

## The Sky Within

**Paul McCartney**  
**Jun 18, 1942**  
**02:00:00 PM GMT +00:00**  
**Liverpool, UK**  
**000W10'00" 50N49'00"**

**Sun** in **Gemini**, at 26° 41', in the ninth house.  
**Moon** in **Leo**, at 18° 27', in the tenth house.  
**Mercury** in **Gemini**, at 18° 20', in the ninth house.  
**Venus** in **Taurus**, at 19° 05', in the eighth house.  
**Mars** in **Leo**, at 02° 44', in the tenth house.  
**Jupiter** in **Cancer**, at 01° 51', in the ninth house.  
**Saturn** in **Gemini**, at 05° 13', in the eighth house.  
**Uranus** in **Gemini**, at 01° 58', in the eighth house.  
**Neptune** in **Virgo**, at 27° 07', in the twelfth house.  
**Pluto** in **Leo**, at 04° 16', in the tenth house.  
**Midheaven** in **Cancer**, at 24° 07'.  
**Ascendant** in **Libra**, at 18° 28'.

*Planets within orb of 1.5 degrees of the following*

*house cusp are displayed and interpreted as being in that house, except the Ascendant which uses 3 degrees.*

*Orb Conjunctions with Sun or Moon are 8 degrees.  
All orbs are set according to Steven Forrest's methods.*

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## **THE SKY WITHIN**

by Steven Forrest

### **Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide**

A woman has a baby and is blissful about it. Another one does the same, and spends the rest of her life dreaming about how she might have been a ballerina. The same choice: having a kid. But only one smiling woman.

Nobody has a generic formula for happiness, at least not one that does the trick for everyone. That's where astrology comes in.

The birthchart, stripped to bare bones, is simply a description of the happiest, most fulfilling life that's available to you... personally. It spells out a set of strategies you can use to avoid boring routines, bad choices, and dead ends. It lists your resources. And it talks about how your life looks when you're misusing the resources and distorting the strategies -- shooting yourself in the foot, in other words.

All from a map of the sky?

Hard to believe. But think for a minute...

"How can the planets possibly affect us? They're millions of miles away." Astrology's critics are fond of rolling out that argument. But it doesn't hold water. Go out and gaze at the moon. What's really happening? Incomprehensible energies are plunging across a quarter million miles of void, crashing through your eyeballs and creating electrochemical changes in your brain. We call the process "seeing the moon." Certainly the planets affect us. The question is where do we draw the boundaries around those effects?

Let's go a step further.

Open your eyes on a starry night. What do you see? A vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Now close your eyes so tight they ache. Where are you now? What do you see? Again, a vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Consciousness and cosmos are structured around the same laws, follow the same patterns, and even feel pretty much the same to our senses.

"As above, so below." Just as the starry night awes us with its vastness, there's something infinitely deep inside you, a place you go when you close your eyes, a place that's beyond being an Aries or a Gemini or even a specific gender. At the most profound level, a birthchart is a map back to that magical center. It describes a series of earthly experiences which, if you're brave and open enough, will trigger certain states of consciousness in you -- states that operate like powerful spiritual catalysts, vaulting you into higher levels of being.

In the pages that follow, you'll tour your personal birthchart. But don't expect the usual "Scorpios are sexy" stuff. You are a mysterious being in a mysterious cosmos. You're here for just a little while, a blink of God's eye. You face a monumental task: figuring out what's going on! In that spiritual work, astrology is your ally. How will it help?

Certainly not by pigeon-holing you as a certain "type."

Astrology works by reminding you who you are, by warning you about the comforting lies we all tell ourselves, and by illuminating the experiences that trigger your most explosive leaps in awareness.

After that, the rest is up to you.

## **YOUR TEN TEACHERS**

Freud divided the human mind into three compartments: ego, id, and superego. Astrologers do the same thing, except that our model of the mind differs from Freud's in two fundamental ways. First, it's a lot more elaborate. Instead of three compartments, we have ten: Sun, Moon, and the eight planets we see from Earth. As we'll discover, each planet represents more than a "circuit" in your psyche. It also serves as a kind of "Teacher," guiding you into certain consciousness-triggering kinds of experience.

The second difference between astrology and psychology is that astrology's mind-map, unlike Freud's, is rooted in nature itself, just as we are.

