

Men Are From Earth,

Id never danced in church before I took a workshop with Marion Woodman. Being in the chapel of New York City's Union Theological Seminary was a sort of homecoming for me: five years earlier I had stridden down the middle aisle of that chapel with a newly minted master of divinity degree in my hand. Now a series of seemingly disconnected incidents had brought me back, as if by design, to attend Woodman's workshop. The psychologist Carl Jung might have chalked it all up to "synchronicity" — a meaningful link between otherwise unrelated events. Woodman, a Jungian analyst herself, would no doubt agree.

I'd attended the seminary to learn about both God and myself, and I had learned much, but something was missing from my education. The Protestant Christian tradition pays little attention to the body. In contrast, Woodman's work focuses intensely on the body — its pains, its pleasures, and its profound wisdom — as a means of personal growth and spiritual development. And for Woodman, the way to access the treasure buried in the body is through dance, meditation, and dream imagery.

So there I was in Union's chapel, wending my way through the group of a hundred or so other dancers, only three of whom were men. Later Woodman asked each participant to act out in a dance a particularly meaningful dream image. I picked the sea, and I lay on my back on the slate floor and moved in slow undulations — a bit self-consciously at first — mimicking waves. It brought me back to my childhood on Long Island Sound and was a welcome respite from my demanding job and responsibilities. It also awakened in me the simple joy of being alive. In *Bone: Dying into Life* (Penguin), about her battle with uterine cancer, Woodman describes an incident in which she says dance saved her life. I was beginning to understand how.

Woodman has spent much of her thirty-year career as an analyst helping people overcome their addictions. She herself once struggled with severe anorexia and believes analysis provides people with the means to free themselves from constraints within and without. The books she has authored or coauthored — there are eleven of them, including *Addiction to Perfection*, *The Pregnant Virgin*, *The Ravaged Bridegroom* (all Inner City Books), and *Dancing in the Flames* (Shambhala) — are filled with Jungian symbolism, Greek mythology, and lines from Shakespeare, William Blake, T.S. Eliot, and other literary giants. She uses these reference points to explore what it means — and what it takes — to be true to ourselves in a world that wants us to be someone we are not. "Most people in analysis are there because nobody has had time to see them or hear them," Woodman says. "They've spent their lives trying to please somebody else, so they've never found their own values."

The foundation of Jungian analysis is the concept of archetypes, which are images or patterns of behavior that are deeply embedded in the human psyche. Archetypes appear in tribal lore, myths, esoteric teachings, and fairy tales throughout the centuries — and, as products of the unconscious, continue to inform who we are and affect how we behave today. "That people should succumb to these eternal images is entirely normal; in fact it is what these images are for," Jung writes.

Born in 1928, Woodman spent the first twenty-one years of her career as a teacher of high-school English and drama in Ontario, Canada, where she was born and raised and still lives. In 1968, while she was traveling in India, a debilitating illness brought her to a crisis and changed her relationship to her body and her Western culture. In the early 1970s, she and her husband, Ross Woodman, moved to London, England, where he studied at London University. It was there that she met E.A. Bennet, a Jungian analyst who transformed her life.

And So Are Women



DANA PIANOWSKI

*She writes about Bennet in her book *Conscious Femininity (Inner City)*: "He could put me in touch with my feelings when I, who was so smart and rational, couldn't feel anything. He would just sit there and feel for me until I got the message. Tears would start to run down my face, not because I was sad, but because . . . I was picking up my own feeling from him." In 1974, guided by her dreams, she enrolled in the C.G.*

*Jung Institute in Zurich, Switzerland. While there she explored her eating disorder, out of which came her first book, *The Owl Was a Baker's Daughter (Inner City)*. Now seventy-eight, Woodman has sold more than half a million books, and a foundation has been created in her honor.*

*My interest in Woodman's work goes back fourteen years, to when I read her 1992 book *Leaving My Father's House: A Jour-**

Marion Woodman On The Inner Marriage Of The True Masculine And The True Feminine

JAMES KULLANDER

ney to Conscious Femininity (*Shambhala*). Although the focus was on women, what she wrote in that book and others spoke to me — a white, middle-class, straight male — as the words of few psychological professionals have. One reviewer has called her “a bridge builder between the male and female worlds.” To understand the human being, Woodman believes, one has to know both sides of the story: the masculine and the feminine. “For Jung,” Woodman says, “the whole process of the soul’s journey is toward the inner marriage of the mature masculine and the mature feminine.”

