

# A Temple for Pluto

By Laurence Hillman

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*If my devils are to leave me, I am afraid  
My angels will take flight as well.*

Rilke

## Pluto's History

In a monastery in medieval Europe an upstart monk was misbehaving. “How do we know that all the words we are copying over and over again in these texts are accurate?,” he asked. “If a monk made a mistake two hundred years ago, we'd still be copying that same mistake, no?” The abbot reluctantly agreed with the smart aleck and promised all the monks that tomorrow he would compare their work with the original text that was kept deep in the vaults below the monastery. The next day, as he descended into the forbidden, stony depths, all the monks gathered excitedly at the top of the stairs. After what seemed an endless amount of time, they heard a woeful cry of agony from below. The abbot emerged clutching his head with both hands and exclaimed: “The word is *celibrate!*”

For about a thousand years, prior to the Reformation, the Catholic Church controlled the Western world alongside various noblemen that came and went. The above story illustrates the twisting that occurred deliberately along the path of human evolution: control, power, sex, and hidden secrets, themes resonant with Pluto, came under the dominion of the Church. The Church understood that by controlling the sex life of its members, it held power over them. Furthermore the timeless ideas of the cycle of life and

reincarnation were replaced with the ideas of purgatory, hell and perhaps heaven – but only if you behaved in the appropriate ways as defined by Church doctrine. Through controlling the ideas about death, another Pluto archetype, total control belonged to those in the religious elite. While only priests were asked to make the sacrifice of celibacy, the implied message was that they were in closer contact with God. In overcoming their worldly urges by sacrificing sex and other pleasures, the implied message was that what the plain people practiced was implicitly inferior.

To the archetypal expressions of Pluto belong the energies of sex, death, and transformation. In my practice as an astrologer I find that in Western culture today we are as uncomfortable with these archetypes as we have been for fourteen or so centuries.

Ask anyone familiar with astrology about Pluto and you will experience Pluto power. You will undoubtedly get the familiar raised eyebrows or frowning from most. In the folklore about Pluto, war stories and horror stories about loss and death abound. Pluto has snaked its way into the collective archetypal consciousness as that power over which we have least control. Pluto energy is most inevitable, fated, and deeply transformational.

Could it be that there is still a cultural origin to our difficulties with Pluto? Could it be that we have collectively banned Pluto underground? That we now have no place to visit with this energy when it appears in our lives as it undoubtedly will? As a result, could it be that this energy erupts into our collective experience as the Trench Coat Mafia in Columbine? Or that Pluto stays hidden in a global network of Internet pornography? Or that Pluto manifests collectively in a huge prison population of locked-up people who most of us want to keep invisible to our consciousness?

### A Temple for Pluto

Every planet is an actor in the celestial play unfolding within us and wants to be heard. Those planets that are not allowed to speak – repressed by culture, grooming, or trauma – will act up. For instance, suppose you have a strong Pluto in your chart. With

this you may experience a strong urge to express yourself in a passionate sexual way. You may also be quite comfortable with the idea of death and rebirth and you may have secret wishes of being very powerful. These are some of the natural ways for Pluto to express, to speak through you. At the same time it is quite likely that your surrounding world does not share your intrigue with Pluto. I believe that this is because we have collectively pushed this Plutonian energy underground.

Every planet also expresses itself somewhere on a sliding scale between two extremes. For instance, Mars at one end of his scale is a gun-wielding maniac mowing down people in an adrenaline and gun-pumping-action fit. At the other end of the same Mars scale you find a 12th Dan black belt martial artist. Here Mars energy has been harnessed with beauty and the martial artist walks away from a fight. Most of us express Mars somewhere between these two extremes.

Similarly, on Pluto's scale we have seen plenty of manifestations that arise as a result of repression. I have mentioned a few above. While I'm not suggesting that we "perk up" Pluto, I *am* interested in a move towards a greater understanding of what has been lost by Pluto's demise. By salvaging what has been buried we may find Pluto's riches once again. Pluto is, after all, also the god of wealth abundance, and precious metals hidden in the earth. Pluto was referred to as the rich one because he owned all the wealth in the ground.

