



* Stories of Knowing Otherwise *

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Re-Birthing the Body of Love: Re-Membering Aphrodites

Again in the beginning, She is born of sky in waters. She of the many names; Mylita and Mitra and Argimpass in the East where She emerged from an egg of wondrous size dropped from the sky into River Euphrates, rolled ashore by Fishes, hatched by attending doves.

But to us She is ever born of the Sky Father's Desire, Lusty Ouranos, All-encompassing Heaven, who smothers his mother/lover Gaia with his obsession. Grasping at Her constantly and loathing their hundred-armed and other children so that He shoves them back into Her curving belly, pressing upon it with His suffocating weight, endlessly thrusting, grasping and pushing.

She revolts under these selfish oppressions, the first wicked acts. Gasping for breath and space for Her children to live, She calls them to Her defense. None but Kronos will connive with her for freedom, for a place in the light. So She digs into Herself to scrape the hard adamant from Her bones to arm Him, Kronos, the first revolting son, with a great curving sickle of iron blades . By his mother's bidding, Kronos hides in Her folds, waiting in Her darkness for Great Heaven's smothering thrusts that seek to fill all space around Gaia and even inside Her with Himself.

Trembling Ouranos presses His endless being again, rushing upon and into Gaia. Kronos rises up, reaching to grasp in His left hand the dark, swollen forms of His fathers lust, swinging with His right the sickle, deflecting in one hooked stroke the un-measurable lust of his father's desire to possess and, in the same motion, tossing this harvest behind him, away from His mother's oppressed body, as far as he can cast the swelling into the wine-dark sea. Even so, fast as he acts, blood from the severed genitals flow into Gaia, still hot with desire, seeding the Erynes, the Giants and the Ash tree nymphs in her helplessly fertile soil.

Ouranos, parted from His obsession retreats, creating distance and emptiness

for the first time, leaving space around Gaia for her children to disperse into the light, to create and contend with each other. Kronos now can mate His sister, bear His children and devour them in fear of their revolt.

Zeus, in his turn can battle His father's oppressions and beget the new order of gods to govern from Olympus, where one no longer outweighs all others. And in this long, perhaps immeasurable while this, the immortal seed-flesh of Great Heaven floats, foaming itself, in the water womb, pulsing yet, pulled in the wake of the playful dolphin, King of the Fishes, fish with a womb that nurses its children on milk in the seas, that leads the way down. Deep Ouranos' lost lust is drawn, where now, free of the grasping body of Heaven, the god-phallus delves not the earth form of Gaia but ripples in the currents of the water world, the salty, formless dark.

As Zeus shakes the earth with his thunder bolts battling the Titans a new form constellates. The appetite of Heaven turns in on itself, becoming She of The Waters, foaming essences of Her father's obsessive desire suckled in the kettis shell, the pink cockle flesh that becomes her first lover, Nerites. At play with all the sleek creatures of the wet world, delirious and thoughtless joy make and keep Her. In a timeless time every pleasure is the first, again and impossibly again She feels the waves pass through Her eternal depths. Yet as Her form ripens earth and fire feel and seek Her. The space between Heaven and Gaia and the gaping wounds left by the battling of the gods call for Her.

Rising toward this longing, riding her cockle, new-made in the body's salty perfections, She who blesses our voyages in all seas blows on Zhepheros' sweet western breath to shore for the first time at fair Cyprus' pink and blue cliffs. And they are there, those who are her beauty's compliments, who are ever waiting on her arrivals: Himeros, Desire for Love, and winged, elemental Eros, Love of Creation, born of Chaos (he who will again and again become her petulant son, so powerful is her radiance, so undimmed the moon's silver glow in her shamelessly un-veiled breasts, so golden her pleasure in herself, her untarnishable flesh, so irresistible her attraction even for gods.)

Aphrodite, Divine Pleasure, born in sea foam, gestated in the wet world, Philomedes, Lover of Genitals, of genitals reborn, drives unfaltering before an April breeze -- for April is her feel in every month. She rides the waters straight ashore where the now endless foam of Ouranos swells continually into the pink pebbled land. Straight on She comes into the embraces of the Houri, the Seasons themselves, daughters of Themis, Goddess of Law and Order of the sexes, billowing into the garments and mirroring gold ornaments made by the Muses and the three Graces (Brightness, Gladness and Abundance). They who dance with Her clothe Her, the holy body of love, She of Persuasion, Aphrodite Epistrophia, She Who Turns Our Hearts.

Tender grass grows up around her every foot print. The quince tree burst it tight, sticky buds into the shimmering bittersweet fruits so like girls' breasts. Aphrodite Antheia, She of the Flowers is bathed in their fragrance, most pleasing to gods who eat no human food, but revel in the essence of smells. And the blossom of

love, newly made in her emergence, the blush of her cheeks, the Rose is born again and again as She draws the heat out of earth and sky, weaving itself into her famous girdle with its attractions of all colors, perfuming her moistness with nectarous petaled lips.

Arrayed as no other ever, always, She mounts her carriage, drawn by Eros and Psyche -- Creative Desire and Soul. Amid doves cooing their courtships, escorted by her counterpart in wily communication, Winged Hermes (God of diplomacy and liars), She rises to Olympus. Even here they are singing Her praises, bending immortal knees beneath the weighing of immortal longings for Her, this new constellation, every god longing to become her lawful groom. Taking her fated place, She balances the Heavenly Six, Zeus the Thunder, dispenser of justice, Poseidon the Earthshaker and Hades, Lord of the Underworld, Hera, Queen of Queens, Demeter, Goddess of the Plants. Now Aphrodite Mandrake, She of the Love Drink, Harma, who contrives, Urania, Uniter of Heaven and Earth, blender the of body and soul with her delight in pleasure and beauties, now She takes her place as one of Them.

