

The Epic of Gilgamesh – Storytelling for the ASA Holy Nights
22 minutes for 13 days: 24 December 2021 – 5 January 2022
9 am PT / 10 am MT / 11 am CT / 12 pm ET / 5pm Universal Time

“The purpose of a story is to be an axe that breaks up the ice within us.” ~ Franz Kafka

All around the world the season of midwinter is the traditional time for community bonding through storytelling. In laying the groundwork for the 100-year anniversary of the [‘Christmas Conference’](#) we bring the ancient Sumerian saga “The Epic of Gilgamesh” to life. Rudolf Steiner explored this story in [Occult History](#) during the Holy Nights of 1910. And again in [World History in the Light of Anthroposophy](#) during those fateful Holy Nights in 1923 for the re-founding of the Society.

The Epic of Gilgamesh is perhaps the oldest written tale on Earth. The Sumerian version dates from around 3000 B.C. Later it was compiled from 12 clay tablets written in Akkadian cuneiform. It is the “Hero’s Journey” of human evolution, a story of friendship, and a quest for the meaning of life - revealing Steiner’s core mission of bringing karma and reincarnation to the west.

Myths, fairytales, historical epics, and sagas open us up to powerful archetypes behind the human condition, revealing clues about ourselves in the past, the present and future. What will we uncover about ourselves and each other during this year’s Holy Nights adventure in storytelling?

Join us for any or all of this dramatic reading, re-worked from various translations by Hazel Archer, featuring friends from around the world.

Friday 12/24/2021 – Prologue – Hazel Archer + Angela Foster

Saturday 12/25/2021 - Tablet #1 - Henry-Cameron Allen + Alicia Young

Sunday 12/26/2021 - Tablet #2 - Stasha Ginsburg + Nicholas Andrea

Monday 12/27/2021 - Tablet #3 - Deb Abrahams-Dematte + John Beck

Tuesday 12/28/2021 - Tablet #4 – Christine Burke

Wednesday 12/29/2021 - Tablet #5 - Bruce Donehower

Thursday 12/30/2021 - Tablet #6 – filling in for Marianne Fieber - Neelima Baird + Hazel Archer

Friday - 12/31/2021 - Tablet #7 – Sally Greenberg + Robyn Hauenstein

Saturday 01/01/2022 - Tablet #8 –Nancy Melvin

Sunday - 01/02/2022 - Tablet #9 -Ultra-Violet Archer

Monday 01/03/2022 - Tablet #10 - Linda Bergh + Dennis Dietzel

Tuesday 01/04/2022 - Tablet #11 – Tess Parker + Michele Mariscal

Wednesday 01/05/2022 - Tablet #12 - Dave Mansur

The Epic of Gilgamesh	'Dramatis Personae'	Description
Gilgamesh	$\frac{2}{3}$ God, $\frac{1}{3}$ Man	<p>King of the city-state of Uruk (Erech) whose name means 'ancestor-hero'</p> <p>Old Atlantean Soul GA 126</p> <p>Inspired into at 1st by an Archangel (Spirit of Fire) - the Guardian God Lugalbanda (also called his father) GA 233</p> <p>Moving from being the bearer of his people's karma to his own – his bore "a stain of uncertainty" GA 233</p> <p>"Alexander the Great stands there as the shadow-image of Gilgamish." GA 233</p>
Enkidu / Ea-bani	$\frac{1}{3}$ God, $\frac{2}{3}$ Man (hair = organ of clairvoyance GA 233)	<p>Enkidu /Ea-bani = 'Wisdom-Sun (Kyriotetes, the highest of the 2nd Hierarchy of the Sun) created him'</p> <p>Described as the archetypal human being fashioned from clay by the goddess Aruru, the 'Mother of the Gods' in the image & likeness of the highest God Anu. GA 233</p> <p>Etymology of the name: Enki / Ea – God/Goddess of Wisdom + Utu – God of the Sun (connected to Marduk = Michael)</p> <p>Counterpart for Gilgamesh</p> <p>"Eabani, projected on to the physical plane, is Aristotle, the teacher of Alexander the Great" GA 126</p>

Anu	God	Highest God in the Firmament
Utu / Shamash	God	The Glorious Sun - god of justice, morality, and truth. (The twin of Ishtar)
Ea (Sophia) / Enki	Goddess / God	Wisdom and magic representing the 2 nd Hierarchy, bringing gifts to humanity, such as the plow, to improve their lives.
Enlil	God	Father of the gods - the cause of the great flood sent to exterminate the human race, because they 'made too much noise and prevented him from sleeping'.
Nanna / Siin	God	God of the Moon
Ninsun	Demi-Goddess	Mother of Gilgamesh; Queen - also called the Lady Wildcow Ninsun. She is noted for her wisdom. Her husband is Lugulbanda.
Lugulbanda	Demi-god	Guardian God – former King /Archangel of Uruk – Husband of Lady Wildcow Ninsun – Father of Gilgamesh.
Ishtar / Inanna	Goddess	Sumerian Goddess of Love (The planet Venus) & War. Known as the "Queen of Heaven". Her symbols included the lion and the 8-pointed star. Inanna appears in more myths than any other Sumerian deity - associated with the city of Uruk & her Temple Eanna
Shamhat	Initiate	Priestess in the Temple of Inanna who brings Enkidu into civilization
Urshanabi	Human	Ferryman - The guardian of the mysterious "stone things."

Utnapishtim "the Faraway man"	Immortal human	Also called Xisuthros, (or Manu- Noah) - "the exceedingly wise". He tells the story of the Deluge to Gilgamesh. Holds the mysteries of Atlantis in Burgenland with its center in Hibernia -
Bull of Heaven	God	Represents Lucifer. Engendered by Anu at the request of Ishtar
Humbaba / Huwawa	God	Represents Ahriman. Holding the forest hostage (the etheric realm – the 'Tree of Life') Humbaba's seven garments produce an aura that paralyzes with fear
Aruru	Goddess	Mother Goddess of human creation - who fashioned Ea-bani from clay and her spittle.
Nisaba	Goddess	Goddess of Corn
Adad	God	God of the Stars & Storms - Son of Anu
Samuqan	God	God of Cattle
Tammuz	man	Lover of Ishtar's youth
Siduri	Demi- goddess	Keeper of the vine at the edge of the world
Ereshkigal	Goddess	Queen of the Underworld

Friday 12/24/2021 – Prologue – hag & Angela Foster

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,

you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Prologue – Angela Foster

He who saw everything in the broad-boned earth, and knew what was to be known - Who had experienced what there was, and had become familiar with all things - He, to whom wisdom clung like a cloak, and who dwelt together with Existence in Harmony - He knew the secret of things and laid them bare - And told of those times before the Flood.

In his city, Uruk, he made the walls, which formed a rampart stretching on and on. And the Temple called Eanna, which was the house of Anu, the Sky God - And also of Ishtar, Goddess of Love and Battle. Look at it even now: where cornice runs on - outer wall shining brilliant copper. See - There is no inner wall; it has no equal. Touch the threshold – ancient. Approach the palace called Eanna - There lives Ishtar, Queen of Heaven and Hell. No king since has accomplished such deeds.

Climb that wall, go in Uruk; walk there. I say, walk there. See the foundation terrace, touch then the masonry – Is not this of burnt brick, and good? They say: The seven Rishi's helped lay its foundation. One third is city. One third is orchards. One third is clay pits that serve to build the Temple.

Search these three parts, find enshrined there a copper and cedar table-box. Open it. Open its secret fastening. Take out the lapis-lazuli tablet. Read aloud from it. Read how Gilgamesh fared many hardships, surpassing all kings, great in respect, a lord in his form. He is the hero - He who built Uruk. He, the striking bull. He leads the Way. He, the Foremost - who also marches at the

back, a helper to his brothers. He is the Great Net, protector of his men. He is the survivor of the furious flood-wave. The offspring of Lugulbanda, Gilgamesh is perfect in strength. The son of the revered Wild-Cow, Goddess Ninsun. Gilgamesh inspires perfect awe.

He opened the mountain passes; he dug the well on the mountain's flank. He crossed to the far shore, traversed the vast sea to the rising Sun. He explored the rim, sought life to uncover death. By his strength he reached Utnapishtim, the Faraway Man - He who restored living things to their places - Those which the Flood had destroyed.

Amidst the teeming peoples, who is there to compare with him in kingship? Who like Gilgamesh can say: 'I am king indeed?'

His name was called Gilgamesh. From the very day of his birth, He was two-thirds god, one third man. The Great Goddess Aruru designed him, planned his body - prepared his form. A perfect body the gods gave, for the creation of Gilgamesh. Utu the Sun gave strength and beauty. Adad the god of Star and Storm gave courage. And so he surpassed all others - two-thirds god, one third man. The form of his body no one can match. Eleven cubits high he is; nine spans his chest. As he turns to see the lands all around him - He comes again to the city of Uruk. Long was his journey, weary; worn down by his labors. When he returned - This is the story he inscribed upon the stone:

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.

What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.

Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –

Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –

Go on now, chew our story through & through –

Until we meet again.

Saturday 12/25/2021 - Tablet #1 - Henry-Cameron Allen + Alicia Lisa Young

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

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Tablet #1

From when he first ruled as King in Uruk, Gilgamesh met with none who could challenge his leadership. The men of Uruk not used to such kingliness muttered in their houses: 'Gilgamesh sounds the tocsin (the alarm bell) for his own amusement; his arrogance has no bounds by day or night. No son is left with his father, for Gilgamesh wins them all, even the children.

Yet it's true, the king should be a shepherd to his people. But his lust leaves no virgin to her husband, neither the warrior's daughter, nor the wife of the noble; he may be no shepherd but he is wise, comely, and resolute.'

The gods heard their lament. They appealed to Anu the god of Uruk: 'Gilgamesh was made by Aruru to be strong as a savage bull, none can challenge his leadership. No son is left with his father, for Gilgamesh wins them all; and is this the king, the shepherd of his people? His lust leaves no virgin to her husband, neither the warrior's daughter, nor the wife of the noble'.

When Anu had heard their lamentation, and only smiled, the gods then appealed to Aruru, the goddess of creation: 'You made him, O Aruru; now create his equal; let it be as like him as his

own reflection, his second self; stormy heart for stormy heart. Let them contend together and leave Uruk in quiet.'

So the goddess conceived an image in her mind, and it was of the stuff of Anu the god of the firmament. She dipped her hands in water and pinched off clay, she let it fall in the wilderness, and noble Ea-bani was created.

There was virtue and strength in him. His body was rough, he had long wild tresses that waved like the hair of Nisaba, the goddess of corn. His body was covered with thick matted hair like Samugan the god of cattle. He was innocent of humankind; he knew nothing of the cultivated land. Ea-bani ate grass in the hills with the gazelle and lurked with wild beasts at the water-holes. He had freedom by the water with the herds of wild game.

But one day there was a trapper who met him face to face at the drinking-hole. For three days he met him face to face, and the trapper was frozen with fear. He went back to his house with the game that he had caught, and he was dumb, and benumbed with terror. His face was altered like that of one who has made a long journey. With awe in his heart he spoke to his father:

'Father, there is a man, unlike any other, who comes down from the hills. He is the strongest in the world; he is like an immortal from heaven. He ranges over the hills with wild beasts and eats the grass that ranges through your land and comes down to the wells. I am afraid and dare not go near him. He fills in the pits which I dig, and tears up-my traps set for the game; he helps the beasts to escape and now they slip through my fingers.'

His father opened his mouth and said to the trapper: 'My son, in Uruk lives Gilgamesh; no one has ever prevailed against him, he is strong, as a star from heaven. Go to Uruk, find Gilgamesh, extol the strength of this wild man. Ask him to give you a Priestess from the Temple of Love; return with her, and let her mysteries conquer this man. When next he comes down to drink at the wells she will be there, naked like the goddess; and when he sees her beckoning he will embrace her, and then the wild beasts will reject him.'

So the trapper set out on his journey to Uruk and addressed himself to Gilgamesh saying: 'A man unlike any other is roaming now in the pastures; he is as strong as a star from heaven, and I am afraid to approach him. He helps the wild game to escape; he fills in my pits and pulls up my traps.'

