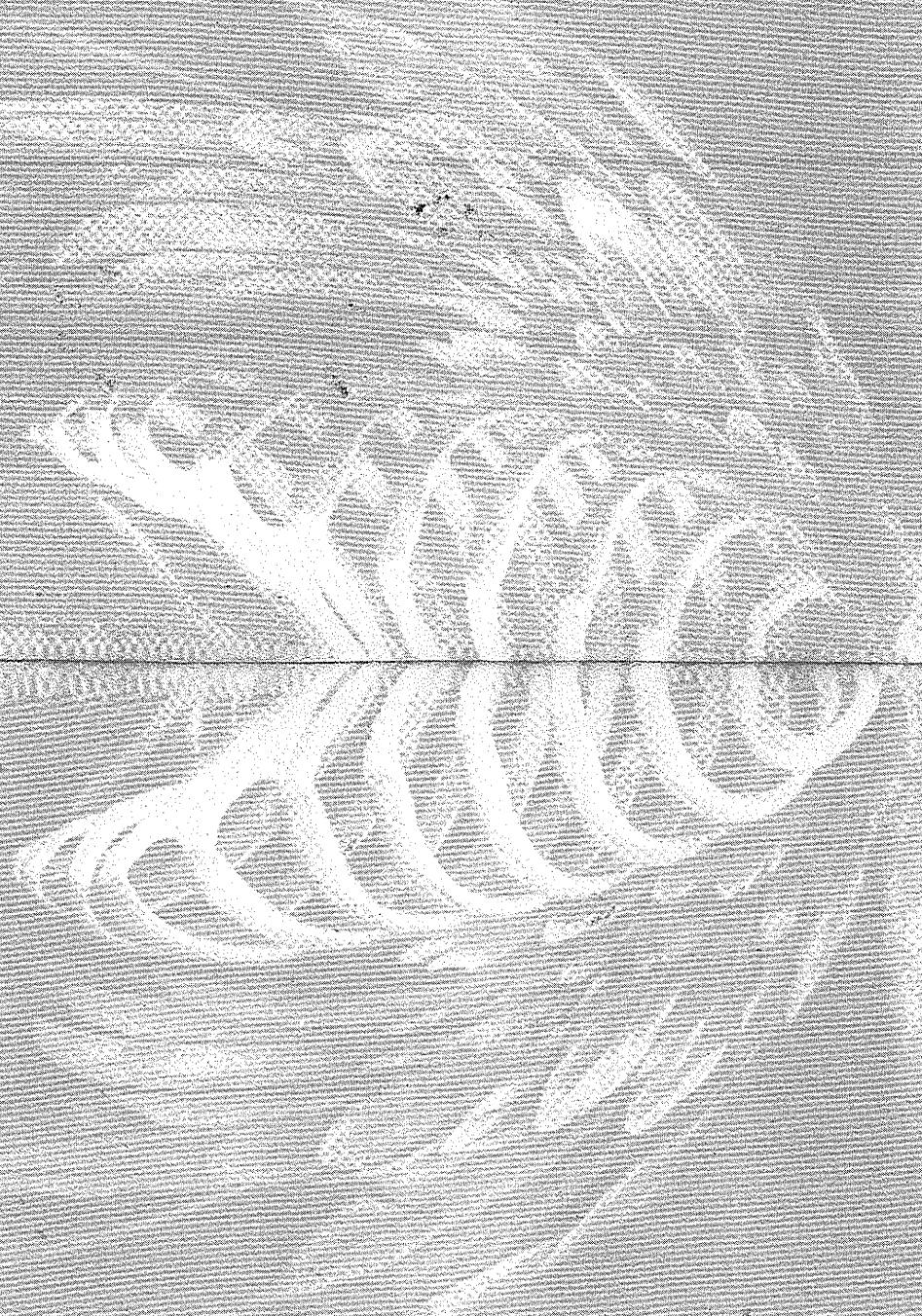


MARION  
*WOODMAN*



BONE / DYING INTO LIFE

PENGUIN COMPASS

## FOREWORD

This book is about living, not dying. It's about dying into life. With cancer, I discovered how much dying it takes to get here, here into my body, here onto Earth. It's about the soul work required to heal both.

Body, like Earth, is an energy system capable not only of nourishing itself, but also of destroying itself. With cancer, I had to differentiate the energies within myself that, both consciously and unconsciously, led to life or death. I have become increasingly aware of how closely connected they are. They are no more than a heart beat apart.

For two years, I lived with cancer as an immediate part of my daily life. I persevered in trying to experience its many shocks as symptoms attempting to bring healing—wholeness—into my body-soul connection. I knew I needed the expertise of both medical science and alternative medicine to hold body and soul together. I am grateful to both.

Since I was twelve years old, I have held body and soul together by writing in what was once my diary, now my journal. Confusion, grief, anger that I had learned not to express outwardly, I discussed with myself by writing, painting, jotting down poems and songs as they happened inwardly. My journal became a mirror in which I could see and hear my truth resonating in my own daily experience.

Gradually, my dreams became very important, bringing with them dimensions I could not have imagined. They opened another level of dialogue in which I began to experience the reality of Sophia as the Divine Mother with

whom I could build a metaphorical bridge to the Mystery that is life. My literary education, grounded in images, and my travels have made me aware that Sophia has long been a carrier of feminine wisdom by many names and for many religions.

