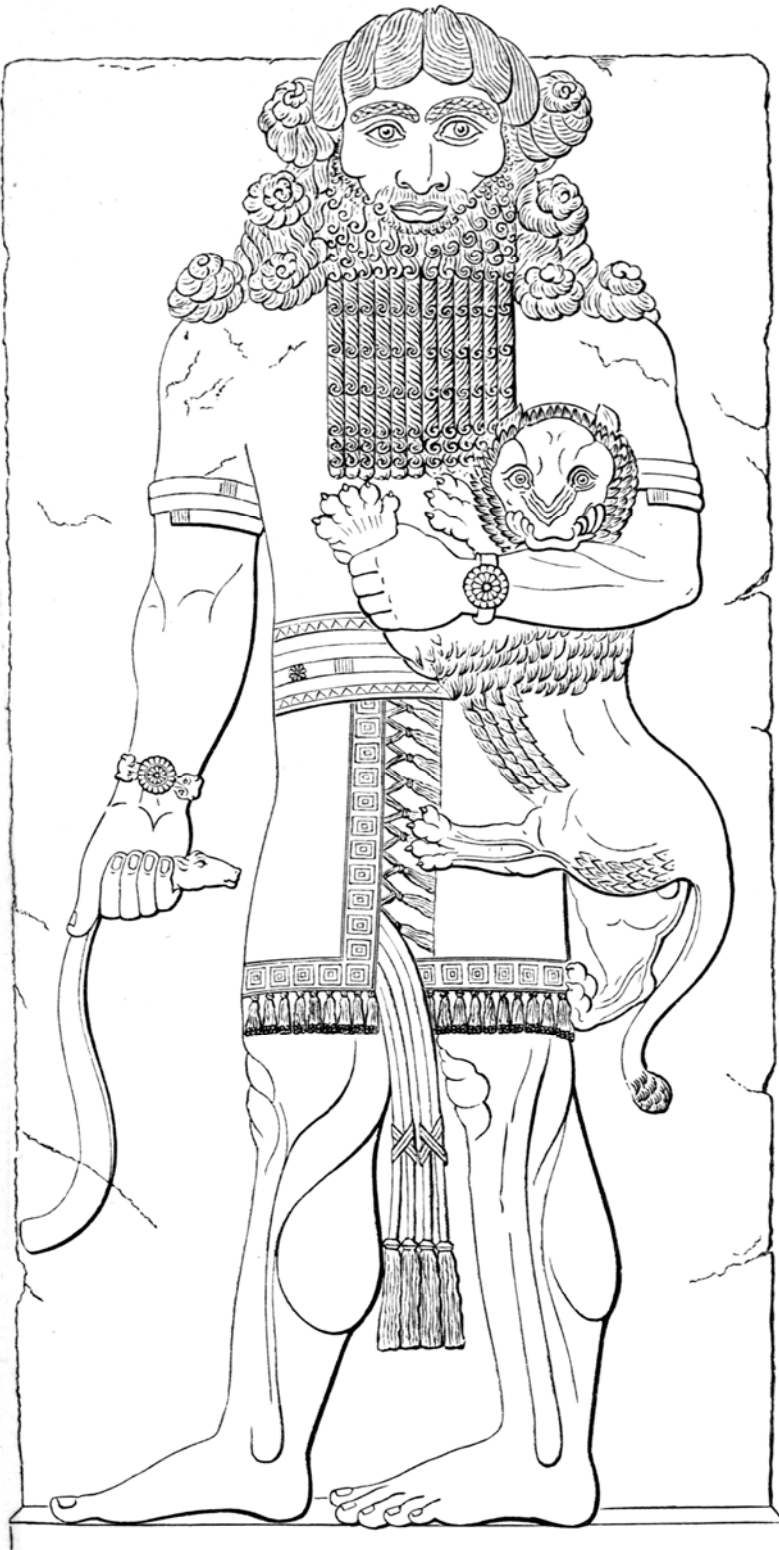


# Gilgamesh and the Ass

for Voice and Piano

Jason Huffman

(2008)



From *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Tablet IX, Column iv lines 46-50 and column v lines 1-47:

Gilgamesh took the road of Shamash, the sun.

When he had gone one double-hour,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone two double-hours,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone three double-hours,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

From Stephen Crane's *The Black Riders and Other Lines*, LV. A man toiled on a burning road:

A man toiled on a burning road,  
Never resting.  
Once he saw a fat, stupid ass  
Grinning at him from a green place.  
The man cried out in rage,  
"Ah! Do not deride me, fool!  
I know you --  
All day stuffing your belly,  
Burying your heart  
In grass and tender sprouts:  
It will not suffice you."  
But the ass only grinned at him from the green place.

