



# ASTROLOGICAL ANATOMY OF AN ACCIDENT

by Andrea Conlon

**O**n a crisp November day, I was walking on a trail with a friend. Suddenly, two large, powerful dogs crashed into me, upending and flinging me into the air. I landed with full force on my kneecap. While falling, I thought, “This is going to be *really* bad,” and it was!

The pain of the impact was excruciating, and I had to be removed from the trail on a gurney. And so, the ordeal began.

After an initial misdiagnosis in the Emergency Room, the physician later determined that my patella was broken. For the first time in my life, I had broken a bone and now had to cope with almost complete immobility. My injured leg was put in a long cast for weeks. After the cast was removed, I wore a heavy metal brace. At six months and counting, the recovery continues.

In this article, I describe my personal journey with the traumatic injury and how astrology, as a meaning-making tool like no other, helped me work with it and get through it. This is what we do with our clients. At times, we help them bear the unbearable by finding a soul-level orientation in the crisis. With our art, we connect to something larger than the personal self. This is the root of astrology’s healing magic.

## An Accident Waiting to Happen?

I surely don’t know the answer to the above question, but transiting Saturn was in my 12th House and tightly opposed

to my 6th House Sun/Pluto conjunction. “Here it is,” I thought, “disaster has struck.” See chart on following page.

Before the accident, I was dreading the transit. Astrologers do not look forward to this transit. Anticipating a difficult cycle with dread is a real downside of astrology. There is no cure for that, but I think it’s important to acknowledge it.

Transiting Saturn wasn’t the only player. A Sun/Mars conjunction in Scorpio opposed Uranus in Taurus, symbolizing the sudden violence of the accident. Further, both sides of the opposition squared my natal 6th House Pluto, which seems to symbolize the assault on my body. The transiting Moon squaring Pluto represented the emotional pain and violation I experienced.

Finally, note the dramatic stellium in Scorpio falling in my 8th House! This lineup indicates themes of crisis and transformation, which felt like a dark night of the soul.

## A Spiritual Wake-Up Call

I was basically confined to bed for many weeks. I could barely shift position in bed and required crutches to painfully get around. Let’s not even mention navigating the bathroom! I plunged into states of intense suffering, high anxiety, and fear that I would never recover.

But in this dark place, I also felt an opening within. I felt deeply for others who survived severe injuries, many more serious

than mine. In an instant, an accident like this can undo your well-erected defenses against human frailty and the unpredictability of life. While devastating, the breakdown of these defenses also invites you to expand and grow. Saturn in Pisces, transiting through the 12th House, whispered, “Yes, my friend, know this.” It reminded me of the Buddhist tonglen practice, where you learn to open your heart to the suffering of others as a shared experience.

In the thick of my crisis, a dear friend sent this quote from Sat Prem’s book on Sri Aurobindo, which refers to his imprisonment by the British. “We know from time immemorial, from the Eastern, Egyptian or Orphic initiations to the quest for the Holy Grail, the story of ascent has always been attended by ordeals.”<sup>1</sup> My friend said, “I’m holding this possibility in mind for you.” What a penetrating description of a 12th House process!

Astrological tradition teaches that 12th House transits can bring losses and states of ego dissolution that trigger spiritual evolution. As Steven Forrest stated, “Loss is arguably the greatest spiritual lesson we face in life, and it is very commonly part of the Neptunian experience.”<sup>2</sup> In my case, it was part of the *Saturn in Pisces transit through the 12th House*.

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Transiting Saturn's method brought me to a virtual halt. I was compelled to stop, slow down, notice, and absorb both my suffering and the immense everyday suffering all around me. As I limped my way into my hospital appointments, I took in the sick and frail elderly I observed in a new way. My circle of compassion was widened.

### A Flash of Sanity

Early on in pain and immobility, I had a lightning strike of realization that if I ever recovered my ability to walk without pain, I could live my life with ease and gratitude. This would truly be liberation! No sweat, no problem, no constant anxiety about whatever... *I could feel the possibility!* Why had I made living such a problem! The suffering from the injury cut through my anxious neurosis.