As I grow older, issues are increasingly complex. So are my pages. New images that I don't yet comprehend, notes from friends in their own handwriting, quotations from poets articulating innuendoes of feeling, intuitive flashes—all these constitute the margins of my journal. They are like magnets that attract me to them, as a baby is attracted to a shiny or colorful object. They teach me where to find new energy for new wholeness. They are the harmonics that surround my life, hold it in a circle, waiting for the conductor to bring down the baton. Whenever that happens, it's like a divine fiat: "Be" and "It is."

Research tells me there is no exact explanation for the "miracle of healing." It also tells me that images that feed us affect the white blood cells that strengthen the immune system. That fact, interwoven with awe at the exactness, humor, and wisdom of the inner terrain, sustains me in my solitude. Sharing my discoveries and my compassion for the sheer beauty of the human soul is my contribution to community.

If these rumblings in the margins seem disruptive to the text, then you, as reader, need not be slowed down. Skip them. The story is complete without them. You may later come back to share the expansiveness of that other dimension. But let me add a word about speed. We are now moving at a pace that is dissolving the world into an abstraction before we can take it in. If the marginalia slows you down, it is doing what I intended, knowing what it has done for me. Practically, during my illness, one of my greatest difficulties was my inability to know what questions to ask my

doctors. Fear blocked my capacity to think at my medical appointments and I would have to cobble together what I remembered of the session and what other people suggested. Just when I thought I understood where I was, another pattern of symptoms manifested, and I was once again floundering with no time to make mistakes. In *Bone*, I have included the questions that I found to be essential to my decisions. Your question may be very different, but mine may be helpful in shaping your thoughts. Once the question is in consciousness, the answer is constellated in the unconscious. Or, as I have come to understand it, the answer often lies in the unconscious waiting for the question to be consciously asked.

*Bone* is also about the stark truth of growing older. Sometimes in my journal, I would work very hard to figure out my responsibilities at forty, only to realize that I was now fifty, and suddenly sixty. What does it mean to be an elder in this culture? What are my new responsibilities? What has to be let go to make room for the transformations of energy that are ready to pour through the body-soul? I don't want to be here if I can't carry my own weight. As life asks new things of me, I feel I must pause, go inward, and ask, "What is my weight now? What are my new values? Who am I and not-I at this stage? Do I have the courage to live with this evolving me?"

Editing my cancer journal for publication was a very different process from the daily writing of my immediate experience. Though I was present to myself as a trained analyst as I wrote, it was not as an analyst that I was recording my experience. In editing, the analyst is more actively present, particularly in responding to the individuals' response to my depiction of them in my journal. Some of them, not surprisingly, were, at least initially, uncomfortable with their roles. Others had no difficulty relating to them. I had

ence of soul could explain. Cancer has made me sadder and wiser, and therefore richer. Because death is an essential part of life, to be fully alive is to be prepared for it. Cancer has prepared me. And that makes me grateful for my life, present to it and in it to a degree that life before cancer never attained. The gift of cancer is the gift of Now, a sense of all time precariously lodged within it. Living with death is a more abundant life.

*Bone* contains the marrow of my illness. In ancient Chinese paintings, rocks represent energy centers that contain the life force, *chi*, that vital energy that connects everything. Rocks, then, are the very skeleton of the Earth. *Bone* is my rock through which the Earth's vital energies flowed into new life. What I learned is the difference between destiny and fate. We are all fated to die. Destiny is recognizing the radiance of the soul that, even when faced with human impossibility, loves all of life. Fate is the death we owe to Nature. Destiny is the life we owe to soul.

B O N E

*November 2, 1993*

Ross and I returned from England yesterday. Stayed overnight at my studio in Toronto. Awoke in darkness, drove home to London through November mists, watched the dawn rise on bronze and burgundy trees.

I was not unaware that I was to meet a new doctor this afternoon. When I checked out two tiny appearances of blood with Dr. Cohen before we left Canada three weeks ago, she immediately made an appointment for me with a gynecologist for this afternoon. I couldn't do anything about the problem right then, so it didn't spoil our trip to Old London.

Went to Dr. Fellows at 2:00 P.M. Read *Time* magazine until 2:25. Walked into his office. He took a sample from my uterus, showed me little wormlike shapes bobbing in the vial.

"Cancer," he said.

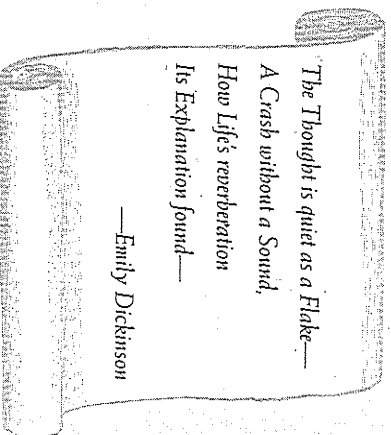
"I have terrible pain in my back," I said. "Isn't it possible that pain could be causing the bleeding?"

"I don't think so," he said.

"But I'm in good contact with my body and I feel well," I said.

He left the room and returned.

"You may have misjudged this time," he said. "We'll send this to the lab to be sure. . . ."



*November 7, 1993*

Talked to Ross on the phone when I returned to Toronto at midnight.

"The news is not good," he said.

"Cancer?" I asked.