When he had gone four double-hours,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone five double-hours,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone six double-hours,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone seven double-hours,  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone eight double-hours, a fever flares up in him;  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone nine double-hours, the north wind bit into his face;  
dense is the darkness, there is no light;  
It was impossible to see ahead of and behind him.

When he had gone ten double-hours,  
He could feel the end draw nigh.

At the nearing of eleven double-hours, light breaks out.  
At the nearing of twelve double-hours, the light is steady.  
Before him the garden of the gods appeared.

Notes:

Piano - The symbol **■** over held chords in the piano signifies to randomly and softly restrike the various notes within the entire chord to keep the sound "alive." A generous use of the sustain pedal in the fugal section marked quarter equals 60 is preferred, no markings have been placed in this section so as to allow the pianist to insert them where most convenient for facility.

Voice - A note under a fermata with multiple words below signifies to intone the words in a natural speaking rhythm; the rest in parenthesis before these held notes can be taken or not at the discretion of the singer for pitch. Slurs indicate melismas, dotted slurs indicate phrasing.

# Gilgamesh and the Ass

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♩ = 84

High Voice

Piano

*f* *mf*

*Red.*

4

♩ = 68 *Rubato*

High Voice

Piano

*p* *ff*

*Red.*

*Red.*

8

*f*

Gilgamesh took the road of Sha - mash, - the sun. \_\_\_\_\_

High Voice

Piano

*f* *ff*

*Red.* \*

♩ = 60 Plodding, calmly moving forward

13 *p*

When he had gone dense is the dark-ness there is no light; It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head \_ of one double-hour,

16 *mp*

\_ and be-hind him When he had gone dense is the dark-ness there is no light; two double-hours,

19 *mf*

It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head \_ of \_ and be-hind him When he had gone three double-hours,

22

dense is the dark-ness there is no light; It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head of

*mf*

24

*♩* = 120 Lightly, with subtle rubato

and be-hind him A man toiled on a burning

*f*

27

road, Ne-ver res-ting Once he saw a fat, stu-pid ass

*p* *f*

34 *mp*

Grin-ning at him from a green place. The man

34 *p*

40

cried out in rage. Ah! Do not de-ride

40

47

me, fool! I know you

47 *ff* *ff*

*p*

52 *f*

All day \_\_\_\_\_ stuf-fing your bel - ly bur - y - ing your

52 *ff* *ff* *ff* *f*

*p* *ff*

58

heart In grass \_\_\_\_\_ and ten-der sprouts: \_\_\_\_\_ It will not

58 *p* *f*

*leg.* *leg.*

63 *f* *mf*

suf-fice you \_\_\_\_\_ But the ass on - ly grinned \_\_\_\_\_ at

63 *p*



71 *rit.* -----, ♩ = 60 As before

*p*

him from the green \_\_\_\_\_ place. \_\_\_\_\_

When he had gone four double-hours,

71 *p*

*p*

77

dense is the dark-ness there is no light; It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

77

79 *p*

\_\_\_\_\_ and be-hind him When he had gone five double-hours, dense is the dark-ness there is no light;

79 *p*

82 *mp*

It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head of \_\_\_\_\_ and be-hind him

When he had gone six double-hours,

85

dense is the dark-ness there is no light; It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head of \_\_\_\_\_

87 *mf*

\_\_\_\_\_ and be-hind him

When he had gone seven double-hours, dense is the dark-ness there is no light;

90 *f*

It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head of \_\_\_\_\_ and be-hind him When he had gone eight double-hours,

93 *f*

a fe-ver flares up in him \_\_\_\_\_ dense is the dark-ness there is no light;

95 *ff*

It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head of \_\_\_\_\_ and be-hind him When he had gone nine double-hours,

98

the north wind bit in - to his face dense is the dark-ness there is no light;

100

It was im-pos-si-ble to see a - head of and be-hind him When he had gone ten double-hours,

103

*accel.*

He could feel the end draw nigh. When he had gone eleven double-hours, light breaks out.

106 *mp* *a tempo* *p* *p*

When he had gone twelve double-hours, the light is steady — Be - fore —

106 *mp* *p* *ff*

*Ped.*

113 *p*

him — the gar - den of the gods — ap-peared

113 *p* *ff*

*Ped.*

121

121 *p* *ff* *p*

*Ped.*