

Dumuzid's dream

(Sumerian text, 3rd Millennium BC, University of Oxford translation, The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature)

His heart was full of tears as he went out into the countryside. The lad's heart was full of tears as he went out into the countryside. Dumuzid's heart was full of tears as he went out into the countryside. He carried with him his shepherd's stick on his shoulder, sobbing all the time:

"Grieve, grieve, O countryside, grieve! O countryside, grieve! O marshes, cry out! O crabs of the river, grieve! O frogs of the river, cry out! My mother will call to me, my mother, my Durtur, will call to me, my mother will call to me for five things, my mother will call to me for 10 things: if she does not know the day when I am dead, you, O countryside, can inform my mother who bore me. Like my little sister may you weep for me."

In ancient times he lay down, in ancient times he lay down, in ancient times the shepherd lay down. When in ancient times the shepherd lay down, he lay down to dream. He woke up, it was a dream! He shivered, it was sleep! He rubbed his eyes, he was terrified.

"Bring, bring, bring my sister! Bring my Ĝeštin-ana, bring my sister! Bring my scribe proficient in tablets, bring my sister! Bring my singer expert in songs, bring my singer! Bring my perspicacious girl, bring my sister! Bring my wise woman who knows the meanings of dreams, bring my sister! I will relate the dream to her."

"A dream, my sister! A dream! In my dream, rushes were rising up for me, rushes kept growing for me; a single reed was shaking its head at me; twin reeds, one was being separated from me. Tall trees in the forest were rising up together over me. Water was poured over my holy brazier for me, the cover of my holy churn was removed, my holy drinking cup was torn down from the peg where it hung, my shepherd's stick disappeared from me. An owl took a lamb from the sheep house, a falcon caught a sparrow on the reed fence, my male goats were dragging their dark beards in the dust for me, my rams were scratching the earth with their thick legs for me. The churns were lying on their sides, no milk was being poured, the drinking cups were lying on their sides, Dumuzid was dead, the sheepfold was haunted."

Ĝeštin-ana answered Dumuzid: "My brother, your dream is not favourable, don't tell me any more of it! Dumuzid, your dream is not favourable, don't tell me any more of it! The rushes rising up for you, which kept growing for you, are bandits rising against you from their ambush. The single reed shaking its head at you is your mother who bore you, shaking her head for you. The twin reeds of which one was being separated from you is you and I, one will be separated from you. The tall trees in the forest rising up together over you are the evil men catching you within the walls. That water was poured over your holy coals means the sheepfold will become a house of silence. That the cover of your holy churn was removed for you means the evil man will bring it inside in his hands."

"Your holy drinking cup torn down from the peg where it hung is you falling off the lap of the mother who bore you. That your shepherd's stick disappeared from you means the demons will smash it. The owl taking a lamb from the sheep house is the evil man who will destroy the sheep house. The falcon catching a sparrow on the reed fence is the big demon coming out from the sheep house. That the churns were lying on their sides, no milk was being poured, the drinking cups were lying on their sides, that Dumuzid was dead, and the sheepfold haunted, means your hands will be bound in handcuffs, your arms will be bound in fetters. That your male goats were dragging their dark beards in the dust for you means that my hair will

whirl around in the air like a hurricane for you. That your rams were scratching the earth with their thick legs for you means that I shall lacerate my cheeks with my fingernails for you as if with a boxwood needle."

Hardly had she spoken these words when he said, "Sister, go up onto the mound, sister, go up onto the mound! Sister, when you go up onto the mound, do not go up onto the mound like an ordinary person, but lacerate your hair and your liver, lacerate your clothes and your crotch, sister, and then go up onto the mound! Sister, when you go up onto the mound, look out from the mound! The evil, hated by men, a river barge! They hold in their hands the wood to bind the hands, they are identified from the wood to bind the neck, no man knows how to undo it!"

Ama-ĝeštīn-ana went up onto the mound and looked around, Ĝeštīn-ana craned her neck. Her girl friend Ĝeštīn-dudu advised her: "The big men who bind the neck are already coming for him, they are coming for him!"

"My adviser and girl friend! Are they coming?" "Yes, I will point out to you those who bind the neck!" "My brother, your demons are coming for you! Duck down your head in the grass! Dumuzid, your demons are coming for you! Duck down your head in the grass!"

"My sister, I will duck down my head in the grass! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them! I will duck down my head in the short grass! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them! I will duck down my head in the tall grass! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them! I will drop down into the ditches of Arali! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them!"

"If I reveal your whereabouts to them, may your dog devour me! The black dog, your shepherd dog, the noble dog, your lordly dog, may your dog devour me!"

She remembered: "..... give your friend instructions about it! O my brother, may you never have a friend or comrade like! After the demons have searched for you,, if he tells you"

"My friend, I will duck down my head in the grass! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them! I will duck down my head in the short grass! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them! I will duck down my head in the tall grass! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them! I will drop down into the ditches of Arali! Don't reveal my whereabouts to them!"

"If I reveal your whereabouts to them, may your dog devour me! The black dog, your shepherd dog, the noble dog, your lordly dog, may your dog devour me!"

