

'I brought out a raven, I let it loose:
off went the raven, it saw the waters receding, XI 155
finding food, *bowing and bobbing*, it did not come back to me.

'I brought out an offering, to the four winds made sacrifice,
incense I placed on the peak of the mountain.
Seven flasks and seven I set in position,
reed, cedar and myrtle I piled beneath them. XI 160

'The gods did smell the savour,
the gods did smell the savour sweet,
the gods gathered like flies around the man making sacrifice.

'Then at once Belet-ili arrived,
she lifted the flies of lapis lazuli that Anu had made for their
courtship: XI 165
'O gods, let these great beads in this necklace of mine
make me remember these days, and never forget them!

'All the gods shall come to the incense,
but to the incense let Enlil not come,
because he lacked counsel and brought on the Deluge, XI 170
and delivered my people into destruction."

'Then at once Enlil arrived,
he saw the boat, he was seized with anger,
filled with rage at the divine Igigi:
"[From] where escaped this living being? XI 175
No man was meant to survive the destruction!"

'Ninurta opened his mouth to speak,
saying to the hero Enlil:
'Who, if not Ea, could cause such a thing?
Ea alone knows how all things are done." XI 180

'Ea opened his mouth to speak,
saying to the hero Enlil:
'You, the sage of the gods, the hero,
how could you lack counsel and bring on the Deluge?

'On him who transgresses, inflict his crime! XI 185
On him who does wrong, inflict his wrongdoing!
'Slack off, lest it snap! Pull tight, lest it [slacken!]

'Instead of your causing the Deluge,
a lion could have risen, and diminished the people!
Instead of your causing the Deluge, XI 190
a wolf could have risen, and diminished the people!

'Instead of your causing the Deluge,
a famine could have happened, and slaughtered the land!
Instead of your causing the Deluge,
the Plague God could have risen, and slaughtered the land! XI 195

'It was not I disclosed the great gods' secret:
Atra-hasis I let see a vision, and thus he learned our secret.
And now, decide what to do with him!"

'Enlil came up inside the boat,
he took hold of my hand and brought me on board. XI 200
He brought aboard my wife and made her kneel at my side,
he touched our foreheads, standing between us to bless us:

'In the past Uta-napishti was a mortal man,
but now he and his wife shall become like us gods!
Uta-napishti shall dwell far away, where the rivers flow
forth!" XI 205
So far away they took me, and settled me where the rivers flow
forth.

'But you now, who'll convene for you the gods' assembly,
so you can find the life you search for?
For six days and seven nights, come, do without slumber!

As soon as Gilgamesh squatted down on his haunches, XI 210
 sleep like a fog already breathed over him.
 Said Uta-napishti to her, to his wife:
 'See the fellow who so desired life!
 Sleep like a fog already breathes over him.'

Said his wife to him, to Uta-napishti the Distant: XI 215
 'Touch the man and make him awake!
 The way he came he shall go back in well-being,
 by the gate he came forth he shall return to his land!'

Said Uta-napishti to her, to his wife:
 'Man is deceitful, he will deceive you. XI 220
 Go, bake for him his daily bread-loaf, and line them up by his
 head,
 and mark on the wall the days that he sleeps!'

So she baked for him his daily bread-loaf, she lined them up by his
 head,
 noting on the wall the days that he slept.
 His first bread-loaf was all dried up, XI 225
 the second was leathery, soggy the third,

the fourth flour-cake had turned to white,
 the fifth had cast a mould of grey,
 fresh-baked was the sixth,
 the seventh still on the coals:
 then he touched him and the man awoke. XI 230

Said Gilgamesh to him, to Uta-napishti the Distant:
 'No sooner had sleep spilled itself over me,
 than forthwith you touched me and made me awake!
 [Said] Uta-napishti [to him,] to Gilgamesh:

'Come, Gilgamesh, count me your bread-loaves, XI 235
 then you will learn [the days that you slept.]
 Your [first] bread-loaf [was all dried up,]
 the second was leathery, soggy the third,

'the fourth flour-cake had turned to white,
 the fifth had cast a mould of grey,
 fresh-baked was the sixth, XI 240
 [the seventh still on] the coals:
 and only then did I touch you.'

Said Gilgamesh to him, to Uta-napishti the Distant:
 'O Uta-napishti, what should I do and where should I go?
 A thief has taken hold of my [*flesh!*]
 For there in my bed-chamber Death does abide, XI 245
 and wherever [I] turn, there too will be Death.'

[Said] Uta-napishti to [him,] to the boatman Ur-shanabi:
 '[May] the quay [reject] you, Ur-shanabi, and the ferry scorn
 you!
 You who used to walk this shore, be banished from it now!
 As for the man that you led here, XI 250

'his body is tousled with matted hair,
 the pelts have ruined his body's beauty.
 Take him, Ur-shanabi, lead him to the washtub,
 have him wash his matted locks as clean as can be!

