

Essay

THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN SUN AND MOON

A Personal Journey

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At Full Moon, when the Sun is setting and the Moon is rising, it becomes obvious that the apparent size of the Sun is equal to the apparent size of the Moon. Solar and lunar eclipses make the seeming equivalence between them even more obvious. I have always found this astronomical fact astonishing. The Sun is many times larger and many times further than the Moon, and yet here, on Earth, their perceived size is exactly equal! This feels to me like a miracle. It is as if, especially during solar and lunar eclipses, a message from some larger awareness is transmitted to our blinded, suffering, Earth-bound souls, saying: "Pay attention. Life is not random. Things do make sense."

For the first few years of my consulting practice in astrology, I dismissed the value of the Moon. "Your Moon is not important," I would tell clients; "that is purely in the past."

I was born with the Sun about to rise, both Sun and Ascendant in late Sagittarius. My Moon, on the other hand, is in Taurus. My early disinterest in the Moon in others' charts betrayed my unconscious denial of the importance of my own Moon. I was proud of being a Sagittarian. Fiery. A go-getter. Burning all my bridges as I marched head-long into the future. Ignoring what I had left behind. *So crippled was my internal Moon's*

function, that I even left my own children in the custody of their father when they were five and seven years old.

The Moon did get me once, later, and pulled me down to her level — it felt wonderful! Healing. Finally, I was grounded. I was given a period of grace during that time in my early 30s when I went back home to marry my high school boyfriend. Dick's Moon was also in Taurus, within a few degrees of my own; we imprinted on each other when we were 13 years old; we were emotionally and physically bonded, always had been. Even during those lost years in our 20s when we were both married to others, we dreamed of each other and, finally, 12 years later, our dream came true.

Unlike our teenage years, when my righteous, dogmatic Sagittarian self tried to convert Dick to Catholicism and that same Catholicism in me forbade my Taurus Moon's needs for physical intimacy with him, when we married we made love morning, noon and night. I had never felt so good, so safe, so at home. This marriage, I thought, saved me from my head-long flight into nowhere. Before, I was the Sun, Sagittarian, burning with the search for Truth. Now, I was the Moon, Taurean, making bread and making love.

Exactly one year after we got back together, I woke up one morning and no longer wanted to make love. This shocked me. Scared me. Oh no, is it over? Am I not safe after all? One would think that I was jumping to conclusions, thinking I wasn't meant to stay with Dick just because I found myself not wanting to make love one morning. But that feeling did prove to be a premonition, and my fear was an initial response to an intuitive hint of the coming change.

It took a year for me to enact this change, so much did I love him. So much did I hope we could combine our energies, not just physically and emotionally, but intellectually and spiritually as well. I needed a full partner, I knew that, and I also needed to feel free to do my work (whatever that was, I didn't really know), and ultimately I needed to be partnered with someone with whom I could share that work.

So, during that year when I was attempting to work things through with him — for he was my original, wonderful Taurus Moon love — the Sagittarian fire had surged back,

and with a vengeance. *Who are you? Who am I? Where are we going? Can we go there together?* My questions flew thick and fast, and though we spent that year exploring and comparing values and goals, hoping for resolution, there was no way to rebuild that bridge either, once my fire had burned it. After only two years of emotionally healing our original mutual abandonment, once again my Sagittarian self launched me into the unknown.

Some think that I was very brave (or very foolish) to go off like that without knowing what I was doing. Without understanding what was going to come of me. With no obvious means of support. But I would say that I really had no choice, once the situation with Dick became clear, once I could lift myself out of the emotional waters and see what lay ahead if I stayed. The fact that I didn't know what would happen next was a challenge, yes, and it scared the hell out of me, and I did it anyhow. I had to. It was my original nature calling me, more and more insistently, so that in the end, I had to surrender to that fiery inner solar mandate.

