

GATE I — DIMKUR KA SAG-US

The Gate of the Crown

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká sag-úš

Insert Gate I Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate I Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

At the first gate, Inanna arrives in her full celestial regalia.

She stands before Neti, the gatekeeper of the underworld, who announces the decree of Ereshkigal with ritual precision:

“At this gate, Inanna, you must give up the sag-us, the crown of your head.”

The sag-us is not merely a headdress.

It is the šugurra, the divine crescent crown associated with the morning star, a symbol of sovereignty, cosmic order, and the right to speak for heaven and earth.

By removing the crown, Inanna relinquishes:

- rank
- identity
- celestial authority
- her title as Queen of Heaven

In Sumerian cosmology, the act of bowing the head is not submission but ritual unmaking.

At this first threshold, she begins the process of being stripped of every constructed layer so she may enter the Great Below in her most essential form.

The descent begins not with loss, but with truth:
the realization that sovereignty cannot be worn — only remembered.

2. Breath Rite — The Sag-ush Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: SAG – UŠ – SAG – UŠ

(4-syllable cycle repeated 7 times)

This breath sequence mirrors the removal of the crown and the release of identity.

- Inhale on SAG

Draw breath up the central channel,

feeling the crown of the head open like a star.

- Hold on UŠ

Sense the weight of all titles, roles, and names you have carried.

- Exhale on SAG

Release the crown into the void,

letting the breath fall like a garment released.

- Rest on UŠ

Bareheaded.

Unnamed.

Present.

Repeat 7 cycles, one for each gate of Inanna's descent.

3. Reflection Prompts

- What identities have I worn so long that I mistake them for myself?
 - Which crown—social, familial, spiritual, or personal—has grown too heavy?
 - What am I when I remove everything I've been praised for or recognized by?
 - Can I imagine sovereignty that arises from within rather than from what I wear?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight

The artwork for this Gate was born inside a circle —

the most ancient of cosmic symbols.

In Sumerian iconography, the circle represents totality, continuity, and the turning of the heavens.

It is a geometry of inevitability: what is meant to unfold, will.

Behind Inanna, the zodiacal circle forms a halo not of divinity but of cosmic law.

The crown sits within this perfect ring, suggesting that her celestial authority is contextual, not absolute — it belongs to the order of the skies rather than to her alone.

In the earliest sketch, the crown trembled.

The lines would not settle, as though the image itself resisted being drawn.

It was only later that the geometry stabilized.

The circle held firm; the crown loosened.

In creating this piece, I discovered how subtle the crown truly is.

It is not rigid or metallic — it is energetic, responsive to alignment.

When the geometry behind her finally clicked into place, the crown surrendered its weight.

I realized this:

The crown was never hers to keep.

The circle was the true sovereign.

And so the crown lifts, and the descent begins.

GATE II — DIMKUR KA ZI-NA-AN-NA

The Gate of the Lapis Necklace

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká zi-na-an-na

Insert Gate II Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate II Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

At the second threshold, the gatekeeper issues the next command from the laws of the Great Below:

“At this gate, Inanna, remove the zi-na-an-na,
the lapis necklace from your throat.”

Lapis lazuli — ZA.GÌN in Sumerian texts — was not a mere ornament.

It was the stone of the heavens, the night sky made tangible, prized for its deep ultramarine glow.

Priestesses, kings, and deities wore lapis as a marker of divine connection and sacred speech.

Around Inanna’s throat, the lapis necklace embodied:

- her voice as Queen of Heaven
- her capacity to command
- her divine utterance (me, the cosmic decrees)
- the celestial breath itself

To remove the zi-na-an-na is to strip the voice of its prestige —

and to discover what remains when words lose their shine.

As the necklace is lifted, the blue light dims.

A silence gathers around her throat, dense and living.

Inanna steps forward bare-voiced,

entering the second darkness not with proclamation,

but with listening.

2. Breath Rite — Zi-na-an-na Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: ZI – NA – AN – NA

(4-syllable cycle repeated 7 times)

This breath sequence awakens the throat and releases the jewel of truth.

- Inhale on ZI

Draw life-force into the throat,

as if breathing lapis-blue air.

- Hold on NA

Feel the weight of the necklace —

all the expectations, obligations, and polished words.

- Exhale on AN

Release the voice to the heavens,

unadorned, unembellished.

- Rest on NA

Silence that is not emptiness,

but the ground of revelation.

Repeat 7 times, until the breath becomes the jewel itself.