The primary celestial teacher is the Sun. What does it teach? Selfhood. Vitality. How to keep the life-force strong in yourself. If the Sun grew dimmer, so would all the planets -- they shine by reflecting solar light. Similarly, if you fail to stoke the furnaces of your own inner Sun, then you'll simply be "out of gas." All your other planetary functions will suffer too.

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

Start by realizing that when you were born the Sun was in Gemini.

Wonder, amazement, astonishment, a sense of the miraculous -- those states of consciousness are the best of what Gemini symbolizes. Although this is an Air sign and therefore rather mental in its orientation, the Twins represent something more primal than thinking. They represent perception itself: all the raw, undigested stuff that pours in through our senses. Thinking too much about that material removes us from its immediate, moment-to-moment reality. We start to inhabit theories instead of the actual world of perception. "Authority" creeps in. So does "rightness." And "mental clarity." And the Twins wither. Nourish your Geminian energies with an endless diet of newness and change. They're hungry for anything they've not seen or felt before. Feed them! Give them conversation, books, travel, education... anything but boredom.

With your Sun in Gemini, you're blessed with high levels of physical and mental energy. Use them! There's a quickness about you, an aliveness to the moment. People probably imagine you to be younger than you really are. Your deepest nature is driven by one force above all others: curiosity. You're happiest when faced with

surprises. You thrive on the unexpected. And you wither in the face of rigid predictability.

Spiritually, you're learning to keep your mind wide open, to view life as a crash course in amazement. Feed your vitality with new relationships -- or old relationships with people who themselves are always new. Stimulate yourself with books and travel. When in doubt, look through a telescope! Take a course in Etruscan history! Do anything you've never done before.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Ninth house. What does that signify?

Start by realizing that Houses represent twelve basic arenas of life. There's a House of Marriage, for example, and a House of Career. Always, we find an element of "fate" in our House structures; the "Hand of God" continually presents us with existential and moral questions connected with our emphasized Houses. How we react and what we learn -- or fail to learn -- is our own business.

One brief technical note: Sometimes the Sun, the Moon, or a planet lies near the end of the House. We then say it's "conjunct the cusp" of the subsequent House, and interpret it as though it were a little further along... in the next House, in other words.

The House of Long Journeys over Water -- that's one old name for this part of the birthchart. Since you have energy focused here a fortune-teller would say, "I see travel in your stars." True enough, although a deeper way of expressing the same notion is that immersing yourself in cultures outside the one into which you were born is a pivotal spiritual catalyst for you.

There are other kinds of catalytic journeys. Getting a wide education, formally or informally, is one. So is anything that breaks up the normal routines of life and thought. Even learning to hang-glide.

Ultimately, in the Ninth House you weave a grand scheme of life's meaning and purpose, at least your own version of it. This is the House of Religion... provided we recognize that many major world religions have no churches or temples. Cynicism is one such religion. Existentialism, Materialism, and Science are others, not to mention Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and so on.

With the Sun in the Ninth House, you have to pack the experiences of two or three lifetimes into a single lifetime. That means being willing to say good-bye to

safe havens, to avoid the human tendency to drift into routines. The motif of the Quest is strong in your destiny-pattern. It manifests as travel, but also as a search for knowledge and meaning. Trust yourself; don't be seduced by "practicality"; above all, recognize that we're all just pilgrims in this world, here for a moment, then gone, carrying only what our souls have managed to digest.

The next step in our journey through your birthchart carries us to the Moon.

As you might expect, Luna resonates with the magical, emotional sides of your psyche. It represents your mood, averaged over a lifetime. As the heart's teacher, it tells you how to feel comfortable, how to meet your deepest needs. While the Sun lets you know what kinds of experiences and relationships help you feel sane, the Moon is concerned with another piece of the puzzle: feeling happy.

When you were born, the Moon was in Leo.

When we hear "Lion," we think "fierce." But that's misleading. Go to the zoo and have a look at the "King of the Beasts." He's lying there, one eye open, looking regal. He knows he's the king. He doesn't need to make a fuss about it. The lion, like Leo at its best, radiates quiet confidence. A happy, creative, comfortable participation in the human family -- that's what Leo the Lion is all about.

The evolutionary method is deceptively simple: creative self-expression. As we offer evidence of our internal processes to the world, we feel more at home, more accepted, more spontaneous -- provided the world claps its hands for us! That's the catch. Leo needs an appreciative audience. That audience can be a thousand people cheering or one person saying "I love you." Either way, it's applause, and for the Lion, that's evolutionary rocket fuel.