In ancient times, temples were erected to house and honor a god and his or her energy. This was a way to bring the particular energy into the fold of everyday life. Worshiping in such a temple meant taking on some of this energy. Or, honoring and leaving some energy behind that was not desirable. This is what I call "holding" an energy. It means having the strength and depth to resonate with a given planetary energy consciously. In Pluto's case, and translated to the twenty-first century, this would include facing our own views – deeply, not casually – about sex, death, and transformation. How

capable am I to stay in Pluto's temple and resonate with these ideas and the feelings they initiate?

If we desire to evoke the most constructive and integrated aspects of Pluto, the question becomes how we can create a metaphoric structure that can hold and resonate with Pluto – a state of mind in which we can reverberate with this archetype's riches. By imagining such a place we begin to invite some of the Plutonic energy back into our awareness. By holding an idea in our conscious mind we become part of it, it no longer rules us and we move out of victim-status.

The question I pose is: what would an imaginal "temple" for Pluto look like?

Like architects, we can take a piece of paper and start to list the criteria that together begin to shape a temple for Pluto. The ancients believed in building temples for the gods. Temples were places to focus the particular energy of a deity. The deity lived within the temple, or at least came to visit. By honoring the god with a temple, mortals were able to step into the presence of the immortal archetype. I am borrowing this idea to re-connect to Pluto's energy. After all, "you do the gods, or the gods do you."

The planets, from my astrological point of view, are energies within us. As such, they are intrinsically neither good nor bad but akin to heat, another form of energy. Depending on how you use heat, it keeps you warm or burns you; the discerning factor is free will. If our goal is to build an inner temple for Pluto so that we can honor and hold this energy, we must first study the energy pattern within the archetype itself.

### Slowness

Pluto moves extremely slowly and consequently the experiences we have of Pluto in transit are very slow and long lasting.

The general complaints I hear from my clients during Pluto transits are: "I don't have time for this stuff," or: "Pluto is interfering with my life," or mostly: "I am losing control." Collectively we cannot handle Pluto because we cannot handle vibrating at that

slow level. In fact the etymological root of the word *slowness* leads to words such as tardiness, apathetic, procrastination, and backwardness. Contrast that to the etymological roots of the word *speed*, which include prosperity, to succeed, and hope. As the world gets increasingly fast, where does this leave slow Pluto? Pluto is not part of the culture. Pluto is an exile. We are uncomfortable with Pluto. We don't have the patience.

The faster we move the more discordant we will be with Pluto's energy. If you are dancing the jitterbug, it is hard to dance with a partner who is undulating to the *Lambada*. In our daily lives, we synchronize our rhythm with Pluto when we are most slowed down and relaxed, during sleep in the dream world, or during meditation and relaxation.

The first thing we have learnt about our temple for Pluto is that it must be large to hold long and slow movement. Perhaps cavernous is a better word. We note this on our list of building criteria for our temple.

### Yin Energy

Pluto, by nature, expresses Yin and Yang energy balanced equally. However, we usually emphasize the Yang side and speak about the outwardly destructive force of Pluto: the fiery eruptions; the devastating earthquake inside that shakes our whole sense of who we are; the mean and manipulating boss who breathes down our necks. Indeed, these or some of the ways Pluto's Yang side is experienced.

In addition to that, Pluto is just as much Yin energy. As food for thought, this idea certainly puts a different spin on Persephone's abduction. Pluto in essence is very congruent with the Egyptian Lion-Headed Goddess Sekhmet. We must remember the importance of seeing the new life potential that becomes visible only *after* the destruction through Plutonic Yang. After the eruption of Mount St. Helen, the surrounding land was covered for miles with ashes and devastation. Those same ashes became the extremely fertile womb for endless new plants.

Simply put, the Yin/Yang symbol is half white and half black, symbolizing light and dark, day and night, male and female. Similarly, we cannot experience Pluto if we miss either the Yin or the Yang.

