

At twenty leagues they broke bread,  
At thirty leagues they pitched camp:  
Fifty leagues they travelled in the course of a day,  
By the third day a march of a month and a half;  
Nearer they drew to Mount Lebanon....

They stood there marveling at the forest,  
Gazing at the lofty cedars,  
Grazing a forest's entrance —  
Where Humbaba came and went there was a track.

The path was straight and the way well trodden.  
They saw the Mountain of Cedar, seat of gods and goddesses' throne.  
On the face of the mountain the cedar proffered its abundance,  
Its shade was sweet and full of delight....

He [Gilgamesh] smote the ground and ... faced him [Humbaba] head on.

At the heels of their feet the earth burst asunder,  
They shattered, as they whirled, Mounts Sirion and Lebanon.  
Black became the clouds of white,  
Raining down on them death like a mist.

Shamash roused against Humbaba the mighty gale-winds...

There rose thirteen winds and the face of Humbaba darkened —  
He could not charge forwards, he could not kick backwards —  
The weapons of Gilgamesh then reached Humbaba....

Humbaba bitterly cursed them....

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak,  
Saying to Gilgamesh: ...  
“[Let those curses return] to his mouth.”

Gilgamesh heard the words of his friend,  
He drew the dagger at his side.  
Gilgamesh smote him [Humbaba] in the neck,  
[and] pulled out the lungs...

He [Gilgamesh] discovered the secret abode of the gods,  
Gilgamesh felling the trees, Enkidu choosing the timber.

Enkidu opened his mouth to speak,  
Saying to Gilgamesh,  
“My friend, we have felled a lofty cedar,

Whose top thrust up to the sky...

“To the house of Enlil the Euphrates shall bear it,  
Let the folk of Nippur rejoice over it!  
Let the god Enlil delight in it!

They bound together a raft, they laid the cedar on it.  
Enkidu was helmsman...  
And Gilgamesh carried the head of Humbaba.

-*The Epic of Gilgamesh* (between 2150 and 1500 BCE) excerpt