So, though the fear was there, I did not let it stop me. Indeed, a number of years earlier, after I had left my first husband and was shoving off into the unknown for the first time, I had made a rule for myself: "Whatever I'm afraid of, *that* is what I must do." My Sun knew intuitively that only by moving through fear would I expand my horizons. So now, in leaving my second husband, I was moving through fear again.

Each time I moved through fear I switched from the Moon to the Sun. Each time I dared to test my own limits, I was freeing myself up from my own childhood. As I child, I *was* my Taurus Moon, dependent, fearful, obedient, my needs for security locking me into small rigid daily habits. My Sagittarian fire didn't erupt until I was 26 years old, when I almost died from a physical illness which created an entry for the soul to swoop down and boom out, clear and thundering: "Live or die. It's up to you. Decide."

I decided to live. Really live. Live out my Sun's destiny. Burn all the bridges. Leave my husband and children. Move from East Coast to West Coast and a position in an experimental California college where after one year, I was fired, for being, they told me, "too experimental."

My fire burned hot that year. I had a definite and determined philosophy of education, and I was dogmatically pushing it on to everyone in that small college, creating a polarized situation, making myself into both martyr and scapegoat, I thought, but really, looking back on it now, I see that my demise there was inevitable. I was an Icarus who flew too close to the Sun. I had been released, and I did not yet know the appropriate use of my fiery energy.

I would say now that I had no ground to stand on. There was no safe place for me to return to, after these terrific adventures in space. So that's where Dick came in, our marriage. Having gone to the fiery extreme, I flipped, from Sun to Moon — from Icarus and his daring Spiritual Quest to Bovine Splendor at home. And then, after two years, *I couldn't do that, either.*

So far, in my life, I had moved from Moon (as a child and young adult) to Sun (ages 26 to 32) to Moon (32 to 36) to Sun. Flip-flopping back and forth like a fish out of water. And each time I shifted from one to the other, the transition was sudden, wrenching, and unpredictable. It was as if I went as far out as I could go (the Sun) and then freaked, turned around, scuttled back in where I thought I belonged (the Moon), and then, feeling utterly confined and caged in, flipped out again, thrusting into the unknown. I was either the Sagittarian Sun, extreme, manic, full of ideas and plans, but hostile, righteous, paranoid — or I was the Taurus Moon, sensual, security-oriented, stuck, suffocating. After the Sun's initial burst of enthusiasm or the Moon's initial collapse into comfort, neither of them alone felt good; without the other one to balance it, neither one could go on to build its own kind of sense. But I didn't know that then. All I knew was that I was at the mercy of oscillating energies, and the drama was far from over.

And yet, having finally experienced, as an adult, the fully feeling self that the Moon offered me with Dick, leaving him behind was wrenching. That may account for why I told clients during that time — I had decided to try my luck as an astrological consultant after only two years of study — that the Moon wasn't important, that it represents only the past. I was Sagittarian, oriented toward the future, and in order to leave Dick I had to deny how essential my Moon was for me. Just as in order to leave my own children years earlier, I had had to deny the Moon in Taurus' utterly strong and natural

connection with them. That first time, though, the denial was unconscious — and so powerful that I did not feel the pain. I couldn't feel it. If I had been able to feel the pain, I would not have left my children, as the severing of that original biological bond would have been impossible.

So there I was at 36, having made a clear, though painful, choice: Sun over Moon, my work (what was it?) over true love with Dick. I had yet to learn that I could not choose between them, that both conscious and subconscious dimensions were essential aspects of me, that as long as I kept denying one for the other I would remain unbalanced. This imbalance showed up in my tendency to go to extremes, and in both directions . . .

During my late 30s I became a local guru of sorts in my hometown. Working as an astrologer, and establishing *OpenSpace*, a grassroots journal of free expression, my Sun began to shine brightly over that small pond. So brightly, in fact, that my success as a “guru” began to seed messianic dreams of changing the world.