Toughing it out, not letting oneself be affected by a lack of support or understanding, may well be an important spiritual lesson -- but not for Leo. Here the evolutionary problem comes down to lack of real, ultimate trust in other people. The cure isn't toughness; it's building a pattern of joyful give-and-take. So perform! And if no one claps, go somewhere else and perform again.

With your Moon in Leo, you have the instincts of a performer. To feel comfortable, you need to feel appreciated. That is to say, you need to feel as though people are enjoying you, taking pleasure and inspiration from what you have to offer them. This combination is a little odd: the Moon, unlike Leo, is inherently timid. You must nurture the performer in yourself, making sure it's not too easily rebuffed. Some of that work revolves around cultivating your own creative talents, polishing them, making them all that they can possibly be. Another piece of the puzzle lies in

learning to select the right audiences... and if you're giving your best and everybody's yawning, then for sure you'd better pack your bags and go somewhere else.

If you don't feed your Leo Moon the applause it needs, then you'll slip into the "occupational hazards" associated with this combination: getting haughty, self-centered, or demanding. You'll be the "performer" who offers nothing, and still expects everyone's rapt attention.

Going farther, we see that your Moon lies in the Tenth house of your chart.

Community -- that's the key to the Tenth House. How do you fit into your local branch of civilization? What role do you play there? "He's an anesthesiologist." That's a Tenth House statement. But so is, "She's into the women's movement." Even though she doesn't make a dime being a feminist, it still says something about the hat she wears in the community.

Planetary Teachers in this House do two things for you. They outline your "cosmic job description." That is, they tip you off about the role you were born to play in your community. Unfortunately, they don't do that very well; there are a billion roles and only ten planets, so the descriptions they provide are of necessity rather vague. At best, they're rough guidelines.

Tenth House Teachers do better with their second task. They point out parts of your own character that need to be developed to a radical degree before your mission coalesces before your eyes. Accept their suggestions, act on them, and you'll leave a lasting stamp of your vision upon the myths and symbols of your community.

With the Moon in the Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is lunar in tone; that is, you were born to play the role of healer, nurturer, or imaginer in the human family. Counselor, physician, massage therapist -- they're all on the right track. But there's more to heal than the mind or body; you might also heal the soul of the community. Ministers may well have this configuration; also the poets, playwrights, and novelists who inspire us.

There's a third critical piece in your astrological puzzle -- the Ascendant, or rising sign. Along with the Sun and Moon, it completes the "primal triad." What is it? What does it mean? Simple -- the Ascendant is the sign that was coming up over the eastern horizon at the instant of your birth. It's where the sun is at dawn, in other words. In exactly the same way, the Ascendant represents how you "dawn" on people -- that is, how you present yourself. It's your "style," or your "mask."

The ascendant means more than that. It symbolizes a way you can help yourself feel centered, at ease, comfortable with who you are. If you get its message, then something wonderful happens: your style hooks you into the world of experience in a way that feeds your spirit exactly the kinds of events and relationships you need. Your soul is charged with more enthusiasm for the life you're living -- and you feel vibrant, confident, and full of animal grace.

When you took your first breath, Libra was lifting over the eastern horizon of Liverpool, UK. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Artist".

Perfect equilibrium. That's the spirit of the Scales. When Libra realizes its evolutionary aim, the nervous system is as still as a dark pool on a windless summer evening. Outwardly, Libran energy often looks as though it's already there: it seems graceful and balanced, even unflappable. Inwardly, it's another story: the Libran part of you is tuned as tight as the high string on a violin. Spirit gave you some advice back before you were born: don't pluck it. And don't let anyone else pluck it either.

Inevitably, with your terrific sensitivity, you'll get rattled from time to time. What can you do about it? Watch a ballet, or any other beautiful thing. The outer harmony will internalize; you'll sigh, releasing tension. That's the Libran evolutionary strategy in a nutshell: flood your senses with perceptions of beauty. It will soothe you, lifting you closer to the unbreakable serenity which is the true goal of this sign of the zodiac.

With Libra rising, you radiate grace and friendliness. Instinctively, people feel at ease around you... which spotlights the central characteristic of your outer self: courtesy. In this context that word doesn't mean being painfully "proper" all the time; instead it implies the capacity to grease the social wheels, to help people feel accepted and natural. You have that skill in abundance.