Gilgamesh pondered and said: 'Trapper, go back, take with you an initiate of Inanna, a holy priestess of pleasure. At the drinking hole she will engage him, and when he sees her beckoning he will embrace her and the game of the wilderness will surely reject him.'

And so the trapper returned taking the Priestess with him. After a three days' journey they came to the drinking hole, and there they sat down. The holy Priestess and the trapper sat, facing one another and waited for the game to come. For the first day, and for the second day, the two sat waiting, but on the third day the herds came; they came down to drink and Ea-bani was with them. The small wild creatures of the plains were glad of the water, and Ea-bani with them, who ate grass with the gazelle and was born in the hills. And she saw him, the savage man, come from far-off in the hills.

The trapper spoke to her: 'There he is. Now, woman, reveal your mysteries, do not delay but welcome his innocent love. Let him see you naked like the goddess; let him embrace your body. Lay with him. Let him know you. Teach the savage man your woman's art; for when he murmurs love to you the wild beasts that shared his life in the hills will reject him.'

She stood in her power and made herself naked like the goddess and welcomed his eagerness. As he knew her, murmuring love, she taught him the woman's art.

For six days and seven nights they lay together, for Ea-bani had forgotten his home in the hills. After seven nights, when he was satisfied, he stood up to go back to the wild beasts.

But, when the gazelle saw him, they bolted away; when the wild creatures saw him they fled.

Ea-bani would have followed, but his body was bound as though with a cord, his knees gave way when he started to run, his swiftness was gone. The wild creatures had all fled away. Ea-bani was changed; for a new wisdom was in him, and the thoughts of a man were in his heart.

So he returned and sat down at the initiate's feet, and listened intently to what she said: 'You are wise, Ea-bani, and now you have become like a god. Why do you want to run wild with the beasts in the hills? Come with me. I will take you to strong-walled Uruk, to the blessed Temple

of Ishtar and of Anu, of love and of heaven, there Gilgamesh lives who is very strong, and like a wild bull he rules over all men.'

When she had spoken, Ea-bani was pleased. He longed for a comrade, for one who would understand his heart. 'Come, holy Priestess, and take me to that holy temple, to the house of Anu and of Ishtar, and to the place where Gilgamesh is lord over the people. I will challenge him boldly, I will cry out aloud in Uruk: "I am the strongest here, I have come to change the old order, I am he who was born in the hills, I am he who is strongest of all."'

She was gladdened and said: 'Let us go, and let him see your face. I know very well where Gilgamesh is in great Uruk. O Ea-bani, there all the people are dressed in their gorgeous robes, every day is holiday, the young men and the girls are wonderful to see. How sweet they smell! All the great ones will be roused from their beds. O Ea-bani, you who love life, I will show you Gilgamesh, a man of many moods; you shall look at him well in his radiant manhood. His body is perfect in strength and maturity; he never rests by night or day. He is stronger than you, so leave your boasting. Utu the glorious sun has given favors to Gilgamesh, and Anu of the heavens, and Enlil, and Ea the wise, your name sake, has given him deep understanding. I tell you, even before you have left the wilderness, Gilgamesh will know in his dreams that you are coming.'

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

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(Sunday 12/26/2021) - Tablet #2 - Stasha Ginsburg & Nicholas Andrea

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

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Tablet #2

Gilgamesh got up to tell his dream to his mother; Ninsun, one of the wise ones: 'Mother, last night I had a dream. I was full of joy, the young heroes were round me and I walked through the night under the stars of the firmament; and one great star, a meteor of the stuff of Anu, god of the firmament, fell down from heaven. I tried to lift it but it proved too heavy. All the people of Uruk came round to see it, the common people jostled and the nobles thronged to kiss the feet of the pure one who came streaking down from the heavens. And to me its attraction was like the love of a woman. The people helped me move it. I braced my forehead and I raised it with thongs and brought it to you, and you yourself pronounced it my brother.'

Then Ninsun, who is well-beloved and wise, said to Gilgamesh: 'This star of heaven which descended like a meteor from the sky; which you tried to lift, but found too heavy, when you tried to move it, it would not budge, until the people helped you, and so you brought it to my feet - I made it for you - a goad and spur toward change within you. And so you were drawn as though to a woman. This is the strong comrade of your heart, the one who brings help to his friend in his need. He is the strongest of wild creatures, the stuff of Anu, god of the firmament; born in the grass-lands, the wild hills reared him. When you see him you will be glad; you will love him and he will never forsake you. This is the meaning of the dream.'

Gilgamesh opened his mouth and said: 'Mother, I dreamed a second dream. In the streets of strong-walled Uruk there lay an axe; the shape of it was strange. The people thronged round. I

saw it and was glad. I bent down, deeply drawn towards it; I loved it like a woman and wore it at my side.'

Ninsun answered: 'That axe, which you saw, which drew you so powerfully like the love of a woman, that is the comrade whom I give you, and he will arise in his strength like one of the host of heaven. He is the brave companion who rescues his friend in necessity.'

Gilgamesh said to his mother: 'A friend, a counsellor has come to me from Ea, and now I shall befriend and counsel him.'

So Gilgamesh told his dreams; and the Priestess who was able to see, retold them to Ea-bani.

She said to him: 'When I look at you, you have become like a god. Why do you yearn to run wild again with the beasts in the hills? Get up from the ground, from the bed of a shepherd you shall be like a king.'

He listened to her words with care. It was good advice that she gave. She divided her clothing in two and with the one half she clothed him and with the other herself, and holding his hand she led him like a child to the sheepfolds, into the shepherds' tents. There all the shepherds crowded round to see him, they put down bread in front of him, but Ea-bani could only suck the milk of wild animals. He fumbled and gaped, at a loss what to do or how he should eat the bread, and drink the strong wine. Then the priestess said, 'Ea-bani eat the bread, it is the staff of life; drink the wine, it will enliven your heart, it is the custom of the land.'

So he ate till he was full, and drank the strong wine - seven goblets. He became merry, his heart exulted and his face shone. He rubbed down the matted hair of his body and anointed himself with oil.

Ea-bani had become a man; and when he had put on a man's clothing he appeared like a bridegroom. He took up arms for the first time to hunt the lion so that the shepherds could rest at night. He caught wolves and lions and the herdsmen sat down in peace; for Ea-bani was their watchman, that strong man who had no rival.

He was merry living with the shepherds, till one day lifting his eyes he saw a man approaching. He said to the priestess, 'Why has he come? Fetch that man here. I wish to know his name.' She went and called the man saying: 'Sir, where does your weary journey lead you?' The man answered, saying to the initiate of Ishtar and to Ea-bani:

'Gilgamesh has gone crazy from a dream. He has gone into the marriage-house and shut out the people. He does strange things in Uruk, the city of great streets. At the roll of the drum work begins for the men, and work for the women. Yet Gilgamesh the king is about to celebrate the sacred marriage with the Queen of Love, and he still demands to be first with another man's bride, 'The Lords Right - the king to be first, and the husband to follow', for that he says, he was ordained by the gods from his birth, from the time the umbilical cord was cut. But now the drums roll for the choice of the bride and the city groans.'

At these words Ea-bani turned white in the face. 'I will go to the place where Gilgamesh is lord over the people, I will challenge him boldly, and I will cry aloud in Uruk, "I have come to change the old order, for I am the strongest here."

Now Ea-bani strode in front and the priestess followed behind, a change from before. He entered Uruk, that great market, and all the folk thronged round him where he stood in the street in strong-walled Uruk. The people jostled; speaking of him they said, 'He is the spit of Gilgamesh. '

He is shorter.'

'He is bigger of bone.'

This is the one who was reared on the milk of wild beasts. His is the greatest of strength.'

The men rejoiced: 'Now Gilgamesh has met his match - This pure-one, this hero, whose beauty is like a god, he is a match even for Gilgamesh.'

In Uruk the bridal bed was made, fit for the goddess of love. The bride waited for the bridegroom, but in the night Gilgamesh got up and came to the house.

Then Ea-bani stepped out, he stood in the street and blocked the way. Mighty Gilgamesh came over and Enkidu met him at the gate. He put out his foot and prevented Gilgamesh from entering the house, and so they grappled, holding each other like bulls. They broke the doorposts and the walls shook, they snorted like bulls locked together. They shattered the stone blocks and the foundations shook.

Gilgamesh bent his knee with his foot planted on the ground and with a turn Ea-bani was thrown - Then immediately his fury died. When Ea-bani was thrown he said to Gilgamesh:

'There is not another like you in the world. Ninsun, who is as strong as a wild ox in the byre, she

was the mother who bore you, and now you are raised above all men, and Ea, my name sake, has given you the kingship, for your strength surpasses the strength of men.'

So Ea-bani and Gilgamesh embraced and their friendship was sealed.

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

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Monday 12/27/2021 - Tablet #3 - Deb Abrahams-Dematte & John Beck

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

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Tablet #3

Gilgamesh and Ea-bani shared all. And then came a dream: Enlil of the mountain, the father of the gods, has decreed the destiny of Gilgamesh, declaring him a man and not a god. – This was what Gilgamesh dreamed, and it did not sit well with him. And Ea-bani said: 'The meaning of the dream is this: The father of the gods has given you kingship, such is your destiny; everlasting life is not your destiny. Because of this do not be sad at heart, do not be grieved or oppressed.

He has given you power to bind and to loose, to be the darkness and the light of humankind. He has given you unexampled supremacy over the people, victory in battle, from which no fugitive returns, in forays and assaults from which there is no going back. But do not abuse this power; deal justly with your servants in the palace, deal justly before Utu the god of the Sun who favors justice.'

After speaking, the eyes of Ea-bani were full of tears and his heart was sick, for he could also see the future coming. He sighed bitterly and Gilgamesh met his eye and said: ' My friend, why do you sigh so bitterly? But Ea-bani opened his mouth and said only: 'I am weak, my arms have lost their strength, the cry of sorrow sticks in my throat, for I am oppressed by idleness.'

It was then that the lord Gilgamesh turned his thoughts to the wide world. On the Land of Cedars the lord Gilgamesh reflected. He said to his friend Ea-bani: 'I have established my name stamped on bricks as my destiny decreed; therefore I will now go to the country where the cedar is felled. I will set up my name in the place where the names of the gods are written, and where- no man's name has yet been written. I will raise a monument to the gods. Because of the evil that is in the land, we will go to the forest and destroy the evil; for in the forest lives Humbaba, a ferocious giant, whose name means "Enslaver".

But Ea-bani again sighed bitterly and said: 'When I went with the wild beasts ranging through the wilderness I discovered this vast forest; its length is ten thousand leagues in every direction. Enlil has appointed Humbaba to guard it and armed him with a force of sevenfold terrors. Fearsome to all flesh is Humbaba. When he roars it is like the torrent of the storm, his breath is like fire, and his jaws are death itself. He guards the cedars so well that when the wild heifer stirs in the trees, though she is sixty leagues distant, he hears her. What man would willingly walk into that country and explore its depths? I tell you, fear overpowers whoever goes near it. It is not an equal struggle when one fights with Humbaba; he is a dissembler, a battering-ram. Dear friend Gilgamesh, this loathsome watchman of the forest never sleeps.'

Gilgamesh replied: 'Where is the man who can clamber to heaven? Only the gods live forever ever rising with the glorious Utu god of the Sun - but as for us men, our days are numbered, our occupations are a breath of wind. How is it that already you are afraid! I will go first, although I am your lord, and I will safely call out, "Forward, there is nothing to fear!" Then if I fall, I leave behind me a name that endures. Men will say of me, "Gilgamesh has fallen in a glorious fight with ferocious Humbaba." Long after the eldest has been bony in my house, they will say it, and remember.'

Ea-bani spoke again to Gilgamesh: 'O my lord, if you will enter that country, appeal first to the great Utu, tell the Sun God, for the land is his. The country where the cedar is cut belongs to Utu.'

And so Gilgamesh took up a goat, white without spot, and a brown one with it; he held them against his breast, and he carried them into the presence of the Sun. He took in his hand his silver scepter and he said to glorious Utu: 'I am going to that country, O ruler of justice, I am going; my hands supplicate, so let it be well with my soul and bring me back to the quay of Uruk. Grant, I beseech, your protection, and let the omen be good.'

