

gilgamesh stephen mitchell

gilgamesh stephen mitchell is a phrase that brings together two monumental aspects of literary history: the ancient epic of Gilgamesh and the celebrated modern translation by Stephen Mitchell. This article explores the origins of the Epic of Gilgamesh, its significance in world literature, and how Stephen Mitchell's translation has reshaped its accessibility and interpretation for contemporary audiences. Delving into the translation process, key themes, and the cultural impact, we will analyze why Mitchell's version stands out among many others. Readers will gain insight into the story's enduring relevance, its mythological and philosophical layers, and how Stephen Mitchell's work has influenced academic and popular discussions about Gilgamesh. Whether you are a student, literature enthusiast, or someone intrigued by ancient myths, this comprehensive guide will provide a thorough understanding of gilgamesh stephen mitchell and its continued legacy.

- Understanding the Epic of Gilgamesh
- Stephen Mitchell and His Translation
- Key Themes in Mitchell's Gilgamesh
- Translation Process and Techniques
- Cultural and Literary Impact
- Comparing Mitchell's Version to Other Translations
- Frequently Asked Questions about Gilgamesh and Stephen Mitchell

Understanding the Epic of Gilgamesh

The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the oldest known works of literature, originating from ancient Mesopotamia over 4,000 years ago. Written in Akkadian on clay tablets, the epic details the adventures of Gilgamesh, the semi-divine king of Uruk, and his companion Enkidu. This foundational text explores universal themes such as friendship, mortality, the quest for knowledge, and humanity's relationship with the gods. The epic's poetic structure and mythological content have influenced countless later works, making it a cornerstone of literary tradition.

Historical Context of Gilgamesh

The story of Gilgamesh was likely passed down orally before being inscribed on tablets during the second millennium BCE. The epic reflects the values and beliefs of ancient Mesopotamian society, including their views on kingship, religion, and the natural world. Archaeological discoveries in the 19th and 20th centuries brought the tablets to light,

allowing scholars and readers to rediscover the tale.

Main Characters and Plot Overview

- Gilgamesh: King of Uruk, known for his strength and ambition.
- Enkidu: Wild man created by the gods to challenge Gilgamesh, later becomes his closest friend.
- Key events: The confrontation between Gilgamesh and Enkidu, their journey to slay Humbaba, the Bull of Heaven episode, Enkidu's death, and Gilgamesh's quest for immortality.

Stephen Mitchell and His Translation

Stephen Mitchell is an acclaimed American poet, translator, and author known for his accessible renditions of classic texts. His translation of Gilgamesh, first published in 2004, quickly became a bestseller and is widely praised for its clarity, poetic style, and modern sensibility. Mitchell's approach bridges ancient wisdom with contemporary language, making the epic resonate with today's readers.

Background of Stephen Mitchell

Mitchell's career spans several decades, with translations of Rainer Maria Rilke, Lao Tzu, and other significant authors. His expertise in poetry and philosophy informs his translation choices, aiming to preserve the spirit rather than the literal word-for-word meaning. This philosophy is evident in his rendition of Gilgamesh, which prioritizes readability and emotional impact.

Mitchell's Motivations and Influences

Mitchell sought to create a version of Gilgamesh that would engage modern audiences while maintaining the depth and mystery of the original text. He drew upon previous scholarly translations, his own poetic instincts, and intensive research into Mesopotamian culture and language.

Key Themes in Mitchell's Gilgamesh

Mitchell's translation brings forward several core themes present in the Epic of Gilgamesh, emphasizing their relevance to modern readers. His rendition highlights the existential questions and emotional journeys that have made Gilgamesh a timeless story.

Friendship and Loss

The relationship between Gilgamesh and Enkidu is central to the epic. Mitchell's translation accentuates the profound bond between the two characters, exploring how friendship can lead to personal growth, vulnerability, and ultimately, grief.

Mortality and the Search for Meaning

After Enkidu's death, Gilgamesh's quest for immortality becomes a meditation on the limits of human life and the acceptance of mortality. Mitchell's poetic language captures the king's anguish and eventual realization that meaning is found in living fully and leaving a lasting legacy.

Nature, Civilization, and the Divine

- The contrast between the wildness of Enkidu and the civilization of Uruk
- The role of gods in human affairs
- Symbolism of the journey and transformation

Translation Process and Techniques

Stephen Mitchell's translation of Gilgamesh is noted for its innovative approach, blending fidelity to the source material with creative reconstruction. Unlike strictly academic translations, Mitchell's work incorporates poetic license to fill gaps and smooth narrative flow.

Sources and Reference Materials

Mitchell consulted multiple scholarly translations, including those by Andrew George and John Gardner, as well as academic commentaries on Sumerian and Akkadian tablets. He synthesized these sources to create a coherent and captivating narrative.

Poetic Choices and Narrative Structure

- Simplified and modernized language for accessibility
- Use of imagery and rhythm to evoke emotional responses
- Selective omission or expansion where tablets are broken or incomplete

Mitchell's methods have been praised for balancing literary beauty with respect for the original epic's intent.

Cultural and Literary Impact

The publication of *Gilgamesh* by Stephen Mitchell has had a significant impact on how the epic is perceived and studied. Mitchell's translation has reached a broader audience than many previous academic versions, appearing in classrooms, book clubs, and popular media.

Academic Reception

Scholars have responded to Mitchell's work with both admiration and critique, recognizing its strengths in accessibility while debating its faithfulness to the source. Many educators use Mitchell's *Gilgamesh* as an introductory text for students unfamiliar with ancient literature.

