

**INANNA**

**By Peggy Firestone**

**Based on Translations of Clay Tablets from Sumer  
By Samuel Noah Kramer**

**[margaretfirestone@sbcglobal.net](mailto:margaretfirestone@sbcglobal.net)  
(773) 384-5802**

© 2008

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

In order of appearance

Narrators .....	Storytellers & Timekeepers
Inanna .....	Queen of Heaven and Earth, Goddess, Immortal
Enki .....	Creator & Organizer of Earth's Living Things, Manager of the Gods & Goddesses, Trickster God, Inanna's Grandfather
An .....	The Sky God
Ki .....	The Earth Goddess (also known as Ninhursag)
Enlil .....	The Air God, inventor of all things useful in the Universe
Nanna-Sin .....	The Moon God, Immortal, Father of Inanna
Ningal .....	The Moon Goddess, Immortal, Mother of Inanna
Lilith .....	Demon of Desolation, Protector of Freedom
Anzu Bird .....	An Unholy (Holy) Trinity ... Demon bird, Protector of Cattle
Snake that has no Grace .....	Tyrant Protector Snake
Gilgamesh .....	Hero, Mortal, Inanna's first cousin, Demi-God of Uruk
Isimud .....	Enki's Janus-faced messenger
Ninshubur .....	Inanna's lieutenant, Goddess of the Rising Sun, Queen of the East
Lahamma	
Enkums .....	Monster Guardians of Enki's Shrine House
Giants of Eridu	
Utu .....	Sun God, Inanna's Brother
Dumuzi .....	Shepherd King of Uruk, Inanna's husband, Enki's son by Situr, the Sheep Goddess
Neti .....	Gatekeeper to the Nether World
Ereshkigal .....	Queen of the Nether World, Goddess, Immortal, Inanna's mystery relative
Kurgarra & Kalatur .....	Sexless devotees of Inanna
Annunaki .....	The seven black-robed judges of the Nether World
The Galla .....	Demons/Constables of the Netherworld
Geshtinanna .....	Dumuzi's sister, Goddess of Wine

## **PRONUNCIATION GUIDE**

Syllables are evenly accented. Sometimes there is a light accent stress as follow:

2 syllable words – stress is on the first syllable

4 syllable words – stress is on the third syllable

3 syllable words – stress varies between the first & second syllable

**Inanna** – Ee-nah'-nah

**Dumuzi** – Doo'-moo-zee

**Enki** – Ehn'-kee

**Ereshkigal** – Eh-resh-kee'-ghal

**Geshtinanna** – Ges-tee-nah'-nah

**Ninshubur** – Neen-shoo'boor

**Utu** – Oo -too

**Erridu** – Eh'-ree-doo

**Uruk** – Oo'-rook

**Abzu** – ahb'-zoo

**Galatur** – gah'-lah-toor

**Galla** – gah'-lah

**Huluppu** – hoo-loo'-poo

**Kur** - koor

**Kurgarra** – koor-gah'-rah

*Me* – may

**Quay** - kee

**Lapis Lazuli** – la-pezh laz-eh-lay



## PROLOGUE

**Narrator 1: (or part sung)**

The young maid, Inanna

**Narrator 2:**

The fair maid, Inanna

**Narrator 3:**

Set her boat in the ocean.

**All Narrator:**

From her city of Uruk, she set her sail of white moonbeams.  
She sailed her small Ibex of the Waters.

**Narrator 1:**

No Lahama from the Great Below awoke to pursue her.

**Narrator 3:**

No sea serpent from the mighty Kur, wrapped itself around her boat.

**Narrator 1:**

No dragon bird swooped down to pierce her tiny boat.

**Narrator 3:**

No Anzu bird snapped its sharp beak or screeched its ri-di-ik, ri-di-ik.

**Narrator 2:**

Inanna sailed her boat to the sea house of her grandfather.  
Inanna sailed South for the house that no one might enter:  
the holy shrine of Enki in the city of Eridu.  
Enki, the wisest of all the gods,  
Who organized all the living beings that lived in the Universe.

**Narrator 1:**

Enki made his house of silver.  
He adorned it with lapis lazuli and shimmering gold.  
He raised it out from the watery abyss and made it float like a lofty mountain.

**Narrator 2:**

He filled its gardens with fruit and birds.  
He filled its rivers and streams with fish.  
And creatures bright of countenance and wise came forth from the abyss  
And stood around him.

**Narrator 3:**

Enki placed the Holy Laws in his shrine.  
He laid the sacred *me* in his silver shrine -  
the *me* that instruct the black-haired people of Sumer.  
He made his house so it thrummed with sweet sounding lyres  
that played the seven incantations, the pure songs of Eridu.

**Narrator 2:**

The maid Inanna turned her small moonbeam sail,  
She turned her sweet Ibex of the Waters  
Into the house that no one might enter.  
She tied her small boat at the quay of Eridu.  
She listened to the pure songs of sea joy.

**Narrator 3:**

Enki rose from the center of his sea house,  
He rose from the Abyss – the fish rose.  
He greeted his granddaughter with flattery and sweets.  
He invited her to sit on soft reed mats.

**Narrator 1:**

He ordered Isimud to bring warm bread from the oven,  
buttery cheese and dates and sweet milk.  
He ordered Isimud to bring good bread from the oven,  
To bring fair Inanna fat dates and fresh milk.

**The Song of Creation**

**Enki:**

The holy stars teach us where we come from.  
Look up, granddaughter. Listen to the Great Above.

What do you hear.

**Inanna**

I hear the mighty god, An, King of the Heavens  
Sowing luminous seeds in patterns across the lapis lazuli sky,  
I hear his Great Archer drawing the bow and firing arrows.  
I see the Great Archer drawing his bow.  
His arrows miss the Bull of Heaven.  
His arrows miss the Bull's red heart and it disappears into Eternity.  
  
I see my brother Utu, the sun, as he descends past the horizon.  
I hear the crack and thunder of his descent as he pierces the horizon.  
I feel the Above World shudder as he enters the Underworld.

I see my great father and mother moon.  
I see my father Nanna-Sin and my mother Ningal – rising from the Underworld  
their soft ribbons of love light encircling me,  
directing me to be with you so I can learn.

**Enki**

Now listen to the Underworld. What do you hear.  
Look into the Great Abyss. What do you see.

**Inana**

I see a golden staircase reaching to the depths.  
I fear those are dark, cold regions. I do not know what is there.  
I cannot spread my hearing beyond the soft breezes of the Earth.  
I dream about the realm of the dead who have become thirsty shadows.  
I dream about the dark robed judges  
and their monster Queen who lets no one escape her realm.

**Enki**

Alright, then granddaughter – spread your listening out into Earth's breezes.  
Look around you.

**Inanna**

I see my great grandmother, Ki, goddess of birth-giving,  
She reaches her mountainous arms for something dear.  
I see her soft green plains and stretches of harsh white desert.  
I see the stride of the massive lion  
I see the sheepfold where the tender lamb is born each spring.

**Enki**

And over there?

**Inanna**

I see the ocean, its waves bow  
to the goddess Nammu, your mother....

Why ask these questions, grandfather?

**Enki**

Listen to my story of how all things began.  
Listen, granddaughter to the story of how all things began.

The Great Journey of the World began  
When time itself slept in a golden egg.

My mother Nammu cradled the golden egg  
with her protective waters.

My mother, the goddess Nammu surrounded the egg  
with her mighty ocean water.  
And time slept and Nammu held the egg – listening.

In those days there was no everywhere, no up or down  
nor left or right. There was no in or out or through.  
In those days there was only nowhere. There was no movement.  
There was no sound for there was no ear to hear or voice to sing.  
There was no thought.

All the nowhere rested in deep sleep.  
All that was not lay sleeping in the empty stillness.

Then something happened.  
For no reason something happened.  
Within the egg time stretched itself in a dream.  
Time stretched itself and dreamed a song.  
And the song stretched and drew its first breath in  
and breathing out it soared.

**Into the nowhere.**

**Inanna**

Brave song. Brave holy song.

**Enki**

Yes.

**Inanna**

Did it live long?

**Enki**

The song sings itself in everything today.  
But, granddaughter, you make me get ahead of my story.

*Begin Dance*

The song was lonely in the nowhere  
The song was lonely as it soared.  
It breathed itself a sound. It breathed the holy name of AN  
Full out  
And the lapis lazuli sky spilled over the nowhere.

And the song in great joy breathed in again and sang out KI  
And the rich chalice of Earth grew up to greet the sky.

A chalice song of yearning soared from Ki  
A mighty hymn soared from the heart of Ki  
who reached her mountain arms to embrace the lapis lazuli sky.

An breathed his song of Heaven into the heart of Ki.  
An breathed his hymn of hope into the heart of Ki.

Their son, Enlil, the spirit of all living things - was born.  
Enlil soared into the Heavens and scattered his parents' song like a thousand gems.  
And made his father a radiant cloak of stars.

### **Inanna**

And the moon? My mother/father?  
Did he make them with the stars?

### **Enki**

He gave his father the little stars to scatter like grain  
while the big ones walk about like wild oxen.  
Yes. He made the dancing beauty of the moon, light and dark.

Then Enlil cradled in his mother Earth. Enlil lay in his mother's arms  
and warmed her mountains and plains until she softened.  
And in her glens, flowers appeared with buds like small drums  
And leaves like small harps.

He brought forth everything that was needed:

### **Enki & Narrator 1:**

trees,

### **Enki & Narrator 2:**

fields of grain,

### **Enki & Narrator 3:**

cattle & sheep.

### **Enki**

Did you know he invented the plow?  
He appointed winter as farmer and summer as shepherd.  
He made **Enkimdu** the farmer and **Dumuzi**, the shepherd.  
He was king of all the lands and seas.  
We gods loved him.

He appointed **Ereshkigal**, Queen of the Great Below.  
She was not willing but the serpent that has no charm,  
the Kur of the Great Abyss captured her and placed her on her throne.

But the laws of the Underworld are perfect and must not be questioned.

The song had the everywhere to soar  
And was happy – but  
There still was no ear to hear or voice to sing.  
There were no people.  
And that was the work he gave Mother Ki and me to do.  
We had some fun then –  
*End dance*

-----  
It's getting late, little one. Why don't you go home.  
Come back tomorrow and we will continue our lesson.

**Inanna**

I will go home and see to my tree.  
I will sing a hymn of joy to my Huluppu tree  
Does the song live in my tree, Grandfather?  
Does the song thrum in my Huluppu tree?