Glorious Utu answered: 'Gilgamesh, you are strong, but what is the country to you – you who have built a city?'

O Utu, hear me; hear me, Utu, let my voice be heard. Here in the city man dies oppressed at heart, man perishes with despair in his heart. I have looked over the wall and I see the bodies floating on the river, and that will be my lot also. Indeed I know it is so, for whoever is tallest among men cannot reach the heavens, and the greatest cannot encompass the earth. Therefore I would enter that country: because I have only just established my name, stamped on brick, as my destiny decreed. I will go now with my friend to the country where the cedar is cut. I will set up my name where the names of famous men are written; and where no man's name is written, there I will raise a monument to the gods.'

The tears ran down the face of Gilgamesh, and he said: 'Yes, Alas, it is a long journey away from the city that I must take to the Land of Humbaba. If this enterprise is not to be accomplished, why did you move me, Utu, with the restless desire to perform it? How can I succeed if you will not succor me? If I die in that country I will die without rancor, but if I return I will make a glorious offering of gifts and of praise to Utu.'

So the sun god accepted the sacrifice of his tears; and with compassion he showed him mercy. He appointed strong allies for Gilgamesh, sons of one mother, and stationed them in the mountain caves. The great winds he appointed: the north wind, the whirlwind, the stone and the icy wind, the tempest and the scorching wind. Like vipers, like dragons, like a scorching fire, like a serpent that freezes the heart, a destroying flood and the lightning's fork, such were they, and Gilgamesh rejoiced.

He went to the forge and said: 'I will give orders to the armorers; they shall cast us our weapons while we watch them.' So they gave orders to the swordsmith and the craftsmen sat down in conference. They went into the groves of the plain and cut willow and box-wood; they cast for them axes of nine score pounds. And great swords they cast with blades of six score pounds each one, with pommels and hilts of thirty pounds. They cast for Gilgamesh the axe 'Might of Heroes' and the bow of 'Persian Pride'; and Gilgamesh and Ea-bani were thus armed. And the weight of the arms they carried was thirty score pounds.

The people collected in the streets, and the counsellors came to the market-place of Uruk; they came through the gate of seven bolts and Gilgamesh spoke to them in the market-place:

'I, Gilgamesh, go to see that creature of whom such fearsome things are spoken, the rumor of whose name fills the world. I will conquer him in his cedar wood and show the strength of the sons of Uruk, and all the world shall know of it. I am committed to this enterprise: to climb the mountain, to reclaim the cedar, and leave behind me an enduring name.'

The counsellors of Uruk; there in the great market, answered him: 'Gilgamesh, you are young, your courage carries you too far, you cannot know what this enterprise means which you plan. We have heard that Humbaba is not like men who die, his weapons are such that none can stand against them; the forest stretches for ten thousand leagues in every direction; who would willingly go down to explore its depths?

As for Humbaba, when he roars it is like the torrent of the storm, his breath is like fire and his jaws are death itself. Why do you crave to do this thing, Gilgamesh? It is no equal struggle when one fights with Humbaba, that battering-ram.

When he heard these words of the counsellors Gilgamesh looked at his friend and laughed: 'How shall I answer them; shall I say I am afraid of Humbaba, that I will sit at home all the rest of my days?'

Then Gilgamesh opened his mouth again and said to Ea-bani: 'My friend, let us go to the Great Palace, and stand before Ninsun the queen. Ninsun is wise with deep knowledge, she will give us counsel for the road we must go.'

They took each other by the hand as they went to the palace of Wild-Cow the Queen - they went to Ninsun the great queen. Gilgamesh approached, he entered her palace and spoke to the wise mother who bore him. 'Ninsun, will you listen to me; I have a long journey to reach the Land of Humbaba, I must travel an unknown road and fight a strange battle. From the day I go until I return, till I reach the cedar forest and destroy the evil which Utu abhors, will you pray for me to the sun god O mother?'

Ninsun went into her room, she put on a dress to highlight her glory, she put on jewels to make her breast shine, she placed a tiara on her head, and her skirts swept the ground making it holy.

Then she went up to the altar of the Sun, standing upon the roof of the palace. She burnt incense and lifted her arms to Utu as the smoke ascended: 'O Utu, why did you give this restless heart to Gilgamesh, my son; why did you give it? You have moved him and now he sets out on a long journey to the Land of Humbaba, to travel an unknown road and fight a strange battle. Therefore from the day that he goes, till the day he returns, until he reaches the cedar forest, until he kills Humbaba, and destroys the evil thing which you, Utu, abhor, do not forget him; but let the goddess of dawn, Aya, your dear bride, remind you always, and when day is done give him to the watchman of the night to keep him from harm.'

Then Ninsun the mother of Gilgamesh extinguished the incense, and she called to Ea-bani with this exhortation: 'Strong Ea-bani, you are not the child of my body, but I will receive you as my adopted son; you are my other child like the foundlings they bring to the Temple of Ishtar. Serve Gilgamesh as a foundling serves the Temple and the priestesses who reared him. In the presence of my women, the votaries and hierophants, I declare it.' Then she placed - the amulet for a pledge round his neck, and she said to him: 'I entrust my son to you; bring him back to me safely.'

And now the smiths brought to them the weapons, they put in their hands the great swords in their golden scabbards, and the bow and the quiver. Gilgamesh took the axe, he slung the quiver from his shoulder, and the bow of 'Persian Pride', and buckled the sword to his belt; and so they were armed and ready for the journey.

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.

What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.

Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new -

Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew -

Go on now, chew our story through & through -

Until we meet again.

Tuesday 12/28/2021 - Tablet #4 – Christine Burke & Timothy Kennedy

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #4

As Gilgamesh and his friend Ea-bani were about to embark on their journey to the cedar forest, all the people of the city of Uruk came and pressed on them, shouting and crying: 'When will you return to the city?

And the counsellors come forth and blessed them with a warning: 'Do not outpace your strength, be watchful, and restrain your blows at first. The one who goes in front protects his companion; the good guide who knows the way guards his friend. Let Ea-bani lead the way, he knows the road to the forest, he has seen Humbaba and is experienced in battles; let him press first into the passes, let him be watchful and look for a safe passage. Let Ea-bani protect his friend, guard his companion, and bring him safely through the pitfalls of the road. We, the counsellors of Uruk entrust our king to you, O Ea-bani; bring him back safely to us.'

To Gilgamesh, they said: 'May Utu the heart of the sun, give you your heart's desire, may he let you see with your eyes the thing accomplished which your lips have spoken; may he open a path for you where it is blocked, and smooth the road for your feet to tread. May he open the

mountains for your crossing, may the nighttime bring you the blessing of stars, and may Lugulbanda, your guardian god, stand beside you for victory in the battle.

Remember to wash your feet in the river which will be your guide on the way. In the evening dig a well, and let there always be pure water in your water-skin. Offer cold water to Utu and do not forget Lugulbanda.'

Then Ea-bani opened his mouth and said: 'Forward; let us banish fear. Follow me, for I know the place where Humbaba lives and the paths where he walks. Let the blessings of the counsellors go with us. With the help of the good gods there is no cause for fear.'

When the counsellors heard this they sped the hero's on their way. 'Go, Gilgamesh, may your guardian god protect you on the road and bring you safely back to the quay of Uruk. Set the pace wild yet wise Ea-bani; go with strength'.

After twenty leagues they broke their fast; after another thirty leagues they stopped for the night. Fifty leagues they walked in one day; in three days they had walked as much as a journey of a month and two weeks. They crossed seven mountains before they came to the gate of the cedar forest.

Then Ea-bani called out to Gilgamesh, 'Stop! Do not go down into the forest. When I opened the gate my hand lost its strength.'

Gilgamesh answered him: 'Dear friend, do not think only of your fear. Have we got the better of so many dangers and travelled so far, to turn back just as we reach the gate? You, who are tried in wars and battles, hold close to me now and you will feel no fear of death; keep beside me and your weakness will pass, the trembling will leave your hand. Would my friend rather stay behind?

No, Ea-bani cried: 'We will go down together into the heart of the forest.'

'Yes', Gilgamesh answered. 'Let our courage be roused by the battle to come; forget death and follow me, a man resolute in action, but one who is not foolhardy. When two go together each will protect himself and shield his companion, and if we fall, we leave an enduring name.'

Together they went down into the forest; they came to the green mountain. There they stood still, for they were struck dumb; they stood still and gazed at the forest. They saw the height of the cedar, they saw the way into the forest and the track where Humbaba was used to walk. The way was broad and the going was wide. They gazed at the mountain of cedars, and above it the dwelling-place of the gods and the throne of Ishtar. The hugeness of the cedar rose in front of the mountain, its shade was beautiful, full of comfort. Mountain and glade were green with brushwood, shining before the eyes of gods as the sun was setting.

Gilgamesh dug a well. In the last light he went up the mountain and poured out the cold water, and laid the fine grain on the ground, and said, 'O mountain, dwelling of the gods, bring me a favorable dream.' Then Gilgamesh and Ea-bani took each other by the hand and lay down to sleep.

And a favorable sleep that flows from the stars lapped over them. Gilgamesh dreamed. And at midnight, sleep left him, and he told his dream to his friend:

'Ea-bani what was it that woke me if you did not'? Ah, I have dreamed a dream', told Gilgamesh. 'Get up, look at the mountain precipice. The sleep that the gods sent me is broken. Ah, my friend, what a dream I have had! Terror and confusion; I seized hold of a wild bull in the wilderness. It bellowed and beat up the dust till the whole sky was dark, my arm was seized and my tongue bitten. I fell back on my knee; then someone refreshed me with water from his water-skin.'

Ea-bani said: 'Dear friend, the god to whom we are here to battle is no wild bull, his form is more monstrous. That wild bull which you saw in the dream is our benefactor, Utu the Protector, god of the sun. Your dream shows that in our moment of peril he will take our hands. The one who gave water from his water-skin - that is your own god who cares for your good name, your Lugulbanda. United with these, together we will accomplish a work the fame of which will never die.'

Gilgamesh said: 'I had another dream. We stood in a deep gorge of the mountain, and beside it we two were like the smallest of swamp flies; and suddenly the mountain fell, it struck me and caught my feet from under me. Then came an intolerable light blazing out, and in it was one whose grace and whose beauty were greater than the beauty of this world. He pulled me out from under the mountain, he gave me water to drink and my heart was comforted, and he set my feet on the-ground.'

Then Ea-bani the child of the stars and of wilds said: 'Let us go down from the mountain and talk this thing over together.'

He then said to Gilgamesh the young god: 'Your dream is good, your dream is excellent, the mountain which you saw is Humbaba. Now, surely, we will seize and kill him, and throw his body down as the mountain fell on the plain.'

The next day after twenty leagues they broke their fast, and after another thirty they stopped for the night. They dug a well before the sun had set and Gilgamesh ascended the mountain. He poured out fine grain on the ground and said: 'O mountain, dwelling of the gods, send a dream for Ea-bani, make for him a favorable dream.'

And so the mountain fashioned a dream for Ea-bani; it came, an ominous dream thus: A cold shower passed over him; it caused him to cower like the mountain barley under a storm of rain.

But Gilgamesh sat with his chin on his knees till the sleep which flows over all humankind lapped over him too. Then, at midnight, sleep left him; he got up and said to his friend: 'Did you call me, or why did I wake? Did you touch me, or why am I terrified? Did not some god pass by, for my limbs are numb with fear? My friend, I saw a third dream and this dream was altogether frightful. The heavens roared and the earth roared again, daylight failed and darkness fell, lightning flashed, fire blazed out, the clouds lowered, they rained down death. Then the brightness departed, the fire went out, and all was turned to ashes falling upon us. Let us go down from the mountain and talk this over, and consider what we should do.'

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.
What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.
Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –
Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –
Go on now, chew our story through & through –
Until we meet again.

Wednesday 12/29/2021 - Tablet #5 - Bruce Donehower

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #5

Together Gilgamesh and Ea-bani saw the hard way forward. When they had come down from the mountain Gilgamesh seized the axe in his hand: he felled a thick dead cedar.

