

# How to make it through the night ... as Neptune transits the Twelfth House

by Anne Whitaker

---

*One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time...*

- Andre Gide (1)

---

That quotation occupied a prominent place in my kitchen *for a very long time*, from 2001-2012, to be exact. Especially during 2001-6, I needed all the inspiration I could get, having been pitched into what amounted to a frightening inner voyage of discovery with no landmarks, no map, no companions – and no idea if I would ever again reach dry land.

During this voyage, the defences I had constructed since childhood to keep my 'other side' at bay were eroded by Neptune's insidious currents. Episodic manifestations of my great-grandmother's Second Sight (2) – as it is known in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland – insisted on being honoured by me at last. I was forced, also, to attend to the fact that inspiration and guidance were welling up from an altogether different Reality than the one my strongly rational, pragmatic side hitherto had trusted and preferred.



**Winter Seascape by Anne Whitaker**

In essence, that long Neptune transit forced me to surrender, pay homage to a symbolic 'god' in whose physical realm ie the sea I had almost drowned at the age of around 7, when Saturn was beginning to square all my twelfth house Leo planets. As Liz Greene once memorably observed in one of her 1990s seminars at the CPA (Centre for Psychological Astrology, London):

---

*You have to give the god what the god wants. And if it's Mars, don't offer a bunch of flowers!*

---

The trigger for my collapse, on top of overwork, was a young family member who had embarked on a course of action in 1998 leading to a paranoid mental breakdown, returning home needing sanctuary in the Spring of 2001. As I battled a severe menopausal stress-related hormonal imbalance which triggered acute exhaustion, insomnia, palpitations and crippling waves of anxiety, mismanagement by my then GP did not help.

By the time we had got our family member into stable supported accommodation and appropriate medication early in 2002, I could barely get out of bed – had to let go of everything and everyone sustaining me except for my husband, a few friends and one or two family members. Life as I had known it was definitely over. I had no idea what came next. The '*night sea journey*' (3) had begun. Honour Neptune I certainly did, having no option but to do so. Retreat from the quotidian round of everyday life for years – and prolonged rest – was at the heart of the cure.

Making long car journeys accompanying my husband on his twelve year pilgrimage to climb all the Munros (4) in Scotland, I sat around in beautiful places, reading everything I hadn't had time to read for decades. This escapist travel, and increasing immersion in the natural world as my energy returned, was also an important dimension of the slow process of recovery.

Reading has always been my sanctuary from early childhood. Via the many and varied writings of a range of open-minded scientists of the calibre of Fritjof Capra, Brian Swimme, Rupert Sheldrake, Paul Davies, and open-minded writers on psycho-spiritual topics such as Carl Gustav Jung and William

James, Pema Chodron, Jack Kornfield and Karen Armstrong, my long-term understanding that the worlds of science and imagination/spirituality need not be at odds with one another was deepened and reinforced during that long retreat.

I realise now, looking back, that all the above reading was an important part of my reconciling the strongly Mercury/Saturn pragmatic, rationalist side of myself with a heavily tenanted twelfth house. I now understand more clearly that we exist in many Realities, some utterly unknowable, which intellect can attempt to refine and communicate **at best**. Until my prolonged immersion in the Neptunian sea, I had used my inner rationalist to keep that mysterious sea with its many currents at bay.

This William James quote sums up his importance to me during my long Neptunian '*dark night of the soul*':

---

*... the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and ...those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also;...although in the main their experiences and those of this world keep discrete, yet the two become continuous at certain points.....*

*The total expression of human experience, as I view it objectively, invincibly urges me beyond the narrow 'scientific' bounds. (5)*

---

His open-minded, non-judgemental qualitative research into people's actual experiences of Realities which lie beyond the one in which we normally live, move and have our being enabled me to value a lifetime's intermittent, threatening, and unwelcome experiences of 'otherness'. My Underworld sojourn also gave me time to record and analyse a variety of paranormal experiences which had occurred now and then between 1971 and 2000 – a whole Saturn cycle. James' work helped me to create a new balance within myself. For that gift I remain forever grateful.

I have recently begun an account of my experiences of that long Neptune transit/'*night sea journey*'. With the benefit of time and distance, I realise two things. One, given a choice between going through that journey again and dying, I would prefer to die. That's how bad some of it was. Two, I am immensely grateful for the enriching gifts which I've slowly realised Neptune has given me – as a result of having surrendered to '*giving the god what the god wants*'.

The book's working title is "*Wisps from the Dazzling Darkness: a Neptunian Night Sea Journey*." Wish me luck as I embark on this new journey with Pluto opposing all those Leo planets – **for the rest of my life**.