### The Places That Have Not Known Love

If ever there was a time to practice self-compassion for my suffering, it was now. Francis Weller stated in his beautiful book about grief, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*, that among the five gates of grief, he identifies the second gate as "the places that have not known love."<sup>3</sup> In those places, you are invited to open to the parts of you that were never loved and the parts that did not know love but shame. In Weller's 30 years

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of offering public grief rituals, he states that this gate is always present for people. In this place, compassion is the medicine you provide to yourself and others and what you receive from others. I found that the empathic and kind words others offered to me were a healing balm.

### Grieving

I've heard that we live in a death-denying culture, but we live in a grief-denying culture as well. Yet grief is our constant companion. "Throughout our life, we are asked to make a companionate relationship with grief."<sup>4</sup> Steven Levine says, "Pain stimulates our grief. It brings to the surface long-suppressed disquietude and

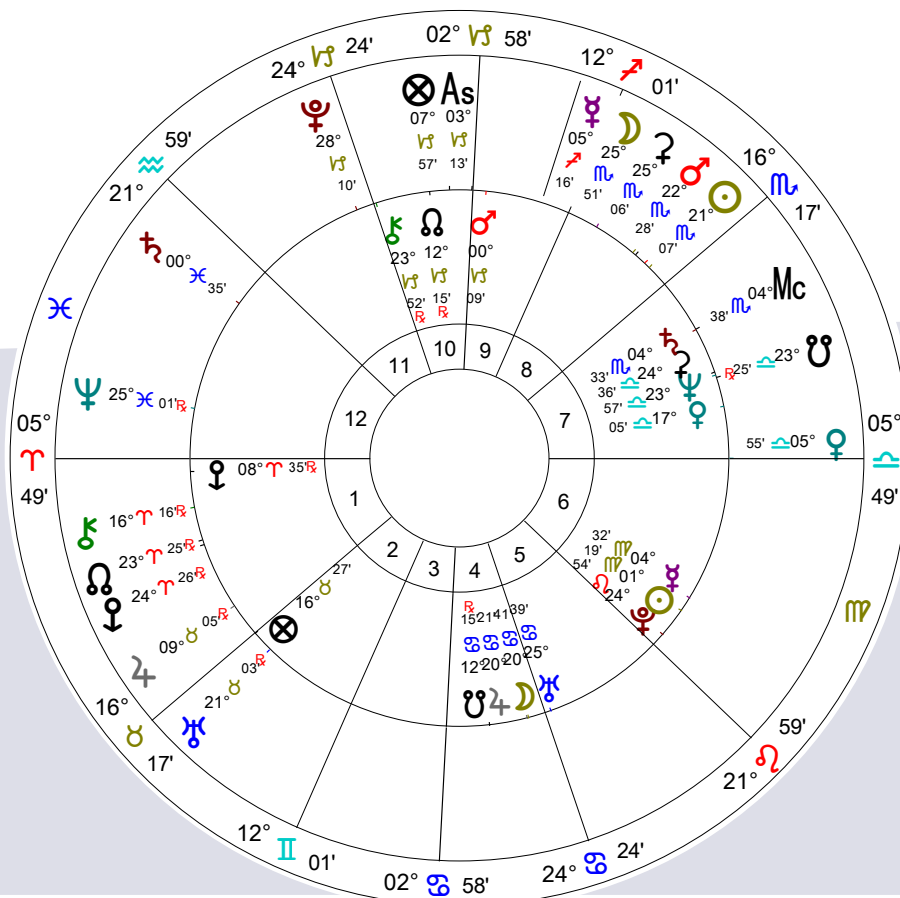
unfinished business. But it is easier said than done to let go of the suffering around pain."<sup>5</sup> These thoughts resonated with my experience. How ironic that I was in the middle of a 5-month Grief Ritual Training course when the accident occurred.

The 12th and 8th Houses, both transpersonal houses, are where you can encounter deep grief. The 12th House and Neptune bring opportunities to encounter impermanence and confront the part of you that clings to your illusory stability and separateness—the ego. It is a crash course in spiritual evolution. The 12th house is a gateway to living beyond the material dimension. Transiting Saturn in Pisces in the 12th was also a challenge to integrate a felt sense of sharing with others and a deeper connection with all of life.

