

Nhut Do '20

Roamings 2019 Representations

The 2019 edition of *Roamings* is subtitled *Representations* because the editors sought works that do just that - represent something greater or deeper than themselves. An unprecedented aspect of this edition is proactive civic engagement. The first two contributions are from students who used open-source software to draw electoral maps that they feel are superior to our existing map in representing all Pennsylvanians. Another notable aspect of this edition is the literary analysis by freshman Joey Baldini. After reading *A Raisin in the Sun*, he composed essays about the American Dream and fatherhood in the play. His thoughtful pieces illustrate how an engaged reader can find representations of real life (and real-life lessons) in literature. The long-verse work of Ethan Lafond also stands out as one of the most ambitious poetic feats published in this magazine. The artistic contributions in this edition also reflect the artists' impressive variety of expression as well as their inspiring ambition. Many of the literary works and the visual arts collected in this magazine also fit into the theme of representation. In some cases, the editors or artists have included commentary explaining how works relate to the theme. In other cases, the works are presented without commentary so that the reader can draw his or her own conclusion about whether or how they may relate to the theme. We hope you enjoy reading this magazine as much as we enjoyed creating it.

This edition of *Roamings* - in keeping with the magazine's theme - is dedicated to every single member of the Roman Catholic High School community. Each of you represents our school in a unique way, and we thank you for that.

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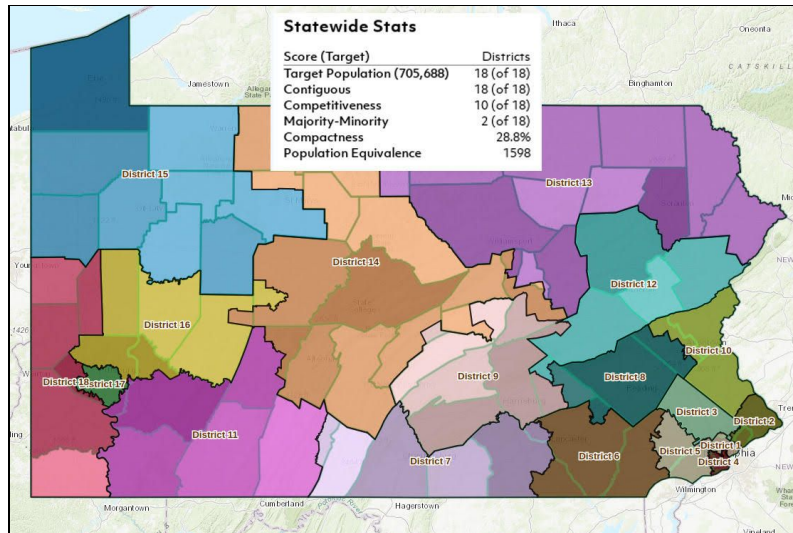
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Draw the Lines Map by Colin Long '21
1st Place Winner
Youth-East Region

My performance making this map has led me to proceed with the ability to grow and share my map with others. In the Draw the Lines competition, this was my third map, and the results got more competitive with each map submission. My main objective in this competition was the

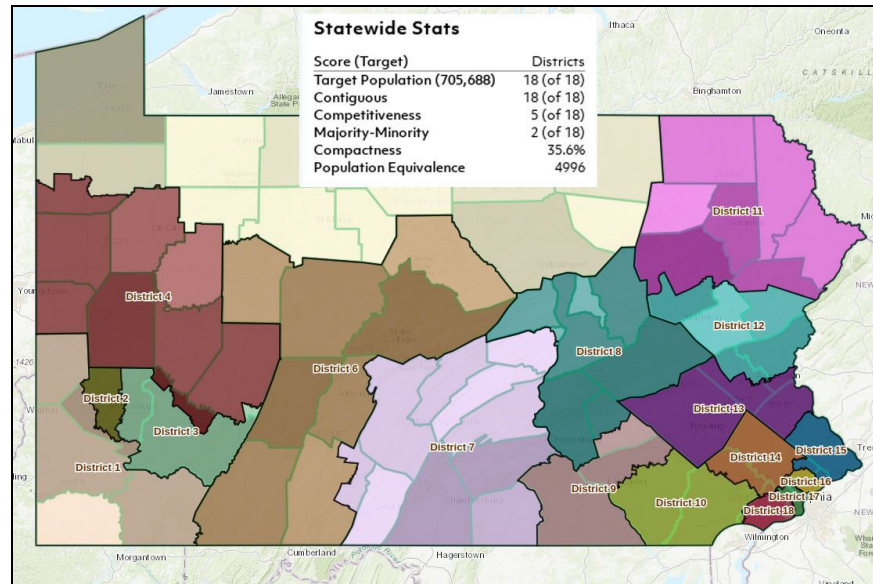
competitiveness. However, there were many places on the map that the competitiveness was prodigiously sided with more populated cities in Pennsylvania, which would see a Democratic take-away. The suburban area of Pennsylvania led me to believe the Republicans had an advantage. Trying to balance the urbaness and the ruralness of Pennsylvania, I connected the cities and rural areas district-wise, making them competitive within a ten-percent area. The most outstanding thing I've completed would definitely be the competitiveness among the districts. I was willing to put much effort and time toward this map and its competitiveness.

The second topic I chose was contiguity. Contiguity was important when dealing with the borders touching each district, and the impression of my map shows others that the lines were drawn by county-line as close as possible. This turned out to be a very smooth and organized map, as the competitions guidelines asked for. Contiguity was also an advantage for my map as all of the 18 districts touch each other - making the map smooth and good-looking. This also affected the population difference on my map at a very low number.

Lastly, minority representation looked stunning on my map with each district showing diversity with races and ethnicity being represented. This was key when making it a priority to represent minority in each district. It was important to draw the city districts as diversified as possible. Overall, competitiveness, minority representation, and contiguity were shown impressively on my map, and I am thankful to the Draw the Lines committee for giving me the opportunity to learn, excel, and accomplish tasks that I set for myself.

**Draw the Lines Map by
Derek Nguyen '21
2nd Place Winner
Youth-East Region**

Considering the trials and tribulations of getting this map to work in the way I wanted, this was a unique experience. I can't say that anyone else ever tasked me with creating a map of this scale.



Anyway, I made this with my own personal beliefs of how this map should be made. To an extent, making sure that districts are "competitive" is contradictory. I realize that it is to ensure that neither party is at an advantage, but it is unnecessary. If there are already statistics of the number of Democrats and Republicans, a vote would never be needed.

Thus, I created districts without much regard for this "competitiveness." Making sure that the districts were of somewhat equal population was a given for anything to be balanced. I don't want to discriminate in anyway when I say this, but I didn't really care for the "majority, minority" scale. A person is a person no matter the race, nationality and gender, so creating a map with that in mind would lead to a district where a minority would have more weight than the entire district if that makes any sense.

For a sixteen-year old kid to even have a chance at possibly shaping his future is kind of cool, and I am really glad to have done something civically meaningful.



Andrew Castro '20



Matthew Kumpf '19



Matthew Kumpf '19



Matthew Kumpf '19



Andrew Castro '20

Fatherhood in *The Raisin in the Sun*
By Joey Baldini '22

A good father is a man who cares for his family. He's someone who's kind and forgiving when his children make mistakes. He supports them in their choices, in their differences, and in their dreams. He never puts his dreams before those of his family. He never scolds them for thinking freely, and he doesn't rule over them like a tyrant. Overall, he is true, brave, selfless, kind, and compassionate.