'Let him cast off his pelts, and the sea bear them off, XI 255
 let his body be soaked till fair!
 Let a new kerchief be made for his head,
 let him wear royal robes, the dress fitting his dignity!

'Until he goes home to his city,
 until he reaches the end of his road, XI 260
 let the robes show no mark, but stay fresh and new!
 Ur-shanabi took him, and led him to the washtub.

He washed his matted locks as clean as could be,
 he cast off his pelts, and the sea bore them off.
 His body was soaked till fair, XI 265
 he made a new [kerchief for] his head,

he wore royal robes, the dress fitting his dignity.
 ‘Until he goes [home to his city,]
 until he reaches the end of his road,
 let [the robes show no mark, but stay fresh and] new!’ XI 270

Gilgamesh and Ur-shanabi crewed the boat,
 they launched the [craft,] and crewed it themselves.
 Said his wife to him, to Uta-napishti the Distant:
 ‘Gilgamesh came here by toil and by travail,
 ‘what have you given for his homeward journey?’ XI 275
 And Gilgamesh, he picked up a punting-pole,
 he brought the boat back near to the shore.
 [Said] Uta-napishti to him, to Gilgamesh:

‘You came here, O Gilgamesh, by toil and by travail,
 what do I give for your homeward journey? XI 280
 Let me disclose, O Gilgamesh, a matter most secret,
 to you [I will] tell a mystery of [gods.]

‘There is a plant that [looks] like a box-thorn,
 it has prickles like a *dogrose*, and will [prick *one who plucks it.*]
 But if you can possess this plant, XI 285
 [you’ll be again as you were in your youth.]’

Just as soon as Gilgamesh heard what he said,
 he opened a [channel]
 Heavy stones he tied [to his feet,]
 and they pulled him down . . . to the Ocean Below. XI 290

He took the plant, and pulled [it up, *and lifted it,*]
 the heavy stones he cut loose [from his feet,]
 and the sea cast him up on its shore.
 Said Gilgamesh to him, to Ur-shanabi the boatman:

‘This plant, Ur-shanabi, is the “Plant of Heartbeat”, XI 295
 with it a man can regain his vigour.
 To Uruk-the-Sheepfold I will take it,
 to an ancient I will feed some and put the plant to the test!

‘Its name shall be “Old Man Grown Young”,
 I will eat it myself, and be again as I was in my youth!’ XI 300
 At twenty leagues they broke bread,
 at thirty leagues they stopped for the night.

Gilgamesh found a pool whose water was cool,
 down he went into it, to bathe in the water.
 Of the plant’s fragrance a snake caught scent, XI 305
 came up [in silence], and bore the plant off.

As it turned away it sloughed its skin.
 Then Gilgamesh sat down and wept,
 down his cheeks the tears were coursing.
 . . . [*he spoke*] to Ur-shanabi the boatman: XI 310

‘[For whom,] Ur-shanabi, toiled my arms so hard,
 for whom ran dry the blood of my heart?
 Not for myself did I find a bounty,
 [for] the “Lion of the Earth” I have done a favour!

‘Now far and wide the tide is rising. XI 315
 Having opened the channel I abandoned the tools:
 what thing would I find that served as my landmark?
 Had I only turned back, and left the boat on the shore!’

At twenty leagues they broke bread,
 at thirty leagues they stopped for the night. XI 320
 When they arrived in Uruk-the-Sheepfold,
 said Gilgamesh to him, to Ur-shanabi the boatman:

‘O Ur-shanabi, climb Uruk’s wall and walk back and forth!
 Survey its foundations, examine the brickwork!
 Were its bricks not fired in an oven? XI 325
 Did the Seven Sages not lay its foundations?’

‘A square mile is city, a square mile date-grove, a square mile is
 clay-pit, half a square mile the temple of Ishtar:
 three square miles and a half is Uruk’s expanse.’

The heart was stricken, his mind despaired.
The king searched for life,
the lord to the Living One's Mountain did turn [his] mind.

A third recension, known from tablets from Ur, continues the dialogue:

'Did you see the one who cheated a god and swore an oath?'
'I saw him.' 'How does he fare?' UET VI 58

'He cannot get near the places in the Netherworld where the libations of water are made, he drinks in thirst.'

'Did you see the citizen of Girsu *at the place of sighs* of his father and mother?' 'I saw him.' 'How does he fare?' rev. 9-10

'Facing each man there are a thousand Amorites, his shade cannot push them off with his hands, he cannot charge them down with his chest.