Meanwhile, in the Moon's underbelly, I smoked cigarettes, in secret. A pack a day. And I went in for just about every other addiction I could get my hands on as well. Especially marijuana — it fed those glorious idealistic dreams. I had to have something in my hand, moving towards my mouth, at all times. Anything to feed the insatiable hunger. But for what? What? I experienced a constant inner anxiety that had to be quelled by any means available.

So on the surface my life looked like a shining success story: heroic Athena, or Joan of Arc, blazing forth on her white stallion. Underneath, I was immersed in a seething cauldron of muted terror. For a while the two, Sun and Moon, compartmentalized, each ignoring the other, co-existed in uneasy tension.

Then the Sun overreached. I magnetized another man. His Moon was in Sagittarius! I loved his philosophical, prophetic side; I kept seeing him as a reincarnation of Jefferson or Emerson — but so what, I came to realize eventually: in this life he is Phil, a PTSD'd Black Beret alcoholic veteran with liver damage that finally killed him not long

after our year-long power struggle in which I tried, of course, to change him — change his mind, heal his body, and save his soul.

It was only then, post-Phil, that my essential long-term healing began. Starting when I was about 40, with my Uranus opposition. Starting with my move to Wyoming, first Casper, and then Jackson Hole, and my recognition that I had to take care of myself, because no one else was going to. Starting with another initiation: within a few months of arrival in Jackson, I stopped smoking. This was the first, and by far the most difficult change in daily habit that I have ever undergone. That I succeeded taught me that I *could* heal. Because if I could do this, I could do anything. (And if I couldn't do this, I couldn't do anything and I was doomed. No matter what I might want to do, that habit would undermine me, mock me, remind me of my fatal flaw.)

For Taurus, any change in habit is no small feat! The Moon rules our daily habits, and Taurus Moon is obsessively attached to her habits, her ways of masking pain. I actually released this long-time habit, this solace in times of loneliness, this substitute for food, for love. And by this time, I was actually beginning to pay conscious attention to my subconscious Moon, to realize that she felt comfortable only with what was familiar, with what was known. That to her, even a terrible known was preferable to a possibly glorious unknown. So, in order to let the cigarette habit go, I had to give her another habit, one not quite so pernicious, so that she wouldn't feel deprived. I chose sugar. For one year I substituted sugar for nicotine, and then released that, too. By then, it was easier to do, as even the Moon part of me knew that good things were coming of this change in habit. I could smell and taste again. I was no longer short of breath. I was learning to pause, to feel my way into all those terrifying empty spaces which had been filled with smoke, with that one long drag, that defiant refusal of my doctor-father's command to me when young, "Don't you dare take up smoking!"

In 1984 I met a man who catapulted me into the next phase of learning about my Moon. (I was learning about my Moon only when I could give my Sun to a man, project it on to him, and then use my Moon, become my Moon, in relationship to him.) This man, whose own Moon was in Aquarius, was reading Alice Miller's *The Drama of the Gifted Child*) and together we helped each other discover and pay attention to each

other's wounded "inner child." Thanks to his help, I now had a name for my Moon, "Orphan Annie," and I could feel her as a distinct part of myself, with a personality all of her own.

With exquisite timing, within weeks of naming "Orphan Annie," my new love left me, to pursue his own thwarted Aquarian Moon's needs for independence. With him, I had opened to the Moon, had become vulnerable, and now I was abandoned. This began the most powerful and most painful time in my long journey to wholeness.

For one whole year I was emotionally catatonic, curled into a fetal ball, silenced into agony.

Then I found myself able to move again, and I was paying attention, especially to Orphan Annie. I began to see that she was not exactly a team player. Sometimes she would suddenly surface — and lash out in agony, or in fury, her terrible need obliterating everything in her path. At those times, others would scurry away, terrified of this demon that had erupted in me. At other times, though I wanted to find her, and tried to coax her out, it was as if she was hiding under the bed, or in the closet, and refused, adamant. As if her survival depended on this refusal. I was astonished at the power of her resistance, and admired her stubborn will to live, despite everything I had done to keep her down, out of sight and mind.

