passionate, respectful return of energy. He does not turn Inanna's strength aside but helps her learn her independence.*

### **Scene 6: The Sacred Marriage**

The Sacred Marriage was a jubilant, rapturous occasion celebrated with joyous music and ecstatic love songs.

*The Sacred Marriage rite of Inanna and Dumuzi was re-enacted through the millennia in Sumer, then spread through the Middle East and Europe into the Middle Ages.*

*Also, their marriage rites are replicated (it seems) in the Old Testament's account of "Solomon's Song of Songs." This piece has nothing to do with the Hebrew people and contains no prophecies or lessons. It is a loosely organized collection of voluptuous love-songs. Yet the rabbis and fathers of the church accept it as an inspiring biblical work to be studied and cherished. The erotic verses are interpreted to be an allegory of the beloved Jahweh.*

*Samuel Noah Kramer likes the interpretation of the cuneiform & biblical scholar, Theophile Meek, who says the "Song of Songs" is a modified conventionalized form of an ancient Hebrew liturgy celebrating the reunion and marriage of the sun god with the mother-goddess which flourished in Mesopotamia from the earliest days. This sacred marriage had been part of a fertility cult, which the nomadic Hebrews took over from their urbanized Canaanite neighbors, who in turn, had borrowed it from the Tammuz-Ishtar cult of the Akkadians, a modified form of the Dumuzi-Inanna cult of the Sumerians. This is not surprising. Scholars have found traces of ancient fertility rites throughout the Books of the Bible. For more on this read Kramer's, The Sacred Marriage Rite: Chapter 5 - The Sacred Marriage and Solomon's Song of Songs.*

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<sup>3</sup> Tyrant/protector of Heaven & the Nether World; symbol of immortality etc.



## **Scene 6: Inanna's Descent to the Nether World**

### **The Phenomenon of the Threshold**

*The solar hero has to spend three days & nights in the Underworld. That is, the hero has to “die” to old beliefs, prejudices etc. before “awakening” to authentic creative endeavors.*

*Psychological freedom from the tyranny of one's own beliefs, fears, yearnings, memories and so on is gained by deliberately crossing a threshold. The natural question rises: What is the threshold? Where do I find it?*

Threshold is ... the limit, the boundary, the frontier that distinguishes and opposes two Worlds – and at the same time the paradoxical place where these worlds communicate where passage from the profane to the sacred becomes possible.

...Hence there must be a door to the Above World by which gods can descend to earth and man can symbolically ascend to heaven ... every sacred place suggests a hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different.

... Churches are a different space – the most archaic image is the door – the image of an opening. In the sacred enclosure, communication with the gods is possible ... gods ... who forbid entrance to human enemies, demons and the power of pestilence.

On the threshold sacrifices to guardian divinities are offered. Paleo-cultures (Babylon, Egypt, Israel) situated the judgment place at the threshold. The door shows the solution to continuity in space immediately and concretely; hence their great religious importance, for they are symbols and at the same time, vehicles of passage from one space to another. (Eliade: Sacred and Profane, The Nature of Religion)

...a space between two worlds, a potent middle ground that simultaneously holds, joins and separates the two. .... The outside and the inside penetrate each other. What goes out and goes in is joined in the in-between. The joining is the threshold. In its intimacy the preservation of things and the granting of the world pervade one another. (Heidegger: Poetry of Language and Thought 1971)

*Eliade and Heidegger describe the mythological realm of threshold as it sits in the psyche. The threshold is found by focusing attention, intending with heartfelt desire (not ego desire) to cross into a realm in the psyche where “knowing” sits, the realm Indian philosophy names “the Self”. This is done with the aid of a mentor.*

*Inanna deliberately focuses her attention: “ the lady lent her ear to the Great Below” and intends to go there. She is motivated partly by ego desire but the “something grumbles in me”, from the Courtship scene, prefigures the more necessary, heartfelt intention to descend.*

She deliberately flaunts the rules of the Nether World by wearing the regalia of authority. She makes noise. She calls at the door situated in the lapis lazuli mountain (Kur). Her tokens of power are removed; she is taken and put on bended knee before the dreaded Anunnaki and their Queen Ereshkigal.