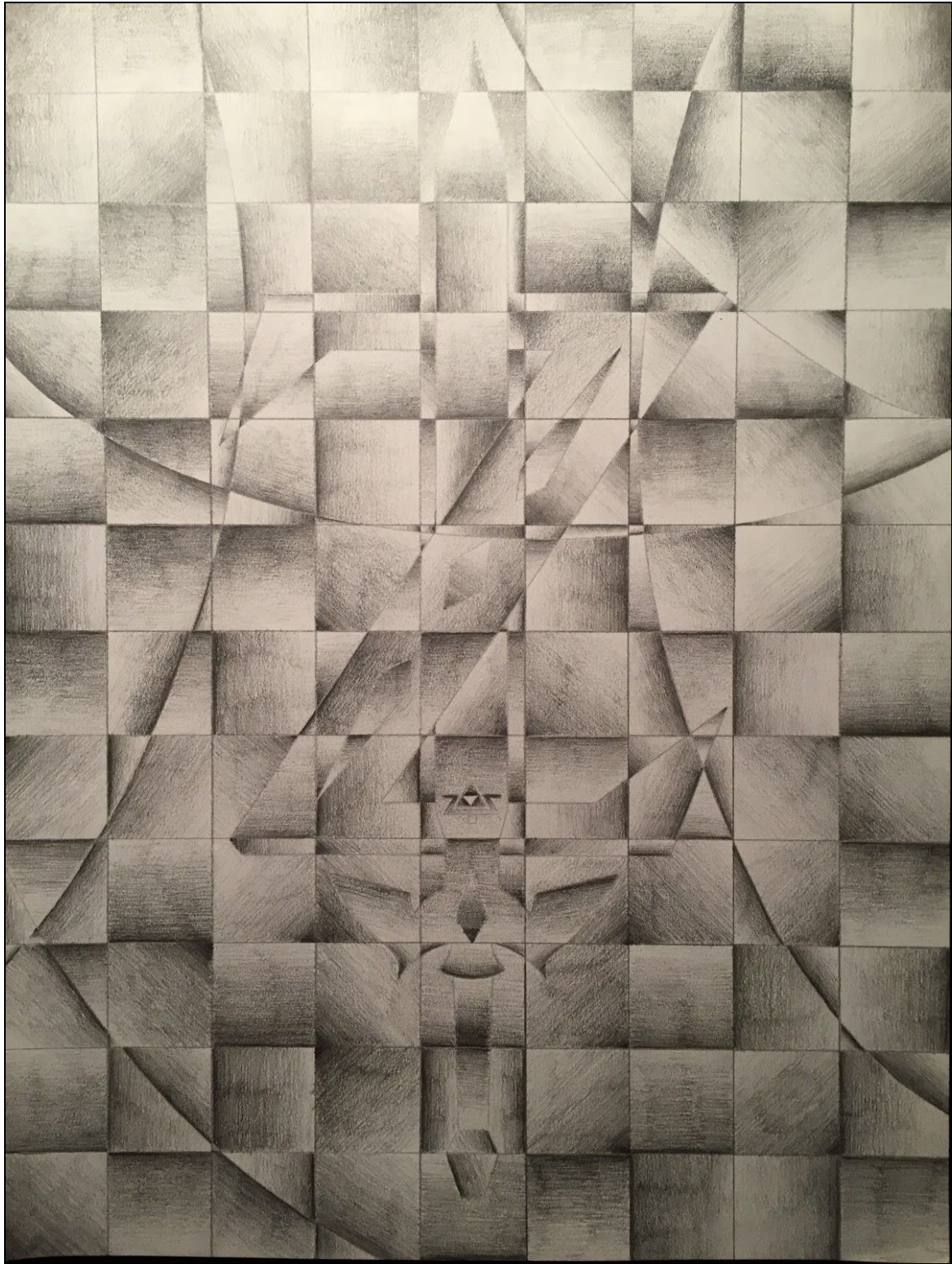
Walter Younger is none of these things.

To some it may seem complicated - whether Walter is a good father or not - but to me, the answer is clear. When Walter hears of the money, his immediate proposition is for himself to decide what to do with it, not his grieving mother. Walter certainly has moments in which his cause seems noble, like when he says, "You tell that to my boy tonight when you put him to sleep on the living room couch ...and tell it to my wife...when she has to go out of here to look after somebody else's kids" (71). But his true colors are shown when he depicts selfishness and greed in the line "Because [the money] is life, Mama!" (74). Although on the surface he seems noble and true to his family, his exasperation causes him to act haphazardly with his facade as he insinuatingly expresses that his plan doesn't completely rely on the good of the family. In fact, it relies on the realization of his own dream.

Besides his questionably selfish deeds, Walter Younger is also not exactly the nicest man you'll ever meet. He puts himself on a pedestal and talks down to others, making him seem judgmental and even arrogant. Lorraine Hansberry makes the reader feel that Walter is this way by using indirect characterization. It's never said that he is sexist, but the total disrespect he shows his wife, his sister, and even his mother makes it clear that he is. He is rude to Ruth and constantly puts her down, describing her as forlorn and saying things to her like "[that] just goes to show you what women understand about the world" (33). Walter faults his sister Beneatha, an assimilationist, for wanting to defy the standard roles of women. That's not something a good father - or a good brother or son - would do, yet he viciously expresses what he thinks about women consistently throughout the play.

And as for the role as Travis' father, one thing the reader could gather in his favor is that he does his best to be a good role model for his son, but at the same time, it's as if he is furtively trying to turn Travis away from Ruth. Though he tries to be kind to Travis, he isn't very responsible, and that can be seen when he inappropriately gives Travis money, despite Ruth's good reason. In the end, it's not a question of how good a father is, but how good a man he is.

A good man makes a good father, so Walter Younger is not a good father.