When Humbaba heard the noise far off he was enraged; he cried out: 'Who is this that has violated my woods and cut down my cedar?'

When they heard this roar they quaked. But glorious Utu called to them out of heaven: 'Go forward, do not be afraid even in the dark'.

But Gilgamesh was overcome by weakness, and sleep seized him suddenly, a profound sleep held him; he fell to the ground, stretched out speechless, as though in a dream.

When Ea-bani touched him he did not rise; when he spoke to him he did not reply.

'O Gilgamesh, Lord of the plain of Sumer, the world grows dark, the shadows have spread over it, now is the glimmer of dusk. Utu has departed, his bright head is quenched in the bosom of the moon. O Gilgamesh, how long will you lie like this asleep? Do not let the mother who gave you birth be forced in mourning into the city square.'

At length Gilgamesh heard him. He rose slowly and put on his breastplate called: 'The Voice of Heroes', a full thirty sheqels weight; he put it on as though it had been a feather garment that he carried, and it covered him altogether. He straddled the earth like a bull that snuff's the ground, and his teeth were clenched. 'By the life of my mother Ninsun who gave me birth, and by the life of my father, divine Lugulbanda, let me live to be the wonder of my mother, as when she nursed me on her lap.'

A second and a third time he said to Ea-bani: 'By the life of Ninsun my mother who gave me birth, and by the life of my father, divine Lugulbanda, until we have fought thus as men, if men

we are, this evil god, if god he is, we shall be cut down, the way is for going forward, we will not turn back to the city.'

Then Ea-bani, the faithful companion, pleaded, answering him: 'O my lord, you do not know this monster and that is the reason you are not afraid. I who know him, I am terrified. His teeth are dragon's fangs, his countenance is like a lion, his charge is the rushing of the flood. With his look he crushes alike the trees of the forest and reeds in the swamp. O my Lord, you may go on if you choose into his captive land, but I will go back to the city. I will tell the lady your mother all your glorious' deeds till she shouts for joy - and then I will tell her of your death that followed till she weeps for bitterness.'

But Gilgamesh said: 'Immolation and sacrifice are not yet for me, the boat of the dead shall not go down, nor the three-ply cloth be cut for my shrouding. Not yet will my people be desolate, nor the pyre be lit in my house and my dwelling burnt on the fire. Today, give me your aid and you shall have mine: what then can go amiss with us two? Tis true that all living creatures born of the flesh shall sit at last in the boat to the West, and when it sinks, when the ship of the netherworld sinks, they are gone; but now we shall go forward! Let us fix our eyes on this monster. If your heart is fearful throw away fear; if there is terror in it - throw away terror. Take your axe in your hand and attack. He who leaves the fight unfinished is not at peace.'

Just then, Humbaba came out from his strong house of cedar. Ea-bani called out: 'Yes, O Gilgamesh, I remember now your boasts in Uruk. Forward, attack, son of Uruk, there is nothing to fear.'

When the words were spoken and heard, both their courage rallied. Gilgamesh answered: 'Make haste, close in, the watchman are at the flanks, do not let Humbaba escape to the woods where he will vanish. He has put on the first of his seven forces but not yet the other six; let us trap him before he is armed.'

Like a raging wild bull Gilgamesh snuffed the ground. The watchman of the woods turned full of threatening, and cried out. Humbaba came from his strong house of cedar. He nodded his head and shook it menacing Gilgamesh; and on him he fastened his eye, the eye of death. Then Gilgamesh called to Utu, his tears flowing: 'O glorious Utu, I have followed the road you commanded, but now if you send no succor - how shall I escape?

Glorious Utu heard his prayer and summoned the great wind, the north wind, the whirlwind, the storm and the icy wind, the tempest and the scorching wind; they came like dragons, like a scorching fire, like a serpent that freezes the heart, a destroying flood and the lightning's fork. The eight winds rose up against Humbaba. They beat against his eyes; he was gripped, unable to go forward or back. Gilgamesh shouted: 'By the life of Ninsun my mother and divine Lugulbanda my father, in the wide world, in this Land I have discovered your dwelling; my weak arms and my small weapons I have brought to this Land against you, and now I will enter your house'.

So he felled the first cedar, and with Ea-bani cut the branches, and laid them at the foot of the mountain.

At the first stroke Humbaba blazed out, but still they advanced. They felled seven cedars and cut and bound the branches and laid them at the foot of the mountain, and seven times Humbaba loosed his fearful forces on them.

As the seventh blaze died out they reached his lair. Humbaba slapped his thigh in scorn, yet he was wise in deception. He approached like an animal roped on the mountain, a creature whose elbows are bound together. The false tears started to his eyes, his head low: 'Gilgamesh, let me speak. I have never known a mother, no, nor a father who reared me. I was born of the mountain, he reared me, and Enlil made me the keeper of this forest. Let me go free, Gilgamesh, and I will be your servant, you shall be my lord; all the trees of the forest that I hold captive on the mountain shall be yours. I will cut them down and build you a palace.'

Humbaba fixed Gilgamesh with his eye - which pulled him like a force into his house, so that the heart of Gilgamesh was covered over with glamor. He doubted heavenly life; he forgot the earthly life, he was caught by the nether world itself:

Gilgamesh cried out in delusion: 'O Ea-bani, should not the snared bird return to its nest and the captive man return to his mother's arms?'

Eabani answered: 'The strongest of men will fall to fate if he has no judgement. The evil fate of this demon of disease that knows no distinction between men will devour you. If the snared bird returns to its nest, if the captive man returns to his mother's arms, then you my friend will never return to the city where the mother is waiting who gave you birth. He will bar the mountain road against you, and make the pathways impassable.'

Humbaba roared: 'Ea-bani, what you have spoken is evil: you, a hireling, dependent for your bread! In envy and for fear of a rival you have spoken evil words.'

Ea-bani said: 'Do not listen, Gilgamesh, this lord of confusion, this Humbaba must die - Kill Humbaba first and his servants after.'

But Gilgamesh said: 'If we touch him the blaze and the glory of light will be put out in confusion, the glory and glamour will vanish, its rays will be quenched. I will be caught in his gruesome lair of darkness.'

Ea-bani said to Gilgamesh: 'Not so, my friend. First entrap the bird, and where shall the chicks run then? Afterwards we can search out the false glory and the glamour, when the chicks run distracted through the grass.'

Gilgamesh listened to the word of his companion which broke the spell, he took the axe in his hand, he drew the sword from his belt, and he struck Humbaba with a thrust of the sword to the neck, and Ea-bani his comrade struck the second blow. At the third blow Humbaba fell.

Then there followed a fearsome uproaring, for this was the wicked guardian of the forest whom they had felled to the ground.

For as far as two leagues the cedars shivered when Ea-bani final blow felled the captor of the forest, he at whose voice Mount Hermon and the forest of Lebanon used to tremble. Now the mountains were moved and all the hills, for the holder of the forest was killed. Yet Humbaba's demons flew in a craze and attacked the cedars, as the seven forces of Humbaba were doused.

So they pressed on into the forest bearing the sword of eight talents. There they uncovered the sacred dwellings of the Anunnaki – the guardians of the star seeds, whose task is to decree the destiny of men.

And while Gilgamesh felled the posts of Humbaba's dwelling, Ea-bani cleared their roots as far as the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates. They set Humbaba before the gods, before Enlil who had made him, Enlil who caused the great flood.

The two heroes kissed the ground and dropped the shroud and set the head before him. When Enlil saw the head of Humbaba, he raged at them. 'Why did you do this thing? From henceforth may the fire be on your faces, may it eat the bread that you eat; may it drink where you drink.'

Then Enlil took again the blaze and the seven forces that had been Humbaba's, he scattered them about: The first to the river, so that when it overcomes its banks the land is fertile; and he gave also to the lion, adding to his roar; a curse fell to the stone, to be an obstacle or a hunted treasure; it burnt the grain, causing new varieties to grow; and fouled the air, calling for more

trees to be planted; and tumbled deep into the mountain gorge, to aid the dreaded Ereshkigal, the Queen of Hell.

And then from the sun Utu's voice called out: 'O Gilgamesh, king and conqueror of the dreadful blaze; wild bull who plunders the mountain, who crosses the desert, glory to him, and to the loyal and wise Ea-bani at his side, the greater glory still.

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.

What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that bids us adieu.

Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –

Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –

Go on now, chew our story through & through –

Until we meet again.

Thursday 12/30/2021 - Tablet #6 - Neelima Baird & Hazel Archer

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,

you may have forgotten my friend.

When did it start, when will it end?

Round & round and ever new –

With a rhyme that forever grew.

Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.

Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.

And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #6

Gilgamesh washed out his long locks until his head glistened. He cleaned his weapons flinging back his hair from his shoulders. He threw off his stained clothes and changed them for new. He put on his royal robes and made them fast.

When Gilgamesh had put on the crown, glorious Ishtar lifted her eyes, seeing the beauty of Gilgamesh. She open her mouth and said: "Come to me Gilgamesh, and be my bridegroom; grant me seed of your body, let me be your bride, and you shall be my husband. I will harness for you a chariot of lapis lazuli, with wheels of gold and horns of copper; and you shall have the mighty genii of the storm for draft mules. When you enter our house in the fragrance of cedar-wood, threshold and throne, all will kiss your feet. Kings, rulers, and princes will bow down before you; they shall bring you tribute from the mountains and the plain. Your ewes shall drop twins, and your goats triplets; your pack-animals shall outrun mules; your oxen shall have no rivals, and your chariot horses shall be famous far-off for their swiftness."

Gilgamesh opened his mouth and answered glorious Ishtar: "If I take you in marriage, what gifts can I give in return? What ointments and clothing for your body? I would gladly give you bread and all sorts of food fit for a god. I would give you wine to drink fit for a queen. I would pour out barley to stuff your granary; but as for making you my wife - that I will not. How would it go with me? Your lovers have found you like a brazier which smolders in the cold, a backdoor which keeps out neither squall of wind nor storm, a castle which crushes the garrison, pitch that blackens the bearer, a water-skin that chafes the carrier, a stone which falls from the parapet, a battering-ram turned back from the enemy, a sandal that trips the wearer; for the love of a goddess cannot know human experience. -

Which of your lovers did you ever love forever? What shepherd of yours has pleased you for all time? Listen to me while I tell the tale of your lovers. There was Tammuz, the lover of your youth, for him you decreed wailing, year after year.

You loved the many colored roller, but still you struck and broke his wing; now in the grove he sits and cries, "kappi, kappi, my wing, my wing."

You have loved the lion tremendous in strength: seven pits you dug for him, and seven times did he fall.

You have loved the stallion magnificent in battle, and for him you decreed whip and spur and a thong, to gallop seven leagues by force and to muddy the water before he drinks; and now his mother laments.

You have loved the shepherd of the flock; he made meal-cake for you day after day, he killed pure goats for your sake. You struck and turned him into a wolf, now his own herd-boys chase him away - his own hounds worry his flanks.

And did you not love Ishullanu, the gardener of your father's palm grove? He brought you baskets filled with dates without end; every day he loaded your table. Then you turned your eyes on him and said: 'Dearest Ishullanu, come here to me, let us enjoy your manhood, come forward and take me, I am yours.' And Ishullanu answered: 'What are you asking from me? My mother has baked and I have eaten; why should I come to such as you for food that is eternal but does not feed? For when was a screen of rushes sufficient protection from frosts?'

And when you had heard his answer, you struck him. He was changed to a blind mole deep in the earth, one whose desire is always beyond his reach.

And if you and I should be lovers, should not I be served in the same fashion as all these others whom you loved once?"

When Ishtar heard this she fell into a bitter rage, she went up to high heaven. Her tears poured down in front of her father Anu, and Antum her mother. She said: "Dear father, Gilgamesh has

heaped insults on me, he has spoken out loud all my abominable behavior, my foul and hideous acts.”

Anu opened his mouth and said: “Why are you coming to me? Did you not quarrel with Gilgamesh the king, so now he has related your abominable behavior, your foul and hideous acts.”