At the places in the Netherworld where the libations of water are made, the Amorite takes *precedence*.'

'Did you see the sons of Sumer and Akkad?' 'I saw them.' 'How do they fare?'

'They drink water from the place of a massacre, dirty water.'

'Did you see where my father and mother dwell?' 'I saw them.' '[How do they fare?]' rev. 15

'[The two] of them drink water from the place of a massacre, [dirty water.]'

* * *

He sent them back to [Uruk,] UET VI 60
he sent them back to his city.

Gear and equipment, hatchet and spear he put [away] in the *store*,

he made merry in his palace.

The young men and women of Uruk, the worthies and matrons of Kullab, rev. 5

looked upon those statues and their hearts rejoiced.

He lifted his head to the Sun God coming forth from his chamber,

he issued instructions:

'O my father and my mother, I will have you drink clear water!'

The day was not half gone, . . . rev. 10

Bilgames performed the mourning rites.

For nine days he performed the mourning rites,
the young men and women of Uruk, the worthies and matrons of Kullab wept.

And it was just as he had said,
the citizens of Girsu *matched his actions*: rev. 15

'O my father and my mother, I will have you drink clear water!'

O warrior Bilgames, son of the goddess Ninsun, sweet is your praise!

Tablet XII of the Babylonian epic preserves a slightly different version of ll. 172-301 in an Akkadian translation:

'Today, had I only left my *ball* in the carpenter's workshop!
[O carpenter's wife who is like a mother] to me! Had I only [left it!]
O [carpenter's daughter who is like a] little sister [to me!] Had [I only left it!]

Today [my] *ball* fell down to the Netherworld,
my *mallet* fell [down] to the Netherworld!' XII 5

Enkidu [answered] Gilgamesh:

'O master, why did you weep [sick] at heart?

Today I myself shall [bring you] the *ball* up from the Netherworld,
I myself shall [bring you] the *mallet* up from the Netherworld!'

Gilgamesh [answered] Enkidu: XII 10

'If [you are going down] to the Netherworld,

[you must pay heed to] my instructions!

[You must not dress in] a clean garment,
[you] will be revealed as a stranger!

You must not anoint yourself in sweet oil from the flask, XII 15
at the scent of it they will gather around you!

You must not hurl a throwstick in the Netherworld,
those struck by the throwstick will surround you!

You must not carry a staff in your hand,
the shades will tremble before you! XII 20

You must not wear sandals on your feet,
 you must not make a noise in the Netherworld!
 You must not kiss the wife you loved,
 you must not strike the wife you hated,
 you must not kiss the son you loved, XII 25
 you must not strike the son you hated,
 the outcry of the Netherworld will seize you!
 The one who lies, the one who lies, the Mother of Ninazu who
 lies,
 her gleaming shoulders are not draped in a garment,
 her breasts are bare like flasks of stone.' XII 30

[As Enkidu] went down [to the Netherworld,]
 he paid no heed [to the instructions of Gilgamesh:]
 he dressed himself in [a clean garment,]
 [he] was revealed [to be a] stranger.
 He anointed himself in sweet oil from the flask, XII 35
 at the scent [of it] they gathered around him.
 He hurled a throwstick in the [Netherworld,]
 [the shades] did tremble,
 those [struck] by the throwstick surrounded him.
 He carried a staff in [his] hand,
 [the shades did] tremble. XII 40
 [He wore] sandals on [his feet,]
 [he made] a noise [in the Netherworld.]
 [He kissed] the wife [he loved,]
 [he struck the] wife he hated,
 he [kissed the] son he loved, XII 45
 he [struck the] son he hated,
 the outcry of the Netherworld seized him.
 The one who lies, [the one who] lies, the Mother of Ninazu who
 lies,
 [her] gleaming shoulders were not draped in a garment,
 her breasts were bare like flasks of stone. XII 50
 From the Netherworld Enkidu wailed [out] to the world above:
 Namtar [had not] seized him, Asakku had not seized him, the
 Netherworld [had seized] him!
 [Nergal's] pitiless sheriff had not seized him, the Netherworld [had
 seized] him!

