

In the Country of the Blind

Vision Quest for Aquarius by Eric Francis Coppolino. Published by Planet Waves, Inc.

Self-knowledge is a dangerous thing / The freedom of who you are. — Lou Reed

My teacher and Aquarius Moon brother Joseph Trusso has suggested for years that I read an H.G. Wells story called “The Country of the Blind,” originally published in 1904. It’s one of Wells’ most famous works (others being *The Invisible Man* and *The Time Machine*). I’m usually quicker taking up Joe’s reading recommendations; they are always life-changing. I finally read the story a few weeks ago.

Its basic premise is that a few guys go out ice climbing down in Ecuador, and one of them slips down the far side of the mountain. He lands in a valley, which for years had been cut off from the world by earthquakes that reshaped the land. The people in this community lived with no knowledge of the outside world, and their existence is but a rumor to those in the world around them. There has been no contact for generations.

They had all gone blind over the generations, due to some disease that wasted their eyes. By the time the story opens, nobody in this secluded mountain village has any memory of vision. They think the whole world is their little nook, ringed by a column of high mountains on all sides that seem to go straight up. They cling to what they call “the wisdom from above.”

Nunez, the mountaineer who has tumbled into their world, figures out pretty fast that the people are blind, and he strives to teach them about what it means to see. Not only aren’t they interested, they consider him insane. For us he’s the equivalent of someone hearing voices or having wild visions that we’re sure are not there. But not really.

Actually he’s more like the person who has a clue about the nature of reality, and says what he sees and feels, but nobody believes him. He’s not insane, he’s perceptive.

In the story, Nunez is ridiculed and even exiled merely for being able to do this natural thing — look around. The pressure to conform is so strong that eventually he almost concedes to having his eyes surgically removed by the village’s blind surgeon, to make him ‘normal’.

I’m always impressed by how science fiction writers can penetrate through the mental clutter and delusion, getting right to the point of what’s happening in the world. The allegory of the sighted person in the land of the blind being considered insane is the story of the world, and especially of our world right now. The attachment people have to their own blindness is also an integral part of that scenario.

And it may be the story of your life. You can perceive something; you can see and feel; you are intelligent and observant; but not so many people get it, or get you. Not so many people are that hip to reality. You, meanwhile, are in a position of leadership, if only over your own life. You have a mission, you have your agenda, and you must get things done. That involves dealing with

many people who may be looking straight in front of them but keep walking into one another, or into walls, or into traffic.

One of the essential elements of Aquarius is group dynamics, and that is being redoubled with Saturn now moving through Sagittarius, your 11th solar house — which covers the theme of social interaction. Any way you look at life, you are integrally involved with others. This may come in the form of the ‘take charge’ kind of leadership, or it may come in the form of the ‘establish yourself’ kind of self-leadership that continually puts you in a position where you must deal with all those other people. Many of whom are blind; or worse, who just act that way.

Narcissism and Inner Vision

The blindness of our times is a kind of insane self-centeredness. This is not some accidental affliction; it’s a conditioned response. While the root causes stretch into many different facets of our culture, the primary issue is economic. Our economy is driven by an obsession with self, and one of the requirements of participating is that we pay as little mind to the needs of others as we can be pushed into doing.

The vision you possess is inner vision. For some time now, you have — willingly or not — been dragged through a kind of shadowy underworld of your own being. Though this has taken many possible forms, the effect has been to put you into contact with your deep motives, and facets of your psychology you have taken for granted.

With this may come a sensation of being alone or isolated, perhaps in the form that you’re going through things you know only you can understand. By the way, I am describing the transit of Pluto through Capricorn, which began in 2007 and has been pushing pretty hard on your psyche. The 12th is one of the deepest, most mysterious houses of the lot, addressing all the topics that are the most misunderstood, the ones most likely for people to avoid, or the ones they feel the least comfortable with.

This transit may have stirred up past issues — be they psychological, emotional or related to your family patterns. It’s as if you’re living closer to your memories than ever before, or perhaps the ‘latent past impressions’ (in Sanskrit, *samskaras*) of your predecessors. It’s not just a theory that we carry the genetic memory of our ancestors in our blood. If we didn’t, we would not look like them. And if anyone denies that there are not also tribal memories and even specific memories, they have not looked (or read) especially closely. Yet you can only see these things with some form of inner vision — the kind that you are, in theory, crazy if you possess.