**Enki**

It soars. Learn the tree song.  
The song rises in the sap of your Huluppu tree.  
Sing with it, my pet.  
Listen to the hymn of the Earth that guides the tree song.  
Listen to the hymn of the Great Below that gives it strength.

**The Huluppu Tree:  
Initiation**

**All Narrators**

Once upon a time a little willow tree,  
a young Huluppu tree  
grew on the bank of the Euphrates River.

**Narrator 2:**

It had been planted by Enki some time before  
and was nurtured by the river's water.

**Narrator 3:**

But the South Wind tore at it, root and crown  
and the river had flooded it with its waters.

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna found the little tree one morning  
and took it in her hand,

she brought it to her sanctuary and planted it in her holy garden.

**Narrator 2:**

There she tended it most carefully  
for when the tree grew big she planned to make from it,  
a throne and a bed.

**Narrator 3:**

Every day she carried water from the river in her alabaster bowl  
to the root of the Huluppu tree.  
She gathered water in her great anzam bowl.  
She brought fresh water in her arms to the tree.  
And she would sing this song:

**Inanna (sung):**

\*Ki-a ba-la at-ka li-iq-bi Hul-uppu

**Narrators (spoken):**

(May Ki proclaim your life, Huluppu)

**Inanna:**

bu-ku-ur An-im lu-uz-mur dun-un-na-ka

**Narrators:**

(Offspring of An I sing your strength.)

**Inanna:**

In an na, la-ab-ba-ta am-ma-rat kal

**Narrators:**

(Inanna, lioness, one who protects all)

**Inanna:**

lu-uz-mur a-na..... (\*Phonetic Sumerian)

**Narrators:**

(I sing....)

**Narrators:**

However, on this day when the young maid Inanna  
left her grandfather's sea house in Eridu  
and went back to her holy garden in Uruk

**Narrator 3:**

she found  
in the branches of the Huluppu

**Narrator 1:**  
in the sweeping arms of the Huluppu

**Narrator 3:**  
the Anzu bird screeching **ri-di-ik, ri-di-ik!**  
In the writhing arms of the Huluppu  
the Anzu bird scattered all the trees's leaves to the ground.

**All Narrators:**  
In the trunk of the Huluppu,  
in the red heart of the great tree,  
Lilith sung out her rasping hymn in response to Inanna's hymn:

**Lilith**  
"Za-mar" Inanna sar-ra a-za-am-mu-ur

**Narrators:**  
(I shall sing the song of Inanna, "the queen")

**Lilith**  
Am-ma-rat kal ...

**Narrators:**  
(One who protects all...)

**Lilith & Narrators:**  
Ha!  
(Ha!)

**Narrator 2:**  
At the dark hymn of Lilith

**Narrators 1 & 3:**  
Inanna was stunned.

**Narrator 2:**  
By the violent storm and screech of the Anzu-Bird

**Narrators 1 & 3:**  
Inanna was stunned.

**Narrator 2:**  
Her words would not come.

**Narrators 1 & 3:**  
The holy words from her lips would not come.

**Narrator 2:**

Inanna cast her great anzam bowl  
her fresh water from the river.  
Inanna cast the fragrant water  
in a floodwave over the tree.

In the roots of the Huluppu tree  
The serpent that had no charm awakened from his sleep,  
the giant serpent of the Underworld unfolded himself  
From his sleep:

Sweet sister, I am drenched.  
What is the point of your discontent?

**Inanna**

Great Lord of the World Below.  
Fierce Warrior of the Great Below.  
For what or whom do you lie in wait?  
You stole the great queen Ereshkigal.  
You brought her to the Great Below for yourself.  
What do you want here – Dragon?  
And -  
Great Lilith, undo your magic knot!  
All the great gods have cursed you –  
Steal away! I do not want you here!

Anzu-Bird - fly away with your unfortunate looking brood.  
Leave your stinking nest!  
All of you leave!

*(Kur, Lilith and Anzu fall over, laughing.)*

**Inanna**

Do not laugh at me! I swear:  
Like an onion, I will peel you!  
Like a date, I will strip you!  
Like matting, I will unravel you!

**Narrator 1**

Lilith emerged from the tree.

**Narrator 2:**

Fierce Lilith, who wore a crown of bones upon her dark head -

**Narrator 3:**

Rings of horns adorned her dark flowing hair

**All Narrators:**  
to show she was a queen.

**Narrator 1:**  
Lilith, on taloned feet emerged from the Huluppu tree.

**Narrator 2:**  
Her twin owls emerged.

**Narrator 3:**  
Her twin lions emerged.

**All Narrators:**  
Lilith fluffed her feathered wings.  
She straightened tall and fierce with her ring and staff in hand.

**Lilith**  
Is this not a fitting home for me?

I am the Queen of the Threshold.  
This Tree of Life is quite the place for me –  
Its roots reach to the Great Below, strengthened there by dark truth.  
Its branches make a platform for the screeching Anzu-bird  
who soars with razored beak and taloned feet to pursue the mighty eagle,  
to chase the hungry wolf and the sinewy lion when they steal into your sheepfold.

I grace the spine of this great tree.  
It stretches from my visit – hard and bad and good.  
By challenge it must stretch.

**Inanna**  
I swear:  
By Heaven cursed.  
By Earth cursed.  
No divine mother whose hands are cool will soothe you.  
No high priest of mercy who loves to revive the dead will help you!

**Lilith**  
I am not cursed by gods. I have my job to do.  
My work seems to lack in grace but truth is - from you know where –  
you cannot exist without my tricks and dance in midnight dream.  
Without my visitations, you'd grow as sallow as a lemon,  
A wry virgin to the last –  
Untried, strung up in fear and unhusbanded.

Oh – and look to the serpent who has no grace.

He circles the Great Below and stretches his cool dark body under it protectively.  
But the gods in the heavens are not shy to ask him to do the same for them.

Not a courageous lot up there in their lofty parks.  
A bit airy-fairy if you ask me, cloaks of stars and all that.  
Humph!  
They need this fierce serpent to kigal up the heavens.

**Inanna**

You are loathsome.

**Lilith**

I don't need your pleasure.  
Banish us if you try but do not do so in pettiness or ignorance.  
Do so as a Queen whose time has come to take what she needs.

Oh – and by the by  
What is your function – What do you do?  
What *is* your job?  
You are little Queen of what?

Well, do your worst and find out what you are.

**Narrator 2:**

Lilith spread out her jet black wings.

**Narrator 1:**

Rainbows of light glimmered in her jet black wings.

**Narrator 2:**

Lilith flew to the tree.

**Narrator 3:**

The Anzu bird sat back down in his family nest  
and the serpent that had no grace recoiled himself deep into the roots  
of Inanna's Huluppu tree,

**Narrator 2:**

Now it happened that Gilgamesh lived in Inanna's city of Uruk.  
The fierce and famous warrior Gilgamesh lived near Inanna's sheepfold.  
And he heard her weeping bitterly.  
The light-hearted and ever joyful maid shed bitter tears.

**Narrator 3:**

He dressed himself in warrior's armor – his breastplate was fifty minas heavy.  
He picked up his sword that would take 7 ordinary men to lift.  
He called his 10 best men and made his way to Inanna's sheepfold.

He went to see what ailed the little Queen of Heaven.

**Gilgamesh**

Little Queen. What has happened to you?

**Inanna**

The snake that has no charm lives in the root of my tree.  
The trickster, Lilith, has made her home in the trunk of my tree.  
And the wretched Anzu-Bird has taken residence with his family in the arms of my tree.  
They will not leave.

I want this tree to come down.

This tree is fat and tall.  
I want to build my throne and my marriage bed.  
This “Little Queen of Heaven” epithet is no longer welcome.  
I must be Queen full bright and strong –  
not a girl anyone dismisses.

**Narrator 3:**

With that, Gilgamesh, all mortal, brass and leather and  
willing to impress his beloved Inanna  
raised his sword and felled the tree.

**Narrator 2:**

The unkind cut pulled up root and serpent to the Earth above.  
And Gilgamesh almighty hero, struck the snake with such force  
its head rolled to the alabaster bowl.

**Narrator 1:**

Shaken from her home  
Lilith rolled from the Huluppu trunk, her minions following –

**All Narrators:**

She arched a brow –

**Lilith**

Impressive, little one.

**All Narrators:**

Dark Lilith. Magnificent Lilith bent down to the serpent’s head  
And holding it to her body, walked over to the rest of him and covered him with her  
wings.

**Lilith**

At your command, his weapon struck me hard.

At your command his weapon struck me hard.

I will undo this.

I will take our serpent that has no grace to the Woman of the Plain and Field.  
I will take him to the great conjurer who will speak words of good omen for him.

I will take him to the divine mother,  
Woman who revives the Dead, whose hands are cool –

What can I add?

Your action holds no honor.

**Narrator 1:**

Lilith picked the serpent up and flew away with him.  
The Anzu bird and his family flew with her.  
They flew away to haunt the desolate areas.  
They flew to haunt the desolate areas together.

**Inanna**

Thank you, Gilgamesh.  
Without your help, there would come no change.  
Great thanks to you.  
Take my tree.  
Remove the roots – I'll make you a resonant drum.  
Remove the arms of my tree.  
I will make you good thick drumsticks.

With the trunk, make thick planks for me.  
Build my throne and build my marriage bed.

Carve sweet fruit and birds and animals of every type around the head.  
Carve plants and flowers of the marsh and desert.  
Carve the moon and the sun and the stars all over my throne and bed.  
And at the foot of each, coil out the serpent round.  
For this little Queen of Heaven is no more.  
I claim the Heavens, Earth and the Realm Below  
as my domains to rule,

**The Transfer of the Arts of Civilization**

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna placed the shugurra upon her head.

**Narrator 2:**

Inanna placed the crown of the steppe upon her head  
And went to the sheepfold and leaned against the apple tree.

**Narrator 3:**

When she leaned back against the apple tree her vulva was wondrous to behold.

**All Narrators:**

She rejoiced in her wondrous vulva.  
Inanna rejoiced in herself.

**Narrator 2:**

She set her mind to visit Enki, god of sweet water and fertility.  
Inanna set her mind to honor the god of wisdom with words and prayers.  
This time, Ninshubur, her lieutenant, was at the helm of the Boat of Heaven.  
The goddess Ninshubur guided the Boat of Heaven to Enki's shrine house.

**Narrator 3:**

Inanna entered the sparkling shrine house of Enki.  
She passed by the stone Lahama.  
She passed the stone protectors at the gate  
and went to the Abyss to wait.