He had not fallen where men do battle, the Netherworld had seized
 him!
 Then the goddess Ninsun's son [went] weeping for his servant,
 Enkidu, XII 55
 he went off alone to Ekur, the house of Enlil:
 'O Father [Enlil], today my *ball* fell into the Netherworld,
 my *mallet* fell into the Netherworld!
 Enkidu, who [went down] to bring [them up, the Netherworld
 seized him!]
 Namtar did not seize him, Asakku did not seize him, the
 Netherworld seized him! XII 60
 Nergal's pitiless sheriff did not seize him, the Netherworld seized
 him!
 He did not fall where men do [battle], the Netherworld seized him!'
 Father Enlil answered him not a word.
 He went off [alone to Ur, the house of Sîn:]
 'O Father Sîn, today my *ball* fell into the Netherworld, XII 65
 my *mallet* fell [into the Netherworld!]
 Enkidu, who [went] down to bring [them up], the Netherworld
 seized him!
 Namtar did not seize him, Asakku did not seize him, the
 Netherworld seized him!
 Nergal's pitiless sheriff [did not seize] him, the Netherworld seized
 him!
 He did not fall where [men do battle], the Netherworld seized
 him!' XII 70
 Father [Sîn answered him not a word.]
 [He went off alone] to [Eridu, the house of Enki:]
 'O [Father Enki, today my *ball* fell into the Netherworld,]
 my *mallet* [fell into the Netherworld,]
 Enkidu, [who went down to bring them up, the Netherworld seized
 him!] XII 75
 Namtar did not [seize him, Asakku did not seize him, the
 Netherworld seized him!]
 Nergal's pitiless sheriff [did not seize him, the Netherworld seized
 him!]

[He did not fall] where men do battle, [the Netherworld seized him!]
 Father Enki [helped him] in [this matter,
 [he spoke] to Young Hero [Shamash:] XII 80
 'O Young Hero Shamash, [as you rise into the sky,
 be it [that you make] an opening [in the Netherworld,
 [that you bring up] the shade of Enkidu [from the Netherworld as a
 phantom!]
 To [his] word XII 85
 the Young Hero Shamash
 He made an opening in the Netherworld,
 he brought up the shade of Enkidu from the Netherworld as a
 phantom.
 They hugged each other and they kissed each other,
 exchanging their thoughts and questions:
 'O tell me, my friend! Tell me, my friend! XII 90
 Tell me what you saw of the ways of the Netherworld!
 'I cannot tell you, my friend, I cannot tell you!
 If I tell you what I saw of the ways of the Netherworld,
 O sit you down and weep!
 'Then I will sit me down and weep! XII 95
 'I, the *friend* whom you touched so your heart rejoiced,
 [my body like an] old *garment* the lice devour.
 [Enkidu, the *friend* whom you] touched so your heart rejoiced,
 [like a crack in the ground] is filled with dust.'
 ['Ah woe!'] cried he, and threw himself [on the] ground, XII 100
 ['Ah woe!'] cried [Gilgamesh], and threw himself [on the ground.]

'Did [you see the man with one son?]' 'I saw him.
 [A peg is] fixed [in his wall] and he weeps over [it bitterly.]'
 '[Did you see the man with two sons?' 'I] saw him.
 [Seated on two bricks] he eats a bread-loaf.' XII 105
 '[Did you see the man with three sons?]' 'I saw him.
 He drinks water [from the waterskin slung on the saddle.]'
 'Did [you see the man with four sons?]' 'I saw him.
 [Like a man with a donkey]-team his heart rejoices.'
 'Did you see [the man with five sons?]' 'I saw him. XII 110
 [Like a] fine [scribe] his hand is *nimble*,
 he enters the palace [with ease.]'

'Did you see [the man with six sons?]' 'I saw him.
 [Like a ploughman his heart rejoices.]'
 '[Did you see the man with seven sons?' 'I saw him.] XII 115
 [Among the junior deities he sits on a throne and listens to the
 proceedings.]
 ['Did you see the one with no heir?' 'I saw him.]
 He eats a bread-loaf like a *kiln-fired* brick.'
 ['Did you see the palace eunuch?' 'I saw him.]
 Like a fine standard *he is propped in* the corner,
 like XII 119
 * * *

'Did you see the one who was struck by a mooring-pole?' 'I [saw
 him.]
 Alas for his mother [and father!] When pegs are pulled out [he]
 wanders about.' XII 145
 'Did you see the one who [*died a premature* death?]' '[I saw him.]
 He lies on a bed drinking clean water.'
 'Did you see the one who was killed in battle?' 'I [saw him.]
 His father and mother honour his memory and his wife [weeps]
 over [him.]'
 'Did you see the one whose corpse was left lying on the plain?' 'I
 saw him. XII 150
 His shade is not at rest in the Netherworld.'
 'Did you see the one whose shade has no one to make funerary
 offerings?' 'I saw him.
 He eats scrapings from the pot and crusts of bread thrown away in
 the street.'

*The Death of Bilgames:
 'The great wild bull is lying down'*

Thanks to the recent discovery at M \acute{e} -Turan (Tell Haddad) of several new manuscripts this poem is now much better known than formerly, but it is still very difficult in places. The remarks about the provisional nature of the translation prefaced to 'Bilgames and the Bull of Heaven' apply here too.

The poem begins with a lament for the stricken Bilgames. He has