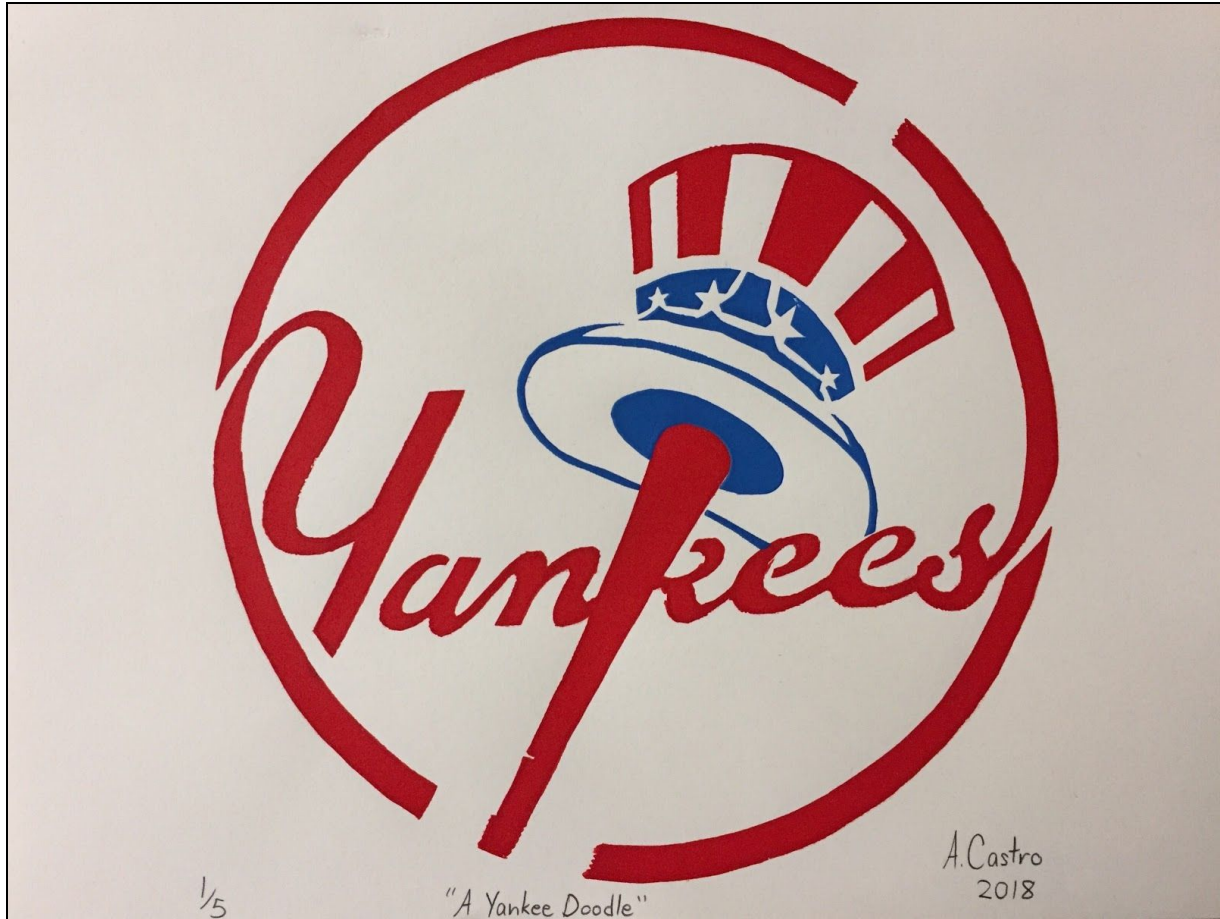
Andrew Castro '20



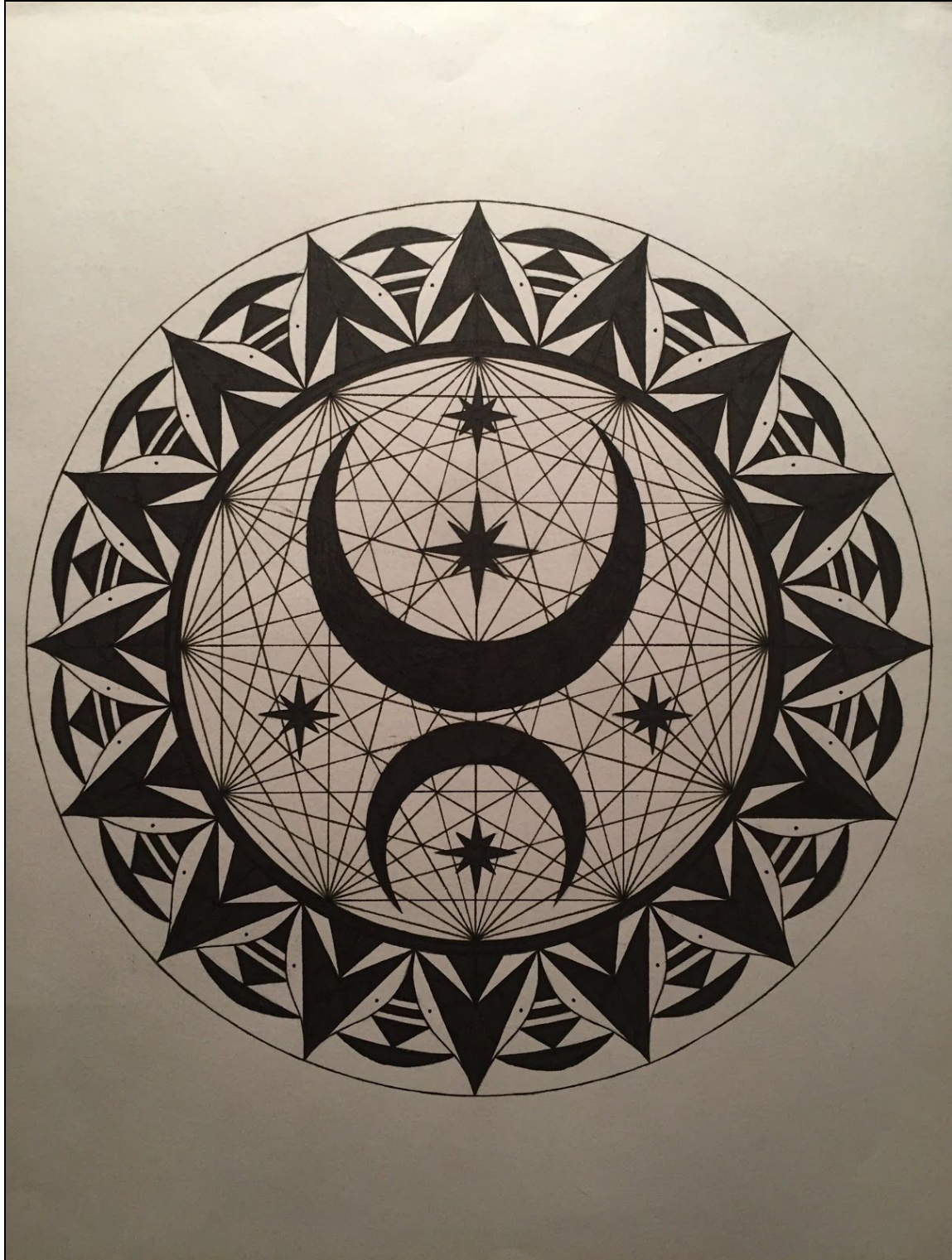
Andrew Castro '20



Andrew Castro '20



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Andrew Castro '20



Andrew Castro '20

The American Dream: A Noble Lie
By Joey Baldini '22

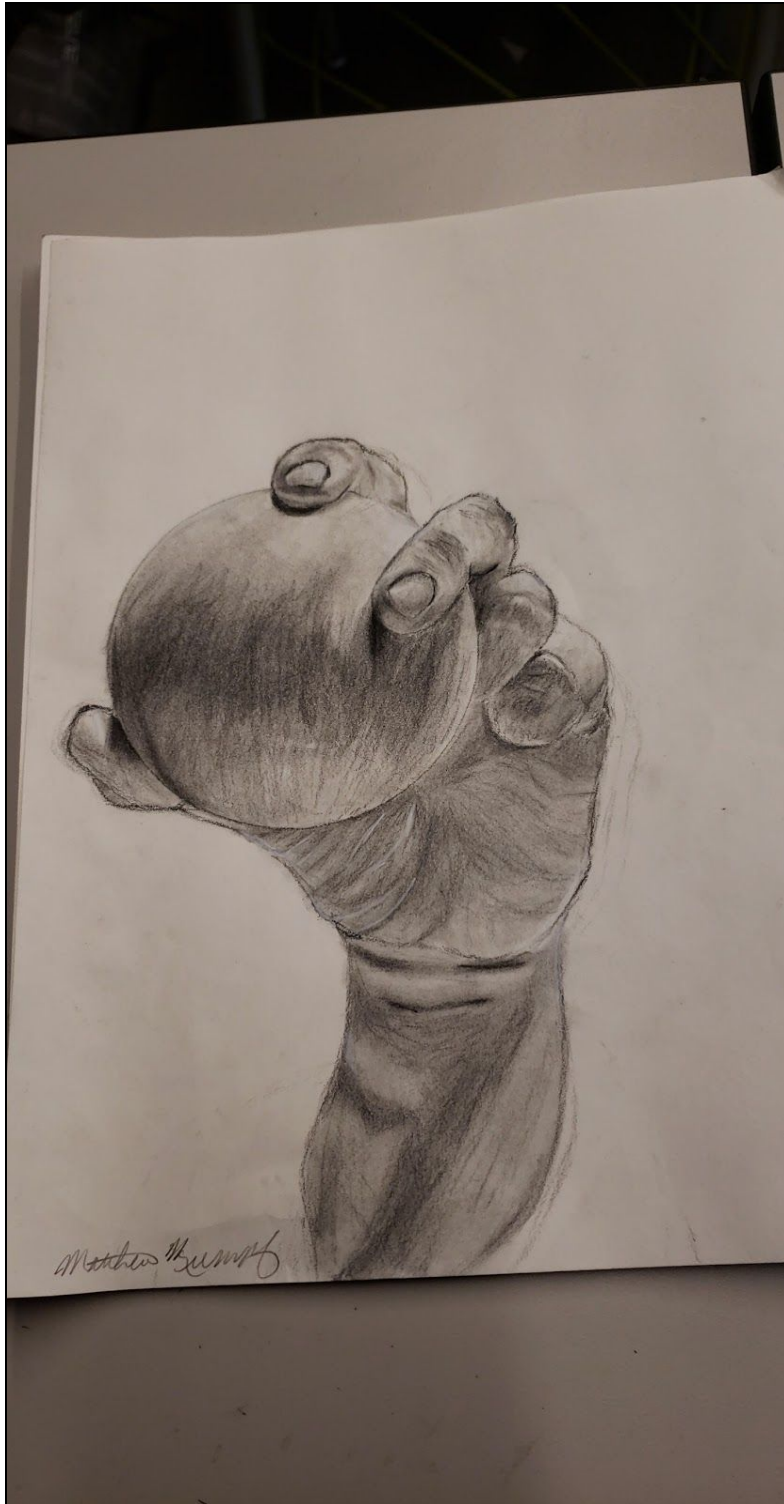
A theme of *A Raisin in the Sun* is that the American Dream must be fought for. If people are told a terrible lie disguised as a fruitful promise, they'll overlook anything they need to in order to believe it, simply because they need to believe it, and if not, they'd have nothing. They might already have nothing in terms of wealth, but it isn't until they lose hope that they are truly lost.

The American Dream is an example of a noble lie. A noble lie is a lie that is told in order to give someone something they need - whether it's hope, love, or a lost part of themselves. Take the Broadway musical *Dear Evan Hansen*, for example. It tells the story of a lonely boy who spins a web of lies, telling the mourning family of a suicide victim of a whole side of their son that they never knew was there because it actually wasn't ever there. Evan tells the family that their son Connor, whom the world saw as violent and scary, was secretly kind and sensitive. He does this not for himself, but so that Connor's parents can have their son back, and so that Connor's sister can have her brother back. Much like how Evan tells the Murphys that Connor was good so that they can find peace and acceptance, the world tells the Youngers that they can achieve their dreams - as long as they hold on to hope. And much like how Evan never really knew Connor, the world never really believed the Youngers could succeed. The world only told them that to give them hope in a hopeless case.

Even though neither of these lies were true, they didn't need to be in the eyes of those being told them. Although the Youngers are held back from success by racism, sexism, segregation, and greed, as long as they have the wonderful lie of the American Dream, they'll always have the hope that their dreams might one day come true, and that is all that anyone really needs.



Matthew Kumpf '20



Matthew Kumpf '20



Nhut Do '20

This is an acrylic painting of the Sour Patch Kids and Skittles candy. The vibrant colors and the use of texture make this painting pop out visually.



Nhut Do '20

This is a mosaic of the well-known video game franchise, "Kingdom Hearts."

"The process of making a mosaic is long and somewhat meticulous. Placing each individual piece and cutting them into the right shape was a time-sucker but the end result washed all of that away."



Nhut Do '20

This piece is a jade-colored chinese dragon made from a process of subtracting and shaping clay.



Nhut Do '20

Both of these pieces are self-portraits that were created through the Delphi Art Futures Program where high school level students have the opportunity to work with artists in their particular field. The artist would spend around 30 hours in residence at the school to teach their field of art to the students in order to present their final pieces at the annual student exhibition.