**Narrator 1:**

Enki called to Isimud:

**Enki**

[Bring her butter cakes and water.](#)

[Bring her butter cakes and beer.](#)

[Treat her as if she were an equal.](#)

[This dazzling young woman is dressed for war.](#)

**Narrator 3:**

Isimud did as he was asked.  
He led Inanna to comfortable chairs  
high on a veranda that overlooked the meeting place  
of the two divine rivers and the ocean.

**All Narrators:**

He brought her butter cakes and water and beer.

**Enki**

Dear daughter of indomitable spirit –  
You know nothing of submission to the enemy.  
You do not weary the eye of the suitor.  
What brings you here.

**Inanna**

Dear Grandfather – I have come to utter prayers in your honor.  
I have come to learn from you again.

My house is peaceful. My sheepfold is peaceful.  
Last night as I the queen, was shining bright.  
Last night as I, the Queen of Heaven was shining bright-  
As I was shining bright and dancing about –  
As I was singing away I sang a song - - that had no words...  
because  
I have no story to tell - of brave deeds or honey lovers – or anything.

### **Enki**

Oh, you are bored with childhood, bored with maidenhood.  
Dear daughter, look to your insignias – let them guide your ambition.  
You have the crook and staff of shepherdship.  
You have songs of war and battle at your holy lips.  
You have stewardship of weaving and fashioning garments.  
You have the power to destroy the indestructible.  
And you have my special blessing to foster copulation in the boulevards of Kullab.

### **Inanna**

Lord Enki! These may be worthy tokens of honor but they do not give me destiny.  
You have appointed every god and goddess to a function in the Universe.  
But you have not named one for me.

You appointed Enbilulu protector of your rivers.  
You named my cousin to take charge of the fish, he who loves the fish.  
You named Nanshe goddess of the sea's holy shrine.  
to judge men's deeds and misdeeds.  
When you called the life-giving rain and made it come down to Earth  
you entrusted it to the storm god, Ishkur.  
And when you attended to the plow, the yoke and the furrow  
You appointed Enkimdu, Enlil's farmer, as their protector.  
My sisters –  
Ninsinna is the goddess of physicians.  
Ninmug is the goddess of metal workers.  
Nindaba is goddess of writing and accounts.  
Ninkasi is the goddess of beer.  
Ereshkigal is goddess judge and protector of the dead!

What do *I* do?

### **Enki**

*(Summons Isimud to bring more beer.)*

What more can I give you?

I have said – you recite the ill-omened words in battle's midst,  
although you are no raven, no omen of misfortune,  
you twist the straight thread and straighten the twisted thread in battles.  
You can heap up heads like dust.

You can cast heads about like seeds.  
You can be so destructive, joyous hymns are no longer sung.

Your destiny, dear one, is to take feast and famine  
and turn both into something of value.

Be the Light and the Dark.

Be the strength of Life that touches the Spirit in everything that breathes.

Dance – wordlessly if you will – in exclamation.

Polish the air with your movement.

### **Inanna**

Alright, Grandfather. This birthright is not to be given.

I must find it and take it for myself.

But before I leave, show me.

Recite for me the divine *me* that I may be guided by them.

### **Enki**

*(Enki has been drinking more beer than Inanna)*

I am glad to recite them and give them to you.

Elegance and grace, are derived from the battlefield of joy, not anger –

Dignity and power are derived from love, not disdain.

Isimud, bring the hundred *me* to me.

Bring them from the shrine for Inanna to see and hear.

### **Narrator 3**

And while they waited for Enki's lieutenant to deliver the one hundred *me*

Inanna and Enki drank beer and more beer.

They toasted each other with bronze vessels in the shape of lions and crowns.

And Isimud returned with the hundred sacred laws.

### **Enki**

In the name of my power,

In the name of my shining house

I will give to holy Inanna –

To my daughter –

And it will not be disputed....

The highest priestly office.

Godship.

The noble enduring crown.

The throne of kingship!

### **Inanna**

I take them!

**Enki**

In the name of my power,  
In the name of my holy shrine  
I give to holy Inanna  
To my daughter –  
And it will not be disputed.....

The noble scepter  
The staff  
The holy measuring rod and line  
The noble throne  
Shepherdship  
Kingship.

**Inanna**

I take them!

**Enki**

In the name of my power,  
In the name of my holy shrine  
I give to holy Inanna  
To my daughter –  
And it will not be disputed .....

Truth  
Descent into the Underworld  
Ascent from the Underworld  
The kurgarra.

**Inanna**

I take them!

**Narrator 2:**

Fourteen times, Enki raised his drinking vessel  
And bestowed upon Inanna the rights and privileges  
Granted in the holy *me*.

**All Narrators:**

Fourteen times Inanna took them:

**Enki**

I give to holy Inanna –  
  
The dagger and the sword  
The title of authority  
The black garment

The colorful garment  
The loosening of the hair  
The binding of the hair

The standard  
The quiver  
The art of lovemaking  
The kissing of the penis  
The art of prostitution  
The art of speeding

The art of forthright speech  
The art of slanderous speech  
The art of ornamental speech  
The cult of the prostitute  
The holy tavern

The holy shrine  
The divine priest of heaven  
The resounding musical instrument  
The art of song  
The art of elder wisdom

The art of the hero  
The art of being powerful  
The art of treachery  
The art of being straightforward  
The art of plundering cities  
The art of setting up lamentations  
The art of the rejoicing heart

I give you deceit  
The rebellious land  
The art of being kind  
I give you travel  
I give you the secure dwelling place.

**I give you**

The craft of the carpenter  
The craft of the copper-worker  
The craft of the scribe  
The craft of the smith  
The craft of the leather worker  
The craft of the fuller  
The craft of the builder

The craft of the reed-worker.

I give you

The perceptive ear  
The power of attention  
The holy purification rites  
The feeding pen  
The heaping up of hot coals  
The sheepfold  
Fear, consternation and dismay.

I give you

The bitter toothed lion  
The kindling fire  
The weary arm  
The putting out of fire  
The assembled family  
and Procreation

In the name of my power  
In the name of my holy shrine  
I give to you, Inanna  
My daughter –  
And it will not be disputed –

The kindling strife  
Triumph  
Counseling  
Heart soothing  
Judgment giving

And  
Decision making.

And now - Isimud  
The one who is set to leave for Uruk,  
Who is set to leave for the place where the sun shines -  
make sure she arrives safely.

**Narrator 1:**

And with that said,  
Inanna gathered all the *me*.  
All the *me* were gathered and placed on the Boat of Heaven  
and she and Ninshubur pushed away from the quay.

**Narrator 2:**

When the beer had gone from Enki  
When the beer had gone from the one who had drunk the beer  
the great god looked around his mighty sea house.  
The eyes of the king scrutinized Eridu and said to Isimud

**Enki**

By the sweet name of An,  
  
The highest priestly office  
The Godship  
The noble, enduring crown  
The throne of kingship  
Where are they?

**Isimud**

My king has given them to his daughter.

**Enki**

Go after her, Isimud.  
Pursue the Lady of Uruk.  
Have the enkums seize the Boat of An.  
Have the guardians of my shrine seize the Boat of An and bring it back to Eridu.

**Isimud**

My queen, your father sent me to you.  
Inanna, your father sent me to you.  
Your father – what he said is lofty.  
Enki – what he said is lofty.  
His great words cannot be subverted.

**Inanna**

My father – what has he said to you?  
What has he assigned to you?  
What are his great words that cannot be subverted?

**Isimud**

My Lord has instructed me:  
Let Inanna keep going to Uruk.  
You turn the Boat of An back to Eridu.

**Inanna**

My father – How is it he has changed his word!  
How is it he broke his pledge to me!  
How is it he has dishonored his great words to me!

My father has spoken cunningly to me.  
Cunningly he pronounced “In the name of my power....”  
“In the name of my holy shrine .....

**Narrator 3:**

Hardly had she said these words when the enkums seized the Boat of An.

**Inanna.**

Come my faithful Ninshubur -  
My messenger of gracious words -  
My herald of truthful words -  
My Queen of the East -  
Goddess of the Rising Sun -

**Narrator 1:**

Ninshubur rose from where she sat at helm.

**Narrator 2:**

Ninshubur let a mighty roar issue from her holy lips.

**Narrator 3:**

The enkums sank below the waves to escape the sound that pierced their ears.  
And Isimud returned to Eridu without the Boat of An.

**Inanna**

*(with irony)*

Ninshubur, your hand has not touched the water.  
Your foot has not touched the water.

**Enki**

Isimud, my faithful lieutenant.  
Where has the Boat of An arrived?

**Isimud**

It has just arrived at the holy.....

**Enki**

Go! Have the Giants of Eridu ...  
-the fifty of them –  
seize the Boat of An.

**Narrator 2:**

Isimud caught up with Inanna a second time.  
The conversation was repeated and Inanna called upon Ninshubur for help  
when the fifty giants of Eridu seized the boat.

**Narrator 3:**

Enki tried four more times –  
first with the help of fifty lahama monsters of the sea  
and then with the help of big fish  
and next with the watchmen of Uruk  
and then with the Guardians of the Canal which was the last stop  
before the Boat's arrival at Uruk.  
When Inanna docked the Boat of An at the White Quay of Eridu  
She said to Ninshubur:

**Inanna**

As far as I am concerned -  
on the day the Boat of An enters the gate of Uruk,  
let my father send water to sweep over the streets.  
Let my father flood Uruk!

**Ninshubur**

*(Tongue in cheek)*

Let the boats move swiftly along the canals of Uruk.

**Inanna**

Let the old men dispense heart soothing.  
Let the old women dispense counseling.  
Let the young men compete in weaponry.  
Let the children play with joyous heart.  
Let Uruk be festive.  
Let the docking of the Boat of An bring sweet water  
Let the Boat of An be greeted by the high priest.  
Let him deliver great prayers  
Let the king slaughter oxen and sheep  
Let him pour beer out of the cup.  
Let the drum and the tambourine resound  
Let the tigi-music – so sweet – be conducted.  
Let all the lands proclaim my noble name.  
Let my people sing praises of me.

**Ninshubur**

My lady, let us hurry to unload our precious cargo.  
Festivity will come but not before the sacred *me* are safe.

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna and Ninshubur unload the *me*  
at the steps of Inanna's temple.  
As the *me* were delivered inside by the high priest,

**All Narrators:**

Inanna announced each one in a loud voice to all the residents of Uruk.

**Inanna**

I give you the holy shrine  
The divine priest of heaven ....  
The art of the musical instrument  
The art of song  
The art of elder wisdom  
The art of the hero  
The art of being powerful ....

**Narrator 2:**

Until she announced them all.

**Inanna**

...and the art of making decisions.

