

Harris Lenowitz's original translations  
from Cyrus Gordon's Ugaritic Textbook  
(Text 52, lines 30-53, and 'nt II, lines  
2-41). Ugarit was spoken in Canaan.

## FROM TWO UGARITIC TEXTS

I

How Bull El cooks some soup up shoots a bird out of the sky &  
eats it then fucks two women wild with admiration for  
Him to a strange birth

El is strolling  
along the seashore  
down by the Deep.

Down by the sea shore  
El strolls along the Deep.

El builds a fire, and  
puts on some soup.

El takes a spoonful  
Off his fire  
Or two.

A girl, lying where El  
could not see her.

"Aha!"  
She gets up from the sand  
then shrieks

Getting a look at El

"Fatherofusall!  
MaMa! That thing's  
long as the Ocean and Rivers!"

Sure enough

That thing of El's stretches out  
like the Ocean and the Rivers.

Startled

He takes a couple more spoonfuls  
off the fire,  
heads back to his hut.

After a while

El's thing declines and subsides

He goes back out.

He raises his bow  
Sights  
Then shoots a bird  
Right out of the sky.  
He cleans it  
and sets it on the coals.

There are now two women.

El wants the women.

They giggle

They call to him:  
"O Husband,  
Lover,  
Whatever happened  
to your stick?"

The bird is roasting  
Roasting on the coals.

El thinks

"These two are El's women  
Mine Forever. "

But then

The women shriek:  
"Fatherofusall!  
Put it down  
Put that stick down!"

The bird is roasting  
Roasting on the coals.

El is puzzled

"Daughters? Daughters  
of El Forever? "

They shout with laughter  
"O Husband,  
Lover,  
Your shaft has fallen  
Your staff is dragging!"

The bird is still roasting.

"So the women are  
Wives of El  
Wives of El Forever. "

He stoops.  
Kisses their lips.  
Their lips are sweet  
Tart as grapes.

After kissing, fucking  
After holding, birth.

They labor and  
they bear.  
Dawn  
and Dusk.

El hears the news.

He muses

"El's wives have borne.  
Why  
They must have borne  
Dawn  
and Dusk. "

II

The Name of Anat, or how the Virgin cut up their armies then  
brought the pieces home but smashed the furniture in  
joy-of-the-blood before She washed Herself in rain

The Virgin Anat  
Camouflages her divine aura  
And puts on

The smell of goats and rabbits

She closes both the doors  
Of the Palace of Anat

She catches up to the troops  
In the mountain's slit

In the valley  
Between the cities  
How she slays them!

She cleaves the Shore folk  
She smashes the Western man.

All around her

Heads--a swarm of locusts  
Hands--like crickets, as many  
Soldiers' hands as thorns on cactus

Anat bundles up her  
Prize

She loads up the heads  
On her back:  
She ties the hands  
On her belt.

And, returning from  
The valley

Her knees slosh through  
The soldiers' blood,  
The soldiers' flesh  
Up to her hips.

She prods the captives  
With the back of her bow.

And Anat comes home  
Unsatisfied with her slaughters  
In the valley.  
She fights on, indoors.

She sets up

Chairs for soldiers  
Tables for soldiers  
Stools to be soldiers.

How she slays them!

She smites them, then  
Stands back  
Her liver full of laughter  
Her heart filled with joy  
Overjoyed  
For her knees wade in  
Soldiers' blood:  
Soldiers' flesh  
Up to her hips.

When she has finished  
Fighting in the house  
Lunging between the tables

She is full

And she rubs her hands  
In the soldiers' blood.

She pours the rich oil  
Into a basin

And she washes  
Her hands

Virgin Anat  
Washes  
Her fingers

The Sister-of-the-Peoples  
Washes  
Her hands in the blood  
Of the soldiers  
Her fingers in the gore  
Of the soldiers

The chairs are only chairs again  
The tables, tables  
The footstools, footstools

She pours out water

To wash  
In the dew of the heavens  
In the oil of the land  
The rain from Cloudrider.

The Heavens' dew  
Bathes her.

The rain bathes her.

Note: The first piece is from the so-called "Poem of the Gracious Gods." It has been described as "descent into burlesque," but might be better viewed as a pure religious manifestation of El as God of Creation and Trickster. The second piece is a fragment of the Ugaritic epic cycle of Ba'al and Anat. Lenowitz writes, "I want to call this piece 'The Name of Anat' because taken altogether it names her, or she names herself in it, through her actions and tone of mind, completely. She is one sort of archetypal virgin. Not the Virgin Mother, Kore or Mary, but more the warrior virgin, like Joan of Arc. She will defend her hymen; her sense of what is right and of what must be done, against all comers. Like Antigone. She is violent in this defense, and violent towards her enemies. And she takes great, savage glee in doing her self-assigned duty. Here she is fighting for her brother's honor. She is really at war with every mortal, flawed man."