

The Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi

Fr = Framer, who tells the story

U = Utu, Sun God, brother of Inanna

I = Inanna

D = Dumuzi, the shepherd

Ni = Ningal, mother of Inanna

Nr = Ninshubur, priest of Uruk

Fr The brother spoke to his younger sister.

The Sun God, Utu, spoke to Inanna, saying:

U "Young Lady, the flax in its fullness is lovely.

Inanna, the grain is glistening in the furrow.

I will hoe it for you. I will bring it to you.

A piece of linen, big or small, is always needed.

Inanna, I will bring it to you."

I "Brother, after you've brought me the flax,  
Who will comb it for me?"

U "Sister, I will bring it to you combed."

I "Utu, after you've brought it to me combed,  
Who will spin it for me?"

U "Inanna I will bring it to you spun."

I "Brother, after you've brought the flax to be spun,  
Who will braid it for me?"

U "Sister, I will bring it to you braided."

I "Utu, after you've brought it to me braided,  
Who will weave it for me?"

U "Sister, I will bring it to you woven."

I "Utu, after you've brought it to me woven,  
Who will bleach it for me?"

U "Inanna, I will bring it to you bleached."

I "Brother, after you've brought my bridal sheet to  
me,

Who will go to bed with me?

Utu, who will go to bed with me?

U "Sister, your bridegroom will go to bed with you.

He who was born from a fertile womb,

He who was conceived on the sacred marriage  
throne,

Dumuzi, the shepherd! He will go to bed with you."

Fr Inanna spoke:

I "No, brother

The farmer! He is the man of my heart!

He gathers the grain into great heaps.

He brings the grain regularly into my storehouses."

Fr Utu spoke:

U "Sister, marry the shepherd.

Why are you unwilling?"

His cream is good; his milk is good.

Whatever he touches shines brightly.

Inanna, marry Dumuzi.

You who adorn yourself with the agate necklace of  
fertility,

Why are you unwilling?

Dumuzi will share his rich cream with you.

You who are meant to be the king's protector,

Why are you unwilling?"

Fr Inanna spoke:

I "The shepherd? I will not marry the shepherd!

His clothes are coarse; his wool is rough.

I will marry the farmer.

The farmer grows flax for my clothes,

The farmer grows barley for my table."

Fr Dumuzi spoke:

D "Why do you speak about the farmer?"

Why do you speak about him?

If he gives you black flour,

I will give you black wool.

If he gives you white flour,

I will give you white wool.

If he gives you beer,

I will give you sweet milk.

If he gives you bread,

I will give you honey cheese.

I will give the farmer my leftover cream.

I will give the farmer my leftover milk.

Why do you speak about the farmer?

What does he have more than I do?"

Fr Inanna spoke:

I "Shepherd, without my mother, Ningal, you'd be  
driven away,

without my grandmother, Ningikuga, you'd be  
driven into the steppe,

without my father, Nanna, you'd have no roof,  
without my brother Utu..."

Fr Dumuzi spoke:

D "Inanna, do not start a quarrel.

My father, Enki, is as good as your father, Nanna.

My mother, Sirtur, is as good as your mother,  
Ningal.

My sister, Geshtinanna, is as good as yours.

Queen of the palace, let us talk it over."

Fr The word they had spoken

Was a word of desire.

From the starting of the quarrel

Came the lovers' desire.

The shepherd went to the royal house with cream.

Dumuzi went to the royal house with milk.

Before the door, he called out:

D "Open the house, My Lady, open the house!"

Fr Inanna ran to Ningal, the mother who bore her.  
Ningal counseled her daughter, saying:  
Ni "My child, the young man will be your father.  
My daughter, the young man will be your mother.  
He will treat you like a father.  
He will care for you like a mother.

Open the house, My Lady, open the house!"  
Fr Inanna, at her mother's command,  
Bathed and anointed herself with scented oil.  
She covered her body with the royal white robe.  
She readied her dowry.  
She arranged her precious lapis beads around her  
neck.  
She took her seal in her hand.

Dumuzi waited expectantly.  
Inanna opened the door for him.  
Inside the house she shone before him.  
Like the light of the moon.  
Dumuzi looked at her joyously.  
He pressed his neck close against hers.  
He kissed her.  
Inanna spoke:  
I "What I tell you  
Let the singer weave into song.  
What I tell you,  
Let it flow from ear to mouth,  
Let it pass from old to young:  
My vulva, the horn,  
The Boat of Heaven,  
Is full of eagerness like the young moon.  
My untilled land lies fallow.  
As for me, Inanna,  
Who will plow my vulva?  
Who will plow my high field?  
Who will plow my wet ground?  
As for me, the young woman,  
Who will plow my vulva?  
Who will station the ox there?  
Who will plow my vulva?"