**Narrator 1:**

High water swept over the streets and flooded the paths.  
The flood reached the doors of the temple and threatened the pure well of Inanna.

**Narrator 3:**

And Enki arrived in Uruk.  
Upon seeing the last *me* carried into Inanna's holy temple  
He said:

**Enki**

Dear Lady, may your high priest spend his days in jubilation.  
May your people of Uruk live with joyous heart.  
And as far as you are concerned – your city  
to its former place will be restored  
and remain an ally of Eridu.

**The Courtship of Inanna**

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna walked on the bank of the mighty Euphrates.

**Narrator 2:**

Inanna watched the sun make little yellow cushions of light  
on the moving waters of the river.

**Narrator 3:**

A lamb that had lost its ewe  
heard Inanna's footsteps

and scuttled into the reeds to hide.

**All Narrators:**

Inanna called out to her brother Utu, the sun.

**Inanna**

Brother, who will make the cover for my nuptial bed?  
I want to choose the flax luxuriant  
That will make the cover soft and fine.

**Utu**

Sister, I will give the plant to you.  
I will bring luxuriant flax to you.

**Inanna**

Brother, after you bring me the luxuriant flax  
Who will comb it for me?

**Utu**

Sister mine, I will bring it to you combed.  
Inanna, I will bring it to you combed.

**Inanna**

Brother, after you bring it to me combed  
Who will spin it for me?

**Utu**

Sister mine, I will bring it to you spun.  
Inanna, I will bring it to you spun.

**Inanna**

Brother, after you have brought it to me spun  
Who will braid it for me?

**Utu**

Sister mine, I will bring it to you braided.  
Inanna, I will bring it to you braided.

**Inanna**

Brother mine, will you weave it for me, dye it for me?

**Utu**

Inanna, sister mine – I will bring it woven to you.  
I will bring it dyed to you.

**Inanna**

Brother, when you bring it to me woven and dyed –  
Who will bed with me.  
Who will bed with me?

**Utu**

Dumuzi, with you he'll bed.  
With you, your husband will bed.  
He is the Great Snake that protects the Heavens.  
He is the divine friend of Enlil, the shepherd of Enlil.  
He who came forth from the fertile womb will bed with you.  
Dumuzi, the shepherd king will bed with you.

**Inanna**

Nay. The man of my heart is not he.  
Nay. The man of my heart is not he.  
Enkimdu is the man who won my heart.  
Enkimdu, whose granaries are heaped high.  
The farmer, his grain fills all the granaries.  
The divine farmer, friend of Enlil -  
Enkimdu has won my heart.

**Utu**

Sister mine, marry the shepherd.  
Why are you unwilling?  
His cream is good. His milk is good.  
Whoever he touches is bright.  
Marry Dumuzi.  
His cream he will eat with you, he, the king protector.  
Why are you unwilling?

**Inanna**

I will not marry the shepherd!  
I will not wear his coarse wool.  
I will not wear his rough garment.  
I will marry the farmer who grows plants –  
the farmer who grows grain.

**Dumuzi**

*(interrupting)*

The farmer more than I? The farmer more than I?  
What has the farmer more than I?

If he gives me his flour  
I will give him my ewe.  
If he gives me his best beer  
I will give him my best milk.

If he gives me his best bread  
I will give him my honey cheese.  
If he gives me his beans  
I will give him my surplus cream.  
What has that farmer got more than I?

**Inanna**

*(distracting him)*

That lamb has lost his mother. I went to pick him up but –  
He ran into the reeds ....

*(Dumuzi puts his shawl over the lamb's head and picks him up.)*

**Dumuzi**

Take the shawl from his eyes.

Take my shawl from the lamb's eyes.

Let you be the first thing he sees.

Blow your breath into his nostrils so he'll know you.

Now he is yours and will follow you anywhere.

**Inanna**

Shepherd.

*(A look of recognition passes between them)*

I called you "shepherd" as an endearment

I did not agree to .....!

**Dumuzi**

Inanna, let us talk this over!

**Inanna**

Your wool is not coarse. It is fine spun  
You bedeck yourself with lapis lazuli and  
fine stones. But

**Dumuzi**

Let us talk this over.

Inanna do not start a quarrel.

**Inanna**

I am not convinced you are for me.

**Dumuzi**

Palace Queen, let us take counsel together.

I am yours completely.

**Inanna**

Your kindness to your flocks and  
your gentleness to me is good .....

**Dumuzi**

I am King Protector of your Sheepfold.  
I protect the people.

**Inanna**

But I am not sure you are for me.  
If I marry you, your divinity is sure.

**Dumuzi**

I am good as Utu is good.  
I am mortal and divine. I am a shepherd and a king.

**Inanna**

But my house shines brighter than yours.

**Dumuzi**

My house shines just as bright.  
My house shines bright in Eridu. Enki is my father!

**Inanna**

My father, mother, brother, sister  
Are more powerful than yours ....  
Without the moon, Nanna Sin & Ningal,  
without my brother Utu and without my sister, Lady of the Reed,  
Dumuzi would be chased about  
in the street & on the steppe  
without a roof to cover his head!

**Dumuzi**

My father Enki & my mother Situr,  
goddess who protects the sheep,  
are as good as Nanna Sin & Ningal.  
My sister Geshtinanna, Lady of the Vine -  
I love with all my heart!

I will not parry like this!

*He turns his back to her and begins to walk away, Inanna stands in disbelief and is about to leave the scene when Dumuzi turns and opens his arms to her.*

Come. There is something I want to show you.

*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.*

***Inanna** does not show what she wants. This is her art of seduction. She is maturing. Her beauty is summoned into a glow, a fragrance. Dumuzi recognizes this,*

**Narrator 1:**

In the white air of the afternoon,  
In the warmth of the afternoon,

**Narrator 2:**

when the fields and their crops glide into view on either side of the purling river –  
As boats steal by, and fishermen catch fish -  
As the water makes caressing sounds  
As the clouds float in the sky  
blossoming day into evening,  
all colors calm to stillness.

**Narrator 3:**

Silence is broken only by the call of a crow.  
Under the dapple green  
Under the dapple green  
at the bend in the river of liquid silver-  
In a stand of willow and palm  
Dumuzi points to Inanna  
his reed hut.

**Narrator 2:**

It is marvelous to behold.  
Intricate webbings of reed and frond,  
tight bundled pillars of reed rise by the door and the four corners of the house.

**Narrator 1:**

Arched windows and a door latticed with reeds to keep the hut cool.  
Rounded roof high as a temple – a doorsill of stone –

**All Narrators:**

Something shimmers on the door.

**Narrator 3:**

Inanna moves closer to look –

**Dumuzi**

A king snake had taken residence on my doorsill.

He pulled against the rough stone to rid himself of his old skin  
to renew himself.

He was strung out whole so I had to step over him  
to enter or leave.

This morning he was gone and I found  
his glassen tissue outside my door  
like an unforeseen consequence.

*Dumuzi opens the door to his hut*

Please come in.

**Narrator 3:**

Inanna entered the shadow cool of the hut.

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna stepped over the doorsill into Dumuzi's hut.

**Narrator 3:**

The floor was soft with fresh reeds and wool carpets of pleasing design

**Narrator 2:**

- clear reds and blues and borders of latticed black.

**Narrator 3:**

Dishes of clear stone and wood and blue glass from Egypt  
sat neatly on shelves.

On a stone table smooth and thin as slate,  
herbs of every kind lay ready for drying.

From the high roof, medicine flowers hung in bundles.  
Baskets were suspended which held fruit and vegetables.

A stone cistern held cold fresh water.

White sheepskins covered cushions on the floor  
and the sweet grass bed.

**All Narrators:**

Dumuzi reached for a basket and withdrew a green coconut.

**Narrator 3:**

He cut off the top and poured fragrant water  
into two alabaster cups.

**Inanna**

How pleasant your hut is. How fragrant.

Your hut, like you, is a cool source.

It has a cool spirit.

**Dumuzi**

Put your hand in my hand.  
*(Inanna turns away.)*

**Inanna**

Unlike me, you walk in the sun  
if your heart feels cold.  
When the silt of concern halts your spirit's flow,  
you consider the situation ...

**Dumuzi**

Put your heart to my heart.

**Inanna**

*(continuing)*

... you warm its substance and shape it  
to a good fit.  
I like your heart.

*(She turns to him)*

**Dumuzi**

Putting hand to hand is so refreshing.  
Putting heart to heart is so sweet.  
*(They sit on the carpeted floor- cushions)*  
I will make your house for you.  
I will make it long.  
Your temple house I will make.  
The people will set up your beautiful bed –  
they will cover it with soft covers and fragrant flowers.

**Inanna**

Evening comes and my mother expects me.  
  
Come now, wild bull, set me free, I must go.  
What can I say to deceive my mother.  
What can I say to deceive my mother, Ningal.

**Dumuzi**

*(Inanna is well known for her deceits – which makes Dumuzi smile mischievously.)*

Let me inform you, let me inform you,  
Inanna, most deceitful of women, let me inform you.  
Say my girlfriend took me with her to the public square.  
There she entertained me with music and dancing.  
Her chant, so sweet she sang for me.  
In sweet rejoicing I whiled away the time there.

Thus deceitfully, stand up to your mother,  
while we, by the moonlight indulge our passion.  
I will prepare for you a bed pure and sweet and noble  
and while away sweet time with you in plenty and joy.

**Narrator 2:**

Dumuzi relished the savor of Inanna's love.

**Narrator 1:**

Dumuzi delighted the savor of Inanna's love  
and promised to make her his rightful spouse.

**Inanna**

*(Later ... sings)*

I have come to our mother's gate.

I, in joy I walk.

I have come to Ningal's gate.

I, in joy I walk.

To my mother he will say the word.

He will sprinkle cypress oil on the ground.

He whose dwelling is fragrant,  
whose word brings deep joy.

My lord is seemly for the holy lap.

Amaushumgalanna, the son-in-law of Sin.

The lord Dumuzi is seemly for the holy lap,

Amaushumgalanna, the son-in-law of Sin.

**Narrator 1:**

Ningal heard her daughter singing.

Ningal heard her daughter singing

And greeted her with joy.

**Narrator 2:**

Lo, the youth, he is your father.

**Narrator 3:**

Lo, the youth he is your mother.

**Narrator 2:**

His mother cherishes you like your mother.

**Narrator 3:**

His father cherishes you like your father.

**Narrator 1:**

Open the house, my Queen.

**All Narrators:**  
Open the House.

**Inanna**

Mother, his beard is lapis lazuli.  
The wild ox who was made by An for me in accordance with the *me*.  
His beard is lapis lazuli.  
His beard is lapis lazuli.

