

Essay Series

## PPP: MONSTER IN THE BASEMENT

Personally Processing Pluto, Part 5

*Welcome to Planet Earth, Virgo 1993*

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I was packing for an astrology trip from Jackson Wyoming to Salt Lake City in mid-June. Curious as to what would occur there. Both excited and reluctant. For during this adventure, transit Mars in late Leo/early Virgo would activate a major T-cross in mutable signs: 9th/3rd house, North/South nodes at 28 Leo/Aquarius, Chiron at 19 Leo, 12th house Mars at 2 Sagittarius and 6th house Uranus at 1 Gemini. This, in turn, would trigger a deeper situation: for six weeks beginning in June, transit Saturn in early Pisces sits within 1° of the South Node/Chiron opposition and exactly squaring that same natal Mars/Uranus situation. This Saturn transit, and the mutable grand cross created with transit Mars, would echo and intensify my natal situation: born in December 1942, I was of the generation which had a Saturn/Uranus conjunction in early Gemini (Saturn, for me, in the nuclear axis at 7° 36 degrees).

To top off this volatile potentially even dangerous situation, during this same month of June, my progressed Moon was entering Aries, and progressed Uranus was going stationary direct!

How, I wondered, will this set of transits show up in my life? How will it coincide with Jupiter's transit over the conjunction of Neptune with 5° Libra Midheaven? And

how, I also wondered with a shudder, will it integrate with the current long term and now exact transit of Pluto opposite natal 23° Taurus Moon (itself widely conjunct Uranus at birth)? I knew that this trip to Salt Lake would be climactic. That I would most likely undergo some kind of initiation which would have something to do with, once again, encountering, embracing and releasing ancient fear. Ever since the Uranus/Neptune conjunction in Capricorn began, I have been encountering situations in the external world in which I must acknowledge, honor and discharge old fears. Moreover, for months now I had been having dreams of a repulsive sleazy white man with a scraggy mustache or beard who slunk around, following me, wanting something from me.

Not in my wildest dreams could I have predicted what actually did happen during my week in Salt Lake. Nor would I have predicted it to take such a profoundly dramatic, and yet utterly subtle form. Here's the story.

I had been invited to stay at the house of a new friend of mine. She would be there for one night and then gone for the rest of my visit. I was grateful for this opportunity to be alone during time off from a heavy daily schedule of consultations. I would need to rest, and looked forward to the safety of her home for my solitude. This would be the perfect place of comfort for my besieged Taurus Moon.

My friend told me that her son Rick, 31 years old, lived below, in the basement. He was a sort of lost soul, she said. She told me that friends thought that she should kick him out, but she didn't want him to end up on the streets; so she provided him with a home and food money in exchange for him looking after her place when she was away and caring for the lawn.

She told me that he would probably show his face at some point, and that he could be charming. "You might find him charming," she said.

The first day was uneventful. My friend had left at noon, and I came back to her house after my astrology readings looking forward to the blessed solitude. I sat down in her plush leather easy chair, put my feet up, and watched the wind ripple the light across the leaves outside the window.

The next morning I got up early and picked the newspaper off the front porch and sat down to it with my tea and toast. Just the way I like to begin the day, with my usual ritual in the silence of early dawn.

When I arrived back that afternoon I noted the newspaper was no longer on the table. “Well,” I thought, “Rick must have taken it.” Again, I padded into the room with the easy chair and folded myself into it.

When I arrived home the third day, again the newspaper was gone, something I now expected.

That day my easy chair reverie was interrupted by the phone. “Hello? Ann, this is Rick. Downstairs. How are you?” Immediately I felt uneasy, without knowing why. I answered him, keeping a formal distance, wanting to get this over with. “So my mother tells me you’re an astrologer. What do you do, exactly?” Inwardly groaning, I adopted the tone my Libra mother uses to get rid of people nicely. It didn’t work. He kept asking questions, ending up with, “Well, what are *you* doing tonight?”

I had had enough. Curtly, I told him I was enjoying my solitude and wanted to hang up. He immediately took offense. “Well, *you’re* not very nice.” This remark, so uncalled for, so inappropriately intimate, coming from a complete stranger, totally unnerved me. I mumbled something else, and hung up.

My idyll was spoiled. That one exchange with the son of my friend had profoundly disturbed the atmosphere in the house. It felt as if my very life was threatened.

I went out for my evening walk, as planned, and attempted to talk myself out of what I was feeling. Arriving back at the house an hour later, I found myself going up the steps somewhat reluctantly, despite the internal pep talk. I walked in and went to the room with the easy chair. Suddenly, the door to the basement burst open, and there was a strange man, moving fast, towards me.

I was shocked. *Rick was the sleazy man in my dreams.* Not only did he look like him, he moved like him, head down, furtive. And he was coming up from the basement

into the heart of my privacy, the hall off which were the doors to the bedroom, the room with the chair, the kitchen, the bathroom.