In the script, Inanna's motivations for descending to the Nether World are:

- To secure the faith of her people. Misfortune always sends a populace in search of another ruler or god. Her power would be undisputed if she reigned over three worlds.
- To discover her counterpart, the mysterious Queen of the Great Below for herself.
- To outwit the dark Queen and gather the *me* of the Nether World for herself.
- To complete the cycle of her creativity: Life, Death & Resurrection i.e. -
- To have power over death but not to destroy the ecology death brings.
- To discover something not nameable that grumbles in her, a gnawing question.

However, when Inanna enters the realm of Ereshkigal she discovers a reality that does not bend to her ambitions.

*Some interpret Inanna's descent as an address to women disenfranchised by patriarchal ideals. Addressing the unfairness of any ideal, not just patriarchal requires one to focus on resistance. When Inanna faces Ereshkigal resistance has to dissolve. She needs to find the unifying force, the force that brings her closer to the Self. What is that force?*

*Inanna bows to her mirror queen with heroic courage. The mirror queen, like Dumuzi, is not mushy but provides the counterweight to Inanna's energy. When Inanna bows, I chose to script an awareness in her that heroic surrender to Ereshkigal is key if Inanna is to "win". Inanna is still conflicted between ego and heartfelt desire. But she is beginning to see something in her relationship to Ereshkigal – if she is to die, she must surrender completely.*

*If a woman or a man, for that matter, is to individuate, surrender to the oppositional energy in the mother is essential. Surrender is acceptance of what is – not submission to injustice. A strengthening shift occurs within the psyche when static resistance to the mother's oppositional energy is exchanged for seeing the dark, unacceptable feminine in oneself.*

*When Inanna dies, one may assume she has reached the point of complete acceptance and surrender. In the script Ereshkigal says: "I will have my pound of fragrant rot ..." to indicate she is the relentlessly "perfect" teacher who allows Inanna to do what the act of discovery requires. Accompanying Ereshkigal's harsh behavior is a mirroring recognition and respect for the sacrifice each of them made. Initially, Ereshkigal sacrificed herself to the transformative mystery of surrender. Inanna too, has crossed the threshold into the sacred, translucent world of psychological death.*

*When Ereshkigal reaches out to touch Inanna, the dead Inanna withdraws with contempt. This raises the question: Is Inanna going to succeed in her discovery. Rage may be a clear response but contempt is a dark paradoxical response because it is filled with projected self-hatred. Inanna has "three days" to dissolve all her paradoxes.*

## **Ereshkigal**

Ereshkigal experiences great pain when Inanna dies. In the script, it appears likely she is grieving the death of Inanna and cries out in despair and aloneness.

*Ereshkigal gave birth to four children in the Nether World. They are: Nanna-Sin (Crescent Moon), Inanna's father; Ninazu, the healing god of the Nether World; Nungal, goddess judge and protector of the black-haired people and a fourth – the tablet has not been found that names this child. Her husband, Nergal, is a demon – “the unsparing”. Enlil is long gone. There is a clue in the translations he died. Perhaps this is the Bull of Heaven Inanna refers to.*

*Ereshkigal appears as the perpetually hungry ghost. She is the sacrificed woman. It is possible to interpret her reigning in the Nether World to represent the primal instinctual rage, unbounded, totally uncaring even destructive. (Perera) However, “everything contains its own opposite”, without her relentless grinding power, life would not renew. She holds the grain goddess within her while being the seed in the dark abyss.*

### **Scene 7: Inanna's Ascent from the Nether World**

Inanna is removed from the hook (crucifix) and is resurrected. Enki fashions her saviors by scraping the dirt from beneath a red-painted nail.