**Narrator 1:**  
Inanna,

**Narrator 3:**  
at her mother's encouragement

**Narrator 1:**  
Stepped over the doorsill to her temple.  
Queen Inanna stepped over her doorsill  
to the house where she, the high priestess lived.

**All Narrators:**  
Ninshubur helped her queen.

**Narrator 2:**  
Lady Inanna bathed herself and anointed herself with holy oil.  
Ninshubur brought stones of lapis lazuli  
for the Queen's breast,  
Egg shaped beads for her head.

**Inanna**  
Something sighs within me.  
Who is there?  
A voice whispers inside me – It is I.

I am like this hair –  
All strands and hiding places.  
Ninshubur, pile thick these small locks,  
let them fall to the border of my nape.  
I have tried everything possible.

**Narrator 2:**  
Ninshubur brought duru lazuli stones for her chignon -  
gold ribbons for her coiffure  
gold earrings for her ears

bronze eardrops for her earlobes  
ornaments for her face, nose and loins  
bright alabaster for her navel  
willow for her vulva  
sandals for her feet.

**Narrator 1:**

She wore her dowry.  
She grasped the seal in her hand.  
The lordly Queen waited expectantly.  
Dumuzi pressed open the door.

**Narrator 3:**

Dumuzi came forth into the house like moonlight.  
He gazed at her joyously.  
Embraced her. Kissed her.

**Inanna**

Make my enduring house, floating cloudlike,  
The Eanna, whose name is vision sweet –  
Where on my fruitful bed, bedecked.  
I will put my hand in your hand,  
Put my heart to your heart.  
Putting hand to hand in sleep is so refreshing.  
Pressing heart to heart is so sweet.

**Dumuzi**

You have captivated me. Let me stand before you  
You have captivated me. Let me stand before you.  
Lady Inanna, let me caress you.  
My precious caress is more savory than honey.  
In the bed-chamber, honey-filled  
Let me enjoy your honeyed beauty.  
Lady Inanna, let me caress you.  
My caress is more savory than honey.

**Inanna**

Bridegroom, sleep in our house until dawn.  
Your heart. I know where to gladden your heart.  
Lion, sleep in our house until dawn.

**Dumuzi**

You, because you love me, give me your caresses.  
My bride, my Queen who gladdens Enlil's heart,  
Give me your caresses.

**Inanna**

Your caress, goodly as honey, lay your hand on it.  
Bring your hand over like a gishban garment.  
Cup your hand over it like a gishban-sikin garment.

**The Sacred Marriage**

**All Narrators:**

At the white quay of Uruk,

**Narrator 3:**

Dumuzi docked his boat.  
With large mountain bulls led by the arm,  
with sheep and goats tied to hand  
with dappled kids and bearded kids pressed to his breast,

**All Narrators:**

to Inanna in the shrine of the Eanna he came.

**Narrator 1:**

In the temple of Inanna  
the high priests prepared an altar for him.  
Water was placed there for him

**All Narrators:**

They speak to him.

**Narrator 1:**

Bread was placed there.

**All Narrators:**

They speak to him.

**Priests**

Dumuzi - radiant in the palace and on Earth  
Mother Inanna is your treasure.  
Lady Inanna is your treasure.  
My lord, approach her.  
Approach her with a chant –  
a heart moving melody  
Approach where she is waiting.

**Dumuzi**

Lordly Queen, your breast is your field.  
Inanna, your breast is your field.  
Your broad field pours out plants.

**Your broad field** pours out grain.  
Water flowing from on high –  
Bread from on high  
Water flowing from on high –  
Bread from on high –  
Pour it out for the Lord, the bespoken one.  
I will drink it from you.

I will bring life to the people.  
I will fulfill their needs.  
I will make its people carry out justice, in this princely house.  
The house of Dumuzi, the house of **Eridu**  
Is guidance.  
The house of Dumuzi, the house of **Eridu**  
Is radiant.

### **Inanna**

In battle I am your leader, in combat I am your helpmate.  
In the assembly I am your champion.  
On the road I am your life.

When the wild bull lies with holy Inanna -  
When on my vulva his hands he shall have laid,  
When like his black boat he shall have brought joy to it,  
When like his narrow boat he shall have brought life to it,  
When on the bed he shall have caressed me,  
Then I shall caress Dumuzi, the faithful shepherd,  
a sweet fate I shall decree for him.  
I shall caress his loins, the shepherdship of the lands.  
I shall decree his fate.

### **All Narrators:**

And the king goes with lifted head to the holy lap.

### **Narrator 1:**

He goes with lifted head to the lap of Inanna.  
The king with lifted head,

### **Narrator 2:**

comes to my Queen

### **Narrator 1:**

and embraces the goddess of the people.

### **Narrator 3:**

At the king's lap stands the rising cedar.

Plants rise high by his side.  
Grains rise high by his side  
And gardens flourish luxuriantly by his side.

### **Inanna**

You, chosen shepherd of the holy house,  
You, sustainer of An's great shrine,  
In all ways you are fit:  
To hold high your head on lofty dais you are fit.  
To sit on the lapis lazuli throne you are fit.  
To fix the crown on your head you are fit.  
To wear long garments on your body you are fit.  
To gird yourself in garment of kingship, you are fit.  
To carry mace and weapon, you are fit.  
To guide straight the long bow and the arrow, you are fit.  
To fasten the throw stick and the sling, you are fit  
For the holy scepter in the hand, you are fit.  
For holy sandals on your feet, you are fit.  
To prance on my holy bosom like a "lapis lazuli" calf, you are fit.  
May your beloved heart be long of days.  
Thus has An determined the fate for you, may it not be altered.

Enlil, the decreer of fate: May it not be changed.  
Inanna holds you dear. You are the beloved of Ningal.

### **Priests & Priestesses**

Under his reign may there be plants, may there be grain.  
At the river, may there be overflow.  
In the field may there be rich grain  
In the marshland may the fish and birds make much chatter.  
In the canebreak may the old reeds and the young reeds grow high.  
In the steppe may the mashgur-tree grow high.  
In the forests may the deer and the wild goats multiply.  
May the orchards produce honey and wine.  
In the garden beds may the lettuce and cress grow high  
In the palace may there be long life.  
In the Tigris and Euphrates may there be floodwater.  
On their banks may the grass grow high, may it fill the meadows.  
May the holy queen of vegetation pile high the grain in heaps and mounds.

### **Ninshubur**

May the Lord whom you've called to your heart,  
the king, your beloved husband, enjoy long days at your holy lap, the sweet.  
Give him a reign goodly and glorious.  
Give him the throne of kingship on enduring foundation.  
My queen, queen of heaven and earth, queen who encompasses heaven and earth,

May he enjoy long days at your holy lap.

**All Narrators:**

In the palace of Uruk,  
In the house which guides the land,  
in the house of the king  
in its judgment hall where all the black haired people gather,  
the King Dumuzi erected a dais for his Queen Inanna.

**Narrator 1:**

And there he placed her Huluppu throne.

**Narrator 2:**

The king, the god, lived with her  
to care for life - of all the lands.

**Narrator 1:**

He entered with her in his lofty palace.  
He embraced his loving wife.  
He embraced the holy Inanna and  
led her forth like the light of day  
to the throne on the great dais,  
installed himself by her side like King Utu,  
paraded abundance, cheer and plenty before her,  
prepared a goodly feast for her and said,

**Narrator 3:**

“With drum and sweet voiced lyre  
and harp that soothes the spirit,  
O singers, let us utter songs that rejoice the heart!”

**Narrator 2:**

The king put a hand to food and drink.  
Amaushumgalanna put hand to food and drink.  
The palace is in song. The king is in joy  
by the people sated in plenty.  
Amaushumgalanna stands in lasting joy.

**Narrator 1:**

And  
She gave birth to the holy one.  
She gave birth to the holy one.

**All Narrators:**

The queen gave birth to the holy one.

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna gave birth to the holy one.

**Inanna**

Silver and lapis lazuli  
You are, our lord –  
our farmer who makes stand the high grain.

**Dumuzi**

Lady Inanna, mother of all the people,  
Lordly Queen, mother of all our children,  
Oh my Queen, sweet is the drink of your lips.  
Sweet is your drink.  
I give you a pendant of gold, a seal of lapis lazuli.  
I give you a ring of gold, a ring of silver.  
Lift your face to me.  
Lift your face to me.

**Inanna**

The city lifts its head like a dragon, my king.  
It lies at your feet like a lion cub, son of Enki.  
You are the honey of my eyes.  
The honey man, the honey man sweetens me ever.  
My lord, the honey man of the gods,  
You are the lettuce by the water planted.  
Life is your coming into this house of abundance.  
Lying by your side is my greatest joy ...

**Inanna's Descent to the Nether World**

**Narrator 3:**

Summer leaned close upon the land.  
Summer scorched the green land.  
The scent of hyacinth and rose was gone.  
Jackals sniffed the burning air.  
Tender shoots by marshland and field  
drooped and blackened.  
The Earth was like an ember ready to ignite.  
A crow sat on a branch whose leaves had dropped  
and the black haired people talked  
of what was lost.

**Narrator 2:**

Inanna sat in the temple shrine.  
Inanna sat in her temple shrine,  
within the cool & quiet of thick stone walls.

She thought-

**Inanna**

*(thinking)*

All life suffers in this dense and stifling heat.  
Clouds roll up in bloated masses  
but they remain confined in stagnant heaven.  
Enlil ignores my call.  
How long before the people abandon me.  
How long will death keep pounding at the door.

**Narrator 3:**

The black haired people grumble for their queen  
to rouse the god Ninurta,  
to pierce the stupendous clouds.  
But instead, they hear a death cry  
and are fastened to the Earth.

Even breathing stops.

**Inanna**

*(thinking)*

My one soul pushes the second within me  
not as expected but hammering  
to forge connection.

I will capture the *me* of the Nether World –  
I will wear anklets and bracelets of fire.  
Sister, you cannot know what profits will come.  
This immortal, at last, goes into the fire.  
I am a moth who gambles herself.

Will it burn? Yes!

Will it hurt? Yes!

To gather the *me* of the Nether World, I must die.  
As a stranger I walk in.  
I will taste like a surprise of roses in a room.

**Inanna**

*(speaking)*

Ninshubur! Help prepare me for a journey.

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna bathed and anointed herself with holy oil.  
Inanna bathed in cool scented water

and she told her plan to Ninshubur.

**Narrator 2:**

The shugurra, the crown of the steppe, she put upon her head.  
Locks of hair she fixed upon her forehead.