You feel most centered when you're creating harmony -- and that covers a lot of bases. Encouraging friends to relax and unwind certainly is part of it. But you can also create harmony between colors, shapes, and sounds. We call that "art," and expressing yourself artistically is quite self-affirming for you. Similarly, you can create harmony inside yourself by letting beauty wash over your senses, or by simply sitting quietly in an elegant place.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are

1728 different combinations of all three factors. So when we say that you are a Gemini with the Moon in Leo and Libra rising, that's a very specific statement.

Here's a way to make those words come even more alive. Traditionally, signs are connected with Bulls and Sea-Goats and Scorpions -- creatures we don't see every day. But we can translate those images into more modern archetypes.

We can say you are "The Storyteller", or "The Journalist", or "The Witness". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Gemini.

We can say you have the soul of "The Performer", or "The Aristocrat", or "The Clown"... your Moon lies in Leo, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Artist", or "The Diplomat", or "The Lover". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Libra.

You can combine those archetypes any way you want. And you can go further: Once you have a feel for the three basic signs in your primal triad, you can make up your own images to go with them. Whatever words you choose, those simple statements are your fundamental astrological signature. It's your skeleton. Our next step is to begin adding flesh and hair to that skeleton by considering the planets.

Unsurprisingly, planets can gain prominence in a birthchart through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant. These three are power brokers, and any linkage with them boosts a planet's influence.

Your own birthchart is complicated by the fact that, at your birth, Jupiter was aligned with the Sun... or "conjunct" the Sun, to use the proper astrological term. Thus, the energy and spirit of that planet is fused with your solar identity. In a sense, you are an "incarnation" of Jupiter."

What can that mean? Start by understanding the significance of the planet.

Take all the planets, all the meteors, moons, asteroids, and comets. Roll them up in a big ball of cosmic mush. They still wouldn't equal the mass of the "King of the Gods" -- Jupiter. Exactly that same bigness pervades the planet's astrological spirit. Jupiter is the symbol of buoyancy and generosity, of opportunity and joy. At the deepest level, it represents faith... faith in life, that is, rather than faith in anybody's theological position papers.

Jupiter stands in Cancer. This is an important piece of information -- maybe a pivotal one. Being human is tough sometimes. When you need to boost your elemental faith in life, your answer lies in following the Way of the Healer or the Fantasy-Weaver. What that means is that when you're sad you have two solid options. One is to find another being who's wounded, and then bind the wounds -- visit a sick friend, adopt a cat, water the plants. The other is to curl up in a safe, hidden place, and either read some faraway tale or close your eyes and invent one of your own.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Ninth House -- traditionally the "House of Long Journeys." To maintain your faith in life, you need travel. Developing enough self-love to justify investing in yourself in that department is a spiritual lesson for you. The same goes for education, and any other experience that expands your horizons. Trust yourself, trust life, get out your VISA card if necessary, and leap in!

While a fairly large number of people have Jupiter in that sign and house, the fact that it lies conjunct your Sun gives it special emphasis. By pushing the strengths it suggests toward their limits, you charge your solar vitality, approach your destiny, and set the stage for fulfilling your spiritual purpose.

Sometimes a planet gains prominence in a birthchart simply by sharing a House with the Sun. That's the case with you. Mercury is bathing in solar light, occupying the Ninth House along with our central star.

Mercury buzzes around the Sun in eighty-eight days, making it the fastest of the planets. It buzzes around your head in exactly the same way: frantically. It's the part of you that never rests -- the endless firing of your synapses as your intelligence struggles to organize a picture of the world. Mercury represents thinking and speaking, learning and wondering. It is the great observer, always curious. It represents your senses themselves and all the raw, undigested data that pours through them.

Mercury is in heaven -- which is to say it is in Gemini, its favorite sign. This is a powerful, natural, combination which massively stimulates your curiosity and your enthusiasm for the pleasures of the mind: knowledge, witticism, intelligent conversation. Spiritually you are learning about the difficulties of keeping your mind radically open when you're so good at constructing convincing -- and maybe addictive -- theories.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Ninth House, you have the mind of the eternal student, always learning, always eager to stretch a little

further. It's important that you blow out the mental cobwebs periodically by taking a trip into another culture -- or by enrolling in a stimulating class or workshop.