My Moon was Orphan Annie, and she was the irrational, needy side of me. All my life she had been the part of me that I would revert back to when times were tough. *She was the child who was taken off her own mother's breast when only nine months old, and weaned to a cup.* She was the one who defied her father at age two when he returned from World War II, expecting, and exacting, obedience. She was the one whose will he finally succeeded in breaking, and then turned inward, becoming fearful, secretive, insecure. As long as she was not being acknowledged, she would continue to sulk, and need, and insidiously undermine any project that my Sun wanted to create. Until I took the time to re-parent her, to honor and support her needs, to become the one she could turn to for comfort, for solace, she would continue to defy me.

When I first began to tune into Orphan Annie, I figured it would take six months, or at most, two years, to consciously integrate my Moon's energies, six months to two years to heal. HA! That project was not completed until I was 51 years old, with the first return of the wounded healer, Chiron, to his own natal place. During the final years of that process, I also experienced transiting Pluto opposed to the Moon, and used the energy of that powerful investigative force to propel me in seeking the origins of what had held me in chains of anxiety all my life. For years I spiraled down, uncovering more and more layers of memory. My dreams portrayed my feelings as fish, shadowy figures moving through a watery gloom, always below the surface, and yet *there*, lurking, ready to grab an arm or a leg. And then, the moments of revelation! When feelings would break the surface, leave rippling circles, jogging memory loose.

I wanted to connect to these feelings, and yet I was terrified they would pull me down and I would drown. I wanted to feel these feelings long enough and deeply enough so that they would begin to speak, to tell me their secrets, the memories they held close within them, memories that had condensed into little stones, silent, long-suffering, heavy. Gradually, at some deep underwater level, the drive for addiction transformed into a dive into the depths and I was seeking understanding, seeking meaning, seeking to free myself of that thick emotional mucus which had clogged the passage of my expression in life.

Now I am 52 years old, two years into a decade when I can finally say that yes, I have now consciously integrated the energies of the Sun and Moon within. The Sagittarius and the Taurus selves in me no longer take sides. This integration was a tremendous accomplishment. I spent the entire decade of my 40s integrating the Moon — my childhood self — within my larger solar personality.

Unlike those early years, when in my ignorance I told clients to ignore their Moons, I now see the Moon in each person's chart as the source of memories, both good and bad, which need to be re-membered. That only when we *re-member* ourselves, only when we put ourselves back together again, integrate all of who we were into who we are now, will we be able to freely surrender to the present, which in turn will unfold the future. The Moon, as the source of subconscious memories within us, the "inner child"

self that the Pluto-in-Leo generation began to recognize when transiting Pluto went into Scorpio and helped us all go down, down, into the watery depths of childhood memory, is often the seat of pain, and therefore of denial, since we, as children, were taught not to cry, to control ourselves.

For the past five years, the years of transiting Pluto's opposition to my natal Moon, I have been in relationship with Jeffrey Joel, a man whose Moon is in Scorpio, conjunct Jupiter; these planets create a harmonious wedge formation with my own Moon in Taurus and Jupiter in Cancer. We have undergone this Pluto transit together, our opposing Moons reflecting, for each other, the other side of ourselves.

The process has not been easy. Especially at first. Unlike most "romantic" connections, we entered our relationship through the shadow. By the end of that first year, we both looked and felt like exhausted survivors of a journey through hell! Then, gradually, ever so gradually, our sea-change began. That story is still so fresh that I cannot find the words. All I know is the ground has shifted beneath us; where once there was a desert, now the springtime blooms.

I have come home. Not to him, but to my own integrated self. As I feel myself as one, so he, in his own process of healing, meets me there.

My feet are planted in earth, my head embraces the sky. The Sun sets in the West as the Full Moon rises in the East. They are equals. Standing in the center, on Earth, I reach for them both, stretching, opening, to both male and female, both God and Goddess.