Dumuzi replied:  
D "Great Lady, the king will plow your vulva?  
I, Dumuzi the King, will plow your vulva."

Inanna:  
I "Then plow my vulva, man of my heart!  
Plow my vulva!"

Fr At the king's lap stood the rising cedar.  
Plants grew high by their side.  
Grains grew high by their side.  
Gardens flourished luxuriantly.

Inanna sang:  
I "He has sprouted; he has burgeoned;  
He is lettuce planted by the water.  
He is the one my womb loves best.  
My well-stocked garden of the plain,  
My barley growing high in its furrow,  
My apple tree which bears fruit up to its crown,  
He is lettuce planted by the water.

My honey-man, my honey-man sweetens me always.  
My lord, the honey-man of the gods,  
He is the one my womb loves best.  
His hand is honey, his foot is honey,  
He sweetens me always.  
My eager impetuous caresser of the navel,  
My caresser of the soft thighs,  
He is the one my womb loves best.  
He is lettuce planted by the water."

Dumuzi sang:  
D "O Lady, your breast is your field.  
Inanna, your breast is your field.  
Your broad field pours out the plants.  
Your broad field pours out grain.  
Water flows from on high for your servant.  
Bread flows from on high for your servant.  
Pour it out for me, Inanna.  
I will drink all you offer."

Inanna sang:  
I "Make your milk sweet and thick, my bridegroom.  
My shepherd, I will drink your fresh milk.  
Wild bull Dumuzi, make your milk sweet and thick.  
I will drink your fresh milk.  
Let the milk of the goat flow in my sheepfold.

Fill my holy churn with honey cheese.  
Lord Dumuzi, I will drink your fresh milk.  
My husband, I will guard my sheepfold for you.  
I will watch over your house of life, the storehouse,  
The shining quivering place which delights Sumer –  
The house which decides the fates of the land,  
The house which gives the breath of life to the  
people.  
I, the queen of the palace, will watch over your  
house."

Dumuzi spoke:  
D "My sister, I would go with you to my garden.  
Inanna, I would go with you to my garden.  
I would go with you to my orchard.  
I would go with you to my apple tree.  
There I would plant the sweet, honey-covered seed."

Inanna spoke:  
"He brought me into his garden.

My brother, Dumuzi, brought me into his garden.  
I strolled with him among the standing trees,  
I stood with him among the fallen trees,  
By the apple tree I knelt as is proper.  
Before my brother coming in song,  
Who rose to me out of poplar leaves,  
Who came to me in the midday heat,  
Before my lord, Dumuzi,  
I poured out plants from my womb.  
I placed plants before him,  
I poured out plants before him.  
I placed grain before him,  
I poured out grain before him,  
I poured out grain before my womb."

Inanna sang:

I "Last night as I, the queen, was shining bright,  
Last night as I, the Queen of Heaven, was shining  
bright,  
As I was shining bright and dancing,  
Singing praises at the coming of the night  
He met me he met me!  
My lord Dumuzi met me.

He pushed his hand to my hand.  
He pressed his neck close against mine.  
My high priest is ready for the holy loins.  
My lord Dumuzi is ready for the holy loins.  
The plants and herbs in his field are ripe.  
O Dumuzi! Your fullness is my delight!"

Fr She called for it, she called for it, she called for the  
bed!  
She called for the bed that rejoices the heart.  
She called for the bed that sweetens the loins.  
She called for the bed of kingship.  
She called for the bed of queenship.

Inanna called for the bed:

I "Let the bed that rejoices the heart be prepared!  
Let the bed that sweetens the loins be prepared!  
Let the bed of kingship be prepared!  
Let the bed of queenship be prepared!  
Let the royal bed be prepared!"

Fr Inanna spread the bridal sheet across the bed.  
She called to the king:

I "The bed is ready!"

Fr She called to her bridegroom:

I "The bed is waiting!"

Fr He put his hand in her hand.  
He put his hand to her heart.  
Sweet is the sleep of the hand-to-hand.  
Sweeter still is the sleep of heart-to-heart.