Influence on Contemporary Literature

Mitchell's translation has inspired new retellings, adaptations, and creative works. Writers, poets, and playwrights often cite his version as influential in their understanding of myth and heroism.

Broader Cultural Relevance

- Increased interest in Mesopotamian mythology
- Encouragement of cross-cultural dialogue
- Renewed appreciation for ancient texts in the modern era

Comparing Mitchell's Version to Other Translations

There are several notable translations of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, each with distinctive approaches. Mitchell's version stands out for its poetic sensibility and accessibility, compared to more literal or academic interpretations.

Key Differences in Translation Style

- Mitchell's *Gilgamesh* prioritizes readability and emotional resonance
- Academic translations focus on exactness and linguistic fidelity
- Mitchell's creative reconstructions fill narrative gaps, enhancing flow

Reader Reception and Popularity

Mitchell's translation is often recommended for general readers, while scholars may prefer more technical versions. Its widespread popularity has helped bring the epic into mainstream literary discourse, ensuring its continued relevance.

Frequently Asked Questions about Gilgamesh and Stephen Mitchell

Q: Who was Gilgamesh in ancient Mesopotamian mythology?

A: Gilgamesh was a legendary king of Uruk, depicted as a heroic figure in Sumerian and Akkadian myths. He is known for his strength, wisdom, and his quest for immortality, which forms the central narrative of the Epic of Gilgamesh.

Q: What makes Stephen Mitchell's translation of Gilgamesh unique?

A: Stephen Mitchell's translation is renowned for its poetic style and accessibility. Unlike strictly academic versions, Mitchell uses modern language and narrative techniques to make the epic engaging for contemporary readers.

Q: What are the main themes emphasized in Mitchell's Gilgamesh?

A: The main themes include friendship, grief, the search for immortality, acceptance of human mortality, and the interplay between civilization and nature.

Q: How did Stephen Mitchell approach the translation process?

A: Mitchell combined scholarly translations, poetic intuition, and creative reconstruction to produce a readable and emotionally resonant version. He filled gaps in the damaged tablets with informed narrative choices.

Q: How does Mitchell's version compare to other translations?

A: Mitchell's translation is more accessible and poetic, while other versions tend to be more literal and focused on linguistic accuracy. His version is popular among general

readers and educators.

Q: Why is the Epic of Gilgamesh considered important in world literature?

A: The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the earliest surviving works of literature. It has shaped literary traditions, influenced major works, and offers profound insights into human nature and ancient cultures.

Q: What impact has Mitchell's Gilgamesh had on modern culture?

A: Mitchell's translation has revitalized interest in ancient mythology, inspired creative adaptations, and made the epic accessible to a wider audience.

Q: Does Mitchell's translation stay faithful to the original text?

A: While Mitchell aims to preserve the spirit of the original, he takes creative liberties to fill gaps and enhance storytelling, which some scholars debate in terms of strict fidelity.

Q: Where can Mitchell's Gilgamesh be found?

A: Stephen Mitchell's Gilgamesh is widely available in bookstores, libraries, and online retailers, making it one of the most accessible versions of the epic.

Q: What lessons can readers learn from Gilgamesh and Mitchell's translation?

A: Readers can learn about friendship, the value of life, the acceptance of mortality, and the timeless quest for meaning, all presented in a compelling and poetic narrative.

[Gilgamesh Stephen Mitchell](#)

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Gilgamesh: Stephen Mitchell's Enduring Translation

Are you fascinated by ancient epics and their enduring relevance to modern life? Then prepare to delve into the world of Stephen Mitchell's translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. This post will explore Mitchell's acclaimed version, examining its impact, its unique qualities, and why it remains a cornerstone of Gilgamesh scholarship and popular appreciation. We'll unpack his stylistic choices, analyze his contribution to the text's accessibility, and consider the ongoing debates surrounding his interpretation. Get ready to explore the enduring legacy of Gilgamesh through the lens of Stephen Mitchell's masterful translation.

The Significance of Mitchell's Translation

Stephen Mitchell's translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, published in 1988, stands apart from other versions due to its remarkable accessibility and poetic flair. Unlike many scholarly translations that prioritize literal accuracy over readability, Mitchell aimed for a version that captured the epic's emotional core and dramatic sweep while remaining faithful to the original text's essence. This approach made the epic accessible to a wider audience, moving it beyond the confines of academic circles and into the hands of general readers. His translation sparked renewed interest in the epic, introducing it to a new generation captivated by its timeless themes of mortality, friendship, and the search for meaning.

Stylistic Choices and Their Impact

Mitchell's translation is characterized by its lyrical prose and modern idiom. He avoids archaic language and overly formal structures, opting instead for a style that feels both contemporary and deeply resonant. This stylistic choice significantly enhances the reader's engagement, allowing the narrative's power to unfold naturally. He utilizes vivid imagery and evocative language, bringing the ancient world to life with a palpable sense of immediacy. This accessible yet evocative style is a key reason why his version has become so influential and widely read.

Accessibility and its Contribution to Popular Understanding

Prior to Mitchell's translation, accessing *The Epic of Gilgamesh* often required navigating complex scholarly texts. His work democratized the epic, making it available to a much broader audience, including students, casual readers, and those simply curious about ancient literature. This increased accessibility has significantly contributed to a wider popular understanding and appreciation of the epic's enduring themes and its place within the broader context of world literature. It's arguably the reason why many encounter Gilgamesh for the first time – through Mitchell's version.