### Spiritual Discipline

With Saturn's passage through my 12th House, I forged a more profound spiritual practice by *necessity* (a good Saturn word). My less rigorous meditation practice became a daily necessity and a lifeline. I found meditation was the best way for me to work with the anxiety and pain that had been my constant companion for many weeks. Following my breath, just here in the present moment, I could soften around my fearful mind.

Inner Wheel  
Andrea Conlon  
Natal Chart  
Aug 24 1954, Tue  
8:34 pm EST +5:00  
Detroit MI, USA  
42°N20' 083°W03'  
Geocentric  
Tropical  
Placidus  
Mean Node



Outer Wheel  
Accident Chart  
Natal Chart  
Nov 13 2023, Mon  
10:50 am PST +8:00  
Port Townsend  
48°N07'02" 122°W45'33"  
Geocentric  
Tropical  
Placidus  
Mean Node

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### Becoming An Individual

Like the message in the ancient solar myth of Marduk, perhaps you cannot become an individual without a battle. “We might say that out of the conflict and suffering which arise from the experience of separation, individual creative potential is generated.”<sup>6</sup>

During my recovery, my sense of self and my body evolved. My archetypal imperative is that of a Virgo 6th House Sun conjunct Pluto in Leo. So, *health* has always been a dominant theme for me. I had to utilize all my accumulated knowledge about how to heal myself.

Saturn's transits to the Sun are challenging, particularly by opposition. Steven Forrest stated that we often hold our clients' hands as they make this passage.<sup>7</sup> When Saturn transits the Sun, you are called into a deep confrontation with yourself. It calls on you to define who you are and your deepest purpose. *What am I here for? What am I meant to be giving?* The Sun force replies, *I am this being and no other!*

As a result of this transit, I have felt a stronger commitment to bring the very best of myself to my astrologically

informed therapy practice. Through an astrological lens, I seek to offer the dignity, affirmation, and guidance powerfully represented in my client's charts.

### A Love Story

At the core of my injury journey is a love story. The accident chart shows Venus in Libra exactly conjunct my 7th House cusp. I believe this to be an important transit in the accident chart and one that you might be tempted to ignore for the obvious harder transits. At the same time, the South Node of the Moon was transiting through Libra and my 7th House, while transiting Chiron opposed my natal Venus. Both these movements add complexity to the relational themes of the time—wounding, healing, and reworking old relational karma.

My daughter showered me with tender support and compassion, even saying, “I wish it was me instead of you because I'm younger and would heal faster.” A friend gave me Reiki treatments for weeks, which deepened our friendship. Several other friends and clients were especially empathetic. Sadly, I suffered some relational losses as well.

But my biggest support was my husband. He dropped everything to take care of me. He told me, “I just want to be close to

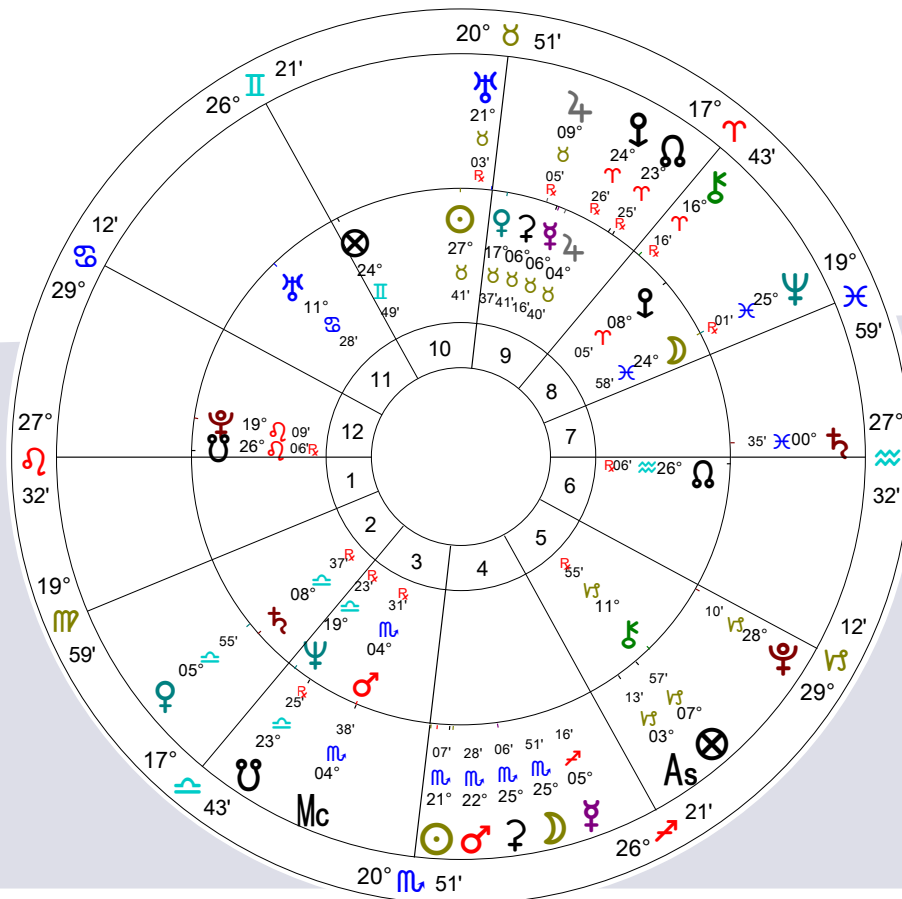
you, and I want to take care of you.” These words melted my heart, cutting through some way I previously held back from him. My emotional armor softened, and we were encapsulated in a heightened intimacy that healed my heart and broken bone.