A planet can gain authority by sharing a House with the Moon. We find that situation in your chart. Mars is bathing in moonlight, occupying the Tenth House along with Luna.

Pale red Mars suggested blood to our ancestors, and they named it the War God. That's an effective metaphor -- Mars does represent violence. But today we go further. The red planet symbolizes the power of the Will. Assertiveness. Courage. Without it, there'd be no fire in life. No spark. Where your Mars lies, you are challenged to find the Spiritual Warrior inside yourself, the part of you that's brave and clear enough to claim your own path and follow it.

Mars glitters in Leo, where it glows with power and charisma. Once your enthusiasm is ignited, people tend to line up behind you. They believe you, trust you. The archetype of the Warrior King (or Queen!), full of dignity and righteous authority, plays a basic role in your psychic makeup. Spiritually you are learning about the humility and sensitivity that must temper the weight of the crown.

With the War-God occupying your Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Crusader. You were born to stand for some principle in the community, to protect something worth saving against forces that would steamroller it. This implies that if you do what you were born to do, you'll have enemies... not that you have to hate them! To rise to this challenge, you'll need to spend some time learning public courage, assertiveness, and confidence... and life may provide the school by supplying you with tyrants, bullies, and a societal deck that's stacked against you somehow.

Your Tenth House is a busy one. The Moon also shares this House with is Pluto.

"Life's a bitch. Then you die." Go to any boutique from coast to coast; you'll find those words on a coffee mug. Meaninglessness. Like most truly frightening ideas, we make a joke of it. That's Plutonian territory: the realm of all that terrifies us so badly we need to hide from it. Death. Disease. Our personal shame. Sexuality, to some extent. Initially, Pluto asks us to face our own wounds, squarely and honestly. Then, if we succeed, it offers us a way to create an unshakable sense of meaning in our lives. How? Methods vary according to the Signs and Houses involved, but always they have one point in common: the high Plutonian path invariably involves accepting some trans-personal purpose in your life.

One more point: Pluto moves so slowly that it remains in a given Sign for many

years. As result, its Sign position in your birthchart refers not only to you but also to your generation. The House position, however, is much more personal in its relevance.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Leo. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Performer archetype: an obsession with being noticed. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen style over substance, glitz over moral excellence? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto gleamed in the Tenth House -- the part of the natal chart that helps clarify your "cosmic job description." You were born with a mission, and your sense of meaning in life depends on fulfilling it. What is the mission? We can't say precisely, but we can narrow it down. First, it involves blowing the whistle on lies. Second, it involves countering the force that has historically been called Evil, and healing its effects. Third, it depends totally upon your courage to speak out at the level of moral principle.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Eighth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Venus, Saturn and Uranus in that area of your life, it is charged with activity, soul lessons, and opportunities for personal development. Before we even consider the planets separately, our first step is to explore this piece of existential real estate in broad terms.

In the Eighth House you experience three basic human instincts in a radically heightened way. The first instinct is sexual -- not simply having intercourse, but also allowing yourself to bond fully with a partner, letting the primal sexual "program" in your deep psyche manifest, riding the roller coaster, trusting it, even though no one can completely understand it.

Death is the second Eighth House instinct. Again, we let ourselves flow with something deep within us, learning consciously something that our cells know automatically -- that death, like sex, is just another biological roller coaster, spooky maybe, but worthy of trust... which leads directly to the third instinct: our sense of immortality. Something deep and trans-rational in us knows there is a realm beyond death. Life has an "occult" dimension -- that is, a hidden one. Without an acceptance of that intuitive feeling, we live forever under a shadow of futility and foreboding.

You have lessons here. Let's consider them.

Venus is the part of your mental circuitry that's concerned with releasing tension and maintaining harmony. Its focus is always peace, inwardly and outwardly. As such, it represents your aesthetic functions -- your taste in colors, sounds, and forms. Why? Because the perception of beauty soothes the human heart. Venus is also tied to your affiliative functions -- your romantic instincts, your sense of courtesy or diplomacy, your taste in friends. Invariably, this planet has one goal: sustaining your serenity in the face of life's onslaughts.

Venus was passing through Taurus. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the earthy, physical spirit of the Bull. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the colors and textures of the countryside, sensual but never jolting. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate unpretentious people, the kind who are comfortable perched on a boulder with the wind ruffling their hair... the kind who aren't upset at the thought of sitting silently for half an hour.