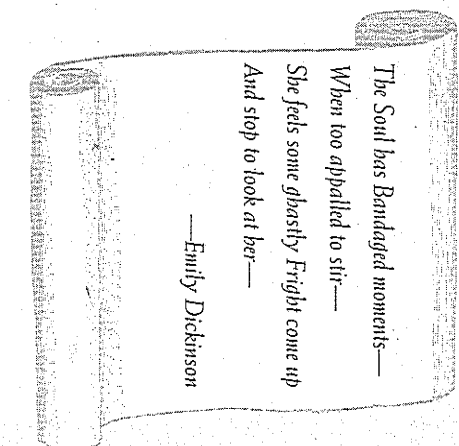
"Yes," he said. "I didn't want to tell you while you were in New York. The surgery will be on the eighteenth."

He had the same tone in his voice when he told me that Fraser [brother] had cancer. All the bells of Earth tolled backwards when he told me about Fraser. I don't feel that for myself. I don't feel that fatality. Thought for a long time lying in bed. Thought of how my intuitions were all operating last spring telling me to let the office go in June '93 and how I had my notification cards printed last August saying that I was closing my practice in June '94. As I designed them, I was haunted by dear Hamlet, "there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come, if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all." I signed them "the readiness is all!"

When I went into my office last week, the violets were purple hallelujahs in the morning sun—and pink and white—but the room seemed abandoned. I think I did leave it, in spite of myself, last June.

*November 8, 9, 10, 1993*

I am dealing with the knowledge that I have cancer. (I have to keep telling myself that I have cancer because I feel so well, better than I have felt for two years.) After four months on crutches, I am walking again without agony in my hip and leg. I am now free to dance.



BANG! There is a loaded gun. CANCER. This time the gun is pointing at me. Hard to take that in. I deal with the knowledge by cleaning my apartment, making it as pretty as possible when I should be preparing my speech for Washington. But then, I'm not sure I am going. So I took clothes to the Goodwill, books to the secondhand shop, went to the dentist, got a new telephone answering machine, sent out letters to my analysts and canceled sessions until Christmas, made decisions with Doris [secretary] and with Chalmers [lawyer]. Yesterday Marion [niece] came over with Aidan [grand-nephew], then came over alone today to help me get off to Washington. I am so used to doing everything for myself that it is good to have my precious niece beside me.

These are strange days, knowing I have moved into Destiny, knowing I am in exactly the right place, agonizing as it is. I think the high spirits come from that shout that rose up in me when I fell, "Free at last." I pray to God that I may live that freedom. It is very difficult to take in that one does indeed die.

As I refurbished my pinks and purples, bringing color back into my bedroom after its summer white, I did a lot of thinking. Why? Why? Why? Not why me. I feel no shame or guilt for my cancer, but that I need to take responsibility for a new future. What is the lesson to be learned here? What factors may have contributed to my dis-ease?

1. Did I betray my femininity by doing too much—too much traveling, teaching, answering mail? Was there an undercurrent whispering, "This isn't liv-

ing"? I know the weight of the mail was more than I could carry, though I love writing to my friends. Still, however much I did, always another bag turned up. The mail took two hours out of every day—two hours of making decisions, two hours that once were soul time for dancing, writing, playing.

2. Was I unable to carry the Mother projection any further? Mothering is not primary in me. I do it. I take the responsibility, the duty, the slugging density of body. I love cooking, cre-

ating beautiful space—but that is not the essential me. I do not thrive. I become a loaded-down, bloated mass. My body eventually says, "NO, I want to play." And play for me is creativity. I never played "mother" with my dolls. Morna and Topsy were my students, along with the rest of my imaginary class. In life I did not become a mother; I became a teacher. Maybe in my work I carried the Mother projection beyond the point where it was creative for me.

3. What is essential to my life is the dynamic of the archetype of Teacher/Student. When I watched Joseph Campbell come alive with light as he taught, watched his energy build instead of diminish, I knew such an archetype existed and I knew the teacher/student dynamic was my life source. My primary relationship to my father was teacher/student. The blackboard I used from four to sixteen was the focus of my constant inner dialogue, question and answer. So was the micro-

scope. So now are the flip chart and colored pens. The thought of never teaching again withers me. I woke up shuddering in Zurich at the thought of never teaching creative drama again. The sheer creative delight!

4. I think my connection to that creative and spiritual source is threatened. That archetype was operative between Fraser and me; for sixty years, on and off, we were teacher/student to each other in creative relationship. As adolescents we knifed our poems on each other's doors to make sure the message was adequately received, sometimes with bloodstains for emphasis. Who knows? Who knows by what Destiny we both taught at South Secondary School in London, Ont., both directed creative drama, went our own ways, and found ourselves once again coming from different directions to the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich and even to 223 St. Clair in Toronto after graduation. None of the moves ever seemed planned by us. But they happened.

Then suddenly in '91 he had cancer. The ferocity of the Death Mother in destroying him, his death in '92, the shattered dream! Much as I tried—and try—to express the shock and grief, I know they linger in my body.

5. And there were other losses. Everything in me believes that without consciousness there is no hope for the world. I couldn't hang on to my vision, my hope, my plan. The creativity that fed those inner fires went out, exploded into nothingness. I remember waking up one night with a blow in the solar plexus that forced me to get up in order to breathe. My chest seemed to be pulling apart. I

tried to keep walking and dancing, but my heart was not in the movement. It was weighed down by endless contracts, the estate, taxes—so many issues that demanded energy, issues that I was no longer interested in. The immense energy that had been going out collapsed, and turned against my body.