These defenses are symbolized by my natal 7th House Saturn in Scorpio. It's interesting to note that a strong transit of Saturn reflexes back to the natal Saturn position, so further work on the life theme of trust and intimacy was at hand. The boundaries between us became more fluid, just what my husband's natal 8th House Moon in Pisces desired.

As you can see in my husband's chart (below), transiting Neptune was completing the long conjunction with his natal Moon in

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Inner Wheel  
Tom Clark  
Natal Chart  
May 18 1952, Sun  
11:19 am CST +6:00  
Chicago IL, USA  
41°N52' 087°W39'  
Geocentric  
Tropical  
Placidus  
Mean Node



Outer Wheel  
Accident Chart  
Natal Chart  
Nov 13 2023, Mon  
10:50 am PST +8:00  
Port Townsend  
48°N07'02" 122°W45'33"  
Geocentric  
Tropical  
Placidus  
Mean Node

Pisces. His innately devotional nature was amplified and found expression. I believe the event of my accident was one of the culminating themes of his transit.

Transiting Uranus conjunct with his Midheaven symbolized a sudden change of state for him, visible to the outside world. It certainly changed his life course. He has shared that this time has been a special journey for him.

### Conclusion

"Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing we'll ever do."<sup>8</sup>

Telling my story helps me anchor what I've learned through the accident. Saturn tests and tempers us through adversity. I can feel how Saturn's rough initiation has strengthened me. Although I will likely always struggle with a dissatisfied mind, I found a deeper appreciation for other people and all the good in my life. The accident, with the transit of Saturn in Pisces through my 12th House, set me on the road to greater spiritual maturity.

Six months after the accident, I walk three miles and take yoga classes. I made

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a vow to get stronger than I was before the accident. After all, I can activate the resource of the Sun trine Mars in my birth chart!

Viewing the disastrous event that befell me as a karmic failure is tempting. "Yet failure seems to be a necessary part of Saturnian experience. This is one of the planet's most profound lessons."<sup>9</sup> Perhaps it is better seen as important learning. It was unbelievably difficult, but many aspects of the experience have been infinitely precious.

Astrology is our compass in rough seas, helping us navigate the meaning of

our lives. As Jung said, "Meaning makes a great many things enduring—perhaps everything."<sup>10</sup>

### REFERENCES

1. Sat Prem, *Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness*, p.138.
2. Steven Forrest, *Book of Neptune*, p.325.
3. Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow*, p.30.
4. Francis Weller, (webinar) Grief Ritual Training Course (Sept 2023 – Jan 2024).
5. Steven Levine, *A Year to Live*, p.47.
6. Liz Greene, *Apollo's Chariot*, p.8.
7. Steven Forrest, in a lecture at NORWAC.
8. Brene Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection*, p.25.
9. Liz Greene, *The Art of Stealing Fire*, p.170.
10. CG Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p.330.

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