The Apollonic, solar, and Yang principle is only too well understood in our culture: the familiar spiritual seeker of the Divine, striving towards the light in a heroic quest. The fluff in New Age is so completely puffed up with The Light and stepping into God's presence that they forget that in the beginning of Genesis, right after God created heaven and earth, "darkness was upon the face of the deep." Only after this process can there be light. If you don't believe the statement about some types being obsessed with the light, remind an angel-faced seeker that half the Yin/Yang symbol is black. Then watch what happens!

Staying with the idea that we must have Yin to balance the light, let us now get a sense of what Yin is. Think: moisture, dark, musky, earthy, fertile, receptive, creating, healing, and undulating (yes, I like that word). Think of the roots of a tree, balancing the crown and the fruits borne forth there, fruits that bulge as they swell with the juices from below.

I am not negating the light. I understand photosynthesis and the need for the solar principle to sweeten the fruit and charge up the crown of the tree. I am merely saying that our culture is obsessed with the tree and its fruits and has a difficult time dealing with the roots of things, with any feminine, dark, mysterious energy.

Too much Yang and the tree will fall over – that's what can happen when there are no roots. Too much Yin, and we have what gardeners refer to (usually with a grimace) as a "tuber," a fungi of swelling roots that can lift asphalt and penetrate concrete. Let's strive for balance.

In its search for light, Western culture has found comfort in the idea of enlightenment. We believe that with proper technique, Kundalini energy will open up your crown chakra like the effects of a double espresso at Starbucks – enlightenment for

sale. What we tend to forget is that Kundalini energy comes up your – well, you know where it starts. The *root* chakra must be opened first. It is not wise to examine any of the other chakras until we have examined the root chakra, including death.

The root chakra is a very Plutonic place. Different schools of thought place it in different physical locations in the lower body. Of course the root chakra is at the root, but is this at the end of the spine? Nearer to the sex organs? The sex organs themselves? This ongoing discussion, just the fact that it is “somewhere down there at the bottom,” I find worth reflecting on! Does anyone argue over where the heart chakra is? For the sake of making my point here and observing that Pluto in Astrology usually rules the sexual organs as well as the latter part of the intestine and the Anus, I will use the this one: the root chakra is located in the Perineum, defined by the dictionary as: “The region between the scrotum and the anus in males, and between the posterior vulva junction and the anus in females. Getting wiggly and uncomfortable? Good! *It is not possible to deal with any of the other chakras until we have faced all that is Plutonic.* To quote the musician George Clinton: “Free your ass and your mind will follow!”

This “ass” energy is not comfortable to us in a culture that is based on Puritan ideas. We are, strictly speaking, a nation of prudes. We could not show Elvis’ hips on the Ed Sullivan Show (and it is still not culturally possible to show a naked breast on prime time television in the USA). Too much Pluto. Wanting to rebel against Pluto repression, each generation must, again and again, confront the status quo with that which resides below the belt. It is a necessary way of opening up consciousness. Because of the need for shock value the content must also always get increasingly explicit. The controversy around the rapper Eminem at the 2001 Grammy’s is a good example. His lyrics are about Pluto. While we tolerate unspeakable violence in video games, movies, and TV and while most twelve year olds can access hard-core pornography on-line (because they are far more sophisticated than *Net-Nannies* and V-Chips), when we find an individual target, we attack. I am not condoning or even commenting on Eminem’s specific lyrics, I am

addressing his phenomenon in our culture and observing hypocrisy to no end. It strikes me that Eminem is often described as an “underground phenomenon” (hello Pluto!) that became highly successful, rose to the surface, so to speak. The same way that I was an affront to those around me when I wore long hair growing up in my native Switzerland, what my nine-year-old daughter sings in the back of my van shocks me, as it must. It is Pluto’s job to confront us with that, which is uncomfortable so that we can imagine change. Happily, most of what my daughter sings is unconscious to her.