Debates and Criticisms of Mitchell's Interpretation

While highly lauded, Mitchell's translation isn't without its critics. Some scholars argue that his focus on readability compromises the nuances and complexities of the original Sumerian text. They point to instances where Mitchell's interpretive choices might subtly alter the meaning or emphasis of certain passages. These criticisms highlight the inherent challenges of translating ancient texts and the inevitable subjective interpretations involved in such a process. The debate underscores the fact that no single translation can be definitively "correct," and each offers a unique perspective on the original work.

The Enduring Legacy of Mitchell's Gilgamesh

Despite the ongoing scholarly debate, Stephen Mitchell's translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* remains a landmark achievement. Its enduring popularity testifies to its success in making this ancient epic accessible and engaging for a modern audience. His lyrical style, coupled with his commitment to capturing the emotional core of the story, has cemented his version as a crucial gateway to understanding and appreciating one of the world's oldest and most influential works of literature. It's a testament to the power of effective translation in bridging the gap between ancient cultures and the contemporary world.

Conclusion:

Stephen Mitchell's translation of *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is more than just a rendering of an ancient text; it's a literary accomplishment that has profoundly shaped how many people engage with this monumental work. Its accessibility, poetic language, and emotional resonance continue to make it a vital resource for readers and scholars alike, ensuring the epic's enduring legacy for generations to come.

FAQs:

1. Is Stephen Mitchell's translation the only good translation of Gilgamesh? No, several excellent translations exist, each with its strengths and weaknesses. Mitchell's version is particularly praised for its readability and poetic style, but others prioritize different aspects, such as linguistic accuracy or a specific scholarly approach.
2. What makes Mitchell's translation unique? Mitchell prioritized readability and poetic flow, using modern language and imagery to bring the epic to life for a contemporary audience. This contrasts with many more literal and scholarly translations.
3. Are there any significant differences between Mitchell's translation and other versions? Yes, subtle differences in interpretation and emphasis can exist, particularly regarding specific passages or characters. These differences often stem from the inherent challenges of translating ancient languages and the translator's subjective choices.

4. Is Mitchell's translation suitable for academic study? While some scholars might prefer more literal translations for detailed textual analysis, Mitchell's version is often used in introductory courses or as supplementary reading due to its accessibility and engaging style.

5. Where can I find Stephen Mitchell's translation of Gilgamesh? It's widely available in bookstores, both physical and online, as well as through major ebook retailers. Checking your local library is also a great option.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Gilgamesh* Stephen Mitchell, 2004 An English-language rendering of the world's oldest epic seeks to convey the work's literary richness and follows the journey of conquest and self-discovery by the heroic king of Uruk, in an edition complemented by an introduction that places the story in its historical, spiritual, and cultural context. By the author and translator of *The Book of Job* and *Tao Te Ching*. 50,000 first printing.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Iliad* Homer, 2011-10-11 TOLSTOY CALLED THE ILIAD A miracle; Goethe said that it always thrust him into a state of astonishment. Homer's story is thrilling, and his Greek is perhaps the most beautiful poetry ever sung or written. But until now, even the best English translations haven't been able to re-create the energy and simplicity, the speed, grace, and pulsing rhythm of the original. In Stephen Mitchell's *Iliad*, the epic story resounds again across 2,700 years, as if the lifeblood of its heroes Achilles and Patroclus, Hector and Priam flows in every word. And we are there with them, amid the horror and ecstasy of war, carried along by a poetry that lifts even the most devastating human events into the realm of the beautiful. Mitchell's *Iliad* is the first translation based on the work of the preeminent Homeric scholar Martin L. West, whose edition of the original Greek identifies many passages that were added after the *Iliad* was first written down, to the detriment of the music and the story. Omitting these hundreds of interpolated lines restores a dramatically sharper, leaner text. In addition, Mitchell's illuminating introduction opens the epic still further to our understanding and appreciation. Now, thanks to Stephen Mitchell's scholarship and the power of his language, the *Iliad*'s ancient story comes to moving, vivid new life.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Odyssey* Homer, 2013-10-01 From Stephen Mitchell, the renowned translator whose *Iliad* was named one of *The New Yorker*'s Favorite Books of 2011, comes a vivid new translation of the *Odyssey*, complete with textual notes and an illuminating introductory essay. The hardcover publication of the *Odyssey* received glowing reviews: *The New York Times* praised "Mitchell's fresh, elegant diction and the care he lavishes on meter, [which] brought me closer to the transfigurative experience Keats describes on reading Chapman's Homer"; *Booklist*, in a starred review, said that "Mitchell retells the first, still greatest adventure story in Western literature with clarity, sweep, and force"; and John Banville, author of *The Sea*, called this translation "a masterpiece." The *Odyssey* is the original hero's journey, an epic voyage into the unknown, and has inspired other creative work for millennia. With its consummately modern hero, full of guile and wit, always prepared to reinvent himself in order to realize his heart's desire—to return to his home and family after ten years of war—the *Odyssey* now speaks to us again across 2,600 years. In words of great poetic power, this translation brings Odysseus and his adventures to life as never before. Stephen Mitchell's language keeps the diction close to spoken English, yet its rhythms recreate the oceanic surge of the ancient Greek. Full of imagination and light, beauty and humor, this *Odyssey* carries you along in a fast stream of action and imagery. Just as Mitchell "re-energised the *Iliad* for a new generation" (*The Sunday Telegraph*), his *Odyssey* is the noblest, clearest, and most captivating rendition of one of the defining masterpieces of Western literature.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The First Christmas* Stephen Mitchell, 2021-11-09 "I love *The First Christmas*. What a charming way Stephen Mitchell has found to tell my favorite story of all, the Nativity, character by character (I love the donkey and the ox), with wise and thrilling interludes about God, reality, truth." -Anne Lamott In *The First Christmas*, Stephen Mitchell brings the Nativity