This year, Roman had the pleasure of participating in this program. The artist-in-residence for Roman was Katie Kaplan, an artist specializing in silkscreen printmaking. Through her guidance, Roman students were able to engage themselves in the process of silkscreen printmaking and banner making which was a very long

process. It involved cutting out a stencil and printing the image from the stencil. After that, banners were hand-sewn and the print was stitched on. Then a process of applique and embroidery created the background of the banners.



“At the start of this program, I had no idea what I was going to make nor did I have any idea of how to do it. Through Katie’s guidance, I was able to learn more about the process of silkscreen printmaking, embroidering, and appliqueing. I learned a lot from this program and it has helped me in so many ways. I personally think that both of the banners on the left truly represent my interests and my character. The planetary and cosmic banner shows who I am as a character, and the colors of the top banner were visually appealing.”



Nhut Do '20

"Mystery of the Night" was made out of string built upon many layers of wood to give the sense of depth. Using the process of putting down nails and continuously wrapping string around the nails, I crafted this piece over many long hours of hard work.

This artwork depicts a mystery detective overlooking the skyline on a dark night. The detective has a question mark on him as well as a strange aura emitting from his body, which mystifies everything. The nocturnal city, the mystery detective, and the strange aura all come together to represent the idea of mysteriousness and uncanny things. The use of the cool colors, like the blue and purple, contribute to nature of the piece as well.

"For my final art project, I proposed my idea of doing string art because it was something that I had never done and it really sparked my interest. What started as just an idea of a one-layered 2D-image turned into a multi-layered storytelling string art. It was a very long process and probably took more than 20 hours, but the final result showed the fruit of that work."



Nhut Do '20

"Part of a birthday gift for my little cousin. I drew a portrait of her using only pencil."



Nhut Do '20

The theme for this piece was "Roman in Bloom" and was the cover of the annual Romauction, a Roman Catholic Fundraising event where friends and families gather for a day of activities ranging from games to live auctions.

"When I thought about the theme, I could only think of flowers and they are usually colorful and vibrant. So what I tried to do was incorporate as many colors as possible but not so much as to make it non uniform and messy. I also wanted to add my own story to the theme. I chose to revolve this picture around a polaroid camera and the films because I enjoy photography."

This piece, out of several entries, became the cover for the Romauction Booklet. From the colors to the detail on the flowers, this is a strong representation of Roman in Bloom.



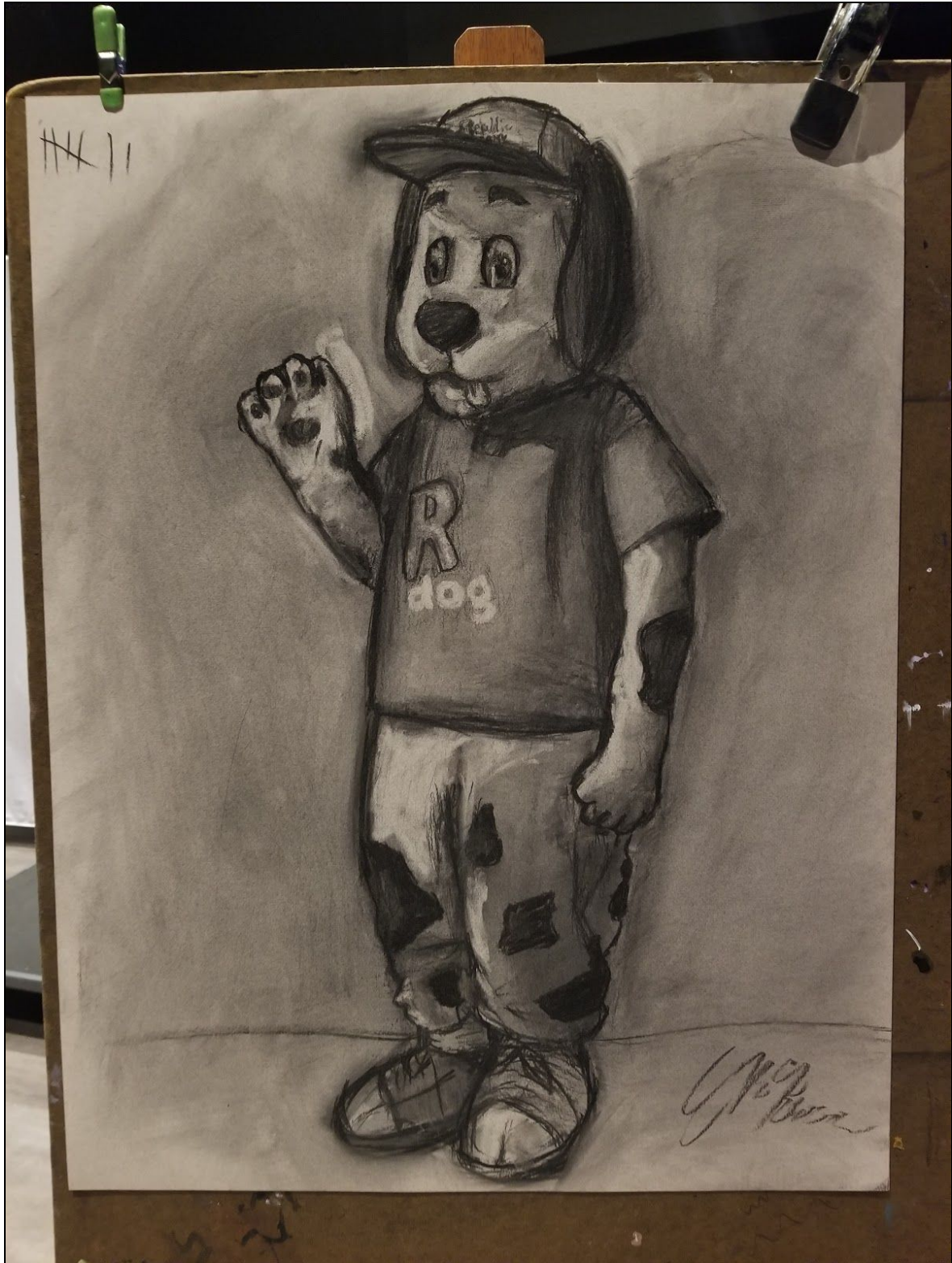
Nhut Do '20

An observational self-portrait made out of charcoal which focused on pushing for the lights and darks.



Nhut Do '20

This observational self-portrait made out of charcoal on a large newspaper board won 1st place at the 2018 Archdiocese of Philadelphia Student Art Exhibition where I proudly represented my high school.



Edward McKeown '19



Edward McKeown '19



Andrew Ameye '19

This digital photograph represents one of the most common ways students get to Roman Catholic High School - public transportation.



Andrew Ameye '19

This digital photograph also represents a way that many of our students get to Roman - on an Interstate Highway.



Andrew Ameye '19



Tim Brown '19

This digital photograph uses Roman as the subject looking down on the intersection upon which it stands.



Michael Cornaglia '19

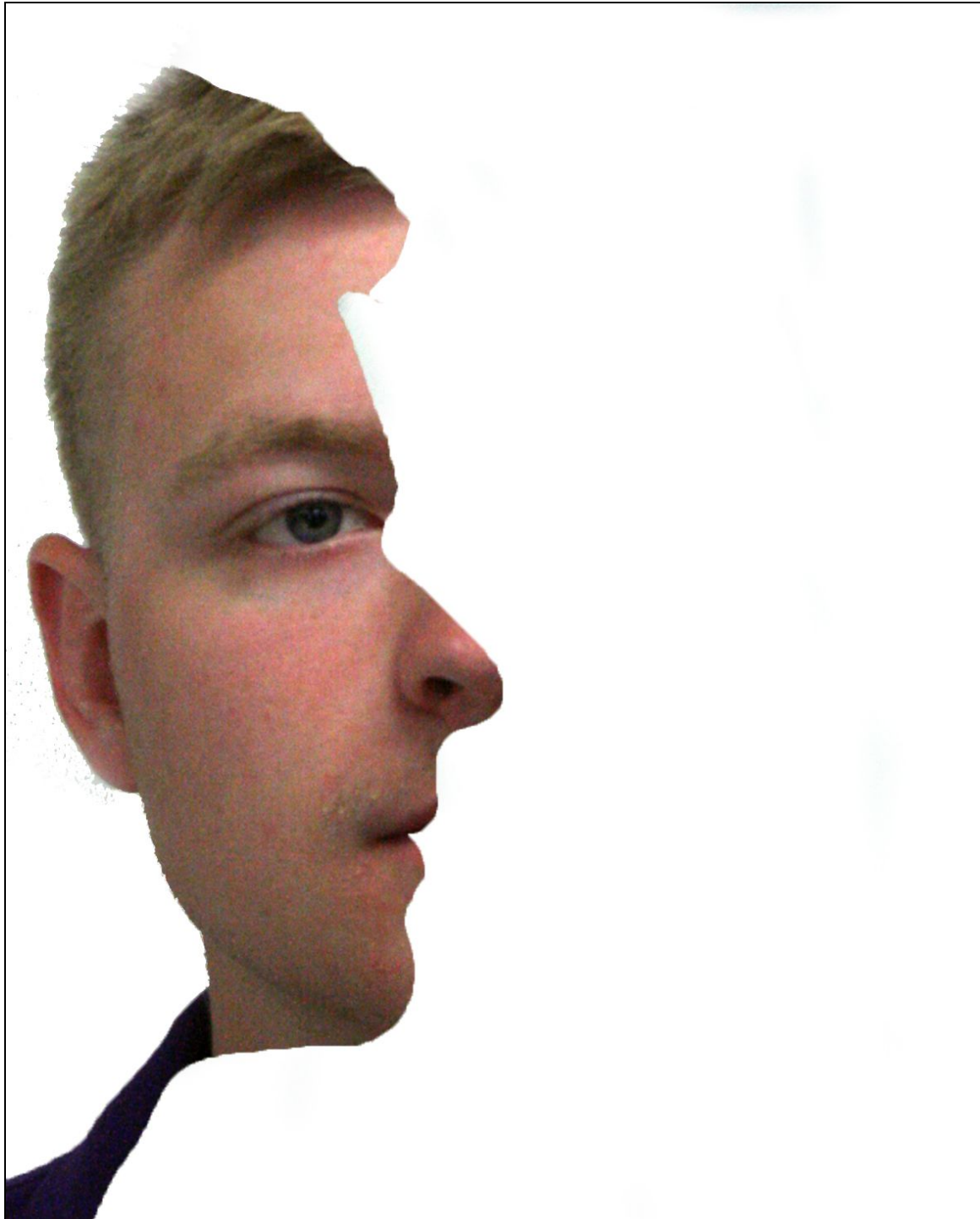
This digital photograph was taken on the school's roof. The golden cross atop our school represents our faith, tradition, and values to all those who see it from below and above.