3. Reflection Prompts

- What adornments have I placed around my voice to make myself acceptable?
 - When have I allowed the “polished version” of my truth to speak instead of the real one?
 - What happens when I allow silence to be an answer — not avoidance, but presence?
 - How does my voice feel when imagined as a raw, uncut stone?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight

In the artwork for Gate II, the lapis rests at the center of a subtle but powerful geometry.

Behind Inanna, interlocking triangles form a vesica:

a meeting point between heaven and earth,

the sacred womb of creation,

the threshold between what is spoken and what is held in silence.

Triangles in ancient Near Eastern iconography often signify breath, direction, and transmission

—
the movement of energy from the unseen to the seen.

The upward triangle carries ascent;

the downward triangle holds descent.

Together they form a star of equilibrium,

teaching that stripped speech is not a loss,

but a recalibration.

During the earliest drafts, the blue of the necklace bled across the page, drowning the throat.

Only later did the geometry rise clearly —

the star behind her forming a stable container.

It was then I understood:

Lapis is not the source of sacred speech.

Geometry is.

Sound flows through the pattern, not the gem.

In creating this piece, my own voice wavered.

I confronted the ways I've adorned my speech:

with politeness, eloquence, spiritual language —

all beautiful, but sometimes barriers.

When the triangles aligned,

her silence became radiant.

And in that silence, I found my own raw voice,

unpolished, unafraid.

GATE III — DIMKUR KA GU-ZA-LUH

The Gate of the Breastplate Beads

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká gu-za-luh

Insert Gate III Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate III Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

At the third threshold, Inanna stands before Neti once more.

The voice of the underworld echoes with uncompromising clarity:

“At this gate, Inanna, remove the gu-za-luh,
the stringed beads of your breastplate.”

The gu-za-luh are not mere ornaments.

They are ritual beads strung across the heart,
symbols of divine power,
markers of strength, protection, and the authority of the sacred chestplate.

In ancient Sumerian royal and priestly attire,

beads worn at the breast signified:

- spiritual status
- courage
- consecration
- the heart's protected truth

For Inanna, they represented the divine potency of her heart-center —

the place where compassion, command, and cosmic law converged.

To remove the gu-za-luh is to expose the heart completely,

to surrender the protective layers of sacred identity,

to stand without the shields that guard vulnerability.

Inanna bows.

The beads fall away like stars slipping from a night sky.

Her chest glows bare,

not diminished —

but revealed.

At the third gate, she learns that true courage begins where protection ends.

2. Breath Rite — Gu-za-luh Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: GU – ZA – LUH

(3-syllable cycle repeated 7 times)

This breath sequence awakens the heart-field and dissolves spiritual armor.

- Inhale on GU

Draw breath into the heart-space,
feeling it widen from the inside.

- Hold on ZA

Sense the weight of the beads,
the protections you've worn for years.

- Exhale on LUH

Release the strands one by one,
letting the heart shine without ornament.

Repeat 7 cycles,

breathing the heart into simplicity.

3. Reflection Prompts

- What am I protecting my heart from — and why?
- Which spiritual or emotional “beads” have become armor rather than adornment?

- Is there a belief I wear across my chest that no longer serves me?
 - How does vulnerability shift when it is not weakness, but offering?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight

The artwork of Gate III centers on the rhythmic geometry of repetition — the pattern formed by beads, circles, and spheres.

In sacred art, repeating shapes symbolize:

- heartbeat
- rhythm
- continuity
- the cyclical flow of giving and receiving

The breastplate beads form a horizontal orbit across Inanna's chest, echoing the movement of planets around the sun.

This is no accident:

the heart is a star within the body,

a center of gravity and light.

In the earliest sketch,

the beads appeared heavy, almost rigid —

as though they resisted being removed.

The geometry insisted on symmetry,

yet the heart behind it pulsed unevenly,

hinting at the cost of protection.

As I refined the rendering,
the beads loosened.

They softened into a pattern that felt less like armor
and more like memory —
a record of every moment she learned to guard herself.

Only when the geometry found its balance
did the heart behind it begin to shine.

Through the creation of this piece,
I felt my own heart shift.

I recognized how often beauty becomes shield,
how sacredness becomes defense,
how strength becomes enclosure.

When the last bead fell in the rendering,
a quiet truth emerged:

The heart is strongest not when armored,
but when it beats without disguise.

The Gate of the Breastplate / Armor

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká tú-kul

Insert Gate IV Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate IV Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

Inanna arrives at the fourth threshold, stripped already of crown, necklace, and heart-beads.

Yet the underworld asks for more.