The ancestral element of this transit is its most vital factor, as if you’re being taken on a tour of the distant past, or your DNA has suddenly come to life and is playing back ancient scenes from your genetic lineage. Yet this is more than a tour; you have the chance to actively dismantle elements of your inherited psychological makeup that you didn’t know existed, or had taken for granted.

This process has pulled you ever inward, and it’s come with many humbling moments, where you had no choice but to accept what was happening.

One great gain has been cultivating your inner orientation. And this comes to a peak over the coming four seasons. You have, in a sense, learned to see into the darkness of your own human psychology. Now you must learn to practice, to use and to depend upon this gift — a factor that a great many people are simply blind to.

We have many concepts to describe this blindness: superficiality, for instance — the determination to stay on the surface and never go deeper. It also manifests as denial.

This is a blinding factor, and it can lead to a kind of self-obsession that verges on being cut off from reality. Whether you call it narcissism, egotism or self-centeredness, the result is the lopping off of sensitivity to one's surroundings, one's fellow people and one's wider environment, and to live almost exclusively in one's own world. Now, this would not be so problematic if it didn't create a group dynamic — a kind of culture where one of the few tendencies that's rewarded is vanity. You might call this The Country of the Blind, where true inner vision is considered a form of madness.

It is not, of course, and you will not consent to being stripped of your ability to see into yourself. Yet it will be necessary to use your vision if you want to keep it, and have it be useful to you. By use, I mean cultivate your sensitivity as a means of navigating through your life, in fulfillment of what now appears to be an urgent mission. Whatever this mission is, it may be driving you with obsessive power. I suggest you follow your guidance, though also recognize there is a building process that is implied. The thing that can be immediate is your ability to respond, and your choice to take action. The thing that will take some time is getting the results to be where you want them to be.

Notably, you are doing this most likely surrounded by people who are self-obsessed, in the midst of pressure from all sides to be the same way. Given this, I suggest the first thing you not do is try to explain to everyone what it means to see inwardly, or to understand yourself in a meaningful way. What would help, however, is if you were to use your extra sight to observe who indeed does have a glimpse within themselves.

Take some pity on those who are in denial, seemingly happy, but not really dealing with themselves or their lives. You are doing something that may be utterly alien to them, even terrifying — it's been scary enough for you, who has a strong stomach. The question you may be facing is that of willingness, and I suggest you resolve to be wholly willing to continue your inner odyssey. And, as it happens, the outer one it's compelling you to take.

There is also the matter of a secret you may be keeping from yourself. This shows up a few different ways, and it's a symbol in the astrology worth looking at. It might involve what you consider your worst fear, or your deepest desire. It may directly involve sex or your sexuality.

Once you're onto this, turn the pages of this secret and reveal what they contain to yourself. Be bold and be assertive about this inner mystery. It is the very thing that is, on one level, powering your quest. Yet when you free up the energy you might use to keep the veil over whatever this is, you will find yourself feeling much more liberated.

Also, notice that those who avoid inner vision, who live devotedly in The Country of the Blind, are often avoiding one specific thing, and their lives can turn out to become a story built around that avoidance. Your life seems destined to be a story of engaging with that element of your consciousness, and if so, you will profit greatly from this direct confrontation.

Creating Your Niche in the World

Saturn is the planet from classical astrology associated with your sign. I am aware, by the way, that most practicing astrologers say it's Uranus. Yet I think that if the rebel without a clue, or the wild, erratic inventiveness that Uranus represents, is to be of any use to you, you need to master and to identify with Saturn. In a later section we will have a good conversation with Uranus, but first things first.

Saturn has recently changed signs from Scorpio to Sagittarius, which shifts its emphasis in your chart to your solar 11th house. Among other things this represents a change in your leadership style, and your leadership role. Being directly in charge of someone or something is no longer necessary, or not like it was; being a self-leader who guides others into participation is the new theme, the new mode you're in.

