

## Gilgamesh: Tablet VIII

At the very first glimmer of brightening dawn, Gilgamesh began mourning his friend:

**“O, Enkidu:**

Whom your mother, a gazelle did raise,  
Whom your father, a wild donkey, did raise.

Whom the wild asses did rear with their milk,  
Whom the beasts of the wild did teach all the pastures.

**O, Enkidu:**

- A May the paths of the Forest of Cedar mourn for you without pause, by day and by night,
- B May the elders of teeming Uruk-the-Sheepfold mourn you!
- A May the high peaks of hills and mountains mourn you,
- B May the pastures lament like your mother!
- A May boxwood, cypress and cedar mourn you, through whose midst we crept in our fury,
- B May the bear mourn you, the hyena, the panther, the cheetah, the stag and the jackal, the lion, the wild bull, the deer, the ibex; all the beasts of the wild!

May the sacred river Ulay mourn you, along whose banks we walked in our vigour,  
May the pure Euphrates mourn you, whose water we poured in libation from skins!

- A May the young men of Uruk-the-Sheepfold mourn you, who witnessed our battle when we slew the Bull of Heaven,
- B May the ploughman mourn you in his furrow, when he extols your name with his sweet burst of song!
- A May the people of teeming Uruk-the-Sheepfold mourn you, who sends forth your name with the first light of day,
- B May the shepherd mourn you in his sheepfold, who made sweet for your mouth the milk and butter!

May the shepherd boy mourn you, who provided the ghee for your lips,  
May the brewer of beer mourn you, who provided the ale for your mouth!

May the priestesses mourn you, who anointed you with  
sweet-smelling oil,  
May the maidens in the House of the Wedding Ceremony mourn  
you, who allowed them to be wives of honor!

May all men of this land mourn you as brothers,  
May all young men let their tresses be loosed down their backs  
as sisters in mourning for you!

Sorrow for Enkidu,  
As the sorrow from a mother and a father.

**On this very day, I myself shall mourn you:**

Hear me, O young men,  
Hear me!

Hear me, O elders of Teeming-Uruk,  
Hear me!

I shall weep for Enkidu, my friend,  
I shall weep like a hired mourner-woman; I shall bitterly wail!

A The axe at my side; in which my arm trusted,

A The dirk at my belt.

B From my sight is removed.

A My festive garment,

A My girdle of delight.

B A wicked wind rose up and robbed me of its pleasure.

**O, my friend:**

Wild ass on the run,  
Donkey of the uplands,  
Panther of the wild!

**O, my friend, Enkidu:**

Wild ass on the run,  
Donkey of the uplands,  
Panther of the wild!

**Having joined forces, we climbed the mountains:**

We seized and slew the Bull of Heaven,  
We destroyed Humbaba, who dwelt in the Forest of Cedar.

**Now what is this sleep that has seized you?:**

You've become unconscious; you do not hear me,  
You lift not your head; your heart beats no longer!"

**Gilgamesh covered, like a bride, the face of his friend:**

Like an eagle, he circled around him.  
Like a lioness deprived of her cubs, he paced to and fro; this way and that.

His own curly hair he tore out in clumps,  
He ripped off his finery; like something anathema he cast it away.

**At the very first glimmer of brightening dawn, Gilgamesh sent forth a call to the land:**

"O, forgemaster!  
O, mason!

O, coppersmith!  
O, goldsmith!

O, jeweller!  
O, lapidary!

Fashion my friend in all your artistry,  
Create of my friend a likeness in stone.

**O, Enkidu:**

Your limbs, my friend, shall be of truest alabaster,  
Your eyebrows shall be the darkest lapis lazuli.

Your chest shall be of gold,  
Your body shall be of translucent white; gold shining throughout.

I shall lay you out on a magnificent bed,  
I shall lay you out on a bed of honour.

I shall place you on my left; on a seat of repose,  
The rulers of the underworld will all kiss your feet.

The people of Uruk I shall mourn and lament you,  
The thriving people I shall fill full of woe for you.

**After you are gone:**

My hair will be matted in mourning,  
Clad in the skin of a lion I shall wander the wild."

**At the very first glimmer of brightening dawn, Gilgamesh arose and entered his treasury, he undid its sealings, inspected the gems: obsidian, carnelian, lapis lazuli, and alabaster:**

- A He provided all for homage to his friend,
- B He butchered fattened oxen and sheep; piled high for his friend.
- A He worshiped in the temple of Shamash day and night,
- B The priests carried all the meat to the Rulers of the Underworld on Enkidu's behalf.

**A javelin, of gleaming wood for the Great Queen Ishtar he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

- A "May the Great Queen Ishtar accept this gift,
- B May she welcome my friend and walk at his side!"

**A lamp of glowing light, for the Moon God, Namra-sit, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

- A "May the Moon God, Namra-sit, accept this gift,
- B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side!"

**A flask, of lapis lazuli, for the Great Queen of the Netherworld, Ereshkigal, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

- A "May the Great Queen of the Netherworld, Ereshkigal, accept this gift,
- B May she welcome my friend and walk at his side!"

**A flute of carnelian for Dumuzi, the Shepherd Beloved of Ishtar, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

- A "May Dumuzi, the Shepherd Beloved of Ishtar, accept this gift,
- B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side!"

**A chair and a staff, of lapis lazuli, for Namtar, the Vizier of the Netherworld, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

A “May Namtar, the Vizier of the Teeming Netherworld, accept these gifts,

B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side!”

**A drinking vessel of silver, for Hushbisha, the Stewardess of the Netherworld, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

A “May Hushbisha, the Stewardess of the Netherworld, accept this gift,

B May she welcome my friend and walk at his side!”

**He had made a neckpiece of finest gold, a clasp of silver, and a bracelet with carnelian beads for Qassu-tabat, the Sweeper of Ereshkigal, which he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

A “May Qassu-tabat, the Sweeper of Ereshkigal, accept these gifts,

B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side,

B May my friend not wander, nor become sick at heart.”

**A chest of alabaster, the inside inlaid with lapis lazuli and carnelian, depicting an image of the Cedar Forest, for Ninshuluhha, the Cleaner of the House, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

A “May Ninshuluhha, the Cleaner of the House, accept this gift,

B May she welcome my friend and walk at his side,

B May she go before my friend, and may my friend not wander, nor become sick at heart!”

**A double-edged dagger, with a haft of lapis lazuli, adorned with an image of the pure Euphrates, for Bibbu, the Butcher of the Netherworld, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

A “May Bibbu, the Butcher of the Netherworld, accept this gift,

B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side!”

**A coffer, the back of which was alabaster, for Gumuzi-abzu, the Scapegoat of the Netherworld, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

A “May Dumuzi-abzu, the Scapegoat of the Teeming Netherworld, accept this,

B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side!”

**A walking stick, the top of which was lapis lazuli inlaid with carnelian, for Neti, the Gatekeeper of the Netherworld, he displayed to the Sun God and cried:**

- A “May Neti, the Gatekeeper of the Netherworld, accept this gift,
- B May he welcome my friend and walk at his side as he crosses each threshold!”

**At the very first glimmer of brightening dawn Gilgamesh opened his gate; he brought out a great table of elammaku wood:**

He filled with honey a dish of carnelian,  
He filled with ghee a dish of lapis lazuli.

He embellished the alter and displayed it to the Sun God,  
He draped the offering-tables and displayed them to the Sun God.

**Enkidu’s funeral commenced.**