The measuring rod and line of lapis lazuli she gripped in her hand.  
Small lapis lazuli stones she tied about her neck.  
Twin egg-stones she fastened to her breast.

**Narrator 3:**

Gold bracelets

**Narrator 1:**

“Come death, come”

**Narrator 3:**

she wrapped around her wrists.

**Narrator 2:**

The breast-plate

**Narrator 1:**

“Come man, come”

**Narrator 2:**

she bound about her breast.

With the pala-garment, the garment of ladyship she covered her body.

**Narrator 3:**

The ointment

**Narrator 1:**

“Let him come, let him come”

**Narrator 3:**

she daubed on her eyes.  
The seven *me* she fastened at her side,

**All Narrators:**

Inanna gathered all the *me*, placed them in her hand,  
and set up the goodly *me* at her waiting foot.

**Ninshubur**

Holy Inanna,

When taboos are broken you will be surrounded by the demons and seized.

You will be held fast by the cry of the Nether World, never to return.

**Inanna**

You who are my constant support,  
my vizier of favorable words,  
my courier of true words,

I go as Queen of Heaven and Earth.  
I go to sit as Queen,  
as ruler of Ereshkigal.

I go to learn about the mystery of death  
that makes my sister's power absolute ...  
I will bring back to the people of Uruk  
the welcome sleep of Death  
and a promise of Return.

**Ninshubur**

I fear for you.  
You speak the chill of a fearsome storm  
scented with jasmine.  
All I can do is wait for you and sing a chant to the gods for your safety.

**Inanna**

You can do more than that.

When I have come to the Nether World  
And stayed three days and nights -  
on the morning of the fourth day  
set up a lament for me by the ruins.  
Beat the drums for me ...

Like a pauper in a single garment, dress for me.  
To the Ekur, the house of Enlil, all alone direct your step.

Upon entering the Ekur, the house of Enlil, weep before him:  
“Father Enlil, let not your daughter be put to death in the Nether World,  
Let not your good metal be covered with the dust of the Nether World,  
Let not your good lapis lazuli be broken up into the stone of the stoneworker.  
Let not your boxwood be cut up into the wood of the woodworker,  
Let not the maid Inanna be put to death in the Nether World.

If Enlil stands not by you in this matter, go to Ur.

“In Ur, upon entering the house that is the terror of the land,  
the house of Nanna, weep before Nanna:  
‘Father Nanna, let not your daughter be put to death in the Nether World,  
Let not your good metal be covered with the dust of the Nether World.

Let not your good lapis lazuli be broken up into the stone of the stoneworker.  
Let not your boxwood be cut up into the wood of the woodworker.  
Let not your maid Inanna be put to death in the Nether World.’

If Nanna stands not by you in this matter go to Eridu.

“In Eridu, upon entering the house of Enki, weep before Enki:  
‘Father Enki, let not your daughter be put to death in the Nether World.  
Let not your good lapis lazuli be broken up into the stone of the stoneworker.  
Let not your boxwood be cut up into the wood of the woodworker.  
Let not the maid Inanna be put to death in the Nether World.’

Father Enki, the lord of wisdom,  
Who knows the ‘food of life’ and the ‘water of life,’  
Will surely bring me back to life.”

Go now and do as I have commanded.

**Narrator 2:**

From the Great Above Inanna set her mind to the Great below.

**Narrator 1:**

The goddess, from the Great Above set her mind to the Great Below.

**Narrator 2:**

My lady abandoned heaven, abandoned Earth –  
abandoned lordship, abandoned ladyship.

**Narrator 3:**

Inanna walked to the lapis lazuli mountain.  
Inanna walked to the locked gate of the Under World  
and spoke boldly to the door.

**Inanna**

Open the house, gatekeeper. Open the house.  
Open the house, Neti, open the house.  
All alone I will enter.

**Neti**

Who, pray, are you?

**Inanna**

I am the Queen of Heaven, of the place where the sun rises.

**Neti**

If you are the Queen of Heaven, of the place where the sun rises,

Why have you come to the 'Land of no Return'?  
How has your heart led you to follow the road whose traveler never returns?

**Inanna**

*(concocts a false excuse)*

My elder sister, Ereshkigal,  
Because her husband, the lord Gugalanna has been killed –  
I've come to comfort her, to witness the funeral rites ...

**Neti**

Stay, Inanna. To my Queen, let me speak.  
To my queen, Ereshkigal, let me speak.

**Narrator 2:**

Neti, the chief gatekeeper of the Nether World  
Entered the house of his queen Ereshkigal.  
He entered her lofty palace of lapis lazuli  
through one of its seven doors.

**Neti**

O my Queen, a maid has come dressed like a god.  
The seven *me* she has fastened to her side.  
She has sought out the divine *me*, has placed them in her hand.  
All the *me* she has set up by her waiting foot.  
The shugurra, the crown of the plain, she has put upon her head.  
The rod of lapis lazuli she has gripped in her hand.  
Small lapis lazuli stones she has tied about her neck.  
Sparkling stones she has fastened to her breast.  
A gold ring she has gripped in her hand.  
A bronze breastplate she has tied upon her breasts.  
All her garments of ladyship she has arranged about her body.  
Holy ointment she has put upon her face.

**Ereshkigal**

*(cries out in rage, strikes her thigh, -bites her finger.*

*Inanna is dressed for war and has crashed the boundary between worlds. There is only one way out: Inanna must die. But nothing can be done to her until her emblems of power are removed)*

Come, Neti, chief gatekeeper of the Nether World.  
The words which I command you, give ear.  
At the gate, Ganzir, the face of the Nether World,  
lift its bolts, define its rules. Bid her enter.  
Of the seven gates of the Nether World, lift their bolts.  
At each gate define the rules of the Netherworld  
and remove her princely garments.  
When you reach the gates of my palace,

bring her naked and bowed low before me

**Narrator 3:**

Neti, chief gatekeeper of the Nether World  
honored the command of his Queen.  
Of the seven gates, he lifted their bolts.  
At the front gate, Ganzir, the face of the Nether World,  
he pressed open its door.

**Neti**

Come, Inanna, enter.

*(he removes her crown of the steppe)*

**Inanna**

What, pray, is this?

**Neti**

Be silent, Inanna.

The *me* of the Nether World have been perfected – most extraordinarily.  
Do not diminish the rites of the Nether World.

**Narrator 3:**

Upon her entering the second gate  
the rod and line of lapis lazuli that measures the land of the people was removed.  
Inanna asked,

**Narrator 1:**

‘What, pray, is this?’

**Narrator 3:**

And Neti answered:

**Narrator 2:**

‘Be silent, Inanna.

The *me* of the Nether World have been perfected – most extraordinarily.  
Do not diminish the rites of the Nether World.’

**Narrator 3:**

Upon her entering the third gate  
The small lapis lazuli stones of her neck were removed.

Upon her entering the fourth gate  
The sparkling stones of her breast were removed.

**Narrators 2 &3:**

Upon entering the fifth gate  
The gold ring of her hand  
and wrist bands that said  
'Come Death, Come', were removed.

Upon her entering the sixth gate  
The breastplate that said 'Come Man, Come' was removed.

**All Narrators:**

Upon entering the seventh and last gate  
All the garments of her ladyship were removed.

**Narrator 3:**

And Inanna said,

**Narrator 1:**

'What, pray, is this?'

**Narrator 3:**

And Neti replied:

**Narrator 2:**

'Be silent, Inanna.  
Enter the palace of Ereshkigal.  
Stand in judgment for violating the divine laws.  
Bow low before your Queen.'

**Narrator 3:**

Ereshkigal seated herself upon her throne.  
The Anunnaki, the seven judges of destiny stood behind her  
and uttered the cry of guilt against her.  
They struck her.

**Inanna**

*(looks steadily at Ereshkigal who has been silent)*  
If it means surrendering, I surrender –

**Ereshkigal**

She tries to tickle me with flattery.

*(remains seated and lets out a deafening roar)*  
*-Inanna falls dead –*

She is so bound in love and fertility.  
She is so bound in sun and moonlight –

She is so delicately wrapped in the musk and amber  
of love by night's lamplight.  
She is blinded by Life.

She came here to fasten me,  
the fool.  
*I* hold the *me* to the Nether World.  
No besotted Enki am *I*.  
In payment for her trespass  
I will have my pound of fragrant rot.

Take her corpse to the threshold.  
Hang her glassen tissue to my doorpost.

The little voice from the throat of her –  
The little voice dripping with warm innocence  
that hides the copper drum beat of her war cry!  
She is sick that has too much  
as sick as one that starves with nothing.

*(Ereshkigal reaches to touch the shimmering corpse ... but it draws back in physical  
repulsion)*

**Narrator 1:**

Inanna was turned into a corpse.  
The corpse was hung on a hook at Ereshkigal's palace door.

**Narrator 2:**

After three days and three nights had passed  
her messenger, Ninshubur,  
her messenger of favorable words,  
her courier of supporting words,  
filled the heavens with complaints for her,  
cried for her in the shrine,  
rushed about for her in the houses of the gods,  
lowered her eye for her,

**Narrator 3:**

lowered her mouth for her,  
like a pauper in a single garment dressed for her.

**Narrator 1:**

To Ekur, the house of Enlil, all alone Ninshubur directed her step.  
Upon entering the house of Enlil she wept and said all that Inanna directed her to say  
But father Enlil said –

**All Narrators:**

Inanna defied the *me* of the gods  
and wants to rule in the Great Above as well as the Great Below.  
I will not stand by her in this matter.

**Narrator 2:**

Ninshubur went to the house of Nanna at Ur.  
Upon entering the house she wept and said all that Inanna directed her to say  
But father Nanna said –

**All Narrators:**

Inanna defied the *me* of the gods  
and wants to rule the Great Above as well as the Great Below.  
I will not stand by her in this matter.

**Narrator 3:**

In Eridu, upon entering the house of Enki,  
Ninshubur wept and said all that Inanna directed her to say  
and father Enki answered her:

**Enki**

What now has my daughter done! I am troubled.  
What now has the Queen of all the Lands done! I am troubled.  
What now has the servant of Heaven done! I am troubled.

Queen Ninshubur, faithful queen of the place where the sun rises,  
Inanna is on the threshing floor.

We must help her before she is whittled too thin.

Sit here while I think how to arrange her escape.

**Narrator 2:**

Grandfather Enki, wisest of all the gods  
sat with Ninshubur on the balcony.

**Narrator 1:**

He brought forth dirt from his fingernail and fashioned the kurgarra.  
He brought forth dirt from the red-painted fingernail and fashioned the kalatur  
-two sexless devotees for Inanna.  
To the kurgarra he gave the Food of Life.  
To the kalatur he gave the Water of Life.