*Inanna is nailed down, fixed to the doorpost. Her potential is literally grounded. Ereshkigal, the cold sadist and the fertilizing energy in the dark abyss stops Inanna's conscious life and quickens a new spirit within her. Limitation evokes creativity. Everything contains its own opposite. Inanna must experience the impersonal inert doorpost, feel empty, lifeless, and hollow – she must find Ereshkigal within her. Having found the emptiness Inanna can stand alone. In the threshold world of death ‘passage from profane to the sacred becomes possible’. (Eliade) ‘...the outside and the inside penetrate each other. What goes out and goes in is joined in the in-between. In its intimacy, the preservation of things and the granting of the world pervade one another.’ (Heidegger)*

*Inanna is granted the capacity to be separate and whole, to negate and assert, to destroy and create and to endure firmly grounded. (Perera)*

*She is revived by the non-gender specific Kalatur and Kurgarra who are servant mourners. They are not separated, set apart by consciousness of opposites. They embody the consciousness of empathy and mirroring. They have been instructed by Enki to trust the life force even when it sounds its misery. (Perera) They transform Ereshkigal's pain into a hymn of honor. The antiphonal hymn of inside and outside resonates in Ereshkigal's threshold experience: her womb/existence, gates to the Nether World and back.*

*Enki's wisdom and compassion meets Ereshkigal's dark primal consciousness by giving it validity. His red-painted fingernail (not my invention) represents the blood of Ereshkigal's birthing and Inanna's death, the silt of his riverbeds, the clay of the building*

*material in Sumer, and the cuneiform tablets on which writing was preserved. The dirt is autonomous, insignificant, rejected remnant of a larger creative process. (Perera)*

Inanna stands. She is dizzy, bewildered and returns to life slowly. She returns demonic.

*She knows abysmal reality – that change requires sacrifice. Inanna has earned the me of the Nether World. She claims the tremendous primal force of woman. She can reach into the depth of herself and find that amoral place and from there, execute what needs to be done. Amorality is not self-indulgent; it requires a decision, which, in turn, requires intelligent deliberation. However, amoral acts will be destructive if the intelligence behind the decision is wrong.*

In the script, Inanna bows to Ereshkigal.

*Inanna is resolved. She has allowed her ego to confront the fear of psychological death and burned away the fear. She sees the truth of Ereshkigal. Ereshkigal acknowledges Inanna in return. The cycle is almost closed. What remains is the need for a new relationship pattern between the presence of the World Above and the World Below.*

Ereshkigal demands a surrogate to replace Inanna.

*The rites of harvest and the death of the land, the revival in spring and the planting of crops were designed around sacrifice. The gods must be propitiated. Inanna must end the old pattern of relationship with Dumuzi. She must kill the primary source of her own validation and identity. The old king must die so the new king will reign.*

### **Scene 8: The Death of Dumuzi**

Inanna meets Ninshubur and her two sons as she makes her way back to Uruk. She spares them from the demons because they recognize she has returned from a significant journey. However, she finds Dumuzi unconcerned for her plight. He is dressed in the garments of kingship, sitting unconcernedly on his throne. He seems unconscious of Inanna except in her fertility and Aphroditic aspects. He is in his favorite role, regal and god-like. She fastens her eye of death upon him and vents her wrath upon him.