Ishtar opened her mouth and said again: “My father, give me the Bull of Heaven to destroy Gilgamesh. Fill Gilgamesh, I say, with arrogance to his destruction. If you refuse to give me the Bull of Heaven I will break in the doors of hell and smash the bolts; there will be a vast confusion of people, those above, with those from the lower depths. I shall bring up the dead to eat food like the living; and the hosts of the dead will outnumber the living.”

Anu said to great Ishtar: “If I do what you desire there will be seven years of drought throughout Uruk when corn will be seedless husks. Have you saved grain enough for the people and grass for the cattle?”

Ishtar replied: “I have saved grain for the people, grass for the cattle; for seven years of seedless husks, there is grain and there is grass enough.”

When Anu heard what Ishtar had said he gave her the Bull of Heaven to lead by the halter down to Uruk. When they reached the gates of Uruk the Bull went to the river. With his first snort, cracks opened in the earth, and a hundred young men fell down to death. With his second snort, cracks opened, and two hundred fell down to death. With his third snort, cracks opened, and Ea-bani doubled over but instantly recovered, he dodged aside and leapt on the Bull and seized it by the horns. The Bull of Heaven foamed in his face - it knocked him with the thick of its tail.

Ea-bani cried to Gilgamesh: "My friend, we boasted that we would leave enduring names behind us. Now thrust in your sword between the nape and the horns."

So Gilgamesh followed the Bull, he seized the thick of its tail; he thrust the sword between the nape and the horns and slew the Bull.

When they had killed the Bull of Heaven, they cut out its heart and gave it to Utu; and the brothers rested. But Ishtar rose up and mounted the great wall of Uruk; she sprang on to the tower and uttered a curse: "Woe to Gilgamesh, for he has scorned me in killing the Bull of Heaven."

When Ea-bani heard these words he defended his friend. He tore out the Bull's right thigh and tossed it in her face saying: "If I were not a mortal man I would lash the entrails to your throat for having spoken thus."

Then Ishtar called together her people; the priestesses, the dancing and singing neophytes, the initiates of the temple. Over the thigh of the Bull of Heaven she set up lamentation.

But Gilgamesh called the smiths and the armorers, all of them together. They admired the immensity of the horns. They were plated with lapis lazuli two fingers thick. They were thirty pounds each in weight, and their capacity in oil was six measures, which he gave to his guardian god, Lugulbanda. But he carried the horns into the palace and hung them on the wall. Then they washed their hands in the Euphrates; they embraced each other and went away.

Gilgamesh and Ea-bani drove through the streets of Uruk where the heroes were gathered to see them, and Gilgamesh called to the singing girls: "Who is most glorious of the heroes, who is most eminent among men?"

"Gilgamesh is the most glorious of heroes, Gilgamesh is most eminent among men." They cried back.

And now there was feasting, with celebrations and joy in the palace, till the heroes lay down saying: 'Now we will rest for the night.'

When the daylight came, Ea-bani got up and cried to Gilgamesh: 'O my brother, such a dream I had last night. Anu, Enlil, Ea, and heavenly Utu took counsel together, and Anu said to Enlil: "Because they have killed the Bull of Heaven, and because they have killed Humbaba who guarded the Cedar Mountain, one of the two must , die."

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.
What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.
Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –
Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –
Go on now, chew our story through & through –
Until we meet again.

Friday - 12/31/2021 - Tablet #7 – Sally Ginsburg & Robyn Hauenstein

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.

And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #7

After Gilgamesh and Ea-bani had slain the Bull of Heaven, Gilgamesh dreamed that Anu, god of the firmament; Enlil, god of the mountain - he who brought the flood; Ea, god of wisdom; and heavenly Utu, the sun god; meet in a heavenly council.

Anu said to Enlil: "Because they have killed the Bull of Heaven, and because they have killed Humbaba who held the Cedar Mountain, one of them must die."

Then glorious Utu answered Enlil: "It was by your command they killed the Bull of Heaven, and killed Humbaba, and must Ea-bani die although innocent?"

Enlil flung round in rage at glorious Utu: "You dare to say this, you who went about with them every day like a man!"

And it was then that Ea-bani lay stretched out in pain before Gilgamesh; his tears ran down in streams. Ea-bani opened his mouth and spoke to Gilgamesh: ' O my brother, so dear you are to me, yet they will take me from you. I must sit down on the threshold of the dead and never again will I see my dear brother, as you are now, with my eyes.'

Gilgamesh racked with pain went about pacing outside on the ramparts. Ea-bani lay alone in his sickness; and it was then that he that fell into a bitterness. He cursed the gate the Temple, as though it was living flesh - Lamenting that he had ever entered the mysteries with the Priestess of Ishtar.

With the first brightening of dawn Ea-bani raised his heavy head and wept before the Sun God, in the brilliance of the sunlight his tears streamed down.

“Sun God, I beseech you, to curse that vile Trapper, who schemed to capture my innocence”

When Utu heard the words of Ea-bani he called to him from heaven: “Ea-bani, why are you cursing the Priestess, the mistress who taught you to eat bread fit for gods and drink wine of kings? She who put upon you a ‘magnificent garment, did she not give you glorious Gilgamesh for your companion, and has not Gilgamesh, your own brother, made you rest on a royal bed and recline on a couch at his left hand? He has made the kings of the earth kiss your feet; and now all the people of Uruk lament and wail over you. When you are dead he will let his hair grow long for your sake, he will wear a lion's pelt and wander through the desert.”

When Ea-bani heard glorious Utu, his angry heart grew quiet, he took back the curse a thousand times.

As he tossed fitfully in his sickness, with the last dregs of the bitterness - of spirit untethered -he poured out his heart to his friend Gilgamesh:

“It was I who cut down the cedar; I who levelled the forest. I who slew Humbaba; and now see what will become of me? Listen, my friend, this is the dream I dreamed last night:

The heavens roared, and earth rumbled back an answer; between us stood an awful being, the somber-faced bird-man. He directed on me his purpose. He had a vampire mouth, his foot was a lion's foot; his hand was an eagle's talon. He fell on me and his claws were in my hair, he held me fast and I was smothered.

Then he transformed me, so that my arms became wings covered with feathers. He turned his stare towards me, and he led me away to the palace of Ereshkigal, the Queen of Hell, to the house from which none who enter ever returns. There, is the house where people sit in darkness; dust is their food and clay their meat. They are clothed like birds with wings for covering. They see no light, they sit in gloom.

I entered the house of dust and I saw the kings of the earth, their crowns put away forever; rulers and princes, all those who once wore kingly crowns and ruled the world in the days of old. They who had stood in the place of the gods, like Anu and Enlil, stood now like servants to fetch baked meats in the house of dust; to carry cooked gist and lukewarm water from the water-skin.

In the house of dust which I entered, there were high priests and acolytes, priests of the incantation and of ecstasy; there were servers of the Temple, and there was even one whom the eagle carried to heaven in the days of old. I saw also Samugan, god of cattle.

Then I came upon Ereshkigal, the Queen of the Underworld; and a scribe squatted in front of Her, she who is recorder of the gods, and keeps the book of death. She held a tablet from which she read. She raised her head, she saw me and spoke:" Who has brought this one here?"

Then I awoke like a man drained of blood, who wanders alone in a waste of rushes; like one whom the bailiff has seized, my heart pounding with terror.'

Gilgamesh had rent his clothes; he listened to Ea-bani's words and wept long tears. Gilgamesh listened and his tears flowed. He opened his mouth and spoke to Ea-bani:

"Who is there in strong-walled Uruk who has wisdom like this? Strange things have you spoken. Why does your heart speak strangely? The dream was marvelous, but the terror was great. We must treasure the dream whatever the terror; for the dream has shown that death comes at last to all - the healthy man, the poor man - the end of life is sorrow.'

And Gilgamesh lamented: "Now I will pray to the great gods, for my friend had an ominous dream."

The day on which Ea-bani dreamed, came and went, as he lay stricken with sickness. One whole day he lay on his bed and his suffering increased. He said to Gilgamesh, the friend on whose account he had left the wilderness:

“Once I ran to you, for the water of life, and I now have nothing.”

A second day he lay on his bed and Gilgamesh watched over him but the sickness increased.

A third day he lay on his bed, he called out to Gilgamesh, rousing him up. but he was weak and his eyes were blind with weeping.

Ten days he lay and his suffering increased; eleven and twelve days he lay on his bed of pain.

Then he called to Gilgamesh: “My friend, it was the great goddess who cursed me, and I must die in shame. I shall not die like a man fallen in battle. I feared to fall, but happy is the man who falls in the battle, for I must die in shame.”

And Gilgamesh wept over Ea-bani. With the first light of dawn he raised his voice and said to the counsellors of Uruk: “Hear me, great ones of Uruk, I weep for Eabani, my friend, bitterly moaning like a woman in labor, I weep for my brother. O Ea-bani my brother, You were the axe at my side; my hand's strength; the sword in my belt; the shield before me - a glorious robe - my fairest ornament. An evil Fate has robbed me. -

The wild hare and the gazelle that were father and mother, all long-tailed creatures that nourished you, weep for you - All the wild things of the plain and pastures -The paths that you loved in the forest of cedars - night and day murmur.

Let the great ones of strong-walled Uruk weep for you. Let the finger of blessing be stretched out in a lamentation and in mourning.

Ea-bani young brother, hark, there is an echo through all the country, like a mother crying for her son. All the paths where we walked together weep. And the beasts we hunted, the bear and hyena, tiger and panther, leopard and lion, the stag and the ibex, the bull and the doe. The river along whose banks we used to walk, weeps for you. The Tigris and Euphrates where once we drew water for the water-skins, they mourn.

The mountain we climbed where we slew Humbaba, weeps for you. The warriors of strong-walled Uruk, where the Bull of Heaven was killed, weep for you. All the people of Sumer weep for you Ea-bani.

Those who brought grain for your eating mourn for you now; they who rubbed oil on your back mourn for you now. – They who poured beer for your drinking mourn for you now. The Priestess who anointed you with fragrant ointment laments for you now.

The women of the palace, who brought you a chosen ring of good advice, lament for you now. And the young men, your brothers, as though they were women, go long-haired in grief. What is this sleep which holds you now? Are you are lost in the dark and cannot hear me?"

When Gilgamesh touched his friends heart, it did not beat. He touched Ea-bani's heart but it did not beat, nor did he lift his eyes again. So Gilgamesh laid a veil, as one veils the bride, over his friend.

The he began to rage like a lion, like a lioness robbed of her whelps. This way and that he paced round the bed, he tore out his hair and strewed it around. He dragged off his splendid robes and flung them down as though they were abominations.

In the first light of dawn Gilgamesh cried out: "I made you rest on a royal bed, you reclined on a couch at my left hand, the kings of the earth kissed your feet. I will cause all the people of Uruk

to weep over you, and raise the dirge of the dead. The joyful people will stoop with sorrow; and when you have gone to the earth, I will let my hair grow long for your sake; I will wander through the wilderness in the skin of a lion.”

The next day, and the next day also, in the first light, Gilgamesh lamented; seven days and seven nights he wept for Ea-bani, until the worm fastened on him. Only then he gave him up to the earth, for the Anunnaki, the judges, had seized him.

Then Gilgamesh issued a proclamation through the land; he summoned them all, the coppersmiths, the goldsmiths, the stone-workers, and commanded them: “Make a statue of my friend.”

The statue was fashioned with a great weight of lapis lazuli for the breast, and of gold for the body.

A table of hard-wood was set out, and on it a bowl of carnelian filled with honey, and a bowl of lapis lazuli filled with butter. These he exposed and offered to the Sun. And weeping he went away.

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.

What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that bids us adieu.

Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –

Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –

Go on now, chew our story through & through –

Until we meet again

Saturday 01/01/2022 - Tablet #8 – Nancy Melvin

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #8

Gilgamesh wept and wept for his friend Ea-bani; he wandered over the wilderness as a hunter, roaming over the plains. In his bitterness he cried: "How can I rest, how can I be at peace? Despair is in my heart. What my brother is now, that shall I be when I am dead. -

Because I am afraid of death I will go as best I can to find Utnapishtim whom they call the 'Faraway man', for he has entered the assembly of the gods and has become immortal."