Neti, the unwavering gatekeeper, speaks the next decree:

“At this gate, Inanna, remove the tukul,
the breastplate of your power.”

In Sumerian, tukul means weapon, tool, or defensive strength.

Here, it refers to the ceremonial breastplate—

a symbol not only of military power,

but of spiritual fortitude,

divine authority,

and protection granted to those who stand between worlds.

Inanna’s breastplate was the visible sign of her potency:

the capacity to act,

to intervene,

to uphold cosmic order (me),

to defend heaven and earth.

To remove the tukul is to relinquish:

- spiritual protection
- divine authority
- the right to command
- the sense of being shielded by destiny

At the fourth gate, Inanna is asked a question without words:

“Who are you when nothing protects you?”

She releases the breastplate.

The metal gleams once, then goes dark.

Her chest—once guarded—stands exposed in the dimness.

Here the descent becomes dangerous.

Here she learns that true divine power is not the armor she wears,
but the nakedness she dares.

2. Breath Rite — Tukul Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: TU – KUL

(2-syllable cycle repeated 7 times)

A short, potent rhythm—like the beating of an unarmored heart.

- Inhale on TU

A breath filling the ribs, expanding behind the breastbone.

- Exhale on KUL

A surrendering, a release of all armor.

This cycle is simple by design,
mirroring the stripping of complexity,
the return to essential form.

Repeat 7 cycles,

letting each breath uncover a layer of internal defense.

3. Reflection Prompts

- What form of “armor” do I instinctively put on each day?
 - What would my life feel like if I did not brace myself before speaking, creating, or loving?
 - Where have I confused protection with power, or defensiveness with strength?
 - In what moments do I sense a deeper power that arises only when I risk being unguarded?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight

The artwork for Gate IV shifts from circles and beads to structured, angular geometry—

triangles, shields, lattices—

the languages of protection.

In ancient Near Eastern iconography, armor was often represented not through literal depiction,

but through geometric motifs that conveyed strength:

- interlocking angles → resilience
- shield-like arcs → deflection

- dense patterns → impenetrability

In the earliest drafting, the geometry around Inanna's chest appeared tight,
almost brittle—

a defensive pattern,

beautiful yet rigid.

As I refined the rendering, something unexpected happened:

the lines began to open.

What had begun as armor softened into a pattern of vulnerability,

a geometry that held shape without needing to protect.

I realized the artwork itself was teaching the truth of this Gate:

Armor becomes unnecessary

when the heart remembers its own structure.

Inanna's breastplate did not fall away as a sign of weakness—

but of mastery.

Through painting this Gate,

I confronted the armor I wear out of habit:

the tension in my body,

the guarded tone in my voice,

the quiet expectation of impact.

But when I allowed the geometry to expand—

to breathe—

I felt something ancient shift.

True protection is not the wall.
It is the clarity of knowing who you are without it.

GATE V — DIMKUR KA GU-ZI-GAL

The Gate of the Bracelets

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká gu-zí-gal

Insert Gate V Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate V Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

At the fifth threshold, Inanna stands with four of her sacred emblems already surrendered.

She is less adorned, less armored, less celestial—

yet more present, more human, more exposed.

Neti delivers the next command of the Great Below:

“At this gate, Inanna, remove the gu-zí-gal,
the bracelets from your wrists.”

In Sumerian culture, bracelets were not simple jewelry.

They represented action, agency, and the capacity to do.

They adorned the wrists of those set apart for sacred work—
signifying:

- authority in ritual
- the ability to bless or to bind
- the power to enact divine will
- the sanctioned use of spiritual force

The wrists are the threshold between energy and expression—
the place where intention becomes movement.

To remove the gu-zi-gal is to surrender the right to act.

The right to intervene.

The right to shape the world with one's hands.

Inanna offers her wrists.

The bracelets slip off like rings of light,

and suddenly her hands—

the hands that had commanded nations, offered blessings, held lovers, traced constellations—

are bare.

At the fifth gate, she enters the sacred paradox:

to be powerful, she must relinquish the power to act.

2. Breath Rite — Gu-zi-gal Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: GU – ZI – GAL

(3-syllable cycle repeated 7 times)

This cycle awakens the hands and dissolves the illusion of control.

- Inhale on GU

Draw breath down the arms to the wrists.

- Hold on ZI

Feel the subtle weight of everything you try to hold, manage, or shape.

- Exhale on GAL

Release the impulse to “do.”

Allow the hands to soften, empty, receptive.

Repeat 7 cycles,

letting action yield to awareness.