This sign change is significant for every reason, but here's one you will relate to: Aquarius is the 11th sign, and it has a good few things in common with the 11th house. For solar Aquarius or Aquarius rising, Sagittarius is where you get to actually do the Aquarius thing in the wider world, because that's where Sagittarius is placed in your chart. Intimately connected with group dynamics, the wider culture and one's relationship to these things, what you're experiencing is a vast experiment in making a deeply cherished idea real.

Saturn tends to be a factor that grants tangibility. In the style of Aquarius, this is less about building something solid (that's more in the style of Capricorn) than about establishing a pattern. Said another way, one of the most vital factors of Aquarius and Saturn as its ruling planet is the creation of social patterns.

Sagittarius is not an easy energy field to work in. First of all, it means you have a very broad canvas, that spans a wide geographic region; and you have the potential to experiment with nearly any idea. You must be guided inwardly in what you pursue, because if you allow 'the world' around you to influence your choices too much, you will be likely to lose your way. So one of the quests you are on is to trust your inner guidance. What other people think and what they want is not so important. Doing what you know is right is where to keep your focus.

When you connect to this, you're likely to make a series of decisions and moves that facilitate your process, even if you have no immediate confirmation that these are the right things to be doing. Yet you will keep going with a determination that even you may not understand.

In any event, I suggest you proceed with trust in whatever you're doing, that you've chosen to do. Choice is an essential element here. To the extent that you may feel trapped in the world, the power of decision is your one remaining freedom, and it's the only one you need. You may

notice that many people around you are in the state they're in, precisely out of a refusal to actually make their own decisions.

You need to exercise your most ardent independence under this astrology, yet you must also be responsive to your environment. There are certain factors you cannot avoid, like the need for resources, and the need to interact directly with your collaborators. Your solar chart has plenty to say about this.

Jupiter and the Exchange of Resources

If we follow the logic of classical astrology, a discussion of Saturn in Sagittarius will lead us to Jupiter — the ruler of Sagittarius. In this way the signs in any chart are woven together by the planets that rule them, creating a cohesive story. We find Jupiter in Virgo, where it will be for most of the year.

Virgo is your solar 8th house. The 8th is the house of 'other people's resources'. It's also the house associated with biological inevitabilities, such as sex and death. As such, it's loaded with the kinds of taboos people love to gossip about. You're not so open, at least not on the level of gossip. But you're sensitive to the secrets, the motives and the inner psychology of others — and this will help you immensely.

Jupiter in Virgo looks like you're making an investment of your energy into something that may, on some level, be extrinsic to yourself — as if you're investing in someone else's family or business. There are so many connections pointing back to this investment that it's clearly the thing to be doing at this time. I suggest, however, that you remember to make it work for you. By that I mean it's probably working well for someone else; you want to make sure it also works to serve your ends, on a 'greatest good for all concerned' basis.

Note, this is a real investment, and it's likely to get a real return. This particular field of activity is likely to widen in late summer. There is some development that shifts the game, and when that happens you will know you were instrumental in the process. The reward is likely to be more than one of satisfaction and of learning, though those are essential; you're also likely to have both a financial reward and an additional opportunity.

Note that as events develop this year, it might mean an international opportunity of some kind. As mentioned, the 8th house involves sex and your feelings about it. This is a profoundly rich field of discovery for you right now. Yet as other aspects imply, this starts from within. Most people think their sexuality evolves through meeting another person who really scratches their itch. It's true that can happen, though what looks more likely is that you begin to make discoveries about yourself.

The world is in a seriously difficult situation where sexuality is concerned. It's as if a perfect storm of forces has combined to corrupt and commodify sex in ways even Wilhelm Reich could not have dreamed of. Reich was the person who explained how repressing sex is one of the most valuable tools repressive political regimes have to keep people in place.

The reason that sounds not just conspiratorial but also unlikely is that most people have not made the connection to politics, and further, have no idea what it feels like to be sexually free. They are therefore unlikely to notice the painful state of being that they are in. Yet we're all in this to some real extent. There are some who can sequester themselves from society, but everyone is under pressure to some degree, because this is a factor of the whole environment.

From numerous viewpoints, your charts are urging a more open and honest approach to your sexuality. This starts merely with being more conversant about who you are, what you want and what you feel. That is another way of saying, get the conversation going. It will be good for you many ways, including letting off psychological pressure, easing some of your sense of isolation, allowing you to feel more imaginative and more interested in art, and helping facilitate your cash flow.