story to vivid life as never before. A narrative that is only sketched out in two Gospels becomes fully realized here with nuanced characters and a setting that reflects the culture of the time. Mitchell has suffused the birth of Jesus with a sense of beauty that will delight and astonish readers. In this version, we see the world through the eyes of a Whitmanesque ox and a visionary donkey, starry-eyed shepherds and Zen-like wise men, each of them providing a unique perspective on a scene that is, in Western culture, the central symbol for good tidings of great joy. Rather than superimposing later Christian concepts onto the Annunciation and Nativity scenes, he imagines Mary and Joseph experiencing the angelic message as a young Jewish woman and man living in the year 4 bce might have experienced it, with terror, dismay, and ultimate acceptance. In this context, their yes becomes an act of great moral courage. Readers of every background will be enchanted by this startlingly beautiful reimagining of the Christmas tale.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Beowulf , 2017-01-01 A widely celebrated translator's vivid, accessible, and elegantly concise rendering of an ancient English masterpiece Beowulf tells the story of a Scandinavian hero who defeats three evil creatures--a huge, cannibalistic ogre named Grendel, Grendel's monstrous mother, and a dragon--and then dies, mortally wounded during his last encounter. If the definition of a superhero is someone who uses his special powers to fight evil, then Beowulf is our first English superhero story, and arguably our best. It is also a deeply pious poem, so bold in its reverence for a virtuous pagan past that it teeters on the edge of heresy. From beginning to end, we feel we are in the hands of a master storyteller. Stephen Mitchell's marvelously clear and vivid rendering re-creates the robust masculine music of the original. It both hews closely to the meaning of the Old English and captures its wild energy and vitality, not just as a deep work of literature but also as a rousing entertainment that can still stir our feelings and rivet our attention today, after more than a thousand years. This new translation--spare, sinuous, vigorous in its narration, and translucent in its poetry--makes a masterpiece accessible to everyone.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Gospel According to Jesus Stephen Mitchell, 2009-03-17 A dazzling presentation of the life and teachings of Jesus by the eminent scholar and translator Stephen Mitchell.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Way of Forgiveness Stephen Mitchell, 2019-09-17 "A unique and special kind of masterpiece." —John Banville Stephen Mitchell's gift is to breathe new life into ancient classics. In *Joseph and the Way of Forgiveness*, he offers us his riveting novelistic version of the Biblical tale in which Jacob's favorite son is sold into slavery and eventually becomes viceroy of Egypt. Tolstoy called it the most beautiful story in the world. What's new here is the lyrical, witty, vivid prose, informed by a wisdom that brings fresh insight to this foundational legend of betrayal and all-embracing forgiveness. Mitchell's retelling, which reads like a postmodern novel, interweaves the narrative with brief meditations that, with their Zen surprises, expand the narrative and illuminate its main themes. By stepping inside the minds of Joseph and the other characters, Mitchell reanimates one of the central stories of Western culture. The engrossing tale that he has created will capture the hearts and minds of modern readers and show them that this ancient story can still challenge, delight, and astonish.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Second Book of the Tao Stephen Mitchell, 2009-02-19 Enhanced by Stephen Mitchell's illuminating commentary, the next volume of the classic manual on the art of living *The most widely translated book in world literature after the Bible*, Lao-tzu's *Tao Te Ching*, or *Book of the Way*, is the classic manual on the art of living. Following the phenomenal success of his own version of the *Tao Te Ching*, renowned scholar and translator Stephen Mitchell has composed the innovative *The Second Book of the Tao*. Drawn from the work of Lao-tzu's disciple Chuang-tzu and Confucius's grandson Tzussu, *The Second Book of the Tao* offers Western readers a path into reality that has nothing to do with Taoism or Buddhism or old or new alone, but everything to do with truth. Mitchell has selected the freshest, clearest teachings from these two great students of the Tao and adapted them into versions that reveal the poetry, depth, and humor of the original texts with a thrilling new power. Alongside each adaptation, Mitchell includes his own commentary, at once explicating and complementing the text. This book is a twenty-first-century form of ancient

wisdom, bringing a new, homemade sequel to the Tao Te Ching into the modern world. Mitchell's renditions are radiantly lucid; they dig out the vision that's hiding beneath the words; they grab the text by the scruff of the neck—by its heart, really—and let its essential meanings fall out. The book introduces us to a cast of vivid characters, most of them humble artisans or servants, who show us what it means to be in harmony with the way things are. Its wisdom provides a psychological and moral acuity as deep as the Tao Te Ching itself. The Second Book of the Tao is a gift to contemporary readers, granting us access to our own fundamental wisdom. Mitchell's meditations and risky reimagining of the original texts are brilliant and liberating, not least because they keep catching us off-guard, opening up the heavens where before we saw a roof. He makes the ancient teachings at once modern, relevant, and timeless. Listen to a special podcast with Stephen Mitchell:

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Ugly Duckling Hans Christian Andersen, 2005-09 An ugly duckling spends an unhappy year ostracized by the other animals before he grows into a beautiful swan.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Question Your Thinking, Change the World Byron Katie, 2007-10-01 "A spiritual innovator for the new millennium." —Time "Byron Katie's Work is a great blessing for our planet." —Eckhart Tolle Inspirational quotes to help you along your journey of self-inquiry as you navigate love and relationships; sickness and health; work and money; and much more. The profound, lighthearted wisdom embodied within is not theoretical; it is absolutely authentic. Here, she discusses the most essential issues that face us all: • Love, Sex, and Relationships • Health, Sickness, and Death • Parents and Children • Work and Money • Self-Realization Not only will this book help you with you these specific issues, but it will point you toward your own wisdom and will encourage you to question your own mind, using the 4 simple yet incredibly powerful questions of Katie's process of self-inquiry, called The Work. 1) Is it true? 2) Can you absolutely know that it's true? 3) How do you react when you believe that thought? 4) Who would you be without the thought? Katie is a living example of the clear, all-embracing love that is our true identity. Because she has thoroughly questioned her own mind, her words shine with the joy of understanding. "People used to ask me if I was enlightened," she says, "and I would say, 'I don't know anything about that. I'm just someone who knows the difference between what hurts and what doesn't.' I'm someone who wants only what is. To meet as a friend each concept that arose turned out to be my freedom.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Enlightened Heart Stephen Mitchell, 2011-01-25 From Stephen Mitchell comes an anthology of poetry chosen from the world's great religious and literary traditions--the perfect companion to Mitchel's bestselling translation of Tao Te Ching • The Upanishads • The Book of Psalms • Lao-tzu • The Bhagavad Gita • Chuang-tzu • The Odes of Solomon • Seng-ts'an • Han-shan • Li Po • Tu Fu • Layman P'ang • Kukai • Tung-shan • Symeon the New Theologian • Izumi Shikibu • Su Tung-p'o • Hildegard of Bingen • Francis of Assisi • Wu-men • Dōgen • Rumi • Mechthild of Magdeburg • Dante • Kabir Mirabai • William Shakespeare • George Herbert • Bunan • Gensei • Angelus Silesius • Thomas Traherne • Basho • William Blake • Ryōkan • Issa • Ghalib • Bibi Hayati • Walt Whitman • Emily Dickinson • Gerard Manley Hopkins • Uvavnu • Anonymous Navaho • W. B. Yeats • Antonio Machado • Rainer Maria Rilke • Wallace Stevens • D.H. Lawrence • Robinson Jeffers

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Gilgamesh Michael Schmidt, 2019-09-24 Reflections on a lost poem and its rediscovery by contemporary poets Gilgamesh is the most ancient long poem known to exist. It is also the newest classic in the canon of world literature. Lost for centuries to the sands of the Middle East but found again in the 1850s, it tells the story of a great king, his heroism, and his eventual defeat. It is a story of monsters, gods, and cataclysms, and of intimate friendship and love. Acclaimed literary historian Michael Schmidt provides a unique meditation on the rediscovery of Gilgamesh and its profound influence on poets today. Schmidt describes how the poem is a work in progress even now, an undertaking that has drawn on the talents and obsessions of an unlikely cast of characters, from archaeologists and museum curators to tomb raiders and jihadis. Fragments of the poem, incised on clay tablets, were scattered across a huge expanse of desert when it was

recovered in the nineteenth century. The poem had to be reassembled, its languages deciphered. The discovery of a pre-Noah flood story was front-page news on both sides of the Atlantic, and the poem's allure only continues to grow as additional cuneiform tablets come to light. Its translation, interpretation, and integration are ongoing. In this illuminating book, Schmidt discusses the special fascination Gilgamesh holds for contemporary poets, arguing that part of its appeal is its captivating otherness. He reflects on the work of leading poets such as Charles Olson, Louis Zukofsky, and Yusef Komunyakaa, whose own encounters with the poem are revelatory, and he reads its many translations and editions to bring it vividly to life for readers.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Epic of Gilgamesh* , 1973-10-25 Gilgamesh, King of Uruk, and his companion Enkidu are the only heroes to have survived from the ancient literature of Babylon, immortalized in this epic poem that dates back to the 3rd millennium BC. Together they journey to the Spring of Youth, defeat the Bull of Heaven and slay the monster Humbaba. When Enkidu dies, Gilgamesh's grief and fear of death are such that they lead him to undertake a quest for eternal life. A timeless tale of morality, tragedy and pure adventure, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is a landmark literary exploration of man's search for immortality.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Buried Book* David Damrosch, 2007-12-26 A "lively and accessible" history of the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh, and its sensational rediscovery in the nineteenth century (*The Boston Sunday Globe*). Composed in Middle Babylonia around 1200 BCE, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* foreshadowed later stories that would become as fundamental as any in human history: the Bible, Homer, *The Thousand and One Nights*. But in 600 BCE, the clay tablets that bore the story were lost—buried beneath ashes and ruins when the library of the wild king Ashurbanipal was sacked in a raid. *The Buried Book* begins with the rediscovery of the forgotten epic and its deciphering in 1872 by George Smith, a brilliant self-taught linguist who created a sensation—and controversy—when he discovered Gilgamesh among the thousands of tablets in the British Museum's collection. From there the story goes backward in time, all the way to Gilgamesh himself. Damrosch reveals the story as a literary bridge between East and West: a document lost in Babylonia, discovered by an Iraqi, decoded by an Englishman, and appropriated in novels by both Philip Roth and Saddam Hussein. This is an illuminating, fast-paced tale of history as it was written, stolen, lost, and—after 2,000 years, countless battles, fevered digs, conspiracies, and revelations—finally found. "Damrosch creates vivid portraits of archaeologists, Assyriologists, and ancient kings, lending his history an almost novelistic sense of character. [He] has done a superb job of bringing what was buried to life." —*The New York Times Book Review* "As astounding as the content of the Epic of Gilgamesh in which the questing hero travels to the underworld and back . . . superb and engrossing." —*Booklist* (starred review) "Damrosch's fascinating literary sleuthing will appeal to scholars and lay readers alike." —*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Gilgamesh* , 2003-07-08 National Book Award Finalist: The most widely read and enduring interpretation of this ancient Babylonian epic. One of the oldest and most universal stories known in literature, the epic of Gilgamesh presents the grand, timeless themes of love and death, loss and reparations, within the stirring tale of a hero-king and his doomed friend. A National Book Award finalist, Herbert Mason's retelling is at once a triumph of scholarship, a masterpiece of style, and a labor of love that grew out of the poet's long affinity with the original. "Mr. Mason's version is the one I would recommend to the first-time reader." —Victor Howes, *The Christian Science Monitor* "Like the Tolkien cycle, this poem will be read with profit and joy for generations to come." —William Alfred, Harvard University