6. I believed, and still believe, that consciousness comes both through spirit and through matter, Jung's psychoid archetype. Life has taught me that my head consciousness does not necessarily release my body consciousness. My work has taught me that I am not alone in this split. All my energy for fifteen years poured into the possibility of creating a physical space in which body could be honored equally with psyche—honored, explored, researched in terms of new scientific discoveries. However, the time was not right. God's timing and mine were not together. *Kairos* was not present.

I knew my vision of bodysoul work was not yet acceptable. I accepted that in my head. I decided to hold the tensions of the opposites until a reconciliation unknown to me found its way into consciousness in a welcoming world. I

could not. However, much I tried to accept this in my mind, my body, born in rejection, received it as heartbreak, which my mind interpreted as defeat. Thank God for Emily.

The physical toll was horrendous. I was simply alone. No one to talk to about the inner reality of what had happened. I needed someone who could be depended on for confi-

*I fear me this—is Loneliness—  
The Maker of the soul  
Its Caverns and its Corridors  
Illuminate—or seal—*

—Emily Dickinson

dentiality. That person was Fraser. He was canny enough to see the inner dynamics, and he could keep silence.

Helga [naturopath] and Heather [body work practitioner] kept me functioning through the crisis. I remember being unable to endure the pain of hearing a lullaby—singing a baby good night. I chose to sing Fraser into the night from which he would never return.

Meanwhile my body fell into despair. Although I did all I could to release the pain, I wasn't connecting. Even my breath ceased to come in fully—as if I would break down if I really breathed, as if I would start to cry and never stop—crying for what was no longer a part of my life. "It is all right," my body said. "This is the way it is. Nothing can be done about it. I can accept it." But in accepting it, she was also withdrawing from life. In April and May she gave up any desire for food, for sexuality, for dancing. She remained very, very still. She made no effort to reach out. Even as I write that, I can feel the hand pushing down on my chest—relentless, ruthless.

*November 11, 1998*

John McCrae was born in Guelph, Ontario, became a physician, died in France in 1918.

At 11:00 A.M., the clocks stopped ticking as the Last Post resonated across Canada from the Ottawa cenotaph. Everyone was wearing a red poppy. Mothers, wives, daughters, lovers, weeping, forever waiting for their men to come home.

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you with falling hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high,  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies  
grow  
in Flanders Fields.*

—John McCrae,  
"In Flanders Fields"



November 12, 13, 14, 1993

Went to Common Boundary conference in Washington. Felt better than I have felt in years as I gave my workshop and lecture. My voice was coming from center, my full body energy was supporting it. As I stood at the podium in the soft light with all that love in front of me, I had one of those intuitive farewell flashes: "I shall never stand here again." That thought threw me into the conference with total abandon.

Conferences are being with people I love. Paula [friend] told me of the deep change that happened in her as a result of her cancer. She does not feel herself a cancer survivor. She had it cut out, and that was it. I kept telling her I do not feel sick, I do not feel I have cancer.

"Stay with that," she said. "You are not sick. You have a health challenge." What a switch in thinking!

"You know, Marion," she continued, "you have for so long carried the grief and outrage of the feminine—the insult of the feminine—it's possible your body finally broke down."

Talked to Edith, who has also had cancer. She is well now. The cancer I have is encapsulated, I hope. Of course, I'm not unaware of my fear of bowel cancer. Not unaware of friends being opened up and being found full of cancer. I am not unaware of the dangers. But I hope. And I do feel well. Edith said she fought fiercely for her own time to do what she wanted to do. "Fight fiercely to defend your territory," she said.

Kathy astounded me when she read my astrology chart. "What were you doing nineteen years ago?" she asked.

"Leaving South Collegiate," I said. "In the hospital, trying to retire from teaching."

"Well, that constellation is repeating," she said. "You're maturing through your body. The mystery is working through your instrument."

"Marion," I thought, "get the message. You've got to learn to surrender to these initiations more cooperatively. When Sophia is moving you toward new consciousness, you need to recognize the winds of change *at once*, move with them instead of clinging to what is already gone."

Sophia is the feminine, dark, yielding, tender counterpart of the power, justice, creative dynamism of the Father.

—*Monica Furlong*,  
Merton: A Biography

November 14, 1993

So I pondered all these things in my heart as I relaxed into my Victorian green coat on the front seat of the Robert Q airbus on my way home to London from Washington. Dear Ross met me, and we have been happily shopping, waiting, enjoying Windermere [condominium] and the fact that I can walk.

November 15, 1993

Need to bring the events that led up to this diagnosis into sharper focus. Need to honor the intuitive flashes from my body that I did not sufficiently receive at the time.

The first one came on Shasha [Island in Georgian Bay], where ten women were with me for an intensive in June. As we were waiting for the water taxi to take us back to the mainland, we were singing together in Miranda [cottage].

I innocently asked Jill [friend] to play "The Red River Valley." As I began to sing "From this valley they say you are going," my throat blocked, the tears came. Everyone was

shocked—none more than I. I tried

again, but I couldn't sing. For the

*Presentiment—is that long*

*Shadow—on the Lanon—*

*Indicative that Sins go down—*

*The Notice to the startled Grass*

*That Darkness—is about to pass—*

—Emily Dickinson

first time I knew I was leaving. I knew there would never be another group there. I began to feel myself moving toward a rendezvous with Destiny, the *Titanic* and the iceberg moving inevitably toward each other. Wrong analogy! Ego submits to Fate; ego cooperates with Destiny. Consciousness makes the difference.