I recently counseled a former rock star in my practice. We were talking about her connecting with the audience from the stage, an experience that she described as very sexual and erotic. Her chart showed what I would loosely describe as an invisible Pluto. I asked her, from where in her body she related to the audience. She said: “Oh, intensely through the heart.” I said: “Anywhere else?” She said: “ Oh yes, from the mind.” Because we had discussed Pluto I said: “Can you imagine connecting with them through your root chakra?” She said “wow” and we started the real work. Of course, this kind of connection with the audience is what Jim Morrison does naturally.

When I try to conjure up an image for the most threatening idea to our culture a very Plutonic image arises: that of a Voodoo priestess writhing in ecstasy, naked, while the blood of the headless chicken in her hands flows down her sweaty, chocolate skin. This image does not bode well on Main Street. Yet, here we have passion, ritual, death, blood, and an undulating feminine body all in one. Pluto is at home here. Totally and uncompromisingly. And need I tell you that we all have Pluto in our charts? *We all express the archetypal Voodoo priestess somewhere.* For many Americans the way to experience ecstatic ritual was at a Grateful Dead concert. For many, Freddie Krueger or Norman Bates is the titillating archetype we cannot be without because it scares us. We hold our hands over our eyes but can’t resist peeking because we must include all the actors in our internal play. Our internal pantheon includes Kali too, and each planet must speak through us in its own voice.



Pluto energy appears not only as horror, and destruction, and titillation. The Yin aspect is also nurturing and receptive. Expressed this way, Pluto is also a bowl, a creative and dark, moist place. The same gardener who knows about destructive tubers, delights at truffles and mushrooms, treasures from the deep, moist earth. Pluto is also a womb, life-giving, nourishing and replenishing vessel of new life. Soft folds protect and nourish new life in complete darkness. This image becomes our next clue for our temple for Pluto. Let us note this on our list of criteria.

### Transformation Through Ecstasy

Another expression of Pluto is in sex, a different kind of sex than that described archetypally by Leo. Leo sex is about fun, procreation, and offspring; creating something new. It is essentially about the *act* of creation. It is like lighting a match, a short, passionate, heartfelt, flaming moment. These are moments only, like the much-celebrated initial weeks of a new sexual relationship.

Different from that, Plutonic sex is slow. Plutonic sex takes refinement, lots of time to develop, like Tantra, which is a form of conscious loving. It is painfully transforming at times. The Rock Star Rod Stewart sings about this:

*And sometimes when we touch  
The honesty's too much  
And I have to close my eyes and hide  
I want to hold you till I die  
Till we both break down and cry  
I want to hold you till the fear in me subsides<sup>1</sup>*

This sex is about sleeping with the gods, but it is not always fun. You enter into Plutonic sex at the risk of death. You are floating in a narrow space of ecstasy between here and yonder. The presence of the unspeakable is experienced as a *mysterium*

*tremendum*<sup>2</sup> that is both a feeling of awe and shuddering. This experience can be extremely frightening, particularly if one partner is not ready. This kind of sex transcends the physical and you must let yourself fall right out of the Leo playpen.

While a Main Street attitude once again has a hard time with this – reconciling sex and death – this meeting is not at all far fetched. The French call the orgasm *le petit mort* or the little death. And if you have ever been “there,” you know why. Tapping into ancient sexual techniques, such as Tantra and all its derivatives is another modern-day effort to “go there.” There are also accounts from England where men were observed having erections at the moment of their hanging. A biological phenomenon? Ecstasy? I guess no man ever lived to tell, but an interesting observation from our viewpoint! Remember the Japanese movie *In the Realm of the Senses*<sup>3</sup>? It is about a woman whose obsessive sexual relationship with her husband crosses the line from passion into the realm of life and death. She strangles him at the peak moment during their lovemaking. Nagisa Oshima brilliantly explores the fine Plutonic line between sex and death. More recently, the master of Plutonic topics, the Marquis de Sade is being popularized in the film “Quills.” Pluto becomes the planet at the threshold between creation and destruction, the keeper of the gate. In ancient times, often when priests entered the holiest of holies, they went in naked. No protection.