3. Reflection Prompts

- Where in my life do I mistake activity for power?
 - What do my hands cling to out of fear that letting go would weaken me?
 - What could arise if I allowed myself to stop “doing” and began “allowing”?
 - When have my hands acted from love—and when from habit, obligation, or fear?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight

The geometry of Gate V centers on the circle and the ring,
symbols of cycles, bonds, and commitments.

Bracelets, in sacred art, represent:

- continuity
- sacred bonds
- the infinite loop of giving and receiving
- the covenant between deity and worshiper

In the earliest drawing, the bracelets appeared luminous but tight—
encircling the wrists with a sense of duty,
of perpetual motion,
of responsibility held too long.

As the rendering evolved, the circles widened.

The geometry around the hands shifted from containment to openness,
from obligation to offering.

The hands, once posed in a gesture of command,
softened into a posture of receptivity.

In the process of creating this image,
I discovered how much we expect our hands to carry—
tasks, hopes, identities, expectations—
as though action alone sustains our worth.

But as I painted the open circles,

I felt a quiet truth arise:

The hands are not powerful because they grasp.
They are powerful because they can let go.

The geometry taught me that creation begins not in the doing,
but in the space cleared when the bracelets fall.

GATE V — DIMKUR KA GU-ZI-GAL

The Gate of the Bracelets

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká gu-zí-gal

Insert Gate V Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate V Rendered Artwork Here

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They represented action, agency, and the capacity to do.

They adorned the wrists of those set apart for sacred work—
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- the sanctioned use of spiritual force

The wrists are the threshold between energy and expression—

the place where intention becomes movement.

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The right to intervene.

The right to shape the world with one's hands.

Inanna offers her wrists.

The bracelets slip off like rings of light,

and suddenly her hands—

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(3-syllable cycle repeated 7 times)

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- Hold on ZI

Feel the subtle weight of everything you try to hold, manage, or shape.

- Exhale on GAL

Release the impulse to “do.”

Allow the hands to soften, empty, receptive.

Repeat 7 cycles,

letting action yield to awareness.

3. Reflection Prompts

- Where in my life do I mistake activity for power?
 - What do my hands cling to out of fear that letting go would weaken me?
 - What could arise if I allowed myself to stop “doing” and began “allowing”?
 - When have my hands acted from love—and when from habit, obligation, or fear?
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4. Geometry + Artist Insight

The geometry of Gate V centers on the circle and the ring,
symbols of cycles, bonds, and commitments.

Bracelets, in sacred art, represent:

- continuity
- sacred bonds

- the infinite loop of giving and receiving
- the covenant between deity and worshiper

In the earliest drawing, the bracelets appeared luminous but tight—
encircling the wrists with a sense of duty,
of perpetual motion,
of responsibility held too long.

As the rendering evolved, the circles widened.

The geometry around the hands shifted from containment to openness,
from obligation to offering.

The hands, once posed in a gesture of command,
softened into a posture of receptivity.

In the process of creating this image,
I discovered how much we expect our hands to carry—
tasks, hopes, identities, expectations—
as though action alone sustains our worth.

But as I painted the open circles,
I felt a quiet truth arise:

The hands are not powerful because they grasp.
They are powerful because they can let go.

The geometry taught me that creation begins not in the doing,
but in the space cleared when the bracelets fall.

GATE VI — DIMKUR KA GI-DUB ♦

Gate of the Measuring Rod & Line

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká gi-dub

Insert Gate VI Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate VI Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

At the sixth gate, Inanna arrives diminished yet luminous—
her crown surrendered, her lapis loosened,
her heart-beads unstrung, her breastplate unlatched,
her bracelets fallen from her wrists.

Still, she holds one final emblem of authority:
the gi-dub, the measuring rod and line.

Neti speaks the decree of the Great Below:

“At this gate, Inanna, surrender the measuring rod and line.”

In Sumerian tradition, the gi-dub was the sovereign’s most sacred tool—
used by kings, queens, and priestesses
to measure temple foundations,
establish borders,
draw sacred proportions,
and align earthly space with celestial order.

It symbolized:

- discernment
- divine judgment
- the right to define

- the ability to set boundaries
- the authority to shape reality

To relinquish the measuring rod is to relinquish the power to decide
what is right, what is wrong,
what is mine, what is yours,
what is sacred, what is profane.

It is the surrender of all orientation.

As Inanna opens her hands,
the rod slides from her palms—
a straight line falling into darkness.

The string loosens.

The measurements unravel.

The architecture of her identity dissolves.
She enters the gate where nothing is fixed,
and therefore everything may be reborn.