With Venus in your Eighth House, there's a mysterious paradox in your psyche; to feel peace, you must feel intensity. Conversely, when life is too calm, you get nervous. Sexually, anyone with whom you can sustain long-term passion is refined and sensitive and probably knows a few poems by heart.

Look at a NASA photo of Saturn. The icy elegance of the planet's rings, the pale understatement of the cloud bands... both hint at the clarity and precision which characterize Saturn's astrological spirit. Part of the human psyche must be cold and calculating, cunning enough to survive in the physical world. Part of us thrives on self-discipline, seeks excellence, pays the price of devotion. Somewhere in our lives there's a region where nothing but the best of what we are is enough to satisfy us. That's the high realm of Saturn. In its low realm, we take one glance at those challenges and our hearts turn to ice. We freeze in fear, and despair claims us.

The buzzing terrain of Gemini offers a region of profound spiritual challenge for you, as Saturn was passing through that sign at your birth. You must learn to steel yourself in the face of the Twins' shadow side: chaos, and the inability to stick to a predetermined course. Will yourself toward sustained effort! And support that journey in practical, Saturnian terms by fortifying yourself with habits of mental focus. Those skills are especially pertinent in regard to Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The Eighth! The arena of life where you face the Unconscious, and all the half-taboo energies that lie there: your sexuality, your sense of mortality, and your instincts about "other dimensions." With Saturn here, your Eighth House passions are so strong they probably frighten you a bit. Concentrate on conquering that fear and extending yourself step by step into those mysterious realms. Otherwise, your

intimate life will be frustrating, death will haunt you, and there will be a big hole in your life where magic should be.

If Uranus were the only planet in the sky, we'd all be so independent we'd still be Neanderthals throwing rocks at each other. There would be no language, no culture, no law. On the other hand, if Uranus did not exist, we'd all still be hauling rocks for Pharaoh. All individuality would be suppressed. This is the planet of individuation... the process whereby we separate out who we are from what everybody else wants us to be. Always it indicates an area of our lives in which, to be true to ourselves, we must "break the rules" -- that is, overcome the forces of socialization and peer pressure. In that part of our experience, what feeds our souls tends to annoy mom and dad... and all the "moms" and "dads" who lay down the law of the tribe.

With Uranus in Gemini, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Storyteller. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through bombarding your senses with mind-stretching new information -- and without it you're likely to clog up your head with cunning rationalizations and word-games. Consciously chosen forays into the world of wonder purify your sense of self, purging out the spurious "inner voices" you've swallowed sitting in front of the great wraparound television set of late twentieth century Industrial Culture. Those forays can be educational or experiential, but the important point is that they sate your appetite for the unexpected.

House of Death -- that's the old name for the Eighth House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just death, but the whole realm of instinct, and most especially, your sexuality. Uranus is your Teacher here and the lessons can be summarized this way: sexuality plays a pivotal role, positively or negatively, in your spiritual journey. To be true to yourself in that department, you must break some cultural taboos. One piece of that puzzle is that your natural sexual soulmates are probably not quite the folks mom and dad had in mind for you...

In the final analysis, all planets are important. Each one plays a unique role in your developmental pattern, and failure to feed any one of them results in a diminution of your life. Just because the following planets aren't "having breakfast with the President" through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant doesn't mean we can ignore them.

You're lying in your bed, going to sleep. Suddenly a jolt runs through your body. You just "caught yourself falling asleep." Where were you two seconds before the jolt? What were you? Astrologically, the answer lies with Neptune. This is the planet of trance, of meditation, of dreams. It represents your doorway into the "Not-Self." Based on the sign the planet occupies, we identify a particularly critical spiritual catalyst for you... although we need to remember that Neptune remains in a Sign for

an average of a little over thirteen years, so its Sign position actually describes not only you, but your whole generation. Its House position, however, is more uniquely your own.

Neptune was passing through Virgo. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Servant... that is consciously, intentionally to seek the perfection of those skills and virtues in yourself which benefit others. Without exposure to the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of selfless service, you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life -- or in the subtle ego-traps of meditation.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Twelfth House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are naturally linked to questions of spirituality and the larger framework within which life -- and consciousness -- operate. You were born with a terrific, and somewhat dangerous, gift: the ability to be your own spiritual teacher. You have sound instincts about the path to higher levels of being. Use them! Or your sensitivities will sooner or later overwhelm you, leaving you vulnerable to addictive behaviors.