Born of irresistible lust cut off, sent to cure in deep waters, She returns to constellate irresistible attraction and pleasure, joining the lost and the longing, drawing together, softening the hard, humbling the proud, bringing the pleasures of beauty, joys of flesh to the unions of the parted and partial so that their fruits will be beautiful and beloved. She makes possible new life from equal attractions, in pleasure and laughter and sweetness, in child and grandparents. The era of monstrous births is ended. In her place, both Heavenly and Earthly, among gods, humans, animals and plants She brings desire to fruition. Only three hearts can She not move to love. The virgins Athena, Artemis and Hestia who have and hold their powers in and of themselves alone.

But who is to be husband to such beauty that all desire? Zeus decrees the great master of craft, creator of beautiful objects, he who makes golden female robots that serve in his workshop, and the weapons of war -- but who cannot make an Aphrodite. It is lame, unromantic Hephaestus who becomes her husband. He who can only please her with the beauty of his craft, his only children. Yet the Goddess of Love is the maker of all unions, of marriages **and** pleasures. Her beauty appeals to, enlivens all. Attraction is her nature so She must be lover to all kinds. And what comes of her flowing into other Gods?

With bloody Aries, in whose shield She gazes upon her reflection, She births Harmony, her love inspiring image, then Fear and Panic who flank their father Aries on fields of carnage. This most famous of her loves all-seeing Helios exposes as he shines down upon the lovers in Hephaestus' bed. The Craftsman makes a trap of invisible netting and catches the naked immortal Love enveloping becalmed War. All the gods and goddess are invited in to see and laugh.

As so often, the humor of Hermes breaks the impasse when He volunteers to take Aries' place and be forever caught entangled with in She of the Beautiful Buttocks. Aphrodite flies away from this humiliation to her sacred Cyprus, there to

bath in the spring that ever renews her virginity, her knowing the purity of her own radiance, the deepest beauty, the sacred soul in every body. No lover, god nor man can quench the purity of beauty welling up from deepest from the depth she has known. Girls and women bathe in Her honor on April first to feel the waters renew the secret in their bodied souls as well.

It is in mingling with her counterpart in illusion, Hermes, that Aphrodite brings forth the one who is both sexes in one being, Hermaphorditos, the union that knows itself as each other. In the wine-flow and dangerous desires of Dionysus She engenders bold Priapus, whom She disowns for his misshapen form, but cannot escape. Priapus, echo of his grandfather heaven, all cock, yet small of body, a godling of gardens, so grandly equipped for the Cyprian act, and like His mother, disregarded only at a painful price.

But of them all, the gentle, adorable Adonis most makes her swoon as She causes all others to do. Adonis, born of a daughter's lust for her father, delivered from her flesh that has been turned into the sweet-weeping myrrh tree. Adonis, so beautiful even as a child, Aphrodite hides him in a box and gives to Persephone to hid in the underworld. Adonis, over whom Aphrodite Machinitis, She Who Contrives, and Persephone quarrel, who Zeus must divide between them, She of Love, She of Death. Adonis, that full lipped youth always dying young, gashed deep in the groin by the wild boar (who some say is the jealous Aries). For Adonis She felt her own keenest connection. So brief this love, however often repeated, there can be no progeny. From his blood Aphrodite Pariphassa, The Far Shinning, made the delicate anemone to grow to give him eternal life, born to die each year.

Melamis, The Black One, who bends the path of every god and mortal, Anrophona, Killer of Men, who makes some connections by breaking others thus making yet more possible, who is not to be denied and will not suffer insult, who, each time Glaucus bars his sleek mares from breeding, turns them on him to devour him alive-unnatural act for unnatural act. Epitymbida is She also, One Who Dances on the Graves, Anosia the Unholy who destroys noble, haughty Hypolotus who refused love and its pleasures. She is the beauty that enlivens, attracts, pleasures with water and fire. Elemon the Merciful, Heitera of holy prostitutes, Pisthyros, She Who Whispers, Parakypitous, The Side Glancer, Nympha of the bridal bed, of gentle doves and randy goats. She of the many names for all her dark and light attractions, Postponer of Old Age.

The other gods and goddesses laughed, and Zeus chided her for venturing onto the field of battle, seeking to save her mortal son by Anchises on the bloody plain of Troy and being ignobly wounded there. Think of that, what goddess is so great she can be wounded?! But they forget whose power it is that turns the heart of Helen to favor Paris, rewarding him for naming her 'most fair,' thus sending all hearts on heaven and earth plunging into war. Poor Paris, who might have had kingship from Hera or fame and heroism in battle from Athena but could not resist having the love of the woman he held most desirable of all. What mere man or

woman could resist Aphrodite Peitho, She of Persuasion, when no god could hope to do so? Aphrodite The Golden, who glows in child and plant and man and woman, whose beauty is radiance, which comes from the watery depths up and out. Such beauty is Hers She cannot resist her own attractions, bringing herself joy or punishing those who resist Her.

Such is our Goddess of Love. Do not be foolish and deny Her. Welcome Her radiance inside you and flowing out of others. Lie in her arms as Aries, as Adonis, as Hephaistos the husband who had to share Her. Feel her move your hand toward the beloved She and Eros reveal to you. Stroke the arrow He darts into your breast. Swim with her. And when She is absent, sink into the waters, feel the dolphin's diving, let the flow bring you back to the deep life where longing becomes beauty and draws again desire to itself even as She dances on your grave.

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With regards to versions of Ahprodite by:

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