Those who come for the king are a motley crew, who know not food, who know not drink, who eat no sprinkled flour, who drink no poured water, who accept no pleasant gifts, who do not enjoy a wife's embraces, who never kiss dear little children, who never chew sharp-tasting garlic, who eat no fish, who eat no leeks. There were two men of Adab who came for the king. They were thistles in dried-up waters, they were thorns in stinking waters, 'his hand was on the table, his tongue was in the palace' (*Alludes to a proverb*). Then there were two men of Akšak who came for the king, with carried on their shoulders. Then there were two men of Unug who came for the king. With head-smashing clubs tied to their waists, there were two men of Urim who came for the king. With clean clothes on the quayside, there were two men of Nibru who came for the king. Crying "Man run after man!", they came to the sheepfold and cow-pen. They caught Ĝeštīn-ana at the sheepfold and cow-pen. They offered a river of water, but she wouldn't accept it. They offered her a field of grain, but she wouldn't accept it. The little demon spoke to the big demon, the wise demon, the lively demon, and the big demon who was between them, wise like destroying a, like barring a, they spoke:

"Who since the most ancient times has ever known a sister reveal a brother's whereabouts? Come! Let us go to his friend!" Then they offered his friend a river of water, and he accepted it. They offered him a field of grain, and he accepted it. "Dumuzid ducked down his head in the grass, but I don't know his whereabouts." They looked for Dumuzid's head in the grass, but they couldn't find him. "He ducked down his head in the short grass, but I don't know his whereabouts." They looked for Dumuzid's head in the short grass, but they couldn't find him. "He ducked down his head in the tall grass, but I don't know his whereabouts." They looked for Dumuzid's head in the tall grass, but they couldn't find him. "He has dropped down into the ditches of Arali, but I don't know his whereabouts."

They caught Dumuzid in the ditches of Arali. Dumuzid began to weep and was tear-stricken: "In the city my sister saved my life, my friend caused my death. If a sister leaves a child in the street, someone should kiss it. But if a friend leaves a child in the street, no one should kiss it."

The men surrounded him and drained the standing waters. They twisted a cord for him, they knotted a net for him. They wove a reed hawser for him, they cut sticks for him. The one in front of him threw missiles at him, the one behind him one cubit. His hands were bound in handcuffs, his arms were bound in fetters. The lad raised his hands heavenward to Utu:

"Utu, you are my brother-in-law, I am your sister's husband! I am he who carries food to E-ana, I am he who brought the wedding gifts to Unug, I am he who kisses the holy lips, I am he who dances on the holy knees, the knees of Inana. Please change my hands into gazelle hands, change my feet into gazelle feet, so I can evade my demons. Let me escape with my life to Ku-bireš-dildareš."

Utu accepted his tears. Like a merciful man he showed him mercy. He changed his hands into gazelle hands, he changed his feet into gazelle feet, and so he evaded the demons, and escaped with his life to Ku-bireš-dildareš. The demons searched for him, but didn't find him.

"Come, let us go to Ku-bireš." They caught Dumuzid at Ku-bireš. The men surrounded him and drained the standing waters. They twisted a cord for him, they knotted a net for him. They wove a reed hawser for him, they cut sticks for him, the one in front of him threw missiles at him, the one behind him His hands were bound in handcuffs, his arms were bound in fetters. The lad raised his hands heavenward to Utu:

"Utu, you are my brother-in-law, I am your sister's husband! I am he who carries food to E-ana, I am he who brought the wedding gifts to Unug, I am he who kisses the holy lips, I am he who dances on the holy knees, the knees of Inana. Please change my hands into gazelle hands, change my feet into gazelle feet, so I can escape to the house of Old Woman Belili."

200-205. Utu accepted his tears. He changed his hands into {gazelle} *{{(1 ms. has instead:) snake}}* hands, he changed his feet into {gazelle} *{{(1 ms. has instead:) snake}}* feet, so he evaded the demons and escaped with his life to the house of Old Woman Belili. He approached the house of Old Woman Belili.

"Old woman! I am not just a man, I am the husband of a goddess! Would you pour water, please, so I can drink water. Would you sprinkle flour, please, so I can eat flour."

She poured water, and she sprinkled flour, and he sat down inside the house. The old woman left the house. When the old woman left the house, the demons saw her.

"Unless the old woman is aware of Dumuzid's whereabouts, she is indeed looking frightened! She is indeed screaming in a frightened way! Come, let us go to the house of Old Woman Belili!" They caught Dumuzid at the house of Old Woman Belili. The men surrounded him and drained the standing waters. They twisted a cord for him, they knotted a net for him. They wove a reed hawser for him, they cut sticks for him, the one

in front of him threw missiles at him, the one behind him His hands were bound in handcuffs, his arms were bound in fetters. The lad raised his hands heavenward to Utu:

"Utu, you are my brother-in-law, I am your sister's husband! I am he who carries food to E-ana, I am he who brought the wedding gifts to Unug, I am he who kisses the holy lips, I am he who dances on the holy knees, the knees of Inana. Please change my hands into gazelle hands, change my feet into gazelle feet, so I can escape to the holy sheepfold, my sister's sheepfold."

Utu accepted his tears. He changed his hands into gazelle hands, he changed his feet into gazelle feet, so he evaded the demons, and escaped with his life to the holy sheepfold, his sister's sheepfold. He approached the holy sheepfold, his sister's sheepfold. Ĝeštīn-ana cried toward heaven, cried toward earth. Her cries covered the horizon completely like a cloth, they were spread out like linen. She lacerated her eyes, she lacerated her face, she lacerated her ears in public; in private she lacerated her buttocks.

"My brother, I will go round in the streets" (The demons said:) "Unless Ĝeštīn-ana is aware of Dumuzid's whereabouts, she is indeed looking frightened! She is indeed screaming in a frightened way! Come, let us go to the sheepfold and cow-pen!" When the first demon entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, he set fire to the bolt, he shouted When the second entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, he set fire to the shepherd's stick. When the third entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, he removed the cover of the holy churn.

When the fourth entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, he poured water on my holy brazier. When the fifth demon entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, he tore down my holy drinking cup from the peg where it hung. When the sixth demon entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, the churns lay on their sides, and no milk was poured. When the seventh demon entered the sheepfold and cow-pen, the drinking cups lay on their sides, Dumuzid was dead, the sheepfold was haunted.

A šir-kalkal for the dead Dumuzid.