Of Individual, Group and Mass

Aquarius is the sign of both groups and strongly individualistic people. At first this seems to be a contradiction, but not when you remember what Alice Bailey taught us about group consciousness: a group is a group of individuals. A mass is a crowd of non-individuated people.

This puts the concepts and indeed the experiences of *individuation* and of *group formation* right into the same idea. As individuals emerge, groups can form. Most of the problems we need to solve on the planet right now require groups — one person is not going to be able to do it. I would say we live in a time of profound evolutionary necessity to wake up to the individuals that we are, so that we can get together and start addressing collective matters in a more direct way.

We also have a potential motive on the part of those who would exploit humanity to keep people in a non-individuated state of being, therefore part of the herd rather than one of the cattle dogs.

Using this frame of reference, we could speculate that the people in *The Country of the Blind* were a mass, not a group. None had individuated to the point where they could question their blindness, or the prohibition on even thinking about sight.

Apparently it takes the human entity quite a long time to individuate — as in many, many hundreds of lifetimes. I'm not sure whether something is stuck, or whether there is a little bit gained every time, or whether something reaches critical mass. It would seem, though, that there are moments of rapid awakening, wherein one just wakes up.

It also comes with considerable responsibility. Someone who wants to be entertained and have a good time and not worry so much has a reason to want to stay as non-individuated as possible. A crisis might emerge, though, when someone needs and is ready to be fully present and conscious, but they don't really want to.

Sex, The Awakener

The easiest way to suppress individuation — that is, the emergence of true self-awareness — is to suppress sex. In *The Country of the Blind*, this is the thing that's not allowed to be questioned

— sex is a form of perceiving and we live in a society that has been, in most ways, stricken blind.

I am not quite saying that all self-awareness is sexual (though the case could be made). I am however saying that at the root of self-awareness is sexual consciousness, and if that is cut off, so too goes much else that is vital to being aware, conscious and alive.

This type of blindness, or numbness, comes in the form of a righteous prudishness which pretty much holds all forms of sex as disgusting unless one personally likes them — and even those are suspect. After doing something especially fun, we live in a time when the question arises: does that make me a pervert?

Let's use astrology and trace how this looks in your chart. I've either described or alluded to the following:

Pluto and Mercury in Capricorn. Pluto is in Capricorn, activated this year by a conjunction from Mercury. Pluto has been there for a while; Mercury's presence says it's time to experience real awareness of whatever process it indicates. Capricorn is your 12th house — which includes profound, existential secrets, one's ancestral past, what has gone missing and one's deepest and unspeakable sexual desires. The message to this configuration is about seeing, feeling and acknowledging what is usually invisible on all of these topics. Remember that the energetic property of the 12th is that it vanishes like a dream does when you wake up. What is there is easily deniable — until you can no longer deny it.

Saturn in Sagittarius. After checking out Capricorn, we can now follow its ruler up to Sagittarius, your 11th solar house. Remember that in addition to ruling Capricorn, Saturn also rules Aquarius — your sign or rising sign. It's noteworthy that the same planet rules your 12th house of what vanishes (Capricorn), and your 1st house of what is fully manifest (Aquarius). Saturn, now in Sagittarius, is about finding your special role in society. This is directly rooted in your inner vision described by Mercury and Pluto in Capricorn. The deeper you go into your self-awareness, the more traction you will have in the world around you. Inner psychology is an analog of society. The more you understand your inner workings, the easier it is to function effectively in the world, and to establish the pattern of self-awareness as you go.

Jupiter in Virgo. The ruler of Sagittarius is Jupiter, and now Jupiter is in Virgo — your solar 8th house. You might say this is about the way intelligence integrates with sexual intelligence, which integrates with your ability to share resources with others. There is a lot of sharing resources going on. However, it is essential that you maintain your awareness of where other people are coming from at all times. It is possible to miss this entirely, by being self-absorbed for example, or forgetting your primary mission of studying group dynamics. Jupiter in Virgo is the placement that involves your investment in others, in your community and in your role in the community. It's essential that you cultivate mutual dependence, interdependence and clear-headed service to others — and that you be aware of codependency.