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Tao Te Ching* Laozi, 1972

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Tao Te Ching Journal* Stephen Mitchell, 2011-04-01 Some thoughts deserve to be put into words – or pictures. Keep a record of your own personal journey in this journal inspired by Lao Tzu's timeless guide to the art of living, the *Tao Te Ching*. Key passages from Stephen Mitchell's wonderful translation, illustrated with ancient Chinese paintings, feature on the undated pages.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Gilgamesh* David Ferry, 2014-11-11 A new verse rendering of

the great epic of ancient Mesopotamia, one of the oldest works in Western Literature. Ferry makes Gilgamesh available in the kind of energetic and readable translation that Robert Fitzgerald and Richard Lattimore have provided for readers in their translations of Homer and Virgil.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *When Heroes Love* Susan Ackerman, 2005 Toward the end of the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh King, Gilgamesh laments the untimely death of his comrade Enkidu, 'my friend whom I loved dearly'. This book examines the stories' sexual and homoerotic language and suggests that its ambiguity provides fresh ways of understanding ideas of gender and sexuality in the ancient Near East.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Letters to a Young Poet* Rainer Maria Rilke, 2021-06-01 A fresh perspective on a beloved classic by acclaimed translators Anita Barrows and Joanna Macy. German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's (1875-1926) *Letters to a Young Poet* has been treasured by readers for nearly a century. Rilke's personal reflections on the vocation of writing and the experience of living urge an aspiring poet to look inward, while also offering sage wisdom on further issues including gender, solitude, and romantic love. Barrows and Macy's translation extends this compilation of timeless advice and wisdom to a fresh generation of readers. With a new introduction and commentary, this edition places the letters in the context of today's world and the unique challenges we face when seeking authenticity.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *A Thousand Names for Joy* Byron Katie, Stephen Mitchell, 2007-02-06 In her first two books, Byron Katie showed how suffering can be ended by questioning the stressful thoughts that create it, through a process of self-inquiry she calls *The Work*. Now, in *A Thousand Names for Joy*, she encourages us to discover the freedom that lives on the other side of inquiry. Stephen Mitchell—the renowned translator of the *Tao Te Ching*—selected provocative excerpts from that ancient text as a stimulus for Katie to talk about the most essential issues that face us all: life and death, good and evil, love, work, and fulfillment. The result is a book that allows the timeless insights of the *Tao Te Ching* to resonate anew for us today, while offering a vivid and illuminating glimpse into the life of someone who for twenty years—ever since she “woke up to reality” one morning in 1986—has been living what Lao-tzu wrote more than 2,500 years ago. Katie's profound, lighthearted wisdom is not theoretical; it is absolutely authentic. That is what makes this book so compelling. It's a portrait of a woman who is imperturbably joyous, whether she is dancing with her infant granddaughter or finds that her house has been emptied out by burglars, whether she stands before a man about to kill her or embarks on the adventure of walking to the kitchen, whether she learns that she is going blind, flunks a “How Good a Lover Are You?” test, or is diagnosed with cancer. With her stories of total ease in all circumstances, Katie does more than describe the awakened mind; she lets you see it, feel it, in action. And she shows you how that mind is yours as well.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Essence of Wisdom* Stephen Mitchell, 1998 A renowned writer and translator presents an anthology of essential quotations from the masters of spiritual wisdom, including The Buddha, Lao-tzu, Heraclitus, the Zen and Sufi masters, Spinoza, Blake, Emerson, Rilke, and other timeless sages.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Inventory* Dionne Brand, 2006-03-28 In Dionne Brand's incantatory, deeply engaged, beautifully crafted long poem, the question is asked, What would an inventory of the tumultuous early years of this new century have to account for? Alert to the upheavals that mark those years, Brand bears powerful witness to the seemingly unending wars, the ascendance of fundamentalisms, the nameless casualties that bloom out from near and distant streets. An inventory in form and substance, Brand's poem reckons with the revolutionary songs left to fragment, the postmodern cities drowned and blistering, the devastation flickering across TV screens grown rhythmic and predictable. *Inventory* is an urgent and burning lamentation.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Loving What Is, Revised Edition* Byron Katie, Stephen Mitchell, 2021-12-07 Discover the truth hiding behind troubling thoughts with Byron Katie's self-help classic. In 2003, Byron Katie first introduced the world to *The Work* with the publication of *Loving What Is*. Nearly twenty years later, *Loving What Is* continues to inspire people all over the