Still, when I returned to London, Ross and I holidayed deliciously together at Windermere, both rather relieved to be momentarily free of worrisome motors and storm-broken trees on the island.

On July 12 Ross and I went to Shasha together. We had two perfect days. July 14 I fell, or rather, my leg let go and I crashed on the rocks. Ross phoned the coast guard. Within half an hour the police boat splashed in, three big, handsome guys secured my leg, stretched me out into a big sling, carried me down the rocks, gently-so-gently drove the boat to Parry Sound, handed their bundle over to the waiting ambulance team, who deposited it in Emergency. Ross and I returned to the island the next day, I with my crutches.

So began the almost idyllic summer in the Lion Chair, in love with the loons, the sunrises and sunsets, and discussing with Ross his paper on the Bahá'í Faith. I completely let go of everything, felt the radiance of Being. I felt no commitment to do anything, not even to entertain

people who sailed in to visit. The only problem was the nights. Because I couldn't walk, fear permeated my body—a physical sensation, "Will I be able to pull the next breath in?" Came the dawn, all fear vanished.

Early September—spent a weekend in Stratford—another honeymoon—four plays in three days. Both of us were electric with poetry and became more radiant as we went from Shakespeare to Wilde and back to Shakespeare. Ross found the five perfect chairs for our dining room—antique chairs he had been looking for for thirty-five years. The grass and gardens, the direction and acting—everything perfection—except that I had to use crutches or a cane.

I have to keep coming back to my legs because I knew all was not well. Something else was moving in on me. I kept trying to boil everything down to essence. What had to go in order for me to be free was going to go. My legs were very painful, but worse, they left me vulnerable, fearful of being knocked down, unable to step out and live, to step out and dance. I felt victimized by Fate.

Victim or no victim, I went to Florida. Yes, and to California in September. (Robert and I did the opening of the *Bly/Woodman on Men and Women* films in L.A.) Had a fabulous time East and West. But, for the first time in my life, I had to sit out the whole evening of dancing. Gabrielle Roth, Dance Herself, was leading!

Then Ross and I went to London, England. Our summer had wrung out a new depth of relationship. That intensity manifested in a charged workshop on the inner marriage. We lectured together and

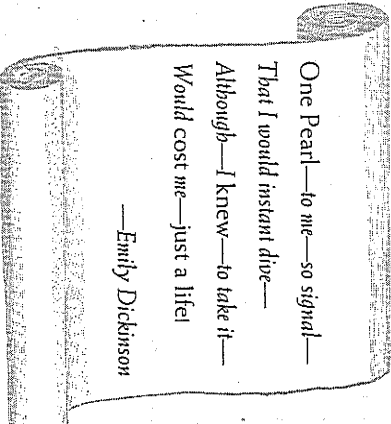
*Thy firmness makes my circle just,  
And makes me end where I begun.*

—John Donne, "A Valediction:  
Forbidding Mourning"

played together. We had three great weeks. Bruce [brother, living in England] and I had hilarious walks in Kew Gardens. The attendant graciously gave us a wheelchair; sometimes I rode and Bruce pushed; sometimes he rode and I pushed. It was excellent exercise without overexertion, but I think the Brits thought we weren't taking the wheelchair seriously enough. One intuitive moment happened when Bruce and Quint [nephew] were waving good-bye to us. Ross was pushing my wheelchair down into the tunnel that led to the plane. As I waved, I remembered Bruce saying, "When I saw Fraser going down that tunnel waving good-bye, I knew it was Good-bye."

At no time all autumn was I overworked or overlonely. I loved moving into my extraverbed space; I loved seeing my analysts, I loved being alone.

The profoundest difficulty during the fall was the loss of my pearls and gold medallion watch. Part of my cleanout



One Pearl—to me—so signal—  
That I would instant die—  
Although—I knew—to take it—  
Would cost me—just a life!

—Emily Dickinson

was my unceasing effort to find my jewels—my image of femininity, my covenant with Sophia. Repeatedly, the gut-level, bone-level emptiness when they were not where I hoped. That search continued for six weeks, until a weekend in October. I found them in the top right-hand drawer of my antique desk at Windermere. Their absence had felt like the loss of my womanhood. It prepared me for the loss of my womb and ovaries. Maybe I am losing my femininity in order to find it in another dimension.

I have no tears, just a profound sense that this is where I am in life. Nothing can change that. It all boils down to a

feeling that I have come as far as I can come on this particular path. The red light is now ON. It was, in fact, flashing last June. I always try to go that extra lap and my body goes into illness to push me out.

*November 16, 1998*

Tuesday—went to St. Joseph's [hospital]. Went through the preadmission program hardly knowing what I was doing. Talked to nurse, told her I thought there might be a mistake. She said to phone Dr. Fellows. Had blood and urine check and ECG. Ross came to get me as I celebrated life on the lawn with my fat bran muffin. Flowers from Bruce arrived. Yellow roses from Ross. Flowers from friends. Phone calls from all the family.

Talked to Dr. Fellows. He made it clear that I have carcinoma of the endometrium, with a three-doctor check. I made it clear to him that I am not 70—that I still have things to do with my life. All this after a yearly checkup two months ago—all clear—everything, including the Pap smear! And the green light to go ahead with hormone replacement therapy. I never quite got around to that.

