



Carved in Stone: A Narrative Account of the Epic of Gilgamesh

John A. Cowgill

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Carved in Stone presents a highly readable narrative account of the epic story of Gilgamesh. It is the oldest myth of which we have record, dating back to the period when the historical Gilgamesh ruled the Sumerian city-state of Uruk. Though rooted in history, the story comes to us as myth, providing insight into human nature, as found in the traditional hero quest. John Cowgill opens our understanding of the hero quest, as found in the story of Gilgamesh, by connecting it to other myths and folk stories and to our own human nature. The hero engages in the two major forms of hero struggle, all within one story—the battle against physical challenges, by defeating the great monster, and the battle for spiritual enlightenment, in the hero's search for the key to immortality. The 3 essays (a prologue, interlogue, and epilogue) presented along with the narrative of the story provide insight into the depth of the myth, the meaning of its symbols, and its connection to our own lives. We too must take the journey—must battle both seen and unseen monsters and seek our own spiritual enlightenment. And through the struggle we find, just as the hero, our own transformation. “That transformation, at its most fundamental level, is one of unification—effectively managing our carnal nature by synthesizing it with the godly. In effect, we overcome the world by unifying ourselves with god, which in effect, is really the unification of our self with our Self.” The story of Gilgamesh is “the story of Baldur and of Christ, and it is the story of each one of us, if we are to rise above this world, escape from the unconscious, become enlightened, have an awakening, be born again, or experience whatever other term of personal change our own mythology may provide. The journey leads in the end to a reunion with Self, with God, with the Light, with the Conscious, with the Ideal, with Brahman. In effect, we become what we seek.”

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