*In the light of the Above World, Inanna brings her Nether World me into being. She sees Dumuzi, who has never been afraid or servile, as unconscious of his human frailty. He is identified with being a god-man and favored consort. However, he is also strong enough for her to stand against him and work out her new strength. He meets her reality with his own separate and secure reality. He faces her down as equal. He does not placate which gives her the space not to care. She can cut through the unequal goddess/mortal, queen/consort bondings and test him to embody more of herself in the conscious world. She has the profound respect of confrontation. (The onslaught of Inanna's return is ended.)*

*The demons focus and spend their fury in pursuit of Dumuzi. His capacity to confront them relieves the people of the land because he stands as their champion and king. He is*

*the people's scapegoat<sup>4</sup>, their peace offering. His fear drives his soul from him "like a hawk flying against a bird".*

*But his destiny is not simply to be the sacrificed god-man. He needs to descend to the Nether World. He needs to earn the me, to earn a relationship with the depths of his own unconscious so he may come into equal relationship with Inanna and reach the best in himself.*

*He turns into a snake (tries to wriggle out of the dilemma); he experiences the shedding of skin (regalia) and the aspect of immortality. He turns into a gazelle. He is already experiencing the preliminary changes. Eventually, he runs to his sister – a positive foreshadowing of his development because the feminine aspect has a natural relationship with the unconscious.*

### **Geshtinanna**

Geshtinanna is Dumuzi's sister, Enki's daughter, goddess of vines and reeds, a wise woman, a tablet-knowing scribe who knows the meaning of words and dreams. She interprets Dumuzi's dream: there are two reeds. One is cut down. She urges her brother to flee. She is in service to the human dimension. She vows to protect him and does so as a mortal woman. She does not implore the sky gods for help. She goes to Inanna whom she knows, loves Dumuzi, then with full consciousness offers to take her brother's place.

*Geshtinanna bridges the mythic intensity of Inanna and Dumuzi. She stands for keeping the reverence for the goddess. She embodies acceptance, compassion. She is the aspect Inanna has yet to develop. Geshtinanna's name means "vine of heaven", "root stock of the grape vine". She is the autumn- harvested grape and the spring-fermented wine. Dumuzi is her counterbalance: the autumn-harvested grain and the spring-fermented beer.*

*She is as close to Dumuzi as Inanna is to Utu. But she is caring in a way that goes beyond the goddess' impersonal capacity. She shares the burden of grief and love.*

*As she serves the goddess she maintains her own point of view. She is very important as the 'root stock of the vine' because she stands before Inanna and reflects the final transformation Inanna must undergo. Like Enki, she creatively responds to her brother's destiny. Unlike Dumuzi, the god-man consort, she is the wise woman. She is conscious and strong. She ends the pattern of scapegoating by volunteering to confront the Nether World and serve Ereshkigal as well as Inanna. A new pattern of energy takes root.*

*Her persona is more personal than Christ's and deeply feminine. Christ offered his life for all men. She offers hers for her brother – a small personal answer. She is not a grand model. She is the result of and the embodiment of the whole initiation process. She feels*

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<sup>4</sup> In ancient Middle East, the tribal group would select a goat at the beginning of each New Year. Symbols and tokens of the misfortunes of individuals and families would be tied into the goat's hair. That done, the goat would be given a head start and sent out into the wilds. Later, hunters would pursue the animal and kill it in an act of symbolically ending the misfortunes of the people. When the goat died, it was hoped/believed the troubles of the past year died.

*personally and lovingly related to the masculine. She serves the light and dark in each of the goddesses. There is no struggle in her character. What will happen to Geshtinanna? How will she be different upon her first return from the Nether World – and from all the subsequent returns? Every new crop, the grape descends to fermentation.*

In the meantime, Inanna mourns the loss of her beloved.

*This is very significant because another change is occurring in her. She has passed through the Solar Gates successfully by transforming in the Nether World. In the light of day she meets the final challenge: she must pass through the Lunar Gates. She must earn the me of Compassion. When she does this, her cycle of development is complete.*

*As she faces Geshtinanna (in the script Inanna 'sees' her) Inanna does what she has to do. She dreams the myth on. Like Arjun on the battlefield (in the Gita) she accepts who she is and what is before her to do (her destiny, her birthright). She accepts Geshtinanna's offer with awareness of the meaning of it. She crosses between the posts of the Lunar Gates and emerges the other side a goddess of awareness, capability and compassion.*

