

Essay Series

# PLUTO STATIONARY DIRECT: The Bitter and the Sweet

Personally Processing Pluto: Part I

*Welcome to Planet Earth, Virgo 1991*

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Sunday, July 28, 1991, the day of Pluto's turning. I awaken alert to phenomena. What will this day bring? Meanwhile, inside . . . aware of a barely conscious turbulence . . . Pluto's increasing work on my inner being as it hovers now, barely five degrees from opposing my natal Moon in Taurus.

Only two days ago, terrible inner pressure literally forced a secret long buried to the surface and out into expression. A secret which I had feared to reveal, feared it would expose my very being as corrupt, unworthy, and guilty at the fundamental existential level.

I had been feeling irritable all morning, lashing out at my partner, Jeffrey, flaring at the smallest things. Went out for a walk along the river. Paused at my usual resting spot on river's banks. Eyes hungry, as usual, for light's dancing on restless water.

I play my usual mesmerizing game, focusing in on one point, one drop, tracing its darting pulsing path to oblivion. Panning out to absorb river's gossamer galaxy, its swirling symphonic flow. Moving in and out, in to a point, one drop, out to the periphery, vision's attempt to embrace a mysterious, moving whole.

The pull of gravity on the river begins to tug at stuck places inside me. I burst into tears, waters moving inside matching those outside . . .

The feeling is one of a quietly ecstatic unity and, upon reflection, of reverence, an awesome sense of gratitude — in being allowed to participate in river's forever abandonment to its own beauty and flow.

I pray to the river, ask for guidance, that I may move through life with the same joy and abandon.

Turning my back on the river, I begin to walk home. Like quicksilver, the mood of enlightened ecstasy is replaced by one of dread, a heavy ominous foreboding.

There it is again, the relentless internal pressure. But now I am accepting its actual reality, rather than cathecting it to the surface, where in denied form, it shows as a general irritability.

Yes, I realize. Now. Now is the time to tell him. This secret I have been carrying for centuries. This heart's aching burden. This foul pestilence. No! No! my subconscious cries out in fear. Why change the status quo? Why introduce something which has the potential to destroy everything, leaving me abandoned forever?

At this point, two days before Pluto's turning, no matter how much my subconscious objects, the internal pressure to release the ancient load is greater. By the time I return the wall between me and my secret has thinned to the point where birth is inevitable, and at hand.

Opening the door, seeing him sitting peacefully on the couch. The sense of sheer terror, heart fluttering as I blurt out that there is something I have to tell him. Gulping air, holding my breath, plunging into the void, toxins pouring from my mouth.

The awe, the childlike wonder, as I feel his loving presence, his full and matter-of-fact acceptance . . .

That was on Friday, the day of our first anniversary. On Saturday we celebrated, walking in the forest, engaging with whatever came along, leisurely exploring the vast and gracious space which opens and opens in two hearts when they beat as one.

And now, it is Sunday, the time of Pluto's turning. Inside, another wrenching turn of the spiral . . . I am experiencing an incipient feeling of panic, even terror, as a belated recognition slowly dawns; my secret, a long held festering wound, had served as both identity and protection. Without it I feel naked, no boundaries. There is now nothing left to prevent our full communion.

I begin to glimpse what Pluto's coming journey opposite my Moon will signify, the area of my life to be transformed. Turning over and over that word "abandonment," its opposite meanings. How I contract or expand, depending upon whether I feel abandoned and cut off from life, or whether I abandon myself to the river of life.

For many years I have been attuned to the stationary times of the planets, especially to Pluto, the two times a year it turns to go forward or backward. "Pay attention to inner and outer events occurring during the end of February and the end of July during these years," I tell clients who are undergoing a long term Plutonian process by transit. "Connect the dots between those two periods each year and notice the sea-change you are going through, the metamorphosis you are undergoing at a cellular level."

I am sensing the power of my own Plutonian process, and knowing it is but a taste of what is to come over the next two years. Now, on this climactic day, I am alert to phenomena. What are the signs? How is this Pluto turning being experienced in the world?

Mainstream headlines, as usual, scream Pluto's dark power, its terrible perverse energy. The usual distortions within the arenas, of power, money, death, sex. The two so-called "superpowers" getting ready to massage their egos again at another "summit." Enormous stock scandal rocking the Tokyo market. Largest bank scandal ever slamming into New York City. Grisly serial killings in Milwaukee, body parts strewn about, acid

vats boiling bones. The transvestite nanny in Wenatchee, WA who sexually abused one of “her” charges. Pee Wee Herman arrested for masturbating during a porno flick.

Pee wee and his wee wee . . . zoom out now from such absurdity to the immensity of the cosmos, and the announcement to the press that for the first time a planet has been discovered orbiting another sun in a distant galaxy . . . how fitting, that as Pluto turns to go forward we should suddenly magnify our vision to embrace a similar “other” so forbiddingly remote in the night sky.

Meanwhile, back on Earth . . . From Earth Island Journal: The ozone hole increasing so fast that by the year 2000 Australians will be under urban domes to survive the sun’s rays . . . Kuwait: 500 wells still burning, many perhaps for four or five years. Black skies, black sand, black lungs . . . Pluto’s hellfires literally burning on earth. Speculation and the typhoon in Bangladesh which killed 100,000 was worsened by weather caused by Mideast fires. . .

