

# 4 POEMS BY BENJAMIN BAGOCIUS



THIS SERIES OF POEMS DIALOGUES WITH STEPHEN MITCHELL'S  
TRANSLATION OF GILGAMESH (SIMON & SCHUSTER,  
2004). ITALICIZED LANGUAGE, FOR INSTANCE, COMES FROM  
MITCHELL'S TRANSLATION.

## Jesus Takes Mental Notes While Listening to a Storyteller Recite *The Epic of Gilgamesh*

Gilgamesh follows every *emotion*  
to its limit

He reaches *the edge of the world*  
*and made his way back*

His hands drop swords  
and rebuild *Eanna Temple*

Resurrection is to decide  
to think like God

What was ruined  
wasn't

## Jesus Wonders if He'd Consider Gilgamesh a Messiah

The Messiah could be anyone willing  
to make their life's work

a change of perspective,  
the decision to climb stairs

to the temple of the mind  
and separate—as a livelihood—

fear  
from God

## The Storyteller Concludes, Jesus Contemplates

Gilgamesh *at last arrived* where he began  
He returns to his city,

walks its markets and courtyards  
His suffering—mountain trek

and ocean storm; love leashed, then not  
—evaporates

The story is not to have a story

Beginning and ending  
the same place

## After the Story, Jesus Walks Through the City Gardens

Gilgamesh falls in love like God does,  
with everyone

Questions of preference  
play no part in loving

Gilgamesh restores plazas and groves  
for those whom he will never know,

criminals and victims alike

He rebuilds Eanna Temple  
as a resurrection of innocence upon the highest hill

Each time we see another's innocence

we add weight to the grooved stone steps  
to the temple