In the several times I’ve heard her talk, I’ve found Woodman to be an intense speaker, her voice a captivating blend of toughness and grace. For this interview, we talked on four separate occasions, twice in person and twice on the phone. Our first meeting took place the day after the workshop I attended, on a balmy autumn Sunday morning on New York City’s Upper East Side. We’d been trying to find a time and place to meet for more than a year. When I arrived at the apartment where she was staying for the weekend, it took her a while to open the door, because she was unfamiliar with all the locks New Yorkers have. Finally we stood face to face, beaming at each other.

Kullander: Freud called his version of psychoanalysis the “talking cure”: the client talks while the therapist or analyst listens. That has been the prevailing model over the past hundred years or so. But you have always paid attention to the body, both in your practice and in your own psychological development. How did this happen?

Woodman: As a child I was intellectual and lived very much in my head, always aware that my body lagged behind. My father had taught me at home from the age of three, and by the time I went to school I was ahead of the other children my age, so I was pushed up to third grade. I was six years old, and the other kids in my class were eight or nine, so physically I developed a real inferiority complex. I paid little attention to my body and its demands until I got severe sunstroke when I was fifteen. It came on so rapidly that I nearly died. I had no idea what was happening. After that I became more aware of what was going on with my body.

All my life God has spoken to me through illness. My pattern is to go along and have a marvelous time until all of a sudden I’m pulled down by some malady. That’s where the real psychological gravity is for me. Throughout my career I’ve seen people have similar experiences: not paying attention to their bodies and getting sick and sometimes even dying prematurely, or, at the very least, not living their lives as fully as they want. I’ve found that talk therapy is not the best way to help these people. In many instances, it is of little help at all. I decided early on that the body must somehow be involved in one’s psychological healing, because the body can hold on to



MARION WOODMAN

memories and images that are otherwise inaccessible. You can’t get to them simply by talking about them.

Now I bring groups of women together to work with dream images and the body, and we help each other. For example, say a woman dreams that her mouth is encased in a silver cage. *Where does that come from?* we’ll ask. Maybe she had parents who scolded her for saying things that “good girls” aren’t supposed to say. Or maybe she had to please someone all her life at the expense of her own growth and development. Or maybe she had a traumatic experience. But we don’t just talk about these possibilities; we guide this woman through a series of body-work exercises that help her dismantle that silver cage. We might begin with movements that open her mouth — liter-

ally — and then go on to exercises that focus on the whole body, from the toes to the top of the head, opening the body up and allowing it the full range of natural movement, so that it’s not restricted by fear or overwork or anything else. Then we act out dream images through movement. After a while the cage turns into thin silver wires, and then the silver wires disappear, too.

Kullander: You’ve also said that physical and spiritual awakening go hand in hand. How so?

Woodman: Some people come to God through the body, and I’m one of them. Jung’s typology lists two pairs of functions: thinking-feeling and sensation-intuition. My primary function is intuition. I see and feel the world intuitively and respond from a very intuitive place. For Jung the opposite of intuition is sensation. Because intuition is my strongest function, sensation is my weakest. The mystery of God comes to us through our least-developed function. So for me sensation can seem like a miracle, because it’s totally new.

As I said, God has always spoken to me through illness. After the shock and pain of a prolonged illness, there comes surprise and joy. I may see something as simple as a red tulip, and that tulip holds all I need to know about the mystery of God.

Kullander: Most of us have a hard time maintaining those moments of clarity.

Woodman: I sometimes fall back into the old ruts, too, and then into the old sicknesses. If I stay in touch with my dreams, however, they continue to push me forward, always moving me into the future. I find that exciting, so I try not to neglect my dreams. Sometimes I do, of course, because I get too busy. That’s a terrible failing, because dreams need to be honored.