The Moon, Psyche and Chaos in Gemini. Mercury conjunct Pluto, referenced above, is a vital aspect of your inner awareness. Mercury is also connected to Virgo (where Jupiter is now

placed) and it is also connected to Gemini. I have not specifically mentioned Gemini yet, though I've alluded to it. Gemini is your 5th solar house of art, fun and sex for creativity and fun. It's not sex for duty, commitment or reproduction — it's teenage-styled sex.

The Moon is placed in this house in your solar chart, and this is where I come up with the delineation, "Be conversant about sex." Gemini wants to keep the conversation going, and the house of "sex for fun" is also linked to sex for every other evolutionary or relational purpose. It's easy to work with Gemini — have fun, mostly by communicating, i.e., hot talk, and the sharing of fantasies.

The other way to have fun Gemini-style is to switch around — reverse roles, play with bisexuality (in fantasy or reality), and basically experiment in any form that involves *twinning*. There is, however, another factor in Gemini, and that is Psyche. This point can describe where faith has been injured, and where someone might lack faith in themselves.

With Psyche there can be hesitancy, and there can be the sense of an injury that will never heal. This is largely a perception or a belief. It is not an indelible fact. But it can be convincing, and it can be a clue to the healing process. The perceived injury is in the ability to have fun with creativity or with sex. One's sense of play can be injured.

Yet there is something deeper here as well, a slow-moving point called Chaos. Here is how Amy Elliott, who is doing research for these articles, put it; I think her description is going to be as good as it gets. Here is what she wrote to you:

Before there was existence, there was Chaos, or rather the being of nothingness, infinite and infinitely dark. The Greeks used to fear infinity and its inherent connection with death, which for them meant eternity fixed in the underworld, a powerless shade. We are not much further developed than the Greeks at facing our fear of the Chthonic world [i.e., beneath the Earth, or the underworld] and all that it means.

Aquarians will be presented this year, one way or another, with a challenge to confront the strongest and deepest of those 'underworld' fears. Not of death as an event, but of the emotional world that lurks beneath, the primal, pre-human, instinctual feelings with which Homo sapiens is still burdened.

There's a certain sense of trial by fire in this process; the counterintuitive concept that confronting the baser self will grant access to purer, higher realms. And after all, taking a torch into the underworld can burn a light into the core of darkness. What gets burned away will be the dead ends, paths no longer relevant to personal growth.

Community is the Thing

Because your ruling planet is Saturn, that represents the sum total of the story — and Saturn connects to all the other planets active in your chart, directly or indirectly.

Saturn in Sagittarius represents you in The Country of the Blind — those who are mainly blinded by their beliefs, and their lack of faith in themselves. As you cultivate faith in your inner being, mainly through familiarity, you will become a more credible person in your community.

The idea is not to teach, prove, explain or disprove; the idea is to be who you are, from a truly grounded place, and focus on your work. Remaining on-mission is the most likely remedy to any psychological or personal issue you might encounter.

Your metric of success is not whether anyone accepts what you're doing, but rather your own acceptance of your mission on a day-to-day basis. Your metric of success is not whether others see; it's whether you can see.

As you may be aware, the world is in a seriously problematic state involving fear and isolation. The concept of community continues to take a beating by any messenger of "every man for himself," and there are many of them. Therefore, by being at peace with any sense of isolation you feel, you will both open up the way for your own contact with others, and set the example for others to do the same. But it's essential that this be teaching by example rather than by messaging. This is about showing, not telling.

It is not easy to be a sighted person in The Country of the Blind, but it would seem you have little choice. Therefore, look for those who not only can see, but those who want to as well.

The other day, my friend and advisor Andrew McLuhan summed it up nicely: "Community is the thing," he wrote. "When people are isolated, marginalized, there's trouble. They're easy pickings for bad people. When people are brought together, welcomed, they are strong. They care about each other, watch out for each other. The community thrives."

It may take a while, but you might say that helping with this process is the heart of your mission. Just remember to look after yourself so you can look after everyone else.

Here is a short essay on that topic, called [Global Warming and the Pot Luck Dinner](#).