

# News From The Astropoetic School

March 2013

Greetings from **The Astropoetic School of Soul Discovery** located in the heart of the galaxy on **Milky Way Farm** here in the beautiful Ozarks - where the stillness of winter gestates new life in secret ritual space.

## Ceres Revisited

I use this phrase to start my newsletter, because I have just finished revising Lesson 22 of my correspondence course on the dwarf planet Ceres. Ceres - a Roman goddess of agriculture - is known mostly through the story of her Greek counterpart Demeter.

Demeter is famous for withdrawing the fertility of the Earth in order to bargain for the return of her daughter Persephone from the Underworld after her abduction by Hades. The agreement worked out between Demeter and Zeus returns Persephone to the upper world for part of the year - an arrangement that is evoked as the mythological basis for the turning of the seasons.

Modern astrologers associate Ceres with mothering, as well as the wounds associated with meddlesome or neglectful mothering - particularly eating disorders like anorexia, bulimia, or weight issues; abandonment issues; and issues associated with sexual abuse.

On a more global scale, Ceres may be implicated in growing concerns about climate change, genetically modified foods, and population growth (7 billion and counting) that places increasing stress on the planet's natural resources and life support systems.

There is another side to Ceres, however, that gets less astrological press. After Demeter learns of her daughter's abduction through conversations with Hecate and Helios (Moon and Sun deities respectively) she doesn't immediately respond. Instead, she puts on a disguise and wanders incognito through the human world.

Eventually, she winds her way to the town of Eleusis and gets a job as a nanny to Demophon, heir to the throne of King Celeus. By day, she goes about her day job, but at night, she works in secret to make Demophon immortal, anointing him with special oils and dipping him in fire.

After a while, she is discovered and reveals her true identity, commanding that a

temple be built for her on the spot. It is only then that she retires into the temple to mourn for her daughter, and begins to withdraw the life force from the Earth, forcing Zeus and Hades to the bargaining table.

After the dust settles and the seasonal compromise is reached, Demeter's temple at Eleusis becomes the site of a mystery school, where supplicants learn the secrets of immortality - secrets that largely remain secret to this day.

in contemplating this myth, I have come to believe that in addition to her more outwardly visible manifestations such as the psychology of mothering and climate change, Ceres also governs the secret inner workings of transformation and healing - precisely those aspects of deep change that cannot be measured in an increasingly evidence-based world and whose true efficacy defies rational explanation.

In some way that is not immediately obvious, those souls with Ceres prominent in their chart will transmute deep inconsolable grief, irrevocably loss, or the unspeakable tragedy of a Hurricane Sandy, or a Fukushima, or a Newtown massacre into another magnitude of strength. This does not happen in the limelight of public discourse so much as it happens in the secret chambers of hearts that have been violated by catastrophe and loss.

Astrologers have long assigned the process of death and rebirth to Pluto - who is in fact Ceres' divine adversary in the myth. But I have come to believe that the inscrutable mystery of the passage between death and rebirth - the bardo state - belongs to Ceres. We see the death; we see the rebirth - what happens in between is beyond our scrutiny.

Nearly 50 years ago, Timothy Leary (who had Ceres conjunct Pluto within 3 minutes of arc) wrote *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* - meant to be a guidebook for those who wished to explore that mysterious space between death (of the ego) and rebirth of a more liberated being - using LSD as a catalyst. Gushing with enthusiasm in the introduction to his book, Leary says (p 30):

*Here then is the key to a mystery which has been passed down for over 2,500 years – the consciousness-expansion experience – the pre-mortem death and rebirth rite. The Vedic sages knew the secret; the Eleusinian initiates knew it; the Tantrics knew it. In all their esoteric writings they whisper the message: it is possible to cut beyond ego-consciousness, to tune in on neurological processes which flash by at the speed of light, and to become aware of the enormous treasury of ancient racial knowledge welded into the nucleus of every cell of your body.*

Today, most of us cringe in embarrassment at the caricature that Leary became,

while nodding secretly to our psychedelic roots. But as Ceres moves into her power as a dwarf planet on a par with her nemesis Pluto - after 205 years of secret gestation in asteroid status - the question remains as potent as ever:

How is it possible rise above the petty concerns of a beleaguered ego and access "the enormous treasury of ancient racial knowledge" within in order to meaningfully serve a world badly in need of every single one of us to step up to the plate?

Are we not in a kind of bardo state now? The old order - built on fossil fuels, capitalism, war, and the myth of limitless expansion - is dying. The future is uncertain. To be alive on the planet now is to be in a liminal space - between death and rebirth.

Could it be that Ceres' promotion to dwarf planet status at this juncture signals her readiness to be a guide through the bardo state into a more sustainable, more humane civilization, more fully integrated into the whole web of life?