This image of disrobing when we enter Pluto’s temple and entering naked and vulnerable becomes the next clue for our temple. We note this on our list.

### The Circle of Life

The next clue for our Plutonic structure can be illustrated in a story a client told me recently. I was telling her about Pluto, transformation, death, rebirth, and how the

butterfly symbolizes this. She told me a little anecdote, triggered by the butterfly image. A truck had crashed into her house and as part of this disruption she found a butterfly cocoon that had been hidden inside the wall. She assumed the cocoon was dead but just in case it was not, she threw it in the basement. Later she discovered that it hatched and she made a point to mention that it was a beautiful swallowtail butterfly that emerged. While this is a type of butterfly, the symbolism in the word is noteworthy to me. The image of the serpent swallowing its tail, a metaphor for reincarnation and the cyclical nature of life, is striking. She saw only death after a traumatic experience; after a long while in the basement the cycle began anew. (As a side note, I pay an inordinate amount of attention to language as metaphor, much like Milton Erickson did. A wise teacher of mine once said: It's not what you're saying, it's what you are telling me!) Similarly, in a study done by Elizabeth Kübler Ross the image of a butterfly appeared scratched by children on the walls of their housing in concentration camps. They had painted this symbolic imagery prior to their execution. Once again the butterfly appears as an image at the threshold of life and death.

I am a fan of the first Lion King movie that Disney released in 1994. There is a lot of Pluto in it and I like the idea of Disney peddling Pluto to minors, not as a silly dog but as a subconscious phenomenon. Consider the first scene and the last in the movie. They are essentially identical except for a generational shift that occurred during the length of the plot. The story comes to a full circle, the circle of life. Everything ends where it began and everything begins where it ended. This is a profound insight, even if animated by Walt. True to Shakespearean tradition we also have the good and the bad kings, the murder of the good king by the bad, the exile of the rightful heir to the throne and his return through love. Then, after the savanna burns – out of the ashes the phoenix – the

new world is born. We must have fire, destruction, starvation, and death before we can re-germinate. In the title song of the Lion King Elton John sings:

*Till we find our place  
On the path unwinding  
In the Circle, the Circle of Life<sup>4</sup>*

Or in the words of T.S. Eliot:

*And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time*

Pluto becomes the butterfly who looks back at the cocoon and says: “That was me? That was I!”

So we observe that the next design criteria for our Pluto structure must be flexibility and a capacity to take us to the threshold between death and rebirth. We take note.

### Cold

Others have said that Pisces is vaporized water, Cancer liquid water, and Scorpio (and thus Pluto) frozen water. Even scientists call Pluto the icy planet. Physics teaches us that the difference between water and ice is basically slower molecules in the ice. Once again we have slowness. As I have described above, fire is a symbolic representation of the Yang side of Pluto. Ice, I would postulate, is an expression of Yin. Life can be preserved in ice for eons. Let us here add another image to our repertoire. Have you ever felt the burning sensation of dry ice? Have you ever cleaned up after a frozen water pipe

burst? Ever found a cracked flowerpot on your porch when water seeped into the ceramic pores and the pot exploded as the water froze? Behold the power of ice. It behooves us to remember that icy glaciers initially carved our landscapes. This is undulating at Pluto's pace. This energy comes on slowly and sometimes inconspicuously. Yet Pluto penetrates everything, moves and undulates up through us – like an earthquake or a volcanic eruption – and shakes us slowly and repeatedly after a buildup of energy.

After Plutonic experiences we can go into “cold shock.” When we are unconscious we are out cold and when we physically die we really chill out, so to speak. After we throw up, we shiver. A drug addict goes “cold turkey” in the jail cell. We also murder in cold blood. Obviously, Pluto is comfortable in the realm of cold.

Most of us are not comfortable being cold. But then again, Pluto is not about being comfortable. If you can't stand the cold, get into the kitchen!

We add to our design criteria a note: temple must be cold, freezing cold.