## **Your Lunar Nodes**

### The soul's journey

Here's a jolly baby. Here's a serious one. An alert one. A dull one. A wise one. Those are common nursery room observations, but they raise a fascinating question: How did that person get in there?

Most of our psychological theory, either technically or in folklore, is developmental theory... abuse a child and he'll grow up to be a child-abuser, for example. But in the eyes of the newborn infant, there is already character. How can that be? One might say it's heredity, and that's certainly at least part of the answer. A large part of the world's population would call it reincarnation -- that baby, for better or worse, represents the culmination of centuries of soul-development in many different bodies. A Fundamentalist might simply announce, "That's how God made the baby." Who's to say? But all three explanations hold one point in common: They all agree that we cannot account for what we observe in a baby's eyes without acknowledging the impact of events occurring before the child's birth.

In astrology, the South Node of the Moon refers to events occurring before your birth, helping us to see what was in your eyes ten seconds after you were born... however we imagine it got in there! The Moon's North Node, always opposite the South Node, refers to your evolutionary future. It's a subtle point, but arguably the most important symbol in astrology. The North Node represents an alien state of consciousness and an unaccustomed set of circumstances. If you open your heart and mind to them, you put maximum tension on the deadening hold of the past.

As we consider the Nodes of the Moon in your birthchart, we'll be using the language of reincarnation. Whether that notion fits your own spiritual beliefs is of course your own business. If it doesn't work for you, please translate the ideas into ancestral hereditary terms. After all, it makes little practical difference whether we speak of a certain farmer weeding his beans a thousand years before the Caesars as your great, great, mega-great grandfather... or as you yourself in a previous incarnation. Either way, he's someone who lived way back there in history who sort of is you, sort of isn't, and lives on inside you--influencing but not ultimately defining you.

At your birth, the South Node of the Moon lay in Pisces, the sign of the Mystic. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed an

eerie wisdom, as though he or she were looking into the eyes of a buddha. For centuries, you've been exploring trance states, typically in the context of spiritual traditions and institutions but occasionally in darker ways... like the "trance" induced by alcohol or opium. As a result, an intuitive grasp of altered and higher states of consciousness has arisen in you. Now, like one who has become too heavenly to be of any earthly good, you must learn new lessons: practical helpfulness toward others and a willingness to face squarely the mucky details of getting free.

That nascent ability to willingly and effectively accept the yoke of service is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Virgo -- the sign of the Craftsperson. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive, in other words. How can you accomplish this Virgoan spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome the myth of "World Transcendence" inside yourself, and begin polishing a set of skills with which you can address the pain of other people, one by one.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Fifth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you lived out the notion that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." There has developed in your spirit a spontaneous immediacy... creative and joyful, but vulnerable to the life-derailing effects of whimsy and self-indulgence.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Eleventh House, you must act to counterbalance those whimsical, self-indulgent tendencies... not so much because they're "bad" as because you've already learned everything you can from them. The time has come for you to take authority over the shape of your own life, establishing your own goals and priorities, determining in advance what kind of elderly person you'll become. Finish what you start!

And that's your birth chart.

Trust it; the symbols are Spirit's message to you. In the course of a lifetime, you'll make a billion choices. Any one of them could potentially hurt you terribly, sending you down a barren road. How can you steer a true course? The answer is so profound that it circles around and sounds trivial: listen to your heart, be true to your soul. Noble words and accurate ones, but tough to follow.

The Universe, in its primal intelligence, seems to understand that difficulty. It supplies us with many external supports: Inspiring religions and philosophies. Dear friends who hold the mirror of truth before us. Omens of a thousand kinds. And, above all, the sky itself, which weaves its cryptic message above each newborn

infant.

In these pages, you've experienced one reading of that celestial message as it pertains to you. There are others. You may want to consider sitting with a real astrologer ... micro-chips are fine, but a human heart can still express nuances of meaning that no computer can grasp. You may want to order other reports, ones that illuminate your current astrological "weather," or that analyze important relationships. Best of all, you may choose to learn this ancient language yourself, and begin unraveling your own message in your own words.

Whatever your course, we thank you for your time and attention, and wish you grace for your journey.