2. Breath Rite — Gi-dub Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: GI — DUB

(2 syllables, repeated 7 times)

This sequence unravels inner rigidity and opens the psyche to shapelessness.

- Inhale on GI

Draw breath into the spine, imagining a line of light straightening within you.

- Exhale on DUB

Release the need to evaluate, to control, to define.

Let all mental measurements dissolve.

Repeat 7 cycles,

until the mind softens into openness,

until the inner ruler lays itself down.

3. Reflection Prompts

- Where have I been measuring myself against impossible standards?
 - What inner rules or judgments bind me more tightly than any external force?
 - What would it feel like to stop evaluating my worth, body, progress, or path?
 - Which boundary in my life is ready to soften or dissolve?
 - What expands in me when I release the need to “make sense”?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight

The geometry of this Gate came to me as grids, axes, and vanishing points—the old Mesopotamian language of measurement. As I drew, I felt the structure becoming a sacred coordinate system: a space where order was once fixed, and now begins to loosen.

The strong architectural lines, the nested corridors, the narrowing tunnel—these all reflected the last framework Inanna moves through while she still holds the power to define and measure her world.

But as I painted her, illuminated with the rod still in her hand, the geometry behind her began to bend. Lines that started rigid softened and shifted, as if resisting certainty.

I realized the artwork was telling me the truth of this Gate:

- the world she measured

- was now measuring her
- and the tool in her hand would soon fall.

While creating this piece, I felt my own sense of direction soften. The rod became a symbol of the last belief that I knew exactly where I was going. When I let it slip in the image, the entire space changed. The tunnel breathed. The form unshaped.

And I understood:

We don't reach the Great Below by control,
but by releasing the need to measure anything at all.

When the rod fell—both in my art and in me—her descent became complete.

The Gate of the Garment

Sumerian: dim-kur-ká tug-du

Insert Gate VII Original Artwork Here

Insert Gate VII Rendered Artwork Here

1. Mythic Interpretation

At the seventh and final gate, Inanna stands with every sacred emblem surrendered.

The crown, the lapis, the beads, the armor, the bracelets, the measuring rod—all gone.

Only one thing remains:

the tug-du, the garment that covers her body.

Neti speaks the last decree of Ereshkigal:

“At this gate, Inanna, remove the tug-du,
the garment from your body.”

In Sumerian ritual culture, the garment was not merely clothing.

It was the final layer of identity:

the covering of dignity, humanity, and form.

To remove it is to become completely unprotected,
visible down to the soul.

This moment is not humiliation—
it is annihilation of hierarchy,
a return to primordial truth.

Inanna strips the garment.

The cloth falls.

The Queen of Heaven enters the Great Below
in the fullness of her vulnerability.

Here, she is not deity, sovereign, or symbol—
she is simply Being.

Nude, unguarded, unmeasured,
she crosses the seventh threshold
and steps into the womb-darkness
where death and rebirth meet.

This is the zero point of all spiritual transformation:
the place where nothing is left to lose,
and therefore everything becomes possible.

2. Breath Rite — Tug-du Cycle

Syllabic Mantra: TUG — DU

(Two syllables, repeated 7 times)

A breath for unveiling.

A breath for total surrender.

- Inhale on TUG

Draw breath into the body with no judgment,

feeling each contour exactly as it is.

- Exhale on DU

Release all coverings—

every disguise, every role, every protective layer.

Repeat 7 cycles,

letting the breath become skin,

and the skin become truth.

3. Reflection Prompts

- What part of myself do I still hide, even from my own eyes?
 - Which inner garment—belief, identity, role—is ready to fall away?
 - What remains when there is nothing left to protect?
 - In what moments do I feel most naked in spirit—and what wisdom lives there?
 - What would it mean for me to meet my life without disguise?
-

4. Geometry + Artist Insight (Shortened, First Person)

The geometry of this Gate came through as pure openness.

After so many Gates built with lines, beads, grids, and symbols,

the final image arrived almost without structure.

The form became the geometry.

As I painted her bare, I realized that nothing more could be removed—

not from her, and not from me.

The lines softened.

The background widened.

The space around her became unclothed too.

This Gate taught me that absolute vulnerability

is a form of sacred symmetry.

When the garment falls,

everything aligns:

the body, the truth, the breath, the gaze.

As I rendered her nude, I felt a deep stillness—

a sense that the descent was complete.

No more layers.

No more symbols.

No more defenses.

Just her.

Just me.

Just the raw essence that remains

when every covering finally drops.