So Gilgamesh travelled over the wilderness; he wandered over the grasslands, a long journey, in search of Utnapishtim, whom the gods transformed after the deluge. They set him to live in the land of paradisiacal Dilmun, in the garden of the sun; and to him alone they gave everlasting life.

At night when he came to the mountain passes Gilgamesh prayed: 'In these mountain passes long ago I saw lions. I was afraid and I lifted my eyes to the moon. I prayed and my prayers went up to the gods, so now, O moon god Nanna, protect me.'

When he had prayed he lay down to sleep - until he was woken from out of a dream.

He saw the lions round him glorying in life. Then he took his axe in his hand; he drew his sword from his belt, and he fell upon them like an arrow from the string; he struck and destroyed and scattered them.

Then at length Gilgamesh came to Mashu, the great mountains which guard the rising and the setting sun, about which he had heard many things. Its twin peaks are as high as the wall of heaven and its paps reach down to the nether world.

At its gate the Scorpions stand guard, half man and half dragon; their glory is terrifying, their stare strikes death into men; their shimmering halo sweeps the mountains that guard the rising sun. When Gilgamesh saw them he shielded his eyes for the length of a moment only; then he took courage and approached.

When they saw him so undismayed, the Scorpion-Man called to his mate: "This one who comes to us now is flesh of the gods."

The mate of the Scorpion-Man answered: "Two thirds is god but one third is man."

Then he called to the man Gilgamesh, he called to the child of the gods: "Why have you come so great a journey; for what have you travelled so far, crossing the dangerous waters; tell me the reason for your coming?"

Gilgamesh answered: "For Ea-bani. I loved him dearly, together we endured all tasks and hardships; on his account I have come, for the common lot of man has taken him. I have wept for him day and night; I would not give up his body for burial. I thought my friend would come back because of my weeping. Since he went, my life is nothing; that is why I have travelled here in search of Utnapishtim the immortal one who knows the secrets from before the deluge. Men say he has entered the assembly of the gods, and has found everlasting life. I have a desire to question him, concerning the living and the dead."

The Scorpion-Man opened his mouth and said, speaking to Gilgamesh: “No man born of woman has done what you have asked; no mortal man has gone into the mountain; the length of it is twelve leagues of darkness; in it there is no light, and the heart is oppressed with its gloom. From the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun there is no light..”

Gilgamesh said: “Although I should go in sorrow and in pain, with sighing and with weeping, still I must go. Open the gate of the mountain:”

And the Scorpion-Man said: “Go, Gilgamesh, I permit you to pass through the mountain of Mashu, and through the high ranges. May your feet carry you safely to your destination. The gate of the mountain is open.”

When Gilgamesh heard this he did as the Scorpion-Man had said; he followed the sun's road to his rising, through the mountain.

When he had gone one league, the darkness became thick around him, for there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

After two leagues the darkness was thick and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

After three leagues the darkness was thick, and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

After four leagues the darkness was thick and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

At the end of five leagues the darkness was thick and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

At the end of six leagues the darkness was thick and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

When he had gone seven leagues the darkness was thick and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

When he had gone eight leagues Gilgamesh gave a great cry, for the darkness was thick and he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

After nine leagues he felt the north wind on his face, and the darkness was thick and there was no light, he could see nothing ahead and nothing behind him.

After ten leagues the end was near: After eleven leagues the dawn light appeared. At the end of twelve leagues the sun streamed out.

There was the garden of the gods. All round him stood bushes bearing gems. Seeing it he went down at once, for there was fruit of carnelian, with the vine hanging from it, beautiful to look at.

Lapis lazuli leaves hung thick with fruit, sweet to behold. For thorns and thistles there were hematite and rare stones, agate, and pearls from out of the sea.

While Gilgamesh walked in the garden by the edge of the sea Utu saw him, and he saw that he was dressed in the skins of animals and had eaten their flesh. He was distressed, and he spoke and said: "No mortal man has gone this way before, nor will, as long as the winds drive over the sea."

And to Gilgamesh he announced: "You will never find the eternal life for which you are searching here."

Gilgamesh said to glorious Utu: "Now that I have toiled and strayed so far over the wilderness, am I to sleep, and let the earth cover my head forever? Let my eyes see the sun until they are dazzled with looking. Although I am no better than a dead man, still let me see the light of the sun."

As so it was that Gilgamesh came forth, stumbling with blindness and fatigue. And yet he walked toward the smell of water.

Beside the sea there lives the woman of the vine, the maker of wine - Siduri, sits in the garden at the edge of the sea, with the golden bowl and the golden vats that the gods gave her. She is covered with a veil; and where she sits she sees Gilgamesh coming towards her, wearing skins; the flesh of the gods in his body, but despair in his heart; and his face like the face of one who has made a long journey. She looked, and as she scanned the distance she said in her own heart:

'Surely this is some felon; where is he going now?' And she barred her gate against him with the cross-bar and shot home the bolt.

But Gilgamesh, hearing the sound of the bolt, threw up his head and lodged his foot in the gate; he called to her: "Young woman, maker of wine, why do you bolt your door; what did you see that made you bar your gate? I will break in your door and burst in your gate, for I am Gilgamesh who seized and killed the Bull of Heaven. I killed the Humbaba the hardener of the cedar forest; and I overthrew the lions in the passes of the mountain."

Then Siduri said to him: "If you are that Gilgamesh who seized and killed the Bull of Heaven, who overthrew Humbaba that held the forest, and killed the lions in the passes of the mountain, why are your cheeks so starved and why is your face so drawn? Why is despair in your heart and your face like the face of one who has made a long journey with questions? Yes, why is your face burned from heat and cold, and why do you come here wandering over the pastures in search of the wind?"

Gilgamesh answered her: "And why should not my cheeks be starved and my face drawn? Despair is in my heart and my face is the face of one who has made a long journey, it was burned with heat and with cold. Why should I not wander over the pastures in search of the wind? -

My friend, my younger brother, he who hunted with the wild animals of the wilderness and the panther of the plains, my friend, my younger brother who seized and killed the Bull of Heaven and overthrew Humbaba in the cedar forest, my friend who was very dear to me and who endured dangers beside me, Ea-bani my brother, whom I loved - the end of mortality has overtaken him. -

I wept for him seven days and nights till the worm fastened on him. Because of my brother I am afraid of death, because of my brother I stray through the wilderness and cannot rest. But now, young woman, maker of wine, since I have seen your face do not let me see the face of death which I dread so much."

She answered: "Gilgamesh, where are you hurrying to? You will never find eternal life for which you are looking here. When the gods created man they allotted to him death for the reckoning, and eternal life they retained in their own keeping. As for you, Gilgamesh, fill your belly with good things; day and night, night and day, dance and be merry, feast and rejoice. Let your clothes be fresh, bathe yourself in water, cherish the little child that holds your hand, and make your wife happy in your embrace; for this too is the lot of man."

But Gilgamesh said to Siduri, the young woman: “How can I be silent, how can I rest, when Ea-bani whom I love is dust, and I too shall die and be laid in the earth. You live by the sea-shore and look into the heart of it; young woman, tell me now, which is the way to Utnapishtim, the son of Ubara-Tutu who reigned in Sumer for 18,600 years; Ubara-Tutu the son of Enoch, who entered heaven without dying. -

What directions are there for the passage; give me, O, give me directions. I will cross the Ocean if it is possible; if it is not I will wander still farther in the wilderness.”

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.
What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.
Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –
Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –
Go on now, chew our story through & through –
Until we meet again.

Sunday - 01/02/2022 - Tablet #9 - Ultra-Violet Archer

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #9

The winemaker said to him: "Gilgamesh, there is no crossing the Ocean; whoever has come, since the days of old, has not been able to pass that sea. The Sun in his glory crosses the Ocean, but who beside Utu has ever crossed it? The place and the passage are difficult, and the waters of death are deep which flow between. Gilgamesh, how will you cross the Ocean? When you come to the waters of death what will you do? -

But Gilgamesh, I will tell you, down in the woods you will find Urshanabi, the ferryman of Utnapishtim; with him are the holy things, the things of carved stone. Look he is fashioning the serpent prow of the boat. Look at him well, and if it is possible, perhaps you will cross the waters with him; but if it is not possible, then you must go back."

When Gilgamesh heard this he was seized with anger. He took his axe in his hand, and his dagger from his belt. He leapt forward and he fell on them like a javelin. Then he went into the forest and sat down.

Urshanabi saw the dagger flash and heard the axe, and he beat his head, for Gilgamesh had shattered the tackle of the boat in his rage.

Urshanabi said to him: "Tell me, what is your name? I am Urshanabi, the ferryman of Utnapishtim the Faraway man."

He replied to him: "Gilgamesh is my name. I am from Uruk, from the house of Anu."

Then Urshanabi said to him: "Why are your cheeks so starved and your face drawn? Why is despair in your heart and your face like the face of one who has made a long journey with questions? Yes, why is your face burned with heat and with cold, and why do you come here wandering over the pastures in search of the wind?"

Gilgamesh said to him: "Why should not my cheeks be starved and my face drawn? Despair is in my heart, and my face is the face of one who has made a long journey. I was burned with heat and with cold. Why should I not wander over the pastures? My friend, my younger brother who seized and killed the Bull of Heaven, and overthrew Humbaba in the cedar forest; my friend who was very dear to me, and who endured dangers beside me, Ea-bani my brother whom I loved - the end of mortality has overtaken him.

I wept for him seven days and nights till the worm fastened on him. Because of my brother I am afraid of death, because of my brother I stray through the wilderness. His fate lies heavy upon me. How can I be silent, how can I rest? He is dust and I too shall die and be laid in the earth forever. I am afraid of death, therefore, Urshanabi, tell me which is the road to Utnapishtim? If it is possible I will cross the waters of death; if not I will wander still farther through the wilderness."

Urshanabi said to him: "Gilgamesh, your own hands have prevented you from crossing the Ocean; when you destroyed the tackle of the boat, you destroyed its safety."

Then the two of them talked it over and Gilgamesh said: "Why are you so angry with me, Urshanabi, for you yourself cross the sea by day and night, at all seasons you cross it."

"Gilgamesh, those things you destroyed, their purpose is to carry me over the water, to prevent the waters of death from touching me. It was for this reason that I preserved them, but you have destroyed them, and the healing snakes that guide the prow with them. But now, go into the forest, Gilgamesh; with your axe cut poles, one hundred and twenty, cut them sixty cubits long, paint them with bitumen, set on them ferrules and bring them back."

When Gilgamesh heard this he went into the forest; he cut poles one hundred and twenty; he cut them sixty cubits long, he painted them with bitumen, he set on them ferrules, and he brought them to Urshanabi.

Then they boarded the boat, Gilgamesh and Urshanabi together, launching it out on the waves of the Ocean. For three days they ran on as if it were a journey of a month and fifteen days, and at last Urshanabi brought the boat to the waters of death. Then Urshanabi said to Gilgamesh”

“Press on, take a pole and thrust it in, but do not let your hands touch the waters. Gilgamesh, take a second pole, take a third, take a fourth pole. Now, Gilgamesh, take a fifth, take a sixth and seventh pole. Gilgamesh, take an eighth, and ninth, a tenth pole. Gilgamesh, take an eleventh, take a twelfth pole.”

After one hundred and twenty thrusts Gilgamesh had used the last pole. Then he stripped himself; he held up his arms for a mast with his covering for a sail.

So Urshanabi the ferryman brought Gilgamesh to Utnapishtim, whom they call the Faraway man, who lives in paradisiacal Dihnun at the place of the sun's transit, Eastward of the mountain. To Utnapishtim alone of men, the gods had given everlasting life.

Now Utnapishtim, where he lay at ease, looked into the distance and he said in his heart, musing to himself: ‘Why does the boat sail here without tackle and mast; why are the sacred stones and the healing snakes destroyed, and why does the master not sail the boat? That man who comes is none of mine. Where I look I see a man whose body is covered with the skins of beasts. Who is this who walks up the shore behind Urshanabi, for surely he is no man of mine?’

So Utnapishtim looked at him and said: “‘What is your name, you who come here wearing the skins of beasts, with your cheeks starved and your face drawn? Where are you hurrying to now?