Michael Cornaglia '19



Michael Golasa '19



Connor Lord '19



Edward McKeown '19

Edward McKeown '19



Nicholas Torelli '19



Robertus Nugroho '21



Robertus Nugroho '21

The Epic of Gilgamesh

By Ethan Lafond '20

Dramatis Personae

Gilgamesh, King of Uruk

Enkidu, a wild man made from clay by the gods

Narrator

Uruk Citizens

Trapper, a citizen of Uruk

Shamhat, priestess-prostitute of Eanna Temple

Forest Animals

Shepherds, citizens of Uruk

Caterer, a servant of a marrying couple

Bride, a woman about to be married

Elders, councilors of Gilgamesh

Ninsun, goddess of cows and mother of Gilgamesh

Humbaba, a large humanoid beast that rules and guards the sacred Forest of Cedars

Ishtar, goddess of Venus, love, and many other things

Anu, father of Ishtar and leader of the gods

Scorpion Man and Woman, a married couple that guard the path of the sun

Siduri, an inkeeper in the underworld

Utanapishtim and Young Utanapishtim, an ancient king who was granted immortality

Utanapishtim's Wife, a woman who received immortality along with her husband

Urshanabi, a sailor in the underworld who works for Utanapishtim

Act I

Scene 1

(Opens to a dark stage, with NARRATOR center stage, sitting with a chest in his lap.)

NARRATOR:

He who has seen everything, the great king,

His story is this, of seeing all things.

Anu, high god, showed him all of the world,

From man's secrets - all that which was hidden -

Of that time before the unending Flood.

To the ends of the earth, tired and frail,

He journeyed, until truth taught of him peace.

He wrote down in stone of his epic tale,

And rose up the wall of the haven Uruk.

He rose up walls of Eanna Temple,

The holiest sanctuary of man.

Its wall, in the sun, gleams like shined copper!

Look at the inner wall, ever unequaled!

Look at the threshold stone, older than time!

Approach now the Temple, Ishtar's Earth-home,

And marvel at the house of the goddess.

Uruk's walls, taller than trees, we can see.

See the foundation laid, conquering the Earth,

And the brickwork, whose dominion is skies!

The clay, kiln-fired, stands high above the ground,

Seven Sages-planned, and perfectly laid!

A league of city, a league of gardens,

A league of lowlands and one of Temple,

And much further, Uruk's walls encircle.

(NARRATOR puts the chest down and opens it as he continues)

See this shining metal tablet box, with

The lock, fire-forged, of purified bronze,

Which holds our story, of the greatest king.

(NARRATOR takes out tablets)

And now listen quietly for the tale,

Of Gilgamesh overcoming the world.

(Blackout. Exit NARRATOR.)

Scene 2

(Opens to a bright day in Uruk, with Gilgamesh in town surrounded by URUK CITIZENS)

CITIZEN 1:

It is Gilgamesh, brother, Gilgamesh!

Uruk's mighty man, our King Gilgamesh!

CITIZEN 2:

The priests say Aruru gave his shape form,
Or so I've heard, but I wouldn't be surprised.
In his presence, not a woman won't swoon.

CITIZEN 1:

Including your wife, dear brother of mine?

CITIZEN 2:

I'm glad, I admit, that our King was young,
When she and I married, for he could not
Exercise the King's right that he does claim,
Of the night after wedding of all brides.

CITIZEN 1:

Shh! Quiet, brother; Gilgamesh draws close!

CITIZEN 2:

But do you not care, for the day you're wed?

CITIZEN 1:

I do, and I pray, but I can't do more.

He is two thirds a god! What could I do?

CITIZEN 2:

You might be wiser than I, my brother,
And you certainly have more faith than I.

Yes, may Aru hear us, and stop our King.

Gilgamesh equaled, by a gods-sent man!

(Blackout. Exeunt URUK CITIZENS and GILGAMESH)

Scene 3:

(Lights rise in a forest outside of Uruk around a pond. ENKIDU is there, along with FOREST ANIMALS. ENKIDU is whistling a tune, as he dismantles a simple animal trap. Enter TRAPPER.)

TRAPPER:

Who are you, monster, man of the forest?

Human or off-spring, like in Father's tales,

Of an eternal creature of the gods?

You've appeared once and twice, and now a third,

Destroying my work, but never speaking.

Speak, stranger, speak! Like a civilized man-

(TRAPPER's voice gets progressively louder and angrier, until he's shouting. ENKIDU rips a tree out of the ground, and holds it above his head like a staff. TRAPPER backs up in fear.)

Such amazing strength, like King Gilgamesh!

I mean no harm to you, man of such strength.

(Aside)

So my father was right, more than I thought!

There are men in the forest beyond me,

Who know not the peace of men of Uruk.

If Father was right on this, then I don't doubt,

That a man could civilize in one way:

By, under Ishtar's gaze, feel man's best peace.

If I beg the king for the Temple's help,

Then this man will be gone, and I'll have peace.

(Exit TRAPPER. Lights fade, exeunt ENKIDU and FOREST ANIMALS, then lights rise and enter TRAPPER and SHAMHAT.)

SHAMHAT:

Where is this man, with strength like the great king?

You said he dwells here, but all here is trees.

TRAPPER:

He will come soon, blessed Ishtar-priestess.

Like an animal, his path's never changed.

(Enter ENKIDU and FOREST ANIMALS. As ENKIDU sees TRAPPER, his anger is evident.

SHAMHAT approaches him, laying her hand on him in a pacifying gesture. As SHAMHAT speaks, she moves closer and closer to ENKIDU and TRAPPER exits slowly.)

SHAMHAT:

Peace, mighty being, man of the forest!

Be calm, god-made savage, and worry not,

Trust me and follow me, poor child of trees.

(Lights darken as SHAMHAT, pressed against ENKIDU, leads him offstage. The FOREST ANIMALS settle down to sleep. Lights rise and fall several times, before they finally rise once

more. Enter SHAMHAT and ENKIDU. ENKIDU is less tense and stoic. As ENKIDU approaches, the FOREST ANIMALS shy away. He looks devastated.)

ENKIDU:

My friends, my dear creatures, why do you run?

(He approaches again, but they flee offstage. SHAMHAT lays her hand on ENKIDU's shoulder.)

SHAMHAT:

Enkidu, handsome man, one like a god,

Why do you care of opinions of beasts?

Come, follow me, be a civilized man,

And let us return to Uruk-Haven!

You can meet Gilgamesh, King of Uruk,

Who is strong like you, and as wise as well.

(ENKIDU is quiet for a while.)

ENKIDU:

Then let us, Shamhat, visit Gilgamesh,

See this grand man that you ceaselessly praise.

I'll fight him, and find who Gilgamesh is.

SHAMHAT:

The King will be pleased, hearing your coming.

Ninsun, the goddess, and our King's mother,

Has spoke of his dreams, dreams sent by Anu,

Or Enlil, maybe, or Shamash of sun.