Inanna spoke:

I "I bathed for the wild bull,

I bathed for the shepherd Dumuzi,  
I perfumed my sides with ointment,  
I coated my mouth with sweet-smelling amber,  
I painted my eyes with kohl.  
He shaped my loins with his fair hands.  
The shepherd Dumuzi filled my lap with cream and  
milk,  
He stroked my pubic hair,  
He watered my womb.  
He laid his hands on my holy vulva,  
He smoothed my black boat with cream,  
He quickened my narrow boat with milk,  
He creased me on the bed.

Now I will caress my high priest on the bed,  
I will caress the faithful shepherd Dumuzi,  
I will caress his loins, the shepherds of the land,  
I will decree a sweet fate for him."

Fr The Queen of Heaven,  
The heroic woman, greater than her mother,  
Who was presented the *me* by Enki,  
Inanna, the First Daughter of the Moon,  
Decreed the fate of Dumuzi:

I "In battle I am your leader,  
In combat I am your armor-bearer  
In the assembly I am your advocate,  
On the campaign I am your inspiration.  
You, the chosen shepherd of the holy shrine,  
You, the king, the faithful provider of Uruk,  
You, the light of An's great shrine,  
In all ways you are fit:

To hold your head high on the lofty dais,  
To sit on the lapis lazuli throne,  
To cover your head with the holy crown,  
To wear long clothes on your body,  
To bind yourself with the garments of kingship,  
To carry the mace and sword,  
To guide straight the long bow and arrow,  
To fasten the throw-stick and sling at your side,  
To race on the road with the holy scepter in your  
hand,  
And the holy sandals on your feet,  
To prance on the holy breast like a lapis lazuli calf.

You, the sprinter, the chosen shepherd,  
In all ways you are fit.  
May your heart enjoy long days.  
That which An has determined for you may it not be  
altered.  
That which Enlil has granted may it not be changed.  
You are the favorite of Ningal.  
Inanna holds you dear."

Fr Ninshubur, the faithful servant of the holy shrine of  
Uruk,  
Led Dumuzi to the sweet thighs of Inanna and  
spoke:

Nr "My queen, here is the choice of your heart,  
the king, your beloved bridegroom.  
May he spend long days in the sweetness of your  
holy loins.  
Give him a favorable and glorious reign.  
Grant him the king's throne, firm in its foundations.  
Grant him the shepherd's staff of judgment.  
Grant him the enduring crown with the radiant and  
noble diadem.

From where the sun rises to where the sun sets,  
From north to south,  
From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea,  
From the land of the huluppu-tree to the land of the  
cedar,  
Let his shepherd's staff protect all of Sumer and  
Akkad.

As the farmer, let him make the fields fertile,  
As the shepherd, let him make the sheepfolds  
multiply,  
Under his reign let there be vegetation,  
Under his reign let there be rich grain.  
In the marshland may the fish and birds chatter,  
In the canebrake may the young and old reeds grow  
high,  
In the steppe may the deer and wild goats multiply,  
In the orchards may there be honey and wine,  
In the grasslands may the lettuce and cress grow  
high,  
In the palace may there be long life.

May there be floodwater in the Tigris and Euphrates,  
May the plants grow high on their banks and fill the  
meadows,  
May the Lady of Vegetation pile the grain in heaps  
and mounds.  
O my Queen of Heaven and Earth,  
Queen of all the universe,  
May he enjoy long days in the sweetness of your  
loins."

Fr The king went with lifted head to the holy loin.  
He went with lifted head to the loins of Inanna.  
He went to the queen with lifted head.  
He opened wide his arms to the holy priestess of  
heaven.

Inanna spoke:

I "My beloved, the delight of my eyes, met me.  
We rejoiced together.  
He took his pleasure of me.

He brought me into his house.  
He laid me down on the fragrant honey-bed.

My sweet love, lying by my heart,  
Tongue-playing, one by one,  
My fair Dumuzi did so fifty times.  
Now, my sweet love is sated.  
Now he says:  
'Set me free, my sister, set me free.  
You will be a little daughter to my father.  
Come, my beloved sister, I would go to the palace.  
Set me free.

Inanna spoke:

I "My brother-bearer, your allure was sweet.  
My blossom-bearer in the apple orchard,  
My bearer of fruit in the apple orchard,  
Dumuzi-abzu, your allure was sweet.

My fearless one,  
My holy statue,  
My statue outfitted with sword and lapis lazuli  
diadem,  
How sweet was your allure"

See Ezekiel 31. The Assyrians are the "tallest trees in  
Eden."

Source on WWW:

<http://www.piney.com/BabCourship.html>

Edited by JBVS [05-09-02] for *Making Pastoral  
Myth*.