### Silence

The eighth principle (Pluto, Scorpio and the eighth house) is associated with the metaphysical world. It is invisible, secretive, often unconscious power. The more noise we make in the outside world, the more this inner invisible power controls us. In other words, it is profoundly psychological. To delve into this aspect of Pluto, we must therefore have absolute silence.

Pluto likes to appear in dreams as nightmares, in meditation as powerful images, and in life-altering psychological insights that take extensive quiet-time to absorb into the very fabric of our cells. Pluto is fermentation deep in the belly. You can't hear this sound unless you are silent. You must undulate silently.

Being secretive also means being silent. The Scorpio archetype is not chatty. In this silence there is wisdom. There is the possibility to hear beyond our selves. There is the potential for great perception/reception.

We add this design criterion too: temple must be absolutely silent.

### The Pond

Let's take a look at our list. We have now several ingredients and design criteria for the creation of a temple for Pluto. But, in case you were thinking of literal columns, a base and a pediment on top, in true Plutonic fashion, please *destroy* that idea! Instead, think of a metaphoric place in the earth. That is, after all, where Pluto houses. As architects of a temple for Pluto we must create something cavernous and retreating, dark, freezing cold, and silent. By design we enter here naked and we are at the edge of death. A design idea and an image emerges for our metaphoric temple for Pluto:

*Walk into a forest at 3:00 am. The night is pitch black except for a crescent moon that gives off just enough light for you to find your way through the trees along the path. You come to a pond, a small black mirror on the forest floor. It is completely surrounded by trees and their roots are growing into the water. The heavenly silver sliver is reflected in the black surface. Not a ripple to be seen. You break the surface tension and test the water and it is ice cold. You strip off all your clothes and naked you swim out into the middle of the pond, and dive straight down, swimming ever deeper. Just as you wonder about drowning you find yourself breathing the icy water. You continue to swim. There seems to be no bottom to this pond. Somewhere down there you come to a steady float. Here you*

*do what is done best in ponds. You ponder. As you float in this place, people, ghosts, memories, and old lovers, dead or alive, float by. Undulation is easy here. Welcome to Pluto's world.*

Later, as you re-surface, re-dress, and re-reflect, you feel empowered and re-seeded in a way that only Pluto can initiate. You have been with Pluto. You have been in a temple for Pluto.

### Practical Application

Pluto brings forth into the visible world the *experience* of what is deeply psychological and transformational. As we change, an old way of being dies.

Sir Francis Bacon said, that the only way we learn is by experience. Along those lines, Pluto's house position indicates where in our life we must experience the death of old ways. The sign position reflects how we must do this, and the aspects to Pluto indicate with whom. For example, Pluto in the fourth house in Leo and squaring the Moon may indicate that we would be confronted with our views about "home" and "roots" (fourth house) in a dramatic way (Leo) and that this would be done in a relationship to our own ideas of nurturing and our archetypal views of "Mother" (square to Moon). Pluto psychologically will confront us with beliefs and with obsessions to keep on doing something until it kills us, or until we change. Pluto demands transformation. As my colleague Donna Spencer likes to say: "Do yourself in or work yourself out." In the example above, fight with your victimizing mother till death do you part or learn from Pluto and change.

As astrologers who are knowledgeable about Pluto and cognizant of free will, we carry a weighty responsibility when deciphering Pluto to clients. First, we must come clean in our own lives and never again should we say: “My Pluto is killing me!” Instead the appropriate phrase might be: “The way I am expressing Pluto is how I am killing myself!” This sound ludicrous but starts the conversation of responsibility versus victimhood. The way I relate to Pluto myself is the way I explain Pluto to others. We must be what we preach. This is congruency. Practical application of the temple for Pluto means allowing for Pluto to speak through us, albeit this may be painful. Only after we have met our own Voodoo priestess are we entitled to meet her in others. Gladly do we let Jupiter speak through us at the casino table. How often do we invite Pluto into our lives? Our inner celestial stage has ten actors and *each* is part of the play. To describe the script of this play I offer the practitioner some ideas from my practice:

- 1) Find the Voodoo priestess in the chart and her relative significance to the rest of the chart. This means find the number of times the eighth principle is prominent in the chart (seen as a strong Pluto, Scorpio or eighth house). Include all relevant aspects and reciprocities (by house and sign). *This gives you an idea of what power you are dealing with.* Some people have more to learn about Pluto than others.
- 2) While encouraging interaction with Pluto, keep in mind that Pluto is invisible to most of us and especially to the culture at large. Exuberance about Pluto may unleash more onto the world than the client (or the world) is ready to handle. So what to do in a world where your Voodoo priestess is not welcome? Caroline Casey uses a poignant phrase with



which we might begin: to become “stealth agents for change.” We must play the part and be within the system yet not of it. That is true power, another favorite word for Pluto. If the Trojan horse had been purple, the people of Troy would not have taken it inside their secure zone. It had to look the part. It too, was a stealth agent of change. In true Plutonic terms it changed the outcome of the story through fire, death, and destruction.

- 3) Expand the repertoire of Plutonic ideas. Go from killer weed to truffle. I have noted an excited sense of relief in innumerable clients at the “permission” to enjoy the Plutonic taboo areas so titillating to many.
- 4) Look for mythological sub-plays in the chart. A Venus Pluto relationship, for instance, brings forth the archetypal blend of Beauty and Death. Here point your clients towards the art world and painters like Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, or to movies dealing with these themes. Thanks to my friend and colleague Ray Grasse I have collected a list of such films to recommend: *Light the Red Lantern*, *The King of Masks*, *Exotica*, *Pleasantville*, and *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, to name but a few. Plutonic thinking requires that you look at the world around you in a refined way.
- 5) Psychological work is filled with images. Therapeutical work begins by adding to the culturally (and surely archetypally) prevalent images surrounding death, sex, and transformation. Invite your clients to visit the temple of Pluto. Not as a preemptive measure (“Hey Pluto, maybe

we can be friends??”) but to experience it more fully. Like the ancients, we must enter this sacred place naked and willingly.

- 6) I like to use the pond metaphor as a useful therapeutic avenue for those needing to connect to their Pluto in an experiential way. Other techniques are taking note of dreams, painting, sculpting or acting out the goblins that appear in nightmares or in meditation. Healing techniques include the practice of Tantra, eliminating the superfluous (vomiting, diarrhea, surgery of cancerous cells), and psychological purging in the therapy room.
- 7) I never encourage wallowing in the past. One of my teachers once said (in as many words): “If you have a pile of manure, don’t stir it up, it will only smell!” Instead we can reflect, visit, observe, play with and add to images that haunt us. This is how we gain perspective. Likewise we do not need to stay in the pond. We go there for perspective. We cycle in and out of the pond. Nobody lives in a temple. We visit and re-enter the world nourished, freed, and connected.
- 8) Remember that in the end Pluto is also about healing. Sometimes this first requires serious sacrifice: emotional surgery, perhaps bloody wounds, even relinquishing a first-born. For those of your clients in the darkest throws of pain, remind them of the value in purging, that which is already dead in the body. This is where healing begins. A dead fetus must be expelled if you are ever to create new life.

Finally, let us have respect for those with a genuine fear of Pluto realities. The culture does not encourage Pluto in any way. If we barge in with too much Pluto, we can cause great damage. Many prefer a warm swimming pool in the sunshine to a cold pond in the night. Also remember what Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “People only see what they are prepared to see.” So, a little dose of Pluto can go a long way. It takes its own slow time to become transformed into someone conscious and alive.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sometimes When We Touch* Lyrics by Barry Mann and Dan Hill

<sup>2</sup> The German Theologian Rudolf Otto describes this term in his 1917 book *The Idea of the Holy*

<sup>3</sup> Nagisa Oshima's sensational, 1976 film

<sup>4</sup> *The Circle of Life* Lyrics by Tim Rice