Whoever has sent them, they spoke of you,
Of one as strong as a meteorite.
One that he could not lift, or even move,
But was worshipped and praised by all Uruk.
And another, more vivid, of an axe,
That he embraced; Ninsun said that it meant
That a friend would come, a man just like you.
But take care, Enkidu, for Gilgamesh
Is a man so strong, he does not need sleep.
Be wary, brave man, of Uruk's great king.
(Fade out. Exeunt SHAMHAT and ENKIDU)

Scene 4:

(Around a makeshift table, in a sheep-herding meadow outside of Uruk. Several SHEPHERDS are at the table, each occasionally getting up to tend to the SHEEP. Enter SHAMHAT and ENKIDU.)

SHAMHAT:

No longer are you an immodest beast,
Unclothed and uncivilized in the trees.
(She takes off her thin coat, and wraps it around ENKIDU's shoulders.)
Now you must wear clothes befitting of men,
And eat and drink as the civilized do.
(To the SHEPHERDS)

Shepherds of Uruk, we ask for your care.

I am Shamhat, a priestess of Ishtar.

We seek food, clean water, and clothes for him.

SHEPHERD 1:

Beautiful priestess, of course we'll provide!

Go ahead and eat, strong young man of such size.

(ENKIDU grabs a loaf of bread, and takes a large bite out of it. SHAMHAT guides him into a seat, while one of the SHEPHERDS fetches a jug of beer. He eats quickly, without care for manners or waste. The SHEPHERDS laugh at ENKIDU's eating. When he finally finishes, he springs to his feet.)

ENKIDU:

Amazing is this civilization,

With this food and this drink that taste like cheer!

(A SHEPHERD walks over with a bowl of water. SHAMHAT mimes splashing it in her face, which ENKIDU does. Another SHEPHERD brings nicer clothes, which SHAMHAT helps him into.)

SHEPHERD 2:

We ask you a favor, Enkidu-friend.

At night, wolves and lions attack our sheep;

If you are as strong as our mighty king,

Please watch in the night over all our lambs.

(SHEPHERD 2 points at a club lying against the table. ENKIDU picks it up, and exits, slightly crouched in a hunting stalk. SHAMHAT stays seated at the table, lost in thought, while the SHEPHERDS lay down in front of the SHEEP. Fade out.)

Scene 5:

(Near and in a wedding near Uruk. SHAMHAT and ENKIDU enter opposite the wedding. From the wedding, an CATERER runs past, knocking into ENKIDU on the way past. ENKIDU grabs the CATERER's arm, stopping him in his tracks. After pacifying ENKIDU with a calming touch to the shoulder, SHAMHAT addresses the CATERER, who ENKIDU has just released.)

SHAMHAT:

Young Uruk man, why are you hurrying?

CATERER:

A wedding, my lady, of my client.

I'm to bring the food for King Gilgamesh!

ENKIDU:

King Gilgamesh, the strong-man of Uruk?

The king is here? I needn't search further?

CATERER:

Yes, our mighty King has graced this couple,

With the brand-new bride being like his wife.

Just for one night, mind you, not after that;

But nevertheless he still must be fed.

ENKIDU:

But...Shamhat, you said that marriage involves..

This cannot be right! Yes, this must be wrong!

SHAMHAT:

It is his right; he's the king of Uruk.

Anu himself gave him this right from birth.

(ENKIDU turns away and charges toward the wedding, where GILGAMESH is leading the BRIDE into a room. ENKIDU picks her up and gently moves her out of the way, then punches GILGAMESH. GILGAMESH and ENKIDU grapple for a while, with GILGAMESH finally shifting his weight to pull down ENKIDU. They both fall, then there's silence. After a while, GILGAMESH starts laughing. He pulls himself to his feet, then helps ENKIDU to his. Still laughing, he embraces ENKIDU.)

GILGAMESH:

Who are you? Who can be as strong as I?

Why have I never heard of you, my friend?

ENKIDU: *(After pausing in shock for a second, he begins to laugh as well.)*

I am called Enkidu, Gilgamesh-king.

Shamhat, the priestess, said that you have had

Dreams of a meteorite and an axe.

Is this story true? She says they're of me.

GILGAMESH:

Of that I have no doubt. So you must be

My gods-given advisor and new friend.

Come, friend! You should meet my mother, Ninsun

What a day! What such joy! Come, Enkidu!

(Blackout.)

Scene 6:

(GILGAMESH and ENKIDU are talking in a palace room, with NINSUN watching amusedly.)

GILGAMESH:

Such boredom, my friend, being Uruk's king!

A boredom like you could never believe!

Say, Enkidu, have you any ideas?

(ENKIDU sighs.)

ENKIDU:

Rumors, my friend, speak of a great forest,

With cedar trees that dwarf even us two.

They stand tall like pillars, holding the sky,

And guarded by the great beast Humbaba,

GILGAMESH:

Truly, dear brother, that fight would be grand!

I win and my name is known for all time;

I fall and I'm the greatest of Heroes,

The one who brought low even Humbaba!

Mother, go gather Uruk's counselors.

Enkidu, the blacksmith does await us!

(Exeunt ENKIDU and GILGAMESH, and exit NINSUN opposite. After a moment, enter NINSUN and ELDERS. ENKIDU and GILGAMESH enter slightly later, ENKIDU with an axe and GILGAMESH with a sword, and both with armor.)

Great men of Uruk, I am going out,
I will hunt down and slay mighty Humbaba,
The hated beast of the forest of gods!
This fight will surpass all I've that yet known!
His head will be mine, and see my palace,
And the triumph will be heard by the gods!

ELDER 1:

Enkidu, friend of our King, please implore
That he not go to the Cedar Forest.
He should not journey to guaranteed death!

ENKIDU:

With his heart brave as now, there is no chance;
I cannot dissuade him, nobody can.

ELDER 2:

My King, Gilgamesh, King of all Uruk,
Please, do not do this! Please, do not go there!
You are following your heart, not your mind,
And wanting to fight for the sake of war!

Even most gods could not slay Humbaba!

GILGAMESH:

I'm already going, as is my right.

That which I ask, Elders, is your blessing,

That I will slay this beast in Uruk's name.

(After a moment of tense silence.)

ELDER 1:

Then go, mighty king, but please be careful.

Great strength alone fails! Be skillful and smart.

And trust Enkidu, for he knows the woods,

Better than you or I possibly could.

And Enkidu, friend of Uruk's great leader,

Take care of our King! Bring him back alive!

(Exeunt ELDERS)

GILGAMESH:

Mother, Ninsun, I ask of you great aid.

I know not what will happen outside these halls.

Battle is perilous, death walks beside,

And so for Humbaba I ask your help.

Intercede for me to the other gods,

The friendly ones, especially Shamash.

I ask you this, that both of us succeed.

NINSUN:

Of course I will do this, my dearest son,

So vict'ry is yours, so that you might win.

Enkidu, forest-man, please guard my son.

May luck follow both of you, like a shade,

May you return cheerily, having won!

(Blackout.)

Scene 7

(On a mountaintop overlooking the Cedar Forest. ENKIDU and GILGAMESH are encamped under the stars.)

GILGAMESH:

Friend, let us stay here for until sunrise,

Let us take time to prepare our attack.

ENKIDU:

If you wish, Gilgamesh, then we shall wait.

Sleep, you will need it; this land is quite fierce.

Maybe send a sacrifice to Shamash?

GILGAMESH:

An excellent point; that is what I'll do.

(He bends down, and begins gathering rocks for a small altar. He pours a bit of alcohol over the rocks, and whispers inaudibly. They both lay down and fall asleep. GILGAMESH rolls around in

his sleep several times, before awakening, clearly afraid. Without standing up, he crawls over to ENKIDU and wakes him.)

ENKIDU:

What bothers you, friend? Why are you perturbed?

What could bother you on a mountaintop?

GILGAMESH:

A dream came in the midst of the darkness,

Of horrors from which I still am not free.

We were in a gorge, one far down below,

When from the sky this mountain did plummet.

ENKIDU:

Peace, my friend, fear not, for that is good news!

That mountain you saw was Humbaba's corpse,

That which we killed, that which we beheaded.

We were the ones who threw him in the gorge.

Worry not, Gilgamesh, we have more time,

Before we must seek the great Humbaba.

Just try to sleep now, prepare for the fight.

(They return to sleep. GILGAMESH, again, sleeps restlessly, and eventually awakes, again panicked. He again wakes ENKIDU.)

GILGAMESH:

Another, Enkidu, worse than before!

It felt so real! I'm amazed that it's not.

I wrestled a bull strong as Nergal,

And as blood-hungry as that god of war.

It bellowed a cry that rent open earth.

I collapsed to my knees in fear and awe,

Then a man pulled me up and gave me drink.

ENKIDU:

Again, my friend, there is nothing to fear.

Again, this was sent by your friend Shamash.

The bull was him, protecting us from death;

The man your father-god, Lugalbanda.

We will need both of them if we will win.

Now sleep, my friend, sleep until comes the dawn.

For come dawn, our victory will be won.