Kullander: Most dreams seem ephemeral and nonsensical, and people hardly even remember them. How can we derive important information on how to live from such flimsy sources?

Woodman: A dream is like a deer at the edge of the forest:

In intimate relationships — especially ones that last — we are both attracted and repelled at the same time. We feel imprisoned in a way, and yet unable or unwilling to break free.

If it's welcomed, it will come out. If you feed it, it will develop a relationship with you. But if you don't care about it, it will disappear.

If you really believe in the importance of dreams, you begin to see patterns in them and realize that your unconscious is carrying images that are meaningful to you. If your unconscious is at war with your conscious self, the only way to end the fighting is to examine your dreams. They will tell you what you need to know. If you dream of a ringing bell, or someone banging on a door, or lightning hitting you as you cross a street, you need to pay attention. Any little sign can indicate real trouble that needs to be addressed.

Kullander: A former Jungian professor of mine told a story about a man who had a recurring dream about driving past a gigantic pumpkin on the side of the road. It turned out the man had a large tumor growing inside him. We all have strange dreams like this. How do we not get paranoid about what our dreams might be telling us?

Woodman: If I had a dream that I thought was telling me something horrific, I would immediately have it checked out — that's how I found out about my uterine cancer. But dreams can also bring healing. The night before I went into my first operation for cancer, I had a dream of a small boat with no motor drifting into a channel at dawn, and there were two figures on the boat. One was a spunky five-year-old girl. The other was a gypsy, tall and stately and powerful. And they were bringing me two pearls, which for me are symbols of the feminine. I was fighting hard for my life then, and I said to myself, "If I can bring that gypsy and that little girl into my body, I know I'll live." And here I am.

Kullander: What do you mean by "bring" them in?

Woodman: Feeling their energy. Instead of looking at my hands, for example, which were full of dying energy — they looked like the hands of a corpse — and letting that energy pull me down, I brought in all that gypsy energy and remembered what it's like to be on the dance floor moving to a rhythm, to be defiant of society and of anything that had held me down all my life. The five-year-old has that same kind of energy, because she does not know yet what it's like to be slapped down, has not yet learned to try to please other people. That's the

energy I tried to bring in.

I worked for about two months on it, dancing an hour a day. At one point I was getting pretty discouraged. When I wasn't actually listening to music, I couldn't maintain that gypsy energy and would fall back into the dying energy I saw in my hand. Then I walked into a party one night, and there was a polka band playing, and my body leapt into it, no questions asked. I was a gypsy on that dance floor. And I knew then I was going to pull out of the cancer. Psychologically, if you accept that you're doomed, you are.

I believe my unconscious knows what I need more than anyone else does. If you allow a dream image into your life when you are sick or having psychological difficulties, it can pull you in a helpful direction. The dream image comes to life through the body. It may be born in the unconscious, but its healing work needs to be embodied through movement and dance.

Kullander: Two people close to me have died of cancer. They sometimes thought they'd brought it on themselves because they hadn't led the lives they were supposed to lead, or because they weren't paying enough attention to their bodies.

Woodman: When you're ill is the wrong time to berate yourself. Should you blame yourself for what you may have done unconsciously? If the disease is coming from your unconscious, can you be responsible for it? When Jesus is up on the cross looking down at his executioners, he asks God to forgive them because "they know not what they do." He's saying that what they are doing is an unconscious act, and so God should forgive them. Forgiveness heals.

I think, in the case of cancer, we need to forgive ourselves. This won't necessarily cure us, but it will give us a sense of peace and purpose beyond what the ego wants or thinks it wants, which is to live. The life and death of each of us is so much bigger than what the ego wants.

Kullander: How has your brush with death changed the way you live?

Woodman: I gave up my office in Toronto and no longer have a private practice. I take more time to be with my friends, to be with my husband, to be in nature. I never really saw flowers in the spring until I saw them after having had cancer. Facing death made me let go of trying to control anything. It's the greatest relief you can imagine. Life is different now because I am not attached to outcomes. While I was sick with cancer, I prayed and prayed not to die. But then one day as I prayed, the words came out: "Thy will be done." And that's how I try to live now.