He was coming up from the basement. He was the “Monster in the Basement” that I talk about to clients undergoing Pluto transits. The monster that, I tell them, “is coming up the stairs now, and no matter how much you barricade the door, he’s going to break through it.”

I had not realized that door was the door to the basement from his apartment. I had thought he would have to come in either the front or the back door to the house, as I had noticed the door to his apartment was down some steps off the left side of the house.

There he was, the monster that I had been dreaming about, now come up through the heart of my privacy and moving toward me, fast. He was mumbling, apologizing for being rude on the phone. I said it was okay, quickly dismissing it, wanting to dismiss him. He kept on apologizing, abjectly, profusely. It was too much. He was being obsequious. As he moved by me, I caught a whiff of his breath, the liquor on it.

Alternating with the apologies were more questions about astrology, belligerent. Aggressive. Almost snarling. I kept on trying to get rid of him graciously, like my Libra mother would, to no avail. He was drunk. He wasn’t listening.

Then he said, “I suppose you notice that the newspaper is gone from the table in the mornings. Well, why don’t you put it back out on the porch when you’re done. I don’t want to disturb your privacy.” Coming from him at that moment, this remark disturbed me further. It felt ironic, passive, aggressive.

Finally, he went back downstairs, closing the door behind him. I breathed a sigh of relief, and immediately decided not to stay the extra night as I had planned, but to leave for Jackson two days hence, right after work. That still left me here for two nights. Could I do it? I was amazed at how my treasured safe space had suddenly turned into a living hell.

About an hour later the phone rang again. It was my friend, Rick’s mother. “Hi, Ann, I just thought I’d call and see how you were doing. I talked to Rick, and he said he

met you, only briefly.” I told her about the encounter, and that it made me feel uneasy. “Well,” she responded — I could feel her own unstated unease — “I think sometimes he drinks too much [I hadn’t mentioned the liquor on his breath], and then he doesn’t know what he does. . . . But he’s never been violent. So I don’t think you have to worry about that.” Her even mentioning the possibility of violence in order to deny it did the opposite of what she intended. My already profound unease deepened.

That night when I went to bed, in order to be able to sleep, I focused on creating a protective golden light around myself. I also instructed my unconscious to wake me instantly, if necessary. I was surprised and pleased when I awoke in the morning, refreshed.

Fixing my tea and toast that morning, feeling the sun warm my back as it peeked over the mountain tops and illumined the kitchen, I felt somewhat better, and again, tried to talk myself out of my extreme paranoia of the night before. After breakfast, I put the newspaper back out on the porch and left for work.

I did not arrive back that evening, my final one, until around dusk. Parking the car, I noticed a light on in the living room. Immediately, I was upset and angry. First he says, “I don’t want to disturb your privacy,” and then, in the guise of welcoming my home, he invades my privacy to turn on the light!

I walked in and immediately the inner door to the basement burst open again and he came barreling through. As if we were roommates and he had been waiting for me to come home. This time he wasn’t drunk, he was charming, ingratiating. Asking me questions about my day. Again, I attempted to graciously get rid of him, which, as before, took some time.

This time he left the door open. I tried to close it and it didn’t quite close all the way. Instinctively, I didn’t try again, as I didn’t want to signal my fear of him.

I sat in the easy chair, weary, glad to be leaving in the morning, and not quite as anxious as before, since he was no longer drunk.

That night I fell asleep more quickly, but then, at 1:30 AM, I found myself slowly emerging from sleep into wakefulness. Watchfulness. I heard a creak in the room with the easy chair. Then another. And another. Instantly I am on full alert, and, like a wild animal which senses danger, I freeze. I cannot move. I am really paralyzed, the way I used to be in my twenties when I would fantasize a murderous rapist under my bed, or outside my window, ready to leap in. Tides of blood were surging so tumultuously through my body that I could no longer hear the loud tick tock of the wall clock in the bedroom. The inner chaos was overwhelming the external senses; my own terror was even stronger than the full alert status of my primal animal survival code. “That is him in there. He is in that room. Turn on the light!” I told myself. To no avail. “I can’t! I am paralyzed!” I hear my creaking. “What will I do if he comes in here? *“Turn on the light! I can’t!”*”

Even as this climactic drama is occurring, I notice how the paralysis is putting a terrific strain on every system of my body; simultaneously, I am switching back through memory to notice other times, and *to realize for the first time how much damage fear and terror do to the physical body itself.*

The seconds crawl by. I manage to turn my head slightly to the left, so that I can better watch the door to the hall. “Turn on the light!” I still can’t. I lie there alternately terrified and disgusted with myself for what I judge to be my infantile response to this situation.

I begin to wonder, “Is this real?” Is he really there? Or are those creaks” — I now notice them coming from the direction of the kitchen also — “just the house settling itself into the coolness of the night? No! He is there! I can feel him! Is he? Are you sure? Turn on the light! Go see! I can’t!”

