

TAKING A MOTHER DREAM APART

I have a journal filled with a night life of dreams. I have not found it troubling to go to sleep and know I will enter an unknown mysterious world for I know I will awaken with my inner eyes suddenly awakened to a new way of perceiving my life. Reading the imagery of dreams is less tiring than trying to sit and think through matters that trouble or confuse me. I just close my eyes and let the inner world appear—a series of kaleidoscopic images flashing on the movie screen of my psyche.

In the summer of 1987, I responded to the appealing announcement of a Dream Workshop being held at a Jesuit retreat center in Weston. It would be followed by five more days of silent retreat.

Why did I respond? I loved dreams, and had found them powerful in changing my own experience of the inner and outer world—mystically interlacing them with meaning. Also, I had begun meeting with others individually in the course of my work. I couldn't help but be aware that the powerful tool of the dream evoking imagery that represented inner processes might be part of what we did together.

The idea of spending another five day paying conscious attention to my dreams while on a silent retreat was enticing. It was always natural for me to entertain significant dreams while spending this kind of time apart. And to receive instruction as well—I was eager.

Participants were asked to bring one dream to the workshop, written out. Well, I had a significant one arrive just in time! It was about my aged mother, who had been living with us for a year, and then at 91 had moved to a New Hampshire facility providing care for seniors like herself. It was near an old friend of hers, Mabel—also in her nineties, and she was looking forward to that association; my dream had included her by name!

So we plunged in. Here is the dream and the way we worked on it.

The dream:

I am threading my way through the hilly streets of the city on a hot summer day.

I seem to sometimes be in a car and sometimes on a bicycle.

Mother and Mabel are in the back seat.

I take some side streets to expedite the journey.

As I go down a hill, I sense my passengers are concerned about the brakes, but I am not.

As I turn left and head up a steep hill, the climb is too much (I am now on a bicycle), so I walk it up.

Then I go back down and park the car (it is now a car), back it up, head into the street and stop beside a refrigerator.

Mother and Mabel must crawl from back to front of the refrigerator through the freezing compartment.

I open the refrigerator door.

Mother is too slow in emerging and in my impatience I slam the door shut to show her.

Then I reopen and ask if she needs help, reach out and hold both her arms/shoulders and pull.

She falls out head down and does a hand spring, landing on her feet.

Wonderful!

Taking It Apart:

Threading = feminine activity, and one denoting both intricacy and challenge.

Bicycle imagery = something one maneuvers alone, no passengers. A simple uncomplicated vehicle.

Mother and Mabel are taking a back seat. Both are strong and feisty Enneagram Ones, godly and literal-minded, independent, long-time friends.

*What part of me needs to take a back seat in my relationship to my mother—and to **others**?*

Taking side streets to expedite - "Get it over with?" A tendency of mine?

Ups and downs in first part of dream. I am to stay with the inner process wherever it takes me—and that takes time and going with the stream of events.

Is this inviting me to seeing a transformation in mother image—not just my image of my mother, but more important, the image of the mother in me as I take on this mentoring work I have felt called to?

Refrigerator = has the function of preservation. A massive object, yet simple.

Freezing compartment is a special place within the whole.

The forceful moment when I reach out and start pulling Mother through the refrigerator door—a startling raw image of birthing.

Action of slamming door shut is what enables me to reach out and offer support.

Possible title: "Birthing Mother's Death." Can I "Leave Her to Heaven"? And is this an invitation to individuation for me?

Feeling tone: I am in charge, working hard, busy about a task in which I am being guided by destiny. I am there to be part of something that "has" to happen.

Mother comes out pretty much on her own power with minor assistance from me. When she begins to fall, she is definitely operating on her own power, going into a handspring. Delightful.

Possible takeaway: But perhaps it is the Mother in me that is being birthed. I did slam the door shut on the mother in me, for a long time. But now I am more open to her in me. Can I let her come out—with a handspring!