**Enki**

Go, lay your feet toward the Nether World.  
Fly about the door like flies.  
Circle about the door – pivot like.

Slip past the gatekeeper and descend.  
You will find Ereshkigal  
She grieves her four children.  
She moans in remembrance of giving birth to them alone.  
Ereshkigal lies there ill.

She knows Inanna is her granddaughter.  
She grieves for the loss of Inanna.  
Over her body no cloth is spread.  
Her holy breasts are like empty vessels.  
Her hair like leeks she wears upon her head.

When she cries 'Woe! Oh my inside!'  
Say to her, 'You who sigh, our queen. Oh! Your inside!'  
When she cries, 'Woe! Oh my outside!'  
Say to her, 'You who sigh, our queen. Oh! Your outside!'

She will say to you: 'Whoever you are, because you cry with me –  
From your inside to my inside  
From your outside to my outside –  
I shall pronounce a kindly word for you if you are gods.  
If you are men I shall decree a kindly fate for you.'

Then it is – you make her swear by Heaven and Earth.

Her minions will then present you with the water from the river of the Nether World.  
Do not drink.  
From the field of the Nether World, they will present you with grain.  
Do not eat.  
'Give us the corpse hung at your threshold', say to her.  
One of you sprinkle upon the corpse the Food of Life, the other, the Water of Life.  
Inanna will rise.

**Narrator 1:**

The kurgarra and the kalatur did exactly as Enki instructed them.

**Narrator 2:**

They found Ereshkigal in pain.

**Narrator 1:**

She lay on the floor in her throne room.

**Narrator 3:**

No cloth covered her body.  
Her hair spread round her like leeks.

**Ereshkigal**

Woe! Oh my inside! Oh my heart!

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

*(with compassion)*

Oh my inside! Oh my heart!

How you sigh, my queen.

**Ereshkigal**

Oh my belly! Oh my liver!

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

Oh my belly! Oh my liver!

How you sigh, my queen.

**Ereshkigal**

Woe! My outside! Oh my back!

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

Oh my back!

How you –

**Ereshkigal**

*(Ereshkigal looks up.)*

Who are you?!

**Kurgarra**

My lady, we come to comfort you.

**Kalatur**

My queen, we came to comfort you.

**Ereshkigal**

If you are gods, I shall pronounce a kindly word for you.

No one shows compassion to this queen.

If you are men I shall decree a kindly fate for you.

No man has shown kindness to this queen.

What may I give you?

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

Do you swear by Heaven and Earth?

**Ereshkigal**

I swear.

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

We want the corpse.  
We want Inanna.

**Ereshkigal**

I cannot give her to you.  
No dead being ever leaves this place, god or mortal.  
Such are the laws of the Nether World.

Have some water, have some bread.  
*(She summons servants)*  
Sit here.

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

Holy Queen. You swore by Heaven and Earth.  
Give the corpse to us.

**Ereshkigal**

Inanna belongs to herself. I cannot give her to you.  
She came here looking for the sacred *me* of the Nether World.  
She found they cannot be taken by trickery.  
She found they belong to her soul.

Have a cupcake.

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

Holy Lady. Give Inanna to us.  
Let her arise.  
It is what we wish.

**Ereshkigal**

*(Waves them away in the direction of the corpse.)*  
I suppose Heaven and Earth will end without her.

**Narrator 2:**

Kurgarra and Kalatur lifted Inanna's corpse from the threshold  
And laid her on the cool floor of Ereshkigal's throne room.

**Narrator 1 & 3:**

They gave her the Water of Life to drink  
And bathed her body with it.  
They put the Food of Life in her mouth  
Until it was consumed

**Narrator 2:**

And slowly Inanna rose.

**Narrator 1 & 3:**

They took a cloak of feathers draped nearby  
And put it round her shoulders.  
They smoothed her hair  
And said to Ereshkigal –

**Kurgarra and Kalatur**

Holy Lady. Make for us a way to depart.  
Queen of the Nether World,  
Holy Ereshkigal,  
Provide for us a portal to the Above World.

**Ereshkigal**

*(The Anunnaki enter the throne Room.)*  
She may leave the way she came.

**Anunnaki**

*(They utter a cry.)*  
Inanna may not ascend!  
She got what she came for – her midnight soul shines with dawn.  
Her forehead shines with clarity  
She is burned and illumined.  
But no dead being leaves this place, god or mortal.

**Inanna**

I deserved that ....

**Kurgarra**

Hush, my lady.

**Kalatur**

She was dead ... she's not dead.

**Kurgarra**

*(to the Anunnaki)*  
Holy Judges, ... Queen Ereshkigal swore  
to give us anything we wished.  
Give Inanna to us.

**Ereshkigal**

*(to Inanna)*  
If you leave  
you must find someone to replace you.  
It is a divine law a surrogate  
remains here  
to mirror your risk.

**Inanna**

*(bows slightly)*

My desire, by its own energy  
fulfilled itself.

**Ereshkigal**

That is what shall be mirrored  
- a seed buried deep.  
*(bows slightly in return)*

**Inanna's Ascent from the Nether World**

**All Narrators:**

Inanna ascended from the Nether World.  
The small pitiless demons from the 'Land of No Return'  
surrounded her.

**Narrator 2:**

The small galla, like lance-sized reeds,  
the large galla, like hedge-sized reeds,  
held fast to her side.

**Narrator 1:**

Who was in front of her, though not a trusted lieutenant,  
held a scepter in his hand.

**Narrator 3:**

Who was at her side, though not a courier,  
held a mace fastened to his loins.

**Narrator 2:**

They who accompanied her -  
they who accompanied Inanna -  
were creatures who know not food, know not drink,  
eat not sprinkled flour, drink not libated wine,  
snatch the wife from the man's lap,  
snatch the child from the nursemaid's breast.

**Narrator 3:**

It was Inanna's task to find a deity  
for whom she had so little use  
she could hand him over to the ghouls without regrets  
as her surrogate in the world Below.

**Narrator 1:**

The very first deity to meet her was the faithful Ninshubur  
who upon seeing her mistress come up from the World Below  
with the monstrous galla at her side,  
prostrated herself in the dust at Inanna's feet.  
The galla seized her as Inanna's substitute.

**Inanna**

This is my vizier of favorable words,  
My courier of true words  
Who failed not my instructions –  
Neglected not the word I uttered.  
I shall not give her to you at any price.

**Narrator 3**

The galla complained and pranced in annoyance.  
They wanted to claim Inanna's surrogate quickly.  
The sun hurt their eyes and skin.

**Narrator 2**

The air stung their mouths.

**Narrator 1**

The chirrup of birds pierced their ears.

**Galla**

Let us move onward.

**Narrator 2**

The dark procession advanced to Umma  
and in the temple, Inanna's son, Shara, ran to greet his mother.  
On seeing the ghastly troupe pushing her  
he fell to his knees before her,  
covered himself in dust and wept.  
The cruel band laid hands on him  
but Inanna stopped them.

**Inanna**

This is my Shara who sings to me,  
who cuts my nails and smooths my hair.  
Him I shall not give you at any price.

**Narrator 3**

Frustrated once more, the cruel harpies  
marched on the temple in Badtibira  
where Lulal was worshipped.

But on hearing the noise  
and seeing the ghastly troupe push his mother,  
he fell to his knees before her, covered himself in dust  
and wept.

The galla grabbed him by the thighs  
but Inanna stopped them.

**Inanna**

This is Lulal, the leader,  
who stands in honor on my right side  
and sits in honor at my left.  
Him I shall not give you at any price.

**Narrator 1**

At last. They arrived at Uruk  
and there they found Dumuzi dressed in noble garments  
sitting on his lofty throne.  
He did not see the ghastly troupe.  
He did not hear the fiendish troupe.  
He did not notice holy Inanna pushed and taunted.

**Dumuzi**

Ah! Sweet Inanna.

**Narrator 3**

The king put hand to food and drink.  
The palace was in song.

**Narrator 1**

The king was in joy with maidens and young men  
sated in plenty  
who paraded abundance and cheer before her.

**Narrator 2**

She fastened her eye upon him, the eye of death.  
Spoke the word against him, the word of wrath.  
Uttered the cry against him. The cry of guilt -  
and handed him to the impatient, waiting galla.

**Narrator 1**

Once he was in their hands, they caught him by his feet, (anus)  
Seized him by his hair, beat him mercilessly,  
Cut him with their axes in preparation for  
his descent to the world of the dead.

### **Narrators 2 & 3**

Dumuzi cried out –

#### **Dumuzi**

Utu, you are my wife's brother!  
I am your sister's husband!  
It is I who took cream to your mother's house.  
It is I who took milk to Ningal's house.  
Utu, you are a just judge, do not let me be carried off.  
She descended to the Nether World.  
Because she descended to the Nether World  
she has turned me over to the Nether World as her substitute.  
Change my hands into the hands of a snake.  
Turn my feet into the feet of a snake.  
Let me escape my demons.  
Let them not seize me.

Like a grass snake I will traverse the meadows.  
I will carry off my soul to the home of my sister, Geshtinanna.

#### **Narrator 1**

Utu accepted his tears,  
Changed his hands, altered his form.  
Like a sagkal snake he traversed the highland meadows.  
Dumuzi's soul left him like a hawk flying against a bird.  
He carried off his soul to the house of Geshtinanna.

#### **Narrator 2**

Geshtinanna stared at her bother,  
rent her cheek, rent her mouth,  
looked to her side –  
uttered a bitter lament for her suffering lord:

#### **Geshtinanna**

O my brother.  
Amaushumgalanna, the lad whose days and years were not long,  
who has no wife, no child -  
who has no friend, no companion -  
who brings no comfort to his mother -  
go and hide in the tall grasses –  
Go and hide!

#### **Narrator 2**

Dumuzi's heart was filled with tears.  
He went forth to the steppe.  
The shepherd, his heart was filled with tears.

He went forth to the steppe.  
He fastened his flute about his neck, uttered a lament:

**Dumuzi**

Among the crabs of the river,  
among the frogs of the river,  
O steppe, set up a lament.  
Let my mother, Sirtur, utter a cry.  
On the day I die she will have no one to care for her.  
On the steppe, like my mother, my eyes shed tears.  
Like my little sister, my eyes shed tears.

**Narrator 3**

Among the buds he lay

**Narrator 2**

Among the buds he lay

**Narrator 1**

As he lay among the buds he dreamed a dream.

**Narrator 2**

He awoke –

**Narrator 3**

it was a dream.

**Narrator 2**

He trembled –

**Narrator 1**

it was a vision.