In Christ's Passion he prays to God that he will not have to drink from the cup, but then, after the disciples are asleep and he's finally alone, he says, "Thy will be done." This is a move from ego to soul. The ego is forgotten. You give your life over to soul — to God — and what the ego wants is no longer valid.

Kullander: How do you define "soul"?

Woodman: For me soul is the eternal essence that lives in a temporal body while we are on the earth. Soul is visited periodically by a fiery spirit who drops his golden sperm into

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her shimmering egg, and new life is conceived. Those points of union, out of which Jung believes the self is born, become our destiny line.

Kullander: Much of your work focuses on the importance of intimate relationships as a means of personal growth and spiritual development.

Woodman: Our intimate relationships, too, reveal our destiny line. Personal growth and spiritual development are based on honesty and integrity, and it's only in intimate relationships that real honesty and integrity surface. Life with an intimate partner is no bowl of cherries, and you've got to be strictly honest with each other and recognize your unconscious projections onto each other and deal with them. If you don't, you drift apart.

Kullander: What sort of "unconscious projections"?

Woodman: Say, for example, something about the other person really annoys you. That annoying quality likely also exists in you, but you don't know it, so you attack the other person for it. The quality that you hate in the other person is also something that you hate about yourself. That's a negative projection. A positive projection can be something you admire in another person but unconsciously devalue in your own life. There are even qualities in others that we hate and admire at the same time. Whenever we refuse to accept something as a part of us, we project that something onto others. A projection is like an arrow that flies out of your unconscious and finds its mark in someone out there.

In an intimate relationship, we are attracted by the positive projections and repelled by the negative. Neither set of images, however, is grounded in what's really going on, because neither acknowledges or accepts the other person as he or she really is. In intimate relationships — especially ones that last — we are both attracted and repelled at the same time. We feel imprisoned in a way, and yet unable or unwilling to break free.



RYAN ANDERSON

These sorts of projections usually have to do with our mother and father, because most of us end up coupling with or marrying people like our parents.

Kullander: Why is that?

Woodman: Because that's our experience of family. It's familiar to us, and we gravitate toward the familiar. We are bonded to our mother and father, whether through love or hate, and unconsciously seek out what we grew up with, because that is the reality we know and understand, whether we liked it or not. We often find ourselves living lives we swore we would never live.

Kullander: If both partners hated their parents growing up, I imagine it might cause some major problems in the relationship.

Woodman: Unless those two people become involved with each other at a deep level, that relationship will not survive. If both partners want to stay together, they will have to go through this process of withdrawing their projections and



CARLOS GUSTAVO

growing into a mature love: no more daddy and mommy in the relationship. Each person will have his or her own reality, and reality is sometimes not all that exciting. But if you are able to accept the reality and the beauty of this other human being, then you've got a real marriage.

Kullander: By "beauty" you mean something other than physical beauty.

Woodman: Yes, real beauty is in the compassion you feel for this fellow soul doing the best it can in a human life. When you're living honestly and maturely with someone you love, there are moments in which God quietly enters. When that happens, the integrity of that relationship can never be undermined.

Kullander: Are there relationships that simply cannot work because the partners can't get past the projections?

Woodman: I think there are. The projections you make onto your partner carry archetypal, divine energy. That's why falling in love is such a heavenly experience. It's not only her

own father that a woman is projecting onto a man; it's God the Father. And the man is projecting the Goddess onto the woman. But the body is not fooled. Sooner or later, the relationship starts to feel incestuous, and it demands that the two partners grow up.

When we recognize our projections for what they are, we see how we are giving away our energy to other people. But that energy is also the source of the romantic bond, so there is a terrible aloneness when a projection collapses. A person who doesn't want to know him- or herself isn't going to go through the agony of withdrawing his or her projections. In some cases the projections are simply too loaded to unpack. In other cases the partners don't want to do the work. So the relationship fails. But they're both going to find themselves in the same situation again with different partners.