After about 20 minutes I feel somehow that, though the creaks continue and I now hear them from all directions, he has now returned to the basement. Suddenly I am able to switch on the light. I get up, go to the bathroom and glance in the room with the chair. Nothing has been disturbed. I look at the door to the basement, which is exactly the way it was earlier, not quite securely shut. I take this as proof. So he wasn’t there after all! So the pressure of my own unconscious extruded so powerfully that it created

that sensation of his presence in the room with the chair! I lie down again, mystified. Confused. Berating myself once more for my paranoid imagination. Disgusted. *And still scared*. Why? He wasn't there! I have now investigated and rationally ascertained that no one came through that door, since it is in exactly the same position as when I tried to shut it. I spend some time putting the golden shield up again and drift off into an uneasy sleep.

I am down at the bottom of layer upon layer of sleep. A crack has appeared. I am trying to come up now, but am caught by the feeling of someone's body sitting next to mine on the bed. I can feel his warm flesh. It is totally real, totally there. "Oh no," I thunder to myself. "So it's true! I was right! He was there! He is there! *He's here, his flesh rubbing mine, now!*"

I fight my way up through the layers of sleep into wakefulness. As I do, the sensation of his flesh next to mine gradually disappears.

Again, the same terror. Even worse now, since he has utterly violated my personal space. And yet the confusion is worse too, since he's not here, it was a figment of my imagination! My own unconscious created that feeling! The combination of terror, confusion and again, disgust at the contents of my unconscious is deeply unsettling and again, a few hours later, I am surprised when I actually wake up in the morning, and don't feel nearly as wrecked as I thought I would, given the extreme drama in the middle of the night.

I got up, dressed quickly, gathered my things, left the newspaper on the porch for him, and left for my last day of work before the long drive back to Jackson.

In talking about this situation with my partner Jeff that night, I realized that Rick *was* there in the room, and that he *was* there, in the "flesh," on the bed with me. That his unconscious and mine had triggered us together. That some subtle psychic essence of him was in that room late at night, that it had gone back downstairs, and that it had returned when I fell asleep again, this time in which I would call a slightly more materialized state, a sort of "plasma" condition, to sit by my side. That's why his flesh felt so real. It *was* real, in a sense. Talking with Jeff helped me to realize that this poor

lost soul, Rick, needed something from me. That in a way, I was an extension of his mother, whom he, apparently, still needed, and wasn't receiving from in the way he thought he should. I was in her bed, and somehow I had psychically plugged into the corruption of the vibration of the two of them living there together. The mother, literally living on top of the son, is giving to him, yes, and he resents it. It is not enough, it was never enough, and he is furious with her.

I feel her fear of him, and her fear for him. This woman's other child died a suicide a few years ago. My heart goes out to her, to him, and to what they are going through. She already lost one child. She does not want to lose another.

At this vantage point, still quite close to the event, only two days later, I am astonished how the universe created a situation for me which did manage to utilize all of the elements of my chart that were "up" for me during this time. The transit of Jupiter to the Midheaven/Neptune played out in many ways — his drunkenness, my attempt to be nice, my confusion at what was real, the psychic character of the entire situation, his passive/aggressiveness, etc. The original Mars/Uranus/Saturn/node/Chiron T-cross triggered by the transits of Saturn and Mars was especially interesting. I didn't have a car accident! — something I had been aware of as a real possibility, and so was exceptionally mindful in my driving to and from Salt Lake. Rather, I felt his fury at his mother (Mars/Uranus), and I felt my own need to respond in kind with a sudden takeover of the situation by throwing light on it (transit Mars square Mars/Uranus) thwarted by my paralysis (transit Saturn squaring Mars/Uranus/Saturn). The current six-week prelude to Saturn's coming transit through Pisces obviously shows me that I need to learn more about both external/internal boundaries and about how to recognize, distinguish, and work with the different dimensions of invisible reality.

And of course, there was the deepest learning: Pluto's exact transit opposite the Moon, as presaged in the sleazy man dreams over the last six months, which in turn reflected the fear-filled reality of my 20s. This, by the way, itself reflects a psychic pattern seeded into my deepest origins in this life: my own mother, whose sun in Libra is exactly conjunct my Neptune, when she was pregnant with me, her first child, had a series of three close encounters with "murderous, rapist" types, each of which turned out



to be not really what she thought it had been — or was it? Her fear was real. Each time she was paralyzed with fear. But in looking back over each one, she could see how it could be interpreted differently, and she still wonders if she was imagining things that weren't there.

I am struck, more and more, by the extraordinary creativity of the universe. Even in an encounter such as the one I just went through, happening on very subtle levels, and deeply within the interior of only one human being (or was it two?), the universe playfully spilled out a drama that both weaves together all the current transits I am undergoing and, if I am willing, shows me how this particular drama can be the divine seed out of which an entirely new life will evolve.