*November 17, 1998*

Ross and I went grocery shopping today. As we drove past St. Joe's I tried to understand I was going in there tomorrow to be operated on for cancer. Dear God, it is amazing how we go about the ordinary tasks in the face of the mystery.

Did a ritual on the phone with Jean [friend] allowing my body to open to golden light.

David [nephew] came for tea and oatmeal cookies and pumpkin tarts. I am very aware how difficult this diagnosis is for the children. Cancer took both their parents. David was very quiet, his blue eyes observing everything.

The living room felt like

Christmas Eve, golden with love, shimmering with a slight holding of the breath before tomorrow. Ross said, "Marion, what is going on here?" I was glad he asked the question because I too felt the extraordinary presence. So did.

—MW

David. I also knew there were groups and individuals praying for me right across the continent. "It must be the love that is being sent to us," I said. They agreed.

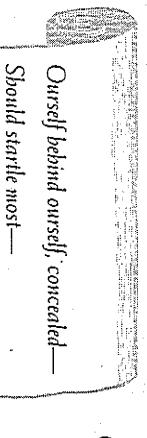
I imagined a night sky: A golden spider's web stretched endlessly, with nodules of gold connecting the filaments. I could feel the energy transmitting to London, Ont. "Dear Sophia, open me to receive it," I prayed, and felt myself totally surrender to the strength of the golden web.

*November 18, 1993*

*My Initiatory Dream*

A ship is coming into shore bearing two pearls. I see them, I don't see them. I know they are on the ship. A 5-year-old girl, barefoot with simple dress and mop of

curls, stands on deck watching. Her gaudy bracelet and corncob pipe shine in the sunlight. Behind her, a woman, young, gypsylke, barefoot, hair flowing, also watches.

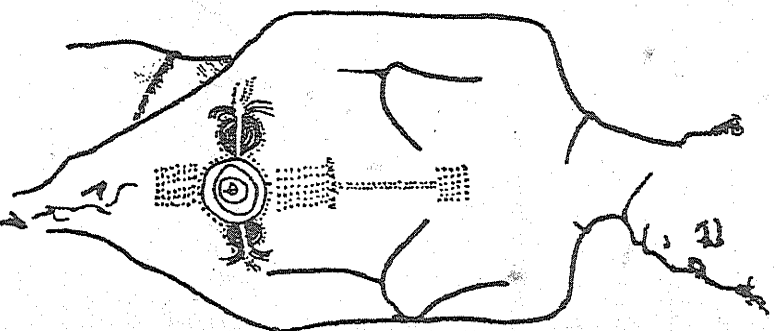


These two are with me as I move into Cronedom—that queendom where I shall be free to live my own truth.

*November 18, 1993*

7:15 A.M.

So here on November 18, 1993, where am I? The golden sun has risen. I had no breakfast. Nothing has passed into my mouth since 8:00 P.M. last night. I am preparing my ritual. Today the doctors are going to cut out my uterus and my ovaries. This is a blood sacrifice. What does it mean? The uterus—my uterus—never bore a child. It is the physical vessel. Maybe this is the sacrifice of my feminine organs to prepare me to go the next step—to release me from all physical mothering, to release me from mothering the masses, to release me from any remaining vestige of connection to dense, opaque flesh, to release me into a new vibration in my body.



Women's scarification, "swallow" pattern. Based on a photograph in Rowe, "Abdominal Circarisation of the Munsiri Tribe, Nigeria."

—Bruce Lincoln, Emerging from the Chrysalis

Cherry [sister-in-law in England] phoned yesterday. When my spirits seemed so good, she said, "Have you no grief for the loss of your womb?" "Yes," I said. (I didn't say that as I lay on the floor doing my exercises last week, I ran my fingers over my unflawed belly—"smooth as monumental alabaster"—and everything in me wept.) I am to undergo the

scarification. The round belly, the navel of the world—my world—will be scarred. Yes, I do weep for the loss of my womb, my physical womb. It never had a chance to do what it would have wished to do—did wish to do: bear a child. That way my Destiny did

Four lines cut at puberty make a woman the guardian of fertility and well-being, heir of the past and creator of the future. The scars themselves are simultaneously the means of her transformation and the visible mark that this transformation has been completed, making each girl a woman and a sacred object for all to see.

—Bruce Lincoln,  
Emerging from the Chrysalis

love I will receive this afternoon. I pray too that Ross will experience that love.

MIDNIGHT

This afternoon Ross and I came to St. Jo's, both strong. I had one faltering moment when I picked up his little maroon case that I was taking and realized that I was going to St. Jo's to be operated on for cancer. This is the beginning of a road whose end is unknown and totally known. Ross insisted I have a private room. And so we came to 301. I undressed and put on the floppy blue hospital gown. We talked quietly until we heard the cart rumbling in the

not lie. Now it is being cut out to make room for the spiritual womb, the womb that will bear spiritual children. Lay in bed this morning blessing it before it went.

10:05 A.M.