When we stick with someone, we know there's going to be fighting; there are going to be situations that will require immense patience; and there are going to be huge disappointments. But individuation — finding one's true self — cannot occur without relationship. Jung pointed out that our projections are like treasures that we believe other people have and that we want badly for ourselves. Withdrawing our projections lets us claim those treasures. But you will never come into possession of them, Jung said, if you keep running around like a wild dog.

The most difficult task each of us faces is the smashing of our infantile projections. Real sexuality is an expression of mature love; it separates the strong masculine and strong feminine from the child's love for a parent. As I said, most of us couple with or marry someone who reminds us of our mother or father. The real trouble begins when we realize we have re-created, at least in part, our parents' marriages. That's also where the real work starts, and the real love.

Kullander: In *Bone* you write: "The marriage we have is not the marriage we committed to thirty-five years ago." People change, and marriages change. What happens when you realize your spouse is no longer the person you thought you married — especially if you don't like this new person he or she has turned out to be?

Woodman: I really believe in destiny. If you've married your destiny partner, you'll know that you should keep working at the relationship. It may be a painful choice, but you'll know this relationship is the right one. You'll choose to work it out, even if you have to separate. A lot of couples I know who can't live with one another are getting separate apartments and dating each other. Sometimes, after two or three years of painful, honest work, they get back together again.

Kullander: It sounds like a couple of boxers retreating into their corners to cool down before going back into the ring.

Woodman: That's right, but you have to box with love. There comes a time when you can recognize your lover both spiritually and physically, and your whole being is brought into that relationship.

Kullander: How do you know if the person you happen to be with is your destiny partner?

Woodman: This person hooks you in your unconscious, and

gradually you realize that the ego can't challenge the strength of the energy that's keeping you together. It's soul energy, and the soul is eternal. It existed before this body, and it will exist after this body is gone. It knows what we can accomplish in this life. What the ego wants is tiny compared to what the soul wants, and there comes a point when we recognize this, and we surrender to soul, to God.

Jung writes about the unconscious containing a natural gradient toward wholeness. The unconscious puts stumbling blocks in our way so that we will grow and become whole. This turns the standard image of romantic love on its head. We eventually arrive at an edge where everything we know and trust about our partner is smashed, and we have to decide whether to stay or leave. With our destiny partner, we find that it's more painful to leave than to stay. The hook remains in, and it pulls us deeper and deeper into the relationship, where we get into bigger and bigger issues, but we stay because we know that we've chosen the right person with whom to do this work.

Kullander: In *The Maiden King* (Henry Holt and Company), which you coauthored with Robert Bly, you describe seeing your husband of many years in a new light: "He was standing in the kitchen. He was a man garbed in an old Black Watch plaid housecoat with two spindly legs sticking out below. He was attempting to crack an egg into a flimsy poacher. *I could have done much better than this*, I thought, *much better than this.*" I had to laugh when I read that. It was so candid.

Woodman: In that moment I was really choosing whether to go on with the marriage or not. I didn't know what was going to happen. What happened is that he put his hand on a loaf of bread, and there was something exquisite about that hand. Compassion came in, and there was no projection. I saw the hand that had made love to me, the hand that had planted tulips with me, the hand that had been my partner for twenty years of my life, and I thought: *This is the man I love. And this is the person I want to work it out with. This is the person who's got the guts to fight it through and find out what a relationship really is.* The compassion I felt for him in that moment — and the compassion I felt for myself — was profound. From that point on, there was no question about our staying together.

Kullander: It must have been a big relief. People can spend years floating in limbo: *do I stay, or do I go?*

Woodman: That's true. I'm not saying everything was peaches and cream afterward. But when we come to difficulties, we both work hard to solve them.

Kullander: What about the monastic tradition, in which men and women intentionally choose to live without intimate relationships? Does that path hold some validity?

Woodman: I think that all of us, on one level, are living in a monastery, especially when we are trying to become a part of a mature relationship in which both partners develop their femininity and their masculinity. In medieval times the monastics were attempting to develop that mature femininity and masculinity by themselves. Like them, we are essentially alone in our inner life.