(Blackout.)

Scene 8:

(The massive HUMBABA prowls back and forth before an enormous cedar tree. Enter ENKIDU and GILGAMESH.)

ENKIDU:

The beast! Be wary, Gilgamesh, and strong!

This moment is that which decides your life!

(HUMBABA laughs deeply and menacingly.)

HUMBABA:

Gilgamesh! A true pleasure to see you!

You're in the company of Enkidu?

Enkidu - fish-child - why would you come here?

To slay me, or to try? Don't make me laugh!

Your life is mine! I could've eaten you,

When you crawled like a turtle on the ground!

I should've followed the laws of my land;

I should've fed your corpse to a vulture.

But gone times are gone. Hello, Enkidu!

(GILGAMESH is backing away slowly, clearly in panic.)

GILGAMESH:

Oh gods far beyond, what is this creature?

What kind of madness brought me to this place?

ENKIDU:

Stop your tears, my friend, and stand like a man!

You're a King, Gilgamesh! Fear is not yours!

Stand strong, stand your ground, and slay Humbaba!

(The wind picks up heavily, though it only seems to disturb HUMBABA.)

Look! See the wind! There is nothing to fear!

Shamash has stopped him! He can't even move.

Go ahead, strike him down, and then we'll leave.

(GILGAMESH approaches slowly, then darts forward once he sees HUMBABA struggle against the wind and fail to move. After HUMBABA takes a sword slash without even being able to defend, GILGAMESH puts his sword to HUMBABA's throat.)

HUMBABA:

Impossible! The gods have betrayed me!

Gods may be disloyal, but Kings can't be!

Right, Gilgamesh? I'll bow to your great rule!

Just mercy, please mercy, and I am yours!

ENKIDU:

Don't listen, Gilgamesh, to fools' nonsense.

Why would you trust this disgusting monster?

GILGAMESH:

You speak right, Enkidu. Die, Humbaba!

HUMBABA:

Enkidu, please, have Gilgamesh free me!

Why do you hate me? Tell, what did I do?

ENKIDU:

We should follow the laws of your forest.

You may have not, but we'll not do the same.

Kill him now, end his life now, Gilgamesh!

(HUMBABA dies, muttering something. ENKIDU sighs.)

A curse, no doubt; he wouldn't die easily.

But he's dead, dead and gone. Let's cut the tree.

(Blackout.)

Scene 9

(GILGAMESH is sitting at a riverside, his armor lying on the ground wet. ISHTAR approaches from behind, caressing his shoulder much to his surprise.)

GILGAMESH:

Ishtar! What brings you here when I'm bathing?

ISHTAR:

All heavens have heard of Humbaba's death;

Of your great fight and of your great success.

(GILGAMESH grows visibly concerned, but doesn't react otherwise.)

And as such you seem like the only choice

Who is strong enough and worthy enough

To become my husband and my consort.

GILGAMESH:

Well, mighty Ishtar, I must tell you that-

ISHTAR:

Think! You will become almost like a god!

The mightiest kings and princes will bow,

Every great city will give you tribute.

GILGAMESH:

I could not do that, for if I were to,

How could I provide anything for you?

You're a goddess, the daughter of Anu!

What could I give you that you do not have?

ISHTAR:

Don't speak nonsense, Gilgamesh, I don't care!

Just having you at my side is a gift!

GILGAMESH:

Ishtar, just stop! I'd have to be stupid

To marry you based on the tales so far.

Just take Tammuz, Dimuzid the Shepherd.

You cursed him! Slapped him! Turned him to a bird!

The greatest of lions, the noblest horse?

You made them the servants of mortal man!

Ishullanu? Even worse! You don't love!

You tried to seduce him, and when you failed,

You struck him, and he became just half-tall!

I'll not be a victim like those before!

Begone, Ishtar, and bother me no more!

(GILGAMESH gathers his armor, puts it on, and leaves, while ISHTAR stews in her anger.

Finally, she screams to the sky.)

ISHTAR:

Father! Curse Gilgamesh as he cursed me!

ANU (OFFSTAGE):

My daughter, my dear, breath and calmly think.

You did not give choice; what else could he do?

ISHTAR:

Nonsense, father, he should have felt honored!

I, Ishtar, offered to become his bride!

If you won't curse him, then just give me this:

Gugalanna, the Bull Of the Heavens!

Gilgamesh must die for what he has said.

ANU (OFFSTAGE):

My dear, you know what happens if I do?

ISHTAR:

Father, I know, seven years of no grain.

I'll make preparations before the Bull.

Now give me the Bull, or I'll open Kur!

I'll destroy the doors, and I'll free the dead!

ANU (OFFSTAGE):

You've thought through this, Daughter. Do as you wish.

(Blackout.)

Scene 10

(ENKIDU and GILGAMESH are kneeling before an altar with a extraordinarily large heart on it. SHAMHAT walks up from behind them quietly, and lights candles around the heart. She retreats to the back of the room, watching from the shadows.)

ENKIDU:

Take this gift, mighty Shamash, for your help

In the slaying of Humbaba days ago.

Confidence gained then helped Gilgamesh now.

He and I killed the Bull and made it yours.

Thank you, Shamash-

(ENKIDU cuts off mid-sentence and slumps over. GILGAMESH, concerned, grabs his friend by the shoulders to support him. ENKIDU twitches several times before coming to.)

A dream, Gilgamesh, of gods in conference!

Anu cried you should die for the Bull's death.

Enlil called for my death instead of yours,

And Shamash tried to prevent both our deaths.

The gods fought and fought, in the end they chose...

I'm to die, Gilgamesh. I'm to die, friend.

GILGAMESH:

No, Enkidu! It's not true, just a dream!

ENKIDU:

It's true, Gilgamesh, I'm already ill.

I feel it in my bones and in my heart.

That stupid door, that from cedar we made!

The gods' blessed wood was Humbaba's curse.

Who would have known that the tree would kill me.

(As ENKIDU continues to curse things, the lights slowly dim until only candlelight remains.)

And that trapper, I suppose it was he,

Who brought me to death by his selfishness.

May he not trap anything, so he starves,

And may for forever he be alone.

And then that temple-prostitute, Shamhat!

May she receive the greatest curse of all!

Alone, unloved, childless and barren,

May she be scorned by the men of Uruk!

Let the drunkards vomit upon her clothes;

Let the thorns of the bushes bloody her.

May she never find happiness in life!

GILGAMESH:

Why do you say these curses, Enkidu?

Were it not for her, we would not have met!

(ENKIDU's eyes widen, and he's quiet for a while.)

ENKIDU:

Forgive me, Shamhat, wherever you are!

I've cursed you, but now, please let me bless you!

May the greatest nobles flock to your bed!

May the soldier give you gemstones and gold!

May the gods smile on you every day!

Find happiness, Shamhat! You deserve it!

(ENKIDU collapses, not even being able to hold a fraction of his weight. Exit SHAMHAT.

GILGAMESH lays ENKIDU's body down, and sits by his side.)

Gilgamesh, last night, I saw in a dream,

A man, dark and tall, with eagle talons.

He grabbed me and pinned my arms with his claws;

I cried for help, but you were far too scared.

He made me a bird, and took me to Kur,

And released me behind the Gates of Death.

There was no light for the people down there,

Just clay as a food and dirt as a drink.

I went where gods live, to the House of Dust.

Your forefathers' crowns were stacked in corners.

And the gods looked upon me, quite displeased...

(His speech grows slower and he stumbles over words.)

I see Ereshkigal's eyes on me now.

Gilgamesh, brother, my greatest of friends?

Remember me, please. Remember our fights.

Remember me please, so that I don't die...

GILGAMESH:

Good night, Enkidu. May all Earth mourn you.

May tears drop from eyes all across Uruk,

From priests' and elders' and even peasants'.

Let the mountains cry as they hear your fate,

And the pastures bemoan your too-soon death.

Every animal that you fed and freed,

Mourn the death of their friend and companion.

The Euphrates and Tigris will flow over

With tears from your death all over the land.

And the people you met here in Uruk

Will curse the cruel gods for what they have done.

I mourn you, Enkidu.

(GILGAMESH picks up the dead ENKIDU and places him on the altar, shoving the heart and candles to the ground. The candles go out, and SHAMHAT comes in. She pauses when she sees ENKIDU's corpse, but calms herself and steps out to grab a torch. She places it on a wall-holder, and approaches the altar slowly. GILGAMESH doesn't seem to notice her, but when she gets close he blocks her with his arm. She freezes.)

His eyes are dark and colorless, priestess.

His skin has turned blue and looks not human!

He has slain Heaven's Bull and Humbaba!

How could sleep and disease stop this great man?

He was as strong as I, but now he's dead...

(He shoves her back, and she falls. He rips his shirt off, and gently lays the cloth on ENKIDU's face. He tears off the jewelry he's wearing as well, and drapes it over or puts it on various parts of ENKIDU's body. Finally, he walks quietly out of the room, but while he passes the torch, his hand darts out to knock it out of the holder. Curtains.)