For what reason have you made this great journey; crossing the sea whose passage is difficult? Tell me the reason for your coming.”

“Gilgamesh is my name”, he replied. “I am from Uruk, from the house of Anu.”

Then Utnapishtim said to him: “If you are Gilgamesh, why are your cheeks so starved and your face drawn? Why is despair in your heart and your face like the face of one who has made a long journey with questions? Yes, why is your face burned with heat and cold; and why do you come here, wandering over the wilderness in search of the wind?”

Gilgamesh said to him: “Why should not my cheeks be starved and my face drawn? Despair is in my heart and my face is the face of one who has made a long journey. It was burned with heat and with cold. Why should I not wander over the pastures? My friend, my younger brother who seized and killed the Bull of Heaven and overthrew Humbaba in the cedar forest, my friend who was very dear to me and endured dangers beside me, Ea-bani, my brother whom I loved - the end of mortality has overtaken him. -

I wept for him seven days and nights till the worm fastened on him. Because of my brother I am afraid of death; because of my brother I stray through the wilderness. His fate lies heavy upon me. How can I be silent, how can I rest? He is dust and I shall die also and be laid in the earth forever.”

After a shudder and a sigh Gilgamesh said: “To see Utnapishtim whom we call the Faraway man, that is why I have come this journey. For this I have wandered over the world. I have crossed many difficult ranges. I have crossed the seas. I have wearied myself with travelling; my joints are aching, and I have lost acquaintance with sleep which is sweet. My clothes were worn out before I came to the house of Siduri. I have killed the bear and hyena, the lion and panther, the tiger, the stag and the ibex, all sorts of wild game and the small creatures of the pastures. I ate their flesh and I wore their skins; and that was how I came to the gate of the young woman, the

maker of wine, who barred her gate of pitch and bitumen against me. But from her I had news of the journey to you; so then I came to Urshanabi the ferryman, and with him I crossed over the waters of death. Oh, father Utnapishtim, you who have entered the assembly of the gods, I wish to question you concerning the living and the dead, how shall I find the everlasting life for which I am searching?"

Utuapishtim said: "There is no permanence. Do we build a house to stand forever; do we eat a meal to hold for all time? Do brothers divide an inheritance to hide forever; does the flood-time of rivers endure? It is only the nymph of the dragon-fly who sheds her larva and sees the sun in his glory. From the days of old there is no permanence. The sleeping and the dead, how alike they are, they are like a painted dream. What is there between the master and the servant when both have fulfilled their earthly part? -

When the Anunnaki, the judges of the nether world, come together; and also the mother of destinies, they decree the fate of all human beings. Life and death they allot, but the day of death they do not disclose."

Then Gilgamesh said to Utnapishtim the Faraway man: "I look at you now, and your appearance is no different from mine; there is nothing strange in your features. I thought I should find you like a god prepared for battle, but you are here taking your ease on your back. Tell me truly, how was it that you came to enter the company of the gods and to possess everlasting life?"

Utnapishtim said to Gilgamesh: "I will reveal to you a mystery; I will tell you a secret of the gods."

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.

What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.

Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –

Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –
Go on now, chew our story through & through –
Until we meet again.

Monday 01/03/2022 - Tablet #10 - Linda Bergh & Dennis Dietzel

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #10

Utnapishtim, the Faraway man, who alone was granted immortality, who alone knew the secrets of before the deluge, said to Gilgamesh:

"I will reveal to you a mystery, I will tell you a secret of the gods: You know the city Shurruk - it stands on the banks of the Euphrates? That city grew old and the gods that were in it were old. There was Anu of the firmament - their father; and warrior Enlil their advisor; Ninurta the helper; and Ennugi watcher over canals; and with them also was Ea, the Wise.

In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the advisor was aroused by the clamor. Enlil heard the clamor and he said to the gods in council: "The uproar of humankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel."

So the gods agreed to exterminate humankind. Enlil did this. But Ea because of her oath warned me in a dream. She whispered their words into my house of reeds:'

"Reed-house, reed-house! Wall, O wall, hearken reed-house, wall reflect; O man of Shurruk, son of Ubara-Tutu; tear down your house and build a boat, abandon possessions and look for life; despise worldly goods and save your soul alive. Tear down your house, I say, and build a boat. These are the measurements of the barque as you shall build her: Let her beam equal her length; let her deck be roofed like the vault that covers the abyss; then take up into the boat the seed of all living creatures."

"When I had understood I said to the wise Ea: "Behold, what you have commanded I will honor and perform, but how shall I answer the people, the city, the elders?"

Then Ea opened her mouth and said to me: "Tell them this: I have learnt that Enlil is wrathful against me, I dare no longer walk in his land nor live in his city; I will go down to the Gulf to dwell with Ea the wise. And on you she will rain down abundance, rare fish and shy wild-fowl, a rich harvest-tide. In the evening the rider of the storm will bring you wheat in torrents.

In the first light of dawn all my household gathered round me, the children brought pitch and the men whatever was necessary. On the fifth day I laid the keel and the ribs, then I made fast the planking. The ground-space was one acre, each side of the deck measured one hundred and twenty cubits, making a square. I built six decks below, seven in all; I divided them into nine sections with bulkheads between. I drove in wedges where needed, I saw to the punt poles, and laid in supplies. The carriers brought oil in baskets. I poured pitch into the furnace and asphalt and oil; more oil was consumed in caulking, and more again the master of the boat took into his stores.

I slaughtered bullocks for the people and every day I offered up the sheep. I gave the shipwrights wine to drink as if it were river water, raw wine and red wine, and oil and white

wine. There was feasting then, as there is at the time of the New Year's festival. I myself anointed my head.

On the seventh day the boat was complete.

Then was the launching full of difficulty; there was shifting of ballast above and below till two thirds was submerged. I loaded into her all that I had of gold and of living things, my family, my kin, the beast of the field both wild and tame, and all the craftsmen. I sent them on board, for the time that Utu had ordained was already fulfilled when Ea the wise said”

‘In the evening, when the rider of the storm sends down the destroying rain, enter the boat and batten her down.’

The time was fulfilled, the evening came, the rider of the storm sent down the rain. I looked out at the weather and it was terrible, so I too boarded the boat and battened her down. All was now complete, the battening and the caulking; so I handed the tiller to Puzur-Amurri the steersman, with the navigation and the care of the whole boat.

With the first light of dawn a black cloud came from the horizon. It thundered within, where Adad, lord of the storm was riding. In front over hill and plain the heralds of the storm, led on. Then the gods of the abyss rose up; Nergal pulled out the dams of the nether waters. Ninurta the war-lord threw down the dykes; and the seven judges of hell, the Annunaki, raised their torches, lighting the land with their livid flame.

A stupor of despair went up to heaven when the god of the storm turned daylight to darkness, when he smashed the land like a cup. One whole day the tempest raged, gathering fury as it went, it poured over the people like the tides of battle; a man could not see his brother, nor the people be seen from heaven.

Even the gods were terrified at the flood; they fled to the highest heaven, the firmament of Anu. They crouched against the walls, cowering like curs.

Then Ishtar the sweet-voiced Queen of Heaven cried out like a woman in travail: 'Alas the days of old are turned to dust because I agreed to this evil; why did I allow this evil in the council of all the gods? I allowed wars to destroy the people, yet are they not my people, for I brought them forth? Now like the spawn of fish they float in the ocean.'

The great gods of heaven and of hell wept, they covered their mouths. For six days and six nights the winds blew, torrent and tempest and flood overwhelmed the world, tempest and flood raged together like warring hosts.

When the seventh day dawned the storm from the south subsided, the sea grew calm, the flood was stilled. I looked at the face of the world and there was silence, all humankind was turned to clay. The surface of the sea stretched as flat as a roof-top.

I opened a hatch and the light fell on my face. Then I bowed low. I sat down and I wept; the tears streamed down my face, for on every side was the waste of water.

I looked for land in vain; but fourteen leagues distant there appeared a mountain, and there the boat grounded; on the mountain of Nisir – the mount of Salvation, the boat held fast, she held fast and did not budge.

One day she held, and a second day on the mountain of Nisir, she held fast and did not budge. A third day, and a fourth day she held fast on the mountain and did not budge; a fifth day and a sixth day she held fast on the mountain.

When the seventh day dawned I loosed a dove and let her go. She flew away, but finding no resting-place she returned.

Then I loosed a swallow, and she flew away but finding no resting-place she returned.

I loosed a raven, she saw that the waters had retreated; she ate; she flew around; she cawed; and she did not come back.

Then I threw everything open to the four winds. I made a sacrifice and poured out a libation on the mountain top. Seven and again seven cauldrons I set up on their stands, I heaped up wood and cane and cedar and myrtle. When the gods smelled the sweet savor, they gathered like great enveloping wings over the sacrifice.

Ishtar came first. She lifted her necklace with the jewels of heaven that once Anu had made to please her: 'O you gods here present, by the lapis lazuli round my neck I shall remember these days as I remember the jewels of my throat; these last days I shall not forget. Let all the gods gather round the sacrifice - except Enlil. He shall not approach this offering, for without reflection he brought the flood; he consigned my people to destruction.'

When Enlil had come, when he saw the boat, he was shaking with wrath and swelled with anger at the gods, the host of heaven: 'Has any of these mortals escaped? Not one was to have survived the destruction.'

Then the god of the wells and canals Ninurta opened his mouth and said to the warrior Enlil: 'Who is there of the gods that can advise without Ea? It is Ea alone who knows all things.'

Then Ea opened her mouth and spoke to warrior Enlil: 'Chief among the gods, old Enlil, how could you so senselessly bring down the flood? Lay upon the sinner his sin, lay upon the transgressor his transgression, punish him a little when he breaks loose, but do not drive him too hard or he perishes.'

Would that a lion had ravaged humankind rather than the flood - Would that a wolf had ravaged humankind rather than the flood - Would that famine had wasted the world rather than the flood - Would that pestilence had wasted humankind rather than the flood. It was not I that revealed the secret of the gods; the wise man learned it in a speaking dream. Now take counsel - what shall be done with him.'

Then Enlil went up into the boat, he took me by the hand and my wife, and made us enter the boat and kneel down on either side, he standing between us. He touched our foreheads to bless us saying: 'In time past you, Utnapishtim, were a mortal man - henceforth you and your wife shall live with eternity in the distance at the mouth of the rivers.'

Thus it was that the gods took me and placed me here to live in the distance, at the mouth of the rivers."

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.

What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.

Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –

Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –

Go on now, chew our story through & through –

Until we meet again.

Monday 01/04/2022 - Tablet #11 – Tess parker + Michele Mariscal

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,

you may have forgotten my friend.

When did it start, when will it end?

Round & round and ever new –

With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #11

After speaking the tale of the flood Utnapishtim said: "As for you, Gilgamesh, who will assemble the gods for your sake, so that you may find that eternal life for which you are searching? If you wish, come and put yourself to the test: You need only prevail against sleep for six days and seven nights."

But while Gilgamesh sat there resting on his haunches, a mist of sleep like soft wool teased from the fleece of a lamb drifted over him, and Utnapishtim said to his wife:

"Look at him now, the strong man who would have everlasting life, even now the mists of sleep are drifting over him."

His wife replied: "Touch the man to wake him, so that he may return to his own land in peace, going back through the gate by which he came."

Utnapishtim said to his wife: "All men are deceivers, even us he will attempt to deceive; therefore bake loaves of bread, each day one loaf, and put it beside his head; and make a mark on the wall to number the days he has slept."

So she baked loaves of bread, each day one loaf, and put it beside his head, and she marked on the wall the days that he slept. and there came a day when the first loaf was hard; the second loaf was like leather; the third was soggy; the crust of the fourth had mold; the fifth was mildewed; the sixth was fresh; and the seventh was still on the embers.

Then Utnapishtim touched him and he woke. Gilgamesh said to Utnapishtim the Faraway man: "I may have sunk down; was I dead, or had sleep befallen me? Of a sudden then you touched me and I startled."

Utnapishtim said: "Look over yonder, count these loaves, heed the marks on the walls, and learn how many days you slept; for your first loaf is hard; your second like leather; your third is soggy; the crust of your fourth has mold; your fifth is mildewed; your sixth is fresh; and your seventh was still over the glowing embers when I touched and woke you."