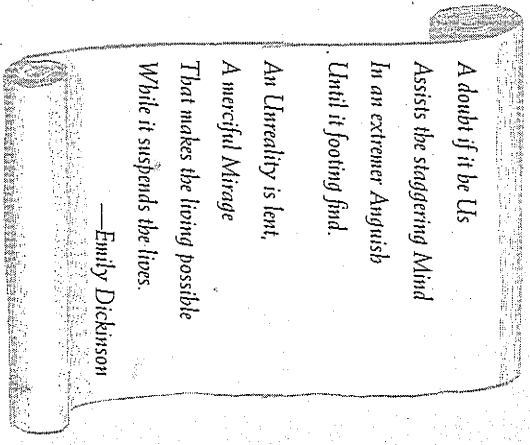
Just completed ritual of farewell to my womb, my ovaries, to mothering the masses, to holding on to mother power. Feel a huge freedom. I pray to be opened to spiritual birthing, to the energy of my own life, to the vibration of my own new body. I pray to be totally open to the

hall. It had come for me. I got on it. Ross kissed me. He was pale as death. The orderly said he could come as far as the surgery. He came. We went down in the elevator. "You can come no further," the orderly said to Ross. The doors swung open and shut.  
Dr. Sutherland introduced himself as the anesthetist. "Good Scott," I thought. "Conscientious." Dr. Fel-lows introduced himself again. At 4:40 my limbs loosened, my body let go. I was gone.

Sometime I came to in the intensive care unit. Ross was there. Then sometime I opened my eyes in 301, exhausted but OK. The nurse gave me a button to push when I needed painkiller. Bouquet arrived from Bruce—it brings life to the brown wood of the room. Two pink ginger blossoms, one leaning down to greet the other—Japanese style on a red tray—with the "earth" full of small, dark purple orchids, shiny foliage, and three lilies ready to burst.

November 19, 1993

Woke up this morning with the realization that my belly has been scarified. It hurts when I walk in the corridor, rolling the IV pump beside me.  
Flowers from Sylvia and Pam. One red rose from Susan.  
Rosa, my nurse, is beautiful—plump, exquisite eyes, innocent, strong—as I once



scared—  
scarred—  
sacred—

[The image is] an individual gift of healing that works on three levels, emotional, intellectual and imaginative, appealing to body, mind and spirit. The dream image planted in the body acts as a magnet attracting the energy, transforming it and releasing it as healing power.

—*Marion Woodman,*  
The Pregnant Virgin

*November 20, 1998*

More flowers today. No desire to move much. Feeling more pain and sheer weakness as I try to keep walking. The carts keep coming and going past my door.

In love with my flowers and the dear ones who sent them. Throughout these three days at St. Jo's I have clung to these flowers whenever I have felt I am nobody. They are the love; they are the beauty in life. Many times I have wakened in the night and breathed them in as I listened to the hospital sounds—the stifled sobs in the corridors, the gentle cadences of nurses' voices.

was. I could not see my own beauty when I was her age, but I certainly see hers.

Another nurse woke me up in the night to show me how to work the painkiller contraption.

"I know how to use it," I said.

"Then why don't you use it?" she snapped.

"I don't need it," I replied. "I'm using imagery."

"Oh?" was her only response.

I knew she had written me off as a New Age flake.

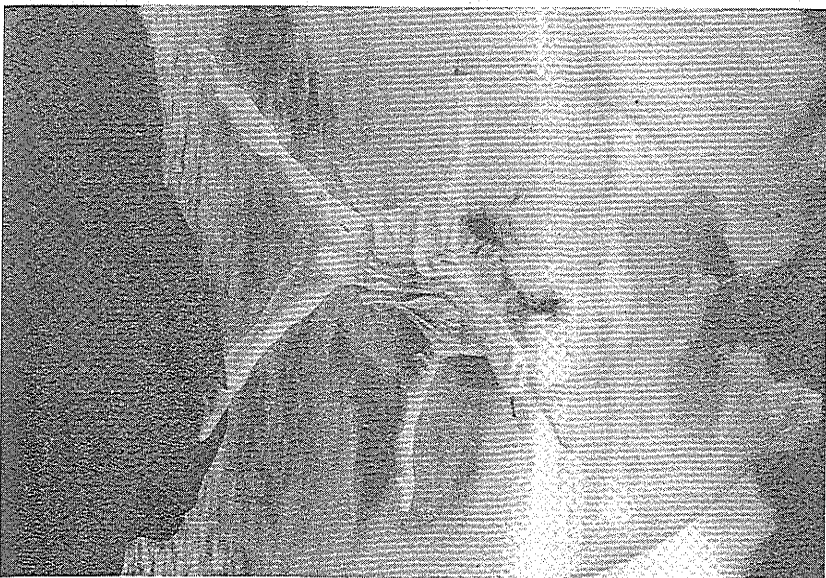
*November 21, 1998*

Sunday. Opening out to life again.

Jill sent me a little white buffalo with turquoise eyes. I hold it in my hand to feel the Navaho energy pouring through me from the earth into the sky and back into my heart. My friends are incredible. To feel myself the cup into which all this earthly love flows, the cup through which it flows and rises to the brim and overflows into Sophia's laughter, filling the universe with rain and rivers and flowers—and my heart with vibrant peace.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death. . . ." Dear Sophia, how the cycle spirals and swings into wider spirals and how your love holds the spiral true in my heart.

Mary [friend] arrived with yellow lilies this morning. My whole body leapt up to greet her. So glad to be alive to meet her. She thinks I've taken in too much poison. Now the sacrifice for the feminine has been made and we will get on with our work. Her card of the dancers in space is so right. The placement of the energy in their



From "Infinite Journey," oil painting by Gloria Joy.

bodies is exact—embodied dancers, not disembodied angels.