End Act 1

Act 2

Scene 1

(Curtains open to a GILGAMESH looking significantly worse off than before. He's still in his ripped clothes, which have gotten much dirtier since then, as has he. His hair is wild and unclean, and he looks like he hasn't gotten sleep in days. He's in a forest, at the foot of a mountain. Lights are low - it's nearing dawn.)

GILGAMESH:

Utanapishtim became immortal.

Ninsun told me this, though she said not why.

If it's possible, then I will seize it!

I'm not going to die like Enkidu!

SCORPION MAN (OFFSTAGE):

The end of the Earth, godling, you have found.

GILGAMESH:

Who's there? Show yourself! Reveal your face now!

(The SCORPION MAN and SCORPION WOMAN enter.)

S. WOMAN:

Peace, child of gods! Husband, see his flesh -

He's only two thirds god; one third is man.

S. MAN:

Your questing is for Utanapishtim?

You have come far in pursuit of your goal.

What drives you to this quest beyond all man?

GILGAMESH:

I must ask him of life and about death!

He gained eternal life, so how can I?

S. WOMAN:

If you make it through the tunnel to Kur,

You will be the first to have done as such.

Why should my husband and I let you through?

Are you capable of beating the sun?

GILGAMESH

No woman-born man has had my great strength;

I have only ever been matched by one!

If anyone can outrace the sun god,

Then it would be I, the king Gilgamesh!

S. MAN:

If this is the truth, then I bid good luck.

The sun has just exited the tunnel.

You have only a day, then you will die.

It will be sudden immolation then.

Follow us, for the tunnel is hidden.

(Exeunt S. MAN, WOMAN, and GILGAMESH. As they leave, the light fades. GILGAMESH walks through the aisles in the dark, with confident and sure strides. He finally approaches the stage, and as he does so the lights come on suddenly and brightly. They fade softly to a level slightly dimmer than normal. SIDURI is standing in front of her inn, and as GILGAMESH approaches, not noticing her, she backs away slowly than slips into her inn. The door locks with a loud clang of wood, and it catches GILGAMESH's attention.)

GILGAMESH:

Who's there? Who closed this door? What scared you so?

Tell me, I demand, or I'll break this door!

SIDURI:

Who are you, wild one, to make that demand?

GILGAMESH:

I am Gilgamesh, killer of the Bull!

Open your door! It is this I demand!

SIDURI:

Impossible! You cannot be that man!

You don't look like a king, fed and watered!

You look like a drunkard, drunk on his ale!

You look like you stumbled carelessly here,

Not like a man so glorified by all!

GILGAMESH:

You've heard of Enkidu, even down here.

That man of great strength, that man was my friend.

He was killed at the hand of the great gods.

He stood next to me as we slew the Bull,

And fought by my side through every battle.

Why wouldn't I look like a drunken mess?

So let me in, Keeper, and give me food.

(There's a moment of tense silence, then SIDURI unlatches the door. It swings open soon after.)

SIDURI:

Why have you come to the land beyond Earth,

Why have you come beyond Kur's tunnel-gates?

You won't be able to find Enkidu,

So what do you seek deep below the Earth?

GILGAMESH:

Utanapishtim is my only goal;

I want to meet him who went beyond death.

SIDURI:

So you want to cross the Waters of Death?

I cannot help you with such a great task.

Talk to Urshanabi, the ferryman.

Begone! Leave my doorstep, king of Uruk!

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(Lights rise to UTANAPISHTIM sitting by a riverside, with his house in the back. Enter GILGAMESH.)

GILGAMESH:

Stranger! Old man! Where's Utanapishtim?

UTANAPISHTIM:

Who are you, one who looks tired and frail?

You look saddened, lonely, pained in your heart!

GILGAMESH:

I should, old man, do you know Enkidu?

The brave wilderness man and my dear friend?

The gods slew him for a tiny offense!

UTANAPISHTIM:

Then, young king, what brings you to this far land?

Why would you journey so far from Uruk?

GILGAMESH:

I must find the man Utanapishtim.

I cannot die like my friend Enkidu!

I must learn immortality from him!

(UTANAPISHTIM rises to his feet.)

UTANAPISHTIM:

Utanapishtim, the man that you seek,

The man who transcended mortality,

Is the old man standing right before you.

You seek immortality? Listen now!

You cannot escape death! You are mortal!

Eternity does not belong to you.

You should cease this quest now, and return home.

GILGAMESH:

I cannot! I must not die like my friend!

Tell me how you became this way, old man!

UTANAPISHTIM:

You wish to know? Then I will tell you now.

Listen, young king, of a time long ago.

(The light fades on them and they exit, while UTANAPISHTIM begins narrating as lights rise on

YOUNG UTANAPISHTIM, who is crouched next to some reeds.)

The gods saw wrongs with the world ages past.

A council decreed that the world would flood.

Silence was sworn, but Ea thought different...

EA: (OFFSTAGE)

Great reed wall, who cannot tell a secret,

Would you like to know about our great flood?

You mustn't tell a soul, but listen close!

Build a great boat, the size of a city,

And bring only people and food inside.

That is what you should do if you could move.

Of course, reed wall, that is all that you are.

(YOUNG UTANAPISHTIM and the reed wall fade. As he talks about the flood, the lights rise and fall erratically.)

UTANAPISHTIM: (OFFSTAGE)

I built the boat as Ea had told me,

I spent all I had to feed the workmen.

We all got on board, and the rains came down.

The rain even scared the gods far above,

The children of Anu cried in their fear.

After seven nights, the wind and rain stopped.

As the waters receded, all I saw

Were the people of Earth, all turned to clay.

The only survivors were those I brought.

(The lights finally rise again, to reveal them once again at the riverside.)

And that, child of man, is why I am

Immortal, beyond the boundaries of Death.

I beat the gods, so they made me a god.

What about you, young man? What have you done?

(He is silent for a while.)

Sit, Gilgamesh, and try to stay up for

Seven nights without ever sleeping once.

If you succeed, maybe you have a chance.

(GILGAMESH sits, and almost immediately slumps over. UTANAPISHTIM's WIFE exits the house and walks over.)

Look at this mere man, he could not make it

Even to sundown; he's already out.

WIFE:

Then awaken him, husband, you must not

Torment him so by continuing this.

UTANAPISHTIM:

No, let us see if he will deceive us.

We shall see if he is even honest.

Bake loaves of bread, place them beside his head.

We shall give him indisputable proof.

(The lights fall and rise seven times, with WIFE putting out a loaf of bread each time. The loaves get progressively more rotten as the days go on. Finally, UTANAPISHTIM wakes GILGAMESH. GILGAMESH looks around in a panic, before seeing UTANAPISHTIM.)

GILGAMESH:

Thank you, ancestor, for alerting me,

I was about to fall asleep right then.

UTANAPISHTIM:

Look to your side, see the rotten bread loaves?

That is how long you have been asleep for!

GILGAMESH:

Death! Death! Will I ever escape you, Death?

Why must you follow me to every place?

(UTANAPISHTIM shakes his head, and turns towards offstage.)

UTANAPISHTIM:

Urshanabi, ferryman, come to me!

(URSHANABI comes rushing in.)

Why did you bring this man to my doorstep?

Begone, leave my home, and never come back!

And you, failure-king, return to your home!

(WIFE whispers something in his ear, and he sighs.)

Gilgamesh, you have come far from your home.

I'll tell you of a gift, as my wife asks. *(Blackout.)*

Scene 3

(URSHANABI is sitting out on his boat, alone on the sea. After a moment, GILGAMESH comes up behind it from below, soaked and carrying a plant.)

GILGAMESH:

Urshanabi, I've done it! Guess what this is!

I can eat it, and I will regain youth!

I shall wait though, an old man will be first,

To make sure it works, and that it is safe.

Let us land, I must clean off the sea-scum. *(Blackout.)*

Scene 4

(Lights rise to GILGAMESH and URSHANABI walking towards the walls of Uruk, where there's a statue of ENKIDU, adorned with the cloth and jewelry GILGAMESH had put on his body.)

GILGAMESH:

A snake! Cursed serpent! I am a fool...

A mere snake took the plant right from my grasp.

I will never have immortality,

Curses, oh curses, on all that I see!

(He looks up, sees the statue, and pauses in silence for a few minutes, before something visibly dawns on his face, and he laughs for a while.)

That old man...Urshanabi, look at the wall.

Look at the city, this great monument.

This brickwork that owns even the great skies.

The king is the kingdom, the walls my crown.

If my city lives, then I will live too.

Perhaps now I've seen of wisdom's glimmer,

Utanapishtim knew, and now I see,

The Seven Sage walls will last for all days,

And Enkidu and I will be engraved

In stories until the end of all time.

Old sailor, my friend, look at my Uruk!

A vict'ry for man, a credit to gods!

Paradise on Earth, beyond all that's known!

Will my city ever be forgotten?