Gilgamesh said: "What shall I do, O Utnapishtim, where shall I go? A demon has seized my flesh. Upon my bed death now sits. And where my foot treads, there is death."

Then Utnapishtim the faraway man having become immortal turned away to ponder. He paced and saw Urshanabi the ferryman, and said to him: "Urshanabi, you have become loathsome to this harbor; let the boat carry you to the mortal lands; you are forever excluded from this place.

The man you brought here has his body covered with foulness, and the wild skins he wears have hidden the beauty of his body. Take him, Urshanabi, and bring him to the place of purification, where he can wash his hair in water that it may become clean as snow. Let him cast off his skins, let the sea will carry them away; his body will then appear beautiful. Let the fillet also be replaced on his head, give him a new garment to cover his nakedness. Until he returns to his city, until he arrives at his road, this novel garment shall not wear with age; it will remain entirely new."

So Urshanabi took him and brought him to the place of purification, where he washed his hair in water so that it became clean as snow. He cast off his skins and the sea carried them away; his body appeared beautiful. He replaced the fillet on his head, and the garment that covered his nakedness, the garment made of a novel weave so that until he should return to his city, until he should arrive at his road - the garment would not wear with age; it would remain entirely new.

Then Gilgamesh and Urshanabi launched the boat on to the water and boarded it, and they made ready to sail away; but the wife of Utnapishtim the Faraway said to her husband:

“Gilgamesh came here wearied, he is worn out; what will you give him to carry him back to his own country?”

So Utnapishtim spoke out, and Gilgamesh took a pole and brought the boat on to the bank to hear him.

“Gilgamesh, you came here a man wearied, you have worn yourself out; my wife asks: What shall I give you to carry you back to your own country?”

Gilgamesh, I shall reveal a secret thing, it is a mystery of the gods that I am telling you. There is a plant that grows under the water, it has a prickle like a thorn, like a rose; it will wound your hands, but if you succeed in taking it, then your hands will hold that which restores lost youth.

When Gilgamesh heard this he opened the sluices so that a sweet water current might carry him out to the deepest channel. He tied heavy stones to his feet which dragged him down to the water-bed. There he saw the plant growing; although it pricked him, he took it in his hands. Then he cut the heavy stones from his feet, and the sea carried him and threw him up on to the shore.

Gilgamesh said to Urshanabi the ferryman: “Come here, and see this marvelous flower. By its virtue a man may win back all his former strength. I will take it to Uruk of the strong walls; there I will give it to the old men to eat. Its name shall be ‘The Old Men Are Young Again’; and at last I shall eat it myself and have back all my lost youth.”

So Gilgamesh returned by the gate through which he had come. Gilgamesh and Urshanabi went together. They travelled their twenty leagues, and then they broke their fast; after thirty leagues they stopped for the night. Gilgamesh saw a well of cool water and he went down and bathed. But deep in the pool there was a serpent, and the serpent sensed the sweetness of the flower. It rose out of the water and snatched it away, and immediately it sloughed off its skin until it was shiny and new; and then happily returned to the well.

Then Gilgamesh sat down and wept for the lost thorny flower. The tears ran down his face, and he took the hand of the ferryman: 'O Urshanabi, was it for this that I toiled with my hands, is it for this I have wrung out my heart's blood? For myself I have gained nothing; not I, but a creature that crawls on the earth has joy of it now. Already the stream has carried it twenty leagues back to the channels where I found it. I received a sign, and now I have lost it. Let us leave the boat on the bank and go.'

After twenty leagues they broke their fast, after thirty leagues they stopped for the night. In three days they had walked as much as a journey of a month and fifteen days.

When the journey was accomplished they arrived at Uruk, the strong-walled city. Gilgamesh spoke to him, to Urshanabi the ferryman:

"Urshanabi, look about you, see this glory, climb up on to the walls of Uruk, inspect its foundation terrace, and examine well the brickwork; see if it is not of burnt bricks, strong and true; and did not the seven wise Rishi's lay these foundations? One third of the whole is city, one third is garden, and one third is field, with the precinct of the goddess Ishtar. These parts and the Temple are all Uruk.'

This was the work of Gilgamesh, the king, who knew the countries of the world. He was wise, he saw mysteries and knew secret things, and he brought us a tale of the days before the flood. He

went a long journey, was weary, worn out with labor, and on his returning he engraved on the lapis stone the whole story.

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.
What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.
Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –
Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –
Go on now, chew our story through & through –
Until we meet again.

Wednesday 01/05/2022 - Tablet #12 - Dave Mansur

Opening (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

Let us tell of a time, in the first of times,
you may have forgotten my friend.
When did it start, when will it end?
Round & round and ever new –
With a rhyme that forever grew.
Now our timeless tale begins - Circle without end.
Our souls remember well, for the story is always true.
And now dear friend, it's up to you.

Tablet #12

Gilgamesh, after engraving his story, after surveying all that he had done, lay himself down.
As if in a dream he saw: the Huluppu Tree -

In the first days, in the very first days, in the first nights, in the very first nights, in the first years,
in the very first years, in the first days when everything needed was brought into being. In the

first days when everything needed was properly nourished. When grain was first baked in the shrines of the land, and bread was tasted in the homes of the land. When heaven had moved away from earth. And the earth had separated from heaven. And the name of the human being was fixed -

When the Sky God, Anu, had carried off the heavens; and the Father God, Enlil, had carried off the earth. When the Queen of the Great Below, Ereshkigal, was given the nether world for her domain; Ea, the Goddess of Wisdom, mother of Ea-bani, set sail for the Great Below.

Gilgamesh did not awaken from this dream, for his destiny had been fulfilled - which the advisor of the gods, Enlil of the mountain, had decreed for Gilgamesh:

“In the nether world the darkness will show him as a light for humankind. Of all that are known, none will leave a monument for generations to come to compare with his. The heroes, the wise men, like the new moon have their waxing and waning. Men will say, "Who has ever ruled with might and with power like him?" As in the dark month, the month of shadows, so without him there is no light.

O Gilgamesh, this was the meaning of your dream. You were given the kingship, such was your destiny - everlasting life was not your destiny. Because of this do not be sad at heart, do not be grieved or oppressed. The gods have given you power to bind and to loose, to be the darkness and the light of humankind. You were given unsurpassed supremacy over the people, victory in battle from which there is no going back. But do not abuse this power; deal justly with your servants in the palace, deal justly before the face of the Sun.”

The king has laid himself down and will not rise again as he was. The Lord of Uruk will not rise again as he was. He overcame evil, he will not come again as he was. Though he was strong of arm he will not rise again as he was. He had wisdom and a comely face, he will not come again as he was. He is gone into the mountain, he will not come again as he was. On the bed of fate

he lies, he will not rise again as he was. He has gone to meet his brother Ea-bani in the nether world, he will not rise again as he was.

In the going he saw the Huluppu-tree when it was first nurtured by the waters of the Euphrates. Then the whirling South Wind arose, pulling at its roots and ripping at its branches, until the waters of the Euphrates carried it away.

Ishtar who walked in the graces of the word of the Sky God, Anu; who walked in dread of the Father God, Enlil - the god who brought forth the flood; plucked the tree from the river and spoke: "I shall bring this tree to Uruk. I shall plant this tree in my holy garden."

Ishtar cared for the tree with her hand. She settled the earth around the tree with her foot. She wondered: "How long will it be until I have a shining throne to sit upon? How long will it be until I have a shining bed to lie upon?"

The years passed; five years, and then ten years. The tree grew thick, but its bark did not split.

Then the serpent who could not be charmed made its nest in the roots of the Huluppu-tree.

The Anzu-bird set its young in the branches of the tree.

And the dark maid Lilith built her home in the trunk.

Ishtar who loved to laugh, wept. O how Ishtar wept! Yet they would not leave her tree.

As the birds began to sing at the coming of a long ago dawn, Ishtar called to her brother Gilgamesh, saying: "O Gilgamesh, in the days when the fates were decreed, when abundance overflowed in Sumer, when the Sky God had taken the heavens and the Father God the earth;

when Ereshkigal was given the Great Below for her domain, and the God of Wisdom, Mother Ea, set sail for the netherworld; at that time, a tree, a single tree, a Huluppu-tree was planted by the banks of the Euphrates.

The South Wind pulled at its roots and ripped at its branches, until the waters of the Euphrates carried it away. I plucked the tree from the river; I brought it to my holy garden. I tended the tree, waiting for my shining throne and bed.

Then a serpent who could not be charmed made its nest in the roots of the tree,

The Anzu-bird set his young in the branches of the tree,

and the dark maid Lilith built her home in the trunk.

I wept. O How I wept! Yet they would not leave my tree.”

Gilgamesh, the valiant warrior, the hero of Uruk, heard Ishtar. Gilgamesh fastened his armor around his chest. He lifted his bronze ax, the ax of the road, to his shoulder. He entered Ishtar's holy garden.

Gilgamesh struck the serpent who could not be charmed.

The Anzu-bird flew with her young to the mountains.

And Lilith smashed her home and fled to the wild, uninhabited places.

Gilgamesh then loosened the roots of the Huluppa-tree; and the sons of the city, who accompanied him, cut off the branches. From the trunk of the tree he carved a throne for his holy sister. From the trunk of the tree Gilgamesh carved a bed for Ishtar.

As a gift of thanks, Ishtar fashioned from the roots of the tree a Drum for her brother. From the crown of the tree she fashioned a mallet for Gilgamesh, the hero of Uruk.

The summoning drum — in street and lane he made the drum resound.

The loud drumming — in street and lane he made the drumming resound.

The young men of the city, summoned by the drum complained to the gods of the noise. This gave cause for Enlil to bring the flood.

But in this remembering, when the evening star had disappeared, and Gilgamesh had marked the places where his drum had been, he carried the drum before him, brought it to his house, and set it down.

At dawn in the places he had marked—bitterness and woe! Death and destruction!

Because of the cry of the young maidens, his drum and drumstick fell into the nether world. Gilgamesh put in his hand, but could not reach them. He put in his foot, but could not reach them. He sat down at the great gate to look into the 'eye' of the nether world. Gilgamesh wept, his face turning pale

“My Drum is in the nether world”, he cried. “O my drum, O my drumstick. Who will bring up the drum? Who will bring up the drumstick from the nether world?”

Ea-bani wandering in the nether world heard the cry of Gilgamesh, and answered: “My brother, why are you crying; why is your heart so sick? I will bring up the drum; I will bring up the drumstick from the nether world.”

When the spirit of Ea-bani, like a wind-puff, came out from the nether world, they embraced and kissed each other. They exchanged counsel, sighing at each other:

“Tell me my friend, tell me my friend, tell me the order of the nether world which you have seen.”

“I will not tell you, I will not tell you; for if I tell you the order of the nether world which I have seen, you will sit you down and weep!”

“Then I will sit down and weep” said Gilgamesh.

This you will see said Ea-bani: “My body which you touched as your heart rejoiced - the worm devours, as if it were old clothes. What formerly gladdened my heart, all is cloaked in dust.”

Gilgamesh cried “Woe!” and threw himself in the dust.

“Yes, but there is more than this” said Ea-bani.

The people of Uruk, having carried the tomb to the highest rampart, lift up the lament. All the people of flesh and blood lift up the lamentation. Fate has spoken. Gilgamesh, the son of Ninsun, lies in the tomb. Like a hooked fish he lies stretched out on the bed, like a gazelle that is caught in a noose.

For Gilgamesh, son of Ninsun, they weighed out their offerings - Their king, peerless, without an equal among men, except for his friend Ea-bani, who went before him.

O Gilgamesh, lord of Uruk, great is thy praise.

Closing (to be spoken quick & lightly - singingly):

We told of a time, in the first of times, take it to sleep my friend.
What had a start for now must end - A rhyme that that bids us adieu.
Tomorrow our tale will begin again - Round & round and forever new –
Circle without end. May our souls be full with this savory stew –
Go on now, chew our story through & through –
Until we meet again.

~Compiled by **Hazel Archer-Ginsberg** primarily from translations by Nancy K. Sanders & by
Andrew George