world to do The Work; to listen to the answers they find inside themselves; and to open their minds to profound, spacious, and life-transforming insights. The Work is simply four questions that, when applied to a specific problem, enable you to see what is troubling you in an entirely different light. Loving What Is shows you step by step, through clear and vivid examples, exactly how to use this revolutionary process for yourself. In this revised edition, readers will enjoy seven new dialogues, or real examples of Katie doing The Work with people to discover the root cause of their suffering. You will observe people work their way through a broad range of human problems, learning freedom through the very thoughts that had caused their suffering—thoughts such as “my husband betrayed me” or “my mother doesn’t love me enough.” If you continue to do The Work, you may discover that the questioning flows into every aspect of your life, effortlessly undoing the stressful thoughts that keep you from experiencing peace. Loving What Is offers everything you need to learn and live this remarkable process, and to find happiness as what Katie calls “a lover of reality.”

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Meetings with the Archangel* Stephen Mitchell, 1999 This text centres on the narrator's spiritual growth. It tells of his quest for enlightenment and his search for the eternal questions - what God is, what love is, how we should live and how we can respond to evil. The book gives a profound and humorous insight into a wide variety of spiritual practices ranging from a broccoli smoking Jewish community through to a formidable tradition of Zen teachers. Tracing its lineage to the reverent irreverence of the Zen masters and the dialogues of Plato, it meets the reader at the crossroads of humour and profound wisdom.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Gilgamesh the Hero*, 2002 A major publishing event - two of the UK's outstanding prize-winning artists working together for the first time The legend of Gilgamesh is the oldest written story, pre-dating both The Bible and The Iliad. An epic story about a quest for immortality, it also includes a legend of the Flood that is remarkably similar to the story of Noah.* Geraldine McCaughrean has won every major prize for children's literature in this country, including the Carnegie Medal, the Whitbread Award, the Guardian Children's Fiction Award, and, most recently, The Blue Peter Best Book to Keep Forever Award.* David Parkins is a highly acclaimed artist, and has been shortlisted for the Kurt Maschler and Smarties awards. He received many critical accolades for God's Story with Jan Mark

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Written World* Martin Puchner, 2017 The story of literature in sixteen acts, from Alexander the Great and the Iliad to ebooks and Harry Potter, this engaging book brings together remarkable people and surprising events to show how writing shaped cultures, religions, and the history of the world--

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *Full Woman, Fleshly Apple, Hot Moon* Pablo Neruda, Stephen Mitchell, 2009-06-30 Full woman, fleshly apple, hot moon, thick smell of seaweed, crushed mud and light, what obscure brilliance opens between your columns? What ancient night does a man touch with his senses? Loving is a journey with water and with stars, with smothered air and abrupt storms of flour: loving is a clash of lightning-bolts and two bodies defeated by a single drop of honey. The poetry of Pablo Neruda is beloved worldwide for its passion, humor, and exceptional accessibility. The nearly fifty poems selected for this collection and translated by Stephen Mitchell—widely praised for his original and definitive translations of spiritual writings and poetry—focus on Neruda's mature period, when the poet was in his fifties. A bilingual volume, with Neruda's original Spanish text facing Mitchell's English translation, it will bring Neruda's sensuous work to vibrant life for a whole new generation of readers.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Enlightened Mind* Stephen Mitchell, 1993-04-16 A magnificent compilation of sacred writings from all traditions and the perfect companion to Stephen Mitchell's poetry collection, *The Enlightened Heart*, and the bestselling *Tao Te Ching*.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: *The Play of Gilgamesh* Edwin Morgan, 2005 Edwin Morgan's verse play translation of the Sumerian epic of Gilgamesh brings an ancient story to life in a supple, vigorous idiom that moves easily between ritual, comedy and moments of intense beauty. Here a god-king, a great city builder, learns the timeless truth that the only immortality lies in what will be remembered and recorded of his actions. Gilgamesh's quest takes him, and the audience, on a