**Narrator 2**

He rubbed his eyes –

**Narrator 3**

he was dazed.

**Dumuzi**

*(calls out –)*

Geshtinanna, sister –

My tablet knowing scribe –

My little sister who knows the meaning of words -

My sister who knows the meaning of dreams –

I would tell you my dream ....

## Geshinanna

*(who has been looking for him)*

I am here.

## Dumuzi

Of the dream, my sister, this is the heart of the dream:

Rushes rise all about me.

Rushes grow thick all about me.

A single- growing reed bows its head for me.

Of the double-growing reed, one is removed.

In the wooded grove –

a terror of tall trees rise around me –

Over my holy hearth no water is poured.

My holy churn – its stand is removed.

My drinking cup hung on a peg, from the peg has fallen.

My shepherd's crook has disappeared

The owl takes ...

A falcon holds a lamb in its claws.

My young kids drag their lapis lazuli beards in the dust.

My sheep of the fold, paw the ground with their limbs bent.

The churn lies shattered, no milk is poured.

The cup lies shattered, Dumuzi lives no more.

The sheepfold is given over to the wind.

## Geshinanna

Dear brother, unfavorable is your dream.

Rushes rise all about you. Rushes grow thick about you.

Cutthroats will rise in attack against you.

A single growing reed bows its head for you –  
the mother who bore you will bow her head for you.

Of a double-growing reed, one is removed –  
I and you, one of us will be removed.

In the wooded grove, the terror of tall trees rises all about you –  
the evil one will terrorize you.

Over your holy hearth the fire has gone out –  
the sheepfold will be turned into a house of desolation.

Of your holy churn, its stand is removed –  
the evil ones will put a restraining hand on you.

The holy cup hung on a peg, from the peg it has fallen –  
you will fall from the gracious knee of the mother who bore you.

Your shepherd's crook has disappeared –  
the evil one makes everything languish away.

Your owl takes –  
the evil one will take.

The falcon holds the lamb in its claws –  
the big galla will drive you from the house.

Your young kids drag their lapis lazuli beards in the dust –  
my hair will swirl about in heaven like a cyclone.

Your sheep of the fold, paw the ground with their limbs bent –  
my brother, I weep for you.

The churn lies shattered, no milk is to be poured.  
The drinking cup lies shattered, Dumuzi lives no more.  
The sheepfold is given over to the wind.

#### **Narrator 2**

Dumuzi wept, turning exceedingly pale.  
He heard the galla in the distance and said to Geshtinanna:

#### **Narrator 3 & Dumuzi**

“I shall have brought an end to my sister. Run, run Geshtinanna –  
As fast as you can.  
You are my friend.  
I will hide among the small plants, tell not where I am.  
I will hide among the large plants, tell not where I am.  
I will hide among the ditches of Arali, tell not where I am.”

#### **Narrator 2**

And Geshtinanna replied:

#### **Narrator 1 & Geshtinanna**

“If I tell your hiding place, may your dogs devour me –  
I am going to Inanna to beg her help!”

#### **Narrator 2**

Geshtinanna ran to the temple where she found Inanna  
and told her all that happened to her  
and Dumuzi.  
Inanna wept bitterly for her husband.

She wept bitterly for Geshtinanna  
and all she suffered for her brother.

**Narrator 1**

She wept for her house, she wept for her city.

**Narrator 3**

She wept for him who would no longer bathe at Eridu,  
who would no longer rub himself with soap at Enun,  
who would no longer treat the mother of Inanna as his mother,  
who would no longer perform his sweet task among the maidens of his city,

**Narrator 2**

who would no longer compete among the lads of his city,

**Narrator 1**

who would no longer wield his sword with the kurgarra of his city,

**All Narrators**

for the noble one who would be no longer held dear by his followers.

**Inanna**

Gone is my sweet husband.  
My bridegroom, like a hand crushed plant.

**Geshtinanna**

Holy Inanna, High Priestess of Uruk,  
Queen of Heaven and Earth –  
What you started in good office,  
You can end in good office.  
There is no point to letting Dumuzi haunt a desolate space  
with not even a reed to guide him!  
There is no use in his godship blown to the winds!  
He is the shepherd of all living things!  
What will happen to them if his name is wiped out!

**Inanna**

The *me* of the Nether World have been perfected – most extraordinarily.  
Do not diminish the rites of the Nether World.

For my beloved husband Dumuzi, I may decree a fate:  
to sweeten his lying-place  
I offer his time in the Nether World be shared  
with you, if you accept.  
For half the year he will remain and observe the *me* of the Nether World.  
And for half the year you may take his place and do the same –

The shepherd of the people and the lady of the vines will  
serve to keep the door open  
between the World Above and the World Below  
Do you accept?

**Geshtinanna**

I do.

### **The Death of Dumuzi**

**Narrator 1**

Geshtinanna ran back to her house  
to watch over her brother's well-being

**Narrator 2**

as best she could

**Narrator 1**

as the galla laid their plan:

**Narrator 3**

“You, galla, who have no mother, no father, sister, brother, wife or son –  
who flutter about heaven and earth as chief constables –  
You, galla, who cling to man's side  
who know not good and bad –  
who see the soul of man panicked in fear –  
Let us go to the home of Geshtinanna.”

**Narrator 1**

The galla clapped their hands and went searching for Dumuzi.

With cries that ceased not from their mouths,  
The galla proceeded to the home of Geshtinanna.

**Narrator 3**

“Show us where your brother is ...” they said to her.

**Narrator 2**

But she told them not.

**Narrator 1**

Heaven was brought close. They tore her garments.

**Narrator 2**

But she told them not.

**Narrator 1**

Earth was brought close. Their axes lacerated her skin.

**Narrator 2**

But she told them not.

**Narrator 1**

Heaven was brought close. Hot pitch was poured on her vulva.

**Narrator 2**

But she told them not.

They did not find Dumuzi in Geshtinanna's house  
and they said to one another:

**Narrator 3**

“In all eternity, a sister has not betrayed her brother.  
Let us go to his house on the desert steppe.”

**Narrator 2**

The inhuman creatures who eat no food,  
drink no water, drink not libated wine,  
Accept no mollifying gifts,  
sate not with pleasure the lap of a wife,  
kiss not children sweet -  
searched the steppe.

They came to the house of old Belili,  
a goddess of endowment –

**Narrator 1**

who had a son Girgire,  
a lonesome man,  
quick-witted,  
a man of experience –

**Narrator 2**

who filled his stall and fold with cattle he had rustled,  
who heaped high his mounds of grain –

**Narrator 1**

who hastily dispersed his slaughtered victims –

**Narrator 2**

Of the river, the galla presented him with water.

**Narrator 1**  
He accepted it.

**Narrator 2**  
Of the field the galla presented him with grain.

**Narrator 1**  
He accepted it.

**Narrator 2**  
“My friend has hidden among the small plants.”

**Narrator 3**  
They searched for Dumuzi amongst the small plants, they did not find him.

**Narrator 2**  
“He has hidden amongst the large plants.”

**Narrator 3**  
They searched for Dumuzi amongst the large plants, they did not find him.

**Narrator 2**  
“He has hidden amongst the ditches of Arali.”

**Narrator 3**  
They searched for Dumuzi amongst the ditches of Arali, they did not find him.

**Narrator 1**  
The galla left the scene.  
Girgire watched them go.  
Dumuzi did not see and approached the house of old Belili.

**Dumuzi**  
Old one, I am not a mortal man.  
I am the husband of a goddess.  
Pour water so I may drink.  
Offer bread so I may eat.

**Narrator 3**  
She poured out water and brought him bread.  
While her son,

**Narrator 2**  
the friendless,

**Narrator 3**  
sat before him  
conversing with him,  
Dumuzi was seized.

The galla surrounded the prisoner.  
They whirled round and round him.

**Narrator 2**  
They twisted a cord,

**Narrator 1**  
Spliced a string.

**Narrator 2**  
They twisted a ziptum cord  
and sharpened sticks.

**Narrator 3**  
Who went in front of him stabbed him.

**Narrator 1**  
Who went behind, plucked him like a plant.

**Narrator 2**  
His hands were bound in fetters.

**Narrator 3**  
His arms were held fast by wood.

Dumuzi lifted his eyes heavenward to Utu -

**Dumuzi**  
Utu, you are my wife's brother, I am your sister's husband.  
I am he who carried food to the Eanna,  
who brought wedding gifts to the Eanna,  
who kissed the holy lips  
who danced on the holy knee, the knee of Inanna.  
Turn my hand into the hands of a gazelle.  
Let me escape my demons.  
Let me carry off my soul to the holy sheepfold.

**Narrator 1**  
Utu accepted his tears as an offering.  
As a man of mercy, he showed him mercy.  
He turned his hands into the hands of a gazelle.

He turned his feet into the feet of a gazelle.  
Dumuzi escaped his demons.  
He carried his soul to the holy sheepfold  
of his sister.

**Narrator 2**

Geshtinanna brought her mouth close to heaven,  
her mouth close to earth,  
covered the horizon like a garment,  
wrapped it about like a cloth,  
rent her eyes for him,

**Narrator 1**

rent her mouth for him,

**Narrator 3**

rent her ears for him.  
And soon the galla arrived.

**Narrator 1**

The big ones jumped the fence,  
struck him on the cheek with a piercing nail.

**Narrator 3**

The small ones entered the sheepfold and the stall,  
struck him on the cheek with the shepherd's crook.

**Narrator 2**

On entering the sheepfold and the stall,  
they removed the holy churn from the stand,  
threw down the drinking cup from the peg.  
On entering the sheepfold and the stall,  
they shattered the churn, no milk was poured.  
Shattered the cup.

Dumuzi lives no more.  
The sheepfold is given over to the wind, Dumuzi is dead.

**Galla**

*(to Dumuzi's soul)*

My king, we are all about you!  
Rise, come with me!  
Dumuzi, we are all about you!  
Rise, come with me!  
Husband of Inanna!  
Brother of Geshtinanna!

You, who sleep the false sleep!  
Rise, come with me!  
Your ewes have been seized, your lambs have been carried off.  
Your goats have been seized, your kids have been carried off!

Take off the holy crown from your head, go bareheaded!  
Take off the *me* garment, go naked!  
Drop the holy scepter from your hand, go barehanded!  
Take off the sandals from you feet, go barefoot!

**Inanna**

Sweet husband,  
Amaushamgalanna –  
Though I am not a shepherd,  
I have reassembled the sheep of my king –  
that you shepherd, you who are lying, stood watch over.  
By day, standing up, you stood watch.  
By night, lying down,  
You stood watch .....