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worth the effort. It's such a relief when we stop projecting the gods and goddesses onto other people, making them objects of worship. At last the woman is not going to be disappointed in the man for not being a god, and the man is not going to be disappointed in the woman for not being a goddess. At this point, each partner finds his or her own inner creativity. Whoever you were born to be creatively, whether it's a writer or a musician or something else, you become that person.

Kullander: What if you don't have any creative ability?

Woodman: I've never known such a person. You don't have to paint or write or make music to be creative. You can cook, garden, build. Even living life in a conscious way is creative. In fact, it's the biggest creative act of all.

Kullander: Have you ever had someone say to you, "I don't know what love is anymore"? If so, what do you tell that person?

Woodman: In cases like that, I tell people to come to one of my workshops, so instead of trying to force love, they can relax their body and see what comes from inside. Then, after a while, the tears start to flow, because they begin to feel loved by the other people in the workshop. Once they believe somebody can love them *as they are*, they gradually learn to love themselves. There's no more performance, no more pretending. They don't feel as if they have to please somebody. They begin to experience this beautiful soul who was born in their body.

You have to be loved by others before you can love yourself for who you are or have any idea what love is. It can be by your parents, by your spouse, or by friends. Once you sense that you are worth cherishing, you relax into finding the strong parts in yourself. There may be a lot of anger there, too, but if someone can go on loving you even when you're smashing the floor with rage, then you know that person is with you, and you are worth something.

Kullander: Why do we sometimes have a hard time acknowledging our own worth?

Woodman: Although most people are determined to have others recognize their worthiness, it's still very difficult

for them to recognize it themselves. They think their job is to please somebody else, to find out what the other person wants and grudgingly give it to them. They may wake up when they turn forty and realize they have not lived their own lives.

Kullander: In your books you say this is a big problem with women, but I think it's just as big a problem with men.

Woodman: I agree it's a problem for men, too, but I also think that, in most cultures in the world, girls are taught to derive their personhood from pleasing others — men, in particular. It starts to happen to girls at about twelve to thirteen years old: they want to be somebody in the eyes of a man, like the character of Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, who was nobody if she was not being “loved” by a man.

Kullander: But I can tell you from experience that men are often trying to please and be loved by women as well.

Woodman: It happens to all of us, I agree. Imagine what hell it is to have a marriage between a man and woman who are always trying to please one another.

Kullander: A fundamental tenet of Jungian psychology — and one that you write about at length — is that each gender contains the psychic components of the other: men have feminine characteristics within them, and women have masculine characteristics. Do we each have them in equal measure?

Woodman: First of all, when I use the terms “masculine” and “feminine,” I am not referring to any biologically or culturally defined gender roles. Rather they represent two types of energy. Masculine energy is goal oriented and disciplined, but it is not rigid. Paradoxically, the stronger it becomes, the more flexible it becomes. It is not interested in having power over anything and is not bound to tradition. It seeks new ways of thinking and being and doing. Feminine energy is receptive and accepting. It's primordial and rooted in nature. It's gestative. It loves life and is always on the side of life. Its focus is on the collective good.

If you are biologically female, your ego is feminine. If you are biologically male, your ego is masculine. But the female has masculine energy within her, which Jung called the “animus,” and the male has feminine energy within him, which Jung called the “anima.” Ideally, masculine and feminine energy do not conflict with but rather complement and complete one another. The Chinese yin-yang symbol represents feminine and masculine energy joined together this way.

We all have the potential to realize both the masculine and the feminine within us, but some of us, male and female, have to work harder than others. And we're not always aligned with our physical gender. Characteristics of the feminine are as foreign to some women as they are to most men, and real masculinity is as foreign to some men as it is to most women. Some men more naturally relate to feminine energy. Many women are the boss in their marriage and rule by masculine force.

Kullander: Why don't we all pay more attention to the voices of the opposite gender within us, if they provide such good medicine?

Woodman: Because we don't believe in them. Even when we do, it's very difficult to bring them into consciousness. A

woman who is trying to discover real femininity and grow out of her matriarchal power complex feels as if everything is going to fall apart. She feels disemboweled, like a rag doll about to fall down. She thinks she has no power. I'm sure a lot of men feel that way, too, when they make an attempt to discover genuine masculinity. It's as if the masculine and the feminine within us are fighting each other all the time instead of trying to balance and complement each other. This is a problem at a cultural level, too. We don't understand the masculine-feminine dynamics, and we're all suffering on account of it.