Elinor [friend] arrived just after Mary left. She bore a great garbage bag with something heavy—a hibiscus plant—three of them, from Marcella [friend]—Mother, Virgin, Crone. She also brought a bag of Body Shop ointments and powders to soothe my soul. Softness enveloped the room. She talked about my not mothering anymore, about accepting my freedom to live my own life. We walked in the corridor, free now of the IV pump.

Ross came. Read Bahai prayers together: "Together" is the crucial word. Feel so cared for and protected in the hospital.

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy, Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my savior in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

—Bahai'ullah, *Prayers and Meditations*, CLXX

November 22, 1993

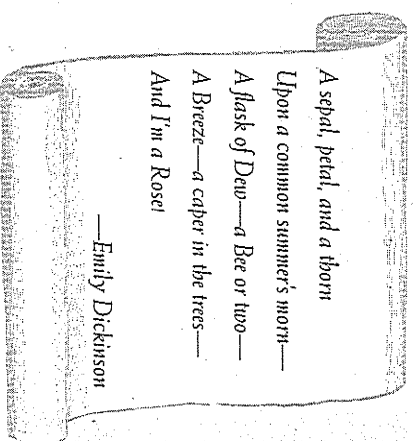
Cleaned my flowers, blessed them in their going or coming, packed Ross's little maroon case, was ready when he came at noon. Drove home through the sparkling wintry morning.

The house is golden. Ross and I are happy to be

here together. Karen sent royal golden pears from Oregon—Harry and Davids. Ross and I had one for lunch between us—dessert for eight days. Simplicity. Helps me to focus.

Starting to work on what to do now. The surgery is over. The death is complete. Out of death comes new life. But I have no idea what to do to help myself, what to eat, how to exercise. Have begun to realize that I have cancer and will probably have to work at this for the rest of my life. Elizabeth phoned to ask if I would talk to a medical doctor interested in alternative methods. "Yes," I said. Others phoned. Beginning to feel deluged with possibilities of what to do—clinics in the States and Mexico, New York specialists, macrobiotic diets, colonics, healers. I don't know.

Put flowers in every room. Take delight every morning in giving them fresh water, cutting their stems, seeing their faces—especially now the lilies with their sexy stamens and pistils—the whole of the life process involved. In their gradual opening, singing their glorias, they are magnifying God. And then the inevitable transparency in their petals as they change color, and the greater transparency requiring a different container to mirror the dignity of their fading. Then their silent letting go. I need to treasure them through their entire cycle of birth, blossoming, full radiance, and gradual return to death. I can thank them, bless them, and let them go. The hour I spend with them every morning is healing for me. Zen and the Art of Flower Arranging.



November 24, 1993

Without the love, would I bother? Without Ross, would I care? More and more, I feel the initiation—the letting go of something that is finished in order to move into new life. How to let go? How to be sure at the unconscious level that I am letting go? Consciously, I let go the instant I fell last July, but as I sat in the Lion Chair the letting go was the letting go of life itself, rather than the letting go of the part that had become destructive. The bliss masked the despair. Unconsciously I was confusing the actual and the metaphorical. I know I am dealing with the Great Mother in her death aspect. In the past she could hypnotize me, blind me to my unconscious death wish in bingeing and starving. Now again. I have to turn her face around and feel myself looking into the eyes of the loving Mother. How to be sure I am moving from the negative face of the archetype to the positive? That has to happen, but it is hard to recognize the move when the dark face is  $\delta\delta$  locked, so fierce, and so fiercely locked in the unconscious.

*Thou who art terrible,  
Thou who art eternal . . .  
Thou who art the moon and the  
moon's light  
And happiness itself . . .*

—Ajit Mookerjee,  
Kali: The Feminine Force

I have carried this dark load too long. I am delivered of a very dark, dead baby. If I cannot get hold of the positive side of the archetypal dimension of this, I think I will die. And that dimension has to do with the emergence of the Virgin bride at a new height and new depth on the spiral. Very aware now that the spiral—the movement of the Virgin Gypsy of my initiatory dream—is a double helix. As above, so below.

Please, God, let me live the Spiritual Warrior, fighting for the new order. Dear Sophia, let your

radiance release me into Virgin/Crone. Masculine and feminine together, we may make the transition.

November 25, 1993

Ross was very reluctant to take me to see Helga [naturopath] and Zeca [naturopath]. From his point of view this is medical time 100 percent. He was quiet, withdrawn as we drove to Toronto, and held back as I got out of the car to go into the office. I was so glad to see Helga. My body leapt into her arms and I assured her I was not going to die and she reassured me. We talked mostly about the operation and future procedures. She gave me essiac, Nurse Caisse's cancer remedy, as several of my friends had so vehemently suggested. She also gave me remedies for detoxifying the liver and gallbladder, and building the immune system.

Homeopathy never deals with an overt disease manifestation—with an infection, shall we say—but with that disturbance which enables the infection to take hold, *contains* it, as it were, as a partial element. It does not deal with an effect of changed chemistry, but with that energy, that ordering element, which permits this change of chemistry to occur.

I felt strong when I went into Zeca's office. He listened to my story and showed no fear, but said we'd get on with the healing.

—Edward C. Whitmont,  
Psyche and Substance

We talked about my connection to Fraser, my loss of purpose, my being constantly in the collective. All of these factors he considered, then gave me a powerful treatment. He checked out my body responses, gave me remedies.

I listened to the chanting on the sound system and lay there accepting the healing. I stepped out into Yorkville ex-