journey through a world that is both mythic and familiar, inhabited by terrifying demons and disappeared political prisoners, by gods and singing transvestites and a Glaswegian jester and by Enkidu, the beloved child of nature who dies of a virus in the blood, through whom Gilgamesh learns to understand the meaning of loss.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Gilgamesh Sophus Helle, 2021-01-01 A poem for the ages, freshly and accessibly translated by an international rising star, bringing together scholarly precision and poetic grace Sophus Helle's new translation . . . [is] a thrilling, enchanting, desperate thing to read.--Nina MacLaughlin, Boston Globe Looks to be the last word on this Babylonian masterpiece.--Michael Dirda, Washington Post Gilgamesh is a Babylonian epic from three thousand years ago, which tells of King Gilgamesh's deep love for the wild man Enkidu and his pursuit of immortality when Enkidu dies. It is a story about love between men; loss and grief; the confrontation with death; the destruction of nature; insomnia and restlessness; finding peace in one's community; the voice of women; the folly of gods, heroes, and monsters--and more. Millennia after its composition, Gilgamesh continues to speak to us in myriad ways. Translating directly from the Akkadian, Sophus Helle offers a literary translation that reproduces the original epic's poetic effects, including its succinct clarity and enchanting cadence. An introduction and five accompanying essays unpack the history and main themes of the epic, guiding readers to a deeper appreciation of this ancient masterpiece.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Earth Force Shemer Kuznits, 2019-04-30 On the first day, a mist descended from the heavens blanketing Earth. On the second day, a cryptic message, 'Infusion commencing', appeared in the corner of everyone's eyes. On the third day, the sick were healed and the crippled walked again. On the fourth day, celebration and joy spread across the globe. And on the fifth day, the warping began...There was no warning. A mist descended from the sky, disabling all technology and causing a weird message to appear at the corner of everyone's eye. The situation grew even worse as animals and people started to warp, transforming into terrible monsters that prey on the livings. Within months, human civilization had crumbled. Unable to fight the seemingly-indestructible beasts, the survivors are reduced to cowering in reinforced shelters. Waiting for the end to come. Helpless. All seemed lost until a few brave souls discovered the secret of their new reality: the Tec and how to use it to level up. Together they represent humanity's last best hope for salvation. But they first must find the answers to the mystery of their new existence. Their journey will require them to quickly adapt to alien technology, operate strange spaceships, and even befriend an extra-terrestrial merchant with an Inferiority Complex.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Dead Famous Greg Jenner, 2021-08-19 Celebrity, with its neon glow and selfie pout, strikes us as hypermodern. But the famous and infamous have been thrilling, titillating, and outraging us for much longer than we might realise. Whether it was the scandalous Lord Byron, whose poetry sent female fans into an erotic frenzy; or the cheetah-owning, coffin-sleeping, one-legged French actress Sarah Bernhardt, who launched a violent feud with her former best friend; or Edmund Kean, the dazzling Shakespearean actor whose monstrous ego and terrible alcoholism saw him nearly murdered by his own audience - the list of stars whose careers burned bright before the Age of Television is extensive and thrillingly varied. Celebrities could be heroes or villains; warriors or murderers; brilliant talents, or fraudsters with a flair for fibbing; trendsetters, wilful provocateurs, or tragic victims marketed as freaks of nature. Some craved fame while others had it forced upon them. A few found fame as small children, some had to wait decades to get their break. But uniting them all is the shared origin point: since the early 1700s, celebrity has been one of the most emphatic driving forces in popular culture; it is a lurid cousin to Ancient Greek ideas of glorious and notorious reputation, and its emergence helped to shape public attitudes to ethics, national identity, religious faith, wealth, sexuality, and gender roles. In this ambitious history, that spans the Bronze Age to the coming of Hollywood's Golden Age, Greg Jenner assembles a vibrant cast of over 125 actors, singers, dancers, sportspeople, freaks, demigods, ruffians, and more, in search of celebrity's historical roots. He reveals why celebrity burst into life in the early eighteenth century, how it differs to ancient ideas of fame, the techniques through which it was

acquired, how it was maintained, the effect it had on public tastes, and the psychological burden stardom could place on those in the glaring limelight.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Epic of Gilgamesh Gilgamesh, 2001 The Epic of Gilgamesh is the world's oldest epic masterpiece.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Tales from Ovid Ted Hughes, 1999-03-30 A powerful version of the Latin classic by England's late Poet Laureate, now in paperback. When it was published in 1997, *Tales from Ovid* was immediately recognized as a classic in its own right, as the best rering of Ovid in generations, and as a major book in Ted Hughes's oeuvre. The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid stands with the works of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton as a classic of world poetry; Hughes translated twenty-four of its stories with great power and directness. The result is the liveliest twentieth-century version of the classic, at once a delight for the Latinist and an appealing introduction to Ovid for the general reader.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Epic of Gilgamesh, 2003-04-29 Andrew George's masterly new translation (The Times) of the world's first truly great work of literature A Penguin Classic Miraculously preserved on clay tablets dating back as much as four thousand years, the poem of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, is the world's oldest epic, predating Homer by many centuries. The story tells of Gilgamesh's adventures with the wild man Enkidu, and of his arduous journey to the ends of the earth in quest of the Babylonian Noah and the secret of immortality. Alongside its themes of family, friendship and the duties of kings, the Epic of Gilgamesh is, above all, about mankind's eternal struggle with the fear of death. The Babylonian version has been known for over a century, but linguists are still deciphering new fragments in Akkadian and Sumerian. Andrew George's gripping translation brilliantly combines these into a fluent narrative and will long rank as the definitive English Gilgamesh. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Myths from Mesopotamia Stephanie Dalley, 2000 The stories translated here all of ancient Mesopotamia, and include not only myths about the Creation and stories of the Flood, but also the longest and greatest literary composition, the Epic of Gilgamesh. This is the story of a heroic quest for fame and immortality, pursued by a man of great strength who loses a unique opportunity through a moment's weakness. So much has been discovered in recent years both by way of new tablets and points of grammar and lexicography that these new translations by Stephanie Dalley supersede all previous versions. -- from back cover.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: Jesus Stephen Mitchell, 2002 Presents an account of the life of Jesus, using what the author considers to be the most authentic sources.

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Chaldean Account of the Deluge George Smith,

gilgamesh stephen mitchell: The Frog Prince Stephen Mitchell, 1999 In this brilliant jewel of a book, the best-selling author of *Tao Te Ching: A New English Version* expands and deepens the classic fairy tale in the most surprising and delightful ways, giving new emphasis to its message of the transcendent power of love. The Frog Prince tells the story of a meditative frog's love for a rebellious princess, how she came to love him in spite of herself, and how her refusal to compromise helped him become who he truly was. This is a magical book that moves (amphibiously) from story to meditation and back, from the outrageous to the philosophical to the silly to the sublime. Profound, touching, written in prose as lively and unpredictable as a dream, *The Frog Prince* tickles the mind, opens the heart, and holds up a mirror to the soul.

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