Kullander: You've said that the masculine and feminine are good, but patriarchy and matriarchy are bad. How do you define patriarchy and matriarchy?

Woodman: Patriarchy is focused on rigid, conservative power — over one's own body, over others, over nature, over the world. It accepts a very narrow definition of law and order and is bent on keeping it at any price. It is a destructive force often fueled by revenge and retaliation, rather than reconciliation and respect. Matriarchy is like patriarchy, only more subtle and sinister. Its power undermines and sabotages. It destroys by subterfuge, often with a sickly sweet smile.

Kullander: What does feminine energy do for men that's beneficial?

Woodman: It brings them into relationship. It teaches them to honor the values of the body, the beauty of sexuality in a relationship. It's the energy that emanates from the unconscious and fills a room without words. It's life.

When both spouses are trying to develop their feminine and masculine energies, a marriage comes into balance. That's what sexuality is all about. In the Chinese yin-yang symbol, the yin has yang in it, and the yang has yin in it. We must continually find that balance and support the strengths and weaknesses of the other.

The world we're brought up in, though, is ruled by power and judgment. We expect to be judged, not loved. In most marriages there's plenty of judging going on. But sooner or later it doesn't work, and somebody has to stop and say, “Where has our love gone?”

Kullander: In *The Pregnant Virgin* you write that the relationship between analyst and client is often a microcosm of what is happening in the culture. What do you see happening right now in analysis, and in the world?

Woodman: Chaos. The fear of real loving, of giving up power. The fear of trust. Our dreams are a reflection of all this. The collective unconscious — that part of the unconscious mind that is shared by all of us — is in chaos, and it's coming through in our dreams.

Kullander: You've spoken about a new consciousness emerging. Is this related to the chaos you're talking about?

Woodman: Yes, the new consciousness is emerging in a fiery birth, which explains all this chaos within and without. All the selfishness and judgment, the religious posturing that says, “Anyone who doesn't believe exactly the way I do and have the same God that I do is inferior to me” — all of that is dying a violent death. We are being driven by the earth itself to begin functioning with a world consciousness rather than



a national consciousness. We need to consider all the different nations and peoples and animals and plants as one unit, because that's what we are, and our survival depends on our recognizing this. Global warming, for example, is everybody's responsibility. It requires a global solution.

This is where the feminine has to be recognized. Mother Earth needs to be cared for and protected just as our own bodies need care and protection. But, as I said, it's a fiery birth, and things are likely to get worse before they get better. The dominant, destructive patriarchal and matriarchal forces in the world are not going to give up easily.

Kullander: How can each of us aid in the emergence of that new consciousness?

Woodman: By respecting the feminine. People think of the feminine as sweet or sentimental, but I'm talking about something with real guts that lets you stand up to another person and say, "This is who I am, and this is what I believe." It's coming from love, not power. If you can respect the feminine, you can respect another religion; you can respect another gender; you can respect reality, whatever it may be. And when you've reached this level of respect, you don't want to destroy anyone or anything, because you can see how the destruc-

tion of someone or something else is, in fact, a form of self-destruction.

Kullander: It seems that the more we accept and love ourselves, the more we can accept and love other people.

Woodman: That's true. And there are ways of working on that. If there's somebody you can't stand, you can ask yourself, "Why do I dislike this person so much?" Often it's that shadow figure within us — that negative projection we talked about earlier — that we can't stand, and that makes us want to take up a gun and shoot that person.

I'm working on a new book about what I call the "death mother," which is the archetype that is now at the center of our world. It's a terrible thing to say, but I think it's true. When we become possessed by the death-mother archetype, we feel an unconscious longing for death. It's different from Jung's "negative mother," which hits us in the mind with criticism and shames us into self-rejection. The death mother hits us in the body. We feel stung, paralyzed. We give up in despair. Our body is turned to stone, and we abandon who we are.