Perhaps a closer look at the placement of Ceres in your chart holds some hidden key to how you can best negotiate this rite of passage, as well as to any potential part you might play as catalyst and co-midwife to the birthing of the new.

At least that is where I try to take Lesson 22 - drawing from examples both of those like the XIVth Dalai Lama, who did access his Ceres in a positive and constructive way, and those like Adolph Hitler, whose failure to do so was catastrophic for the collective wellbeing of the *animus mundi*.

## Individual Lessons Now Available

If you wish to learn more about Ceres, my 36-page lesson is now available as a stand-alone PDF file for \$10.

The lesson includes a homework assignment, which is designed to help you consider Ceres' placement in your chart, and more importantly the role that it plays in your life.

There are also a series of provocative questions meant to serve as Cerean meditations designed to take you more deeply into the secret mysterious heart of this relatively inscrutable archetype.

Also available in PDF format are the first 22 lessons of my correspondence course - each from 30-40 pages, with engaging homework assignments - for \$10 each. To see a list of available lessons, go to <http://www.astropoetics.com/downloads.html>.

The lessons posted are not currently available as downloads from the web site

itself - except to students of my correspondence course - but if there is a lesson that interests you, email me, and I will be glad to make sure you get it.

Each lesson comes with the option of a response from me to the homework assignment. For an additional \$150, I will provide a written response plus a 90-minute phone session to talk about whatever questions you have, or whatever life issues have been raised in the course of your interaction with the lesson.

## The Course

For those who are interested in a more complete in-depth study of astrology, the full correspondence course is still available.

Over the course of the past 20 years, I have been gradually revising the course to include more examples from student files, famous people, and my own experiences, and to reflect a more astropoetic perspective - in which the goal is not interpretation, but self-reflection using astrology as a springboard for the creative imagination.

This course is not meant for those who wish to become practicing astrologers. Instead it is for those - including practicing astrologers - who wish to use their knowledge of astrology as a pathway to self-healing and personal growth.

I personally believe that anyone reading charts for other people can significantly deepen their practice by using the tools for constant self-reflection and as a catalyst to their own spiritual development. It is a structured approach to this more introspective use of astrology that I offer in my course.

Advanced placement is available for those with some prior knowledge or experience with astrology. But as do most astrologers, I have reinvented almost every aspect of the art in the marinating stew of my own 40+ years experience - and there is much that will be new to you, even at the most basic level.

The astrology I teach is rooted in actual life experience, and what I want to know from all potential students is not necessarily how much astrology you know, but how you have applied what you know to your own soul's journey.

If you are interested in working with astrology in this way, we can start with the advanced placement exam - which allows me to assess how well your knowledge of astrology is integrated with your life, and then custom-design a set of recommended lessons to help you deepen and continue the integration process.

Says one student about the course:

*I am always very inspired and challenged (in the best sense of the word) by your lessons. Your thought-provoking insights and assignments have provided me with more self-understanding and self-affirmation in just a few lessons than years of reading self-help books.*

I do try to inspire and challenge my students, as well as myself in moving to the heart of astrology's uncanny capacity to illuminate what we don't already know about ourselves. But mostly I have been blessed with students who are passionate about their own process of self-discovery. So for me, taking my own studies to the next level is often simply a matter of meeting the passion, the curiosity, and the creative imagination of each student with my own. It is a consistent and ever-amazing pleasure.

If you want to deepen your understanding of astrology while you explore your own soul's journey, perhaps this course is for you. You can listen to an audio interview with me about the course at:

<http://www.astropoetics.com/interview.html>

## 2nd Annual Tracking the Soul Workshop

In November 2012, I taught the first annual Tracking the Soul Workshop, based on my book of the same name - **Tracking the Soul With An Astrology of Consciousness**. It was a dream come true - as the ideas presented in my book came alive as each participant breathed life into them.

We all had so much fun, we're going to do it again this year - and hopefully, make it an annual event.

Tracking the Soul is an experiential workshop, integrating the exquisite spiritual psychology of the seven chakras with the intimately personal, image-based approach to astrology that I call astropoetics. The workshop brings the provocative theory of the astro-chakra system into real-life application in relation to core issues brought by participants.

Beginning with a timeline of significant events in your life, and then mapping your astrological cycles to it, we gradually work our way toward a story of the particular thread of your soul's journey you are inspired to track. The story then becomes a launching pad for insight and meaningful changes.

Limited to a small number of people, the workshop provides each participant with ample opportunity to be the loving center of group attention, while allowing plenty of alone time for integration. To supplement our group work, there will be an opportunity for bodywork, individual sessions, and daily yoga classes. Said one participant about this combination:

*The concept is brilliant: working on your core issues in a beautiful and powerful setting. Eating vegetarian food. Bringing in exercise and meditation to complement it. I really enjoyed the time line. It was the first time that I really sat down and thought of my life in that way and it was helpful . . . I got plenty of information to help me look at what my next step is. Coming to Hearthaven was perfect for me. I want to thank you for that.*

You can read a more complete account of last year's workshop at:

<http://www.astropoetics.com/astropoetics-workshops/>

After the workshop, my co-presenters and I spent 3 hours evaluating the experience. As a result of the invaluable feedback generated at this meeting, I've decided to do this year's workshop a bit differently.