And then, somewhere in another small magazine, this tiny notice: during that terrible typhoon, a small child was lost at sea and carried back 14 miles to shore by a dolphin. People tenderly pulling the still live child from the dolphin’s mouth.

The times are bittersweet. Unending sorrow, as we watch the industrialized world and its world-view go up in flames. And gentle flutterings of heart’s joy, too. Small stirrings of new life, of life’s unending wonder.

Jeff and I are to attend two events on this auspicious day. First, in the afternoon, a picnic, with other friends of a family which is being reunited for the first time in ten years. Later that evening, a “Pluto Turning Ceremony,” hosted by my Plutonian Support Group. [This is a group which meets weekly, its members helping one another process their long term Plutonian transits.]

At the picnic I run into a woman from the Bay Area whom I have not seen for several years. A woman formerly glamorous, who sits there now, across from me, tiny lines on her face quivering minutely as, in simple, moving tones she describes the death from AIDS of a female friend of hers whom I knew only as an acquaintance.

I hear of how she died not once but four times, each death a point in a larger process of moving towards total peace. I hear of one of those times when she was dead, out cold, and one hour later resurrected, dancing, on top of her bed! And of how, by the final death, the deep vertical line incised between her eyes by a lifetime of judgments was gone. “It just completely disappeared. Her forehead was completely smooth. There was not a trace left . . .”

She tells me of the hundred friends who flew in from all over to pay their respects to their dying friend. Through this process of meeting with them she grew more demanding (her — and our generation’s — Pluto in Leo!) and yet utterly real, putting everyone around her to the test of being completely present, simply there, being there, with her.

I hear this woman, formerly glamorous, tell of how she was the one who stayed in the “shared care” unit with the dying woman in the hospital and wiped her ass.

The process took two and a half months. “She contracted everything, all the diseases she was afraid of . . . only she experienced them all differently.” The woman sitting across from me smiles, tentatively, and shakes her head slightly, acknowledging how different her experience had also been from what she expected. I am amazed at how real she is, how *there*. How Pluto’s relentless pressure has transformed this woman, her Sun-and-three-other-planets-in-Leo nature.

“When did she die?”

“She died on Spring Equinox, the first day of Spring . . .” She shakes her head again, acknowledging the wonders she has seen, the new beginnings in her life as a result of this process. How she is in the process of releasing old anger, old fears, old wounds which she had been tenaciously nursing.

“And how is your back?” (Her back trouble has been legendary. . .)

“Much better!” We both laugh. What can we say? One more miraculous physical transformation following a spiritual one. “And you know what I think I will end up spending my life doing? Helping the dying. But it is really the living . . . life!” She shakes

her head one last time, frustrated, unable to find words to describe the gift of what she has been through, its horror, its poignance, its beauty.

Though I did not spend much time talking with the family at this family picnic, I heard later from the member at whose house all twenty of them had stayed (!) that many of them were meeting and healing their relationship wounds after years of not speaking to one another.

Sunday evening. The Pluto Ceremony itself. There are eleven of us, including the two children, a boy and a girl, of the woman who created the Pluto mask (actually, it is a hood) for use at our Plutonian Support Group meetings. We don't know what our ritual will be, except that perhaps we would all bring something to throw in the fire, an attitude, a value which no longer supported our life.

The ceremony, once begun, seemed endless, excruciating, way too long to describe here. (How Plutonian!) And yet, at times, it was also marvelous, miraculous. To the accompaniment of slow drumming, each person, in turn, put on the Pluto mask, and in so doing the hidden gold within him or herself rose to the surface.

Two highlights stand out for me. The first, Jeffrey's Pluto dance, up on two great feet like a grizzly looming forth in the night, lit by the fire, moving in slow, grave, ponderous abandon. Here was the deep male sexual energy. Here was the real potency missing in our suffering world.

Secondly, the pre-adolescent girl's performance. We were all surprised that she wanted to put on the mask. Indeed, she became quite insistent that her mother take the mask off, and give her a turn. We marveled at her natural ease and innocence as the young Plutonian female, moving around the group to touch each woman, sensitively engage with her, each in a different manner. Several times she did this, with each woman in turn, and each time she reached her mother there would be a noticeable heightening a tension in the air, as the two engaged in a still-playful tug of war, the daughter moving into position of incipient rivalry with the mother, the mother laughingly acknowledging the new energy, the eventual inevitable takeover.

Later, as the drumming went on, the girl lay down on the floor and lifted her pelvis into the air, legs wide apart, innocently and strongly offering her still incipient sexuality to the gods.

These two Plutonian images, the great earthen dance of the huge male bear and the bold and innocent female sexuality, remain seared in memory now. They are still apart, they play in their own separate wilderness fields, and I pray for their eventual integration.

Now it is Thursday, four days past Pluto's yearly inauguration of new life force into our planet. One last turn of the spiral, one last extreme switch in mood greets me, and reminds me of the extreme splits in our present-day consciousness. Each time I notice the blossoming of love and beauty I am also faced with their twisted perversions, how the life force, constricted, turns into hate.

For just last night, I received a long-distance call from another young girl, this one in the full bloom of adolescence, and a spiritual daughter of mine. The night before she had been viciously kicked in the groin by her former boyfriend, so badly that she was split open and her pubic bone bruised.