Consequently, people are turning to drugs or alcohol or food to give themselves a sense of being alive, to free themselves from the death mother, but these substances

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are actually killing them. There are signs everywhere of people not wanting to live anymore, not fighting to live.

Kullander: Why is this surfacing now?

Woodman: In our present culture, there's very little soul. And if that goes on long enough, despair creeps in. If we are to survive as a species, we need to meet this despair and rise above it and embrace the divine-feminine archetype.

Kullander: How is the "giving-up" feeling of the death mother different from the feeling of surrender when you pray, "Thy will be done"?

Woodman: Giving up your life to an addiction is an unconscious act. Surrendering to God, moving from ego desire to soul desire, is a conscious choice, the biggest choice we'll make in our lives.

Kullander: I've experienced that giving-up feeling sometimes, that death wish. At one level it's despair, but on another level I sometimes feel that I consciously want to leave this life. I think, *I've lived long enough, and things are only going to get more difficult from here, with the aging body and friends and family members getting sick and dying.*

Woodman: They're both the same voice: the voice of the death mother. I'm running into this everywhere I go: a loss of hope among people of all ages. In his book *Four Quartets* T.S. Eliot writes that faith and love and hope are all in the waiting. But we don't know what to hope for, because we don't know what to love; we don't know what to have faith in, because we don't know what to wait for. And we don't know how to hold silence.

We can come to a place, however, where everything within us says, "Yes." And that's where we all want to be. We can even sometimes get there through an addiction, because if you take an addiction far enough, there is a euphoric sense of letting go that feels like an experience of God. Many people tell me they are finding God by taking their addiction as far as they can take it — in essence, blasting into another reality.

Kullander: But aren't drugs or alcohol or food a shortcut

around all the deep psychological work that is otherwise required to have such an experience?

Woodman: Sure, and it's a dangerous shortcut, because if you don't quit an addiction it can eventually kill you.

Kullander: That reminds me of a new trend among teenagers of strangling oneself to the point of passing out. Some of them are dying.

Woodman: It's the death mother again. The goal of that suffocation game is to come as close as you can to dying without actually dying, because it creates a feeling of rapturous abandonment. That's where God comes in.

Jung believed that religion is a natural human instinct, that it's essential for us to have an experience of God, and if the only way we know how to find it is to strangle ourselves, which can become an addiction, then that's what we will do. When we turn to addictions to have spiritual experiences, the addiction becomes our god. This is far beyond the usual way people think about addictions.

But there's a way out, and that is through metaphor. Metaphor is the soul's language; it's what connects us to the divine within. Metaphor means a passing over from one level to another, from the physical to the spiritual. All language is metaphorical. It is the literal language of the soul. Language is a transformation of the body, what Jung calls the "subtle body." We are linguistically in the subtle body from the moment we utter our first words. Sound, if you like, is a transformation of breath. The word is the breath of God. We have forgotten the metaphorical language, or we don't understand it, and as a result, we've forgotten how to be human.

Kullander: How do we reconnect to the soul's language?

Woodman: Dreams can help. They can make it possible for us to see what our future, and the future of the earth, could be. They can show us a way through, and if we find that path, then we will find the strength to go on. Listening to music, reading literature, and attending plays can also help. Nature speaks in metaphor to those who can hear it. A child's smile or the touch of a hand can be metaphor, if we begin to think metaphorically. Metaphor is what separates human beings from the animals. It opens our senses and our minds to a divine dimension.

Kullander: But instead of metaphor, people are turning to addictions.

Woodman: If your suffering reaches a certain point, there's a feeling of ecstasy you get from it. It takes you through to the point where the pain is so exquisite, you don't know whether you're going to live or die. And it seems that's where drug addicts want to be.

It's tragic. So many people feel bored and numb. They're trying to feel something, to reach the divine within, but they need to do it consciously. We need to wake up and choose love and compassion, not death and destruction. Love and death have a lot in common, but the difference is that love demands full consciousness and individual responsibility. Love wants to live. If we risked a little introspection, we'd see that death, despair, and destruction are the easy way out. But to love — now, that takes real stamina, real courage. ■