In order to allow more time at the workshop itself for the processing of individual charts and life experiences, participation in this year's workshop will involve a series of 4 preparatory lessons.

Each lesson will present a concept that is key to understanding how various patterns related to the chakras show up in your birthchart. They will be basic enough for those with little prior knowledge of astrology, but include material that more seasoned astrologers are not likely to have been exposed to - unless of course, you've read my book.

In any case, each lesson will come with a homework assignment - to which I will respond, and after which we will have a 90-minute follow-up phone conversation. After the completion of these 4 preparatory lessons, you will be ready to participate in the workshop with a solid conceptual understanding of the astro-chakra system.

At the workshop itself, we will focus on tracking our chakra patterns, listening to our stories, and learning from each other how the soul's journey is reflected in the birthchart.

For non-students, the cost of the 4 preparatory lessons and the 3-day workshop will be \$900 plus accommodations. Students already enrolled in my correspondence course who wish to attend the workshop will get a special discount.

The accommodations fee will be kept as low as possible, and announced once a suitable venue is located. A date - sometime in the fall - will also be set once the course is full, and I can poll participants about what works best for you.

If this sounds like something that might interest you, you can email me for details

at:

[jlandwehr@astropoetics.com](mailto:jlandwehr@astropoetics.com)

## March Retrograde Madness Sale

Included in the workshop fee is a copy of my second book **Tracking the Soul With An Astrology of Consciousness**.

For those of you who aren't sure about the workshop, or want more of a taste of my work before deciding, I have a special deal. For the month of March only, you can buy all three of my books for 20% off and free shipping - a \$81.85 value for only \$60.

Included in this package is:

**The Seven Gates of Soul:** a 600-year history of ideas about the soul, exploring concepts from religion, philosophy, science, psychology and astrology.

**Tracking the Soul With An Astrology of Consciousness:** an integration of yogic philosophy and astrology as a context in which to observe and map the evolution of consciousness.

**Astrology and the Archetypal Power of Numbers, Part One:** a contemporary reformulation of Pythagorean number theory. Part Two (now being written) will show how the archetypal power of numbers are encoded in the birthchart.

For more details, including the complete introduction and table of contents to each book, as well as reviews, check out my **Ancient Tower Press** book catalog at:

[http://joelandwehr.typepad.com/ancient\\_tower\\_press/book-catalog.html](http://joelandwehr.typepad.com/ancient_tower_press/book-catalog.html)

## Astrological Consultations

Although my focus these past 20 years has been on writing my books, and teaching students to use the language of astrology as a guide to self-reflection, I am now also available for private consultations.

I am not interested in doing general readings to satisfy curiosity about astrology or about life, and I do not predict the future. But I do believe that astrology can be helpful for approaching life's challenges with greater awareness, and I am

willing to guide you in this use of it.

I have also trained in medical astrology, and am available to help those suffering with chronic illness to better understand the psychosomatic components of their health issues, and the opportunities for soul growth that they may provide.

For first time clients, I charge on a sliding scale from \$150-\$250 for a 90-minute session. Subsequent sessions are \$100-\$200. I can work by phone or by Skype (Skype preferred). I record each session to which I send you a link, along with my preparatory notes when we are done.

Says one recent client about my work:

*Joe's unique approach to astrology has helped me discover the core issues that stand in the way of the full expression of my beingness. His consultation, and the brilliantly written notes that are included with it, zero in on what years in therapy or self-realization workshops tend to dance around. Although his medium is astrology his message is easy to understand by anyone who is honestly interested in finding out who they really are and why. I read his notes to my therapist and he smiled in agreement.*

## Unsubscribing

Since you are on my mailing list - which means you were at one time interested in my work - you are automatically subscribed to this e-letter, which you will receive periodically (not more than three times a year). In it, I will share the latest news from **The Astropoetic School**, and my publishing company **Ancient Tower Press**.

Hopefully this news will be of interest to you, but if it is not, please just let me know, and I will take you off the mailing list.

If you know anyone else who might be interested in this newsletter, please feel free to pass it on. But please also be discriminating and do not simply broadcast it to your entire list. No one likes spam, and in no way do I wish to generate it.

I wish you all a peaceful midwinter, and will be back in touch later in the year.

Meanwhile, let me know if I can help you gestate something new in the secret ritual space of a lesson, my course, my workshop, my books or a consultation.

Be well,

Joe Landwehr

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