

## Metaphors/Symbols As Transformers

From Marion Woodman's *Dancing in the Flames: the Dark Goddess and the Transformation of Consciousness* (adapted and abridged by Ariel Spilsbury)

"The images/metaphors we assimilate are as important to our well-being as the food we eat! The images we choose to ingest determine the daily refinement of the subtle body. The subtle body (light body, energy body) is the home of the soul, midway between spirit and body, that is the world of metaphor and dream. Metaphor captures the passion, the movement, the meaning. In one image, it brings together a total response.. emotional, imaginative, intellectual. If we focus the fire of our imagination, our own metaphors begin to heat and transform, opening up new energy channels in our body. *In taking this creative leap, we embody the metaphor. In becoming the metaphor, we become whole.*"

"The power of metaphor was brought home to me in a situation from my own life. In 1968 I was in a car accident that left one side of my head and face badly damaged. A brilliant plastic surgeon pulled my broken bones back into place. Two weeks later I knew I still had an eye. Two years later, I had regained the feeling in my face, but one major symptom remained. Night and day there was a loud ringing in my ears and the sensation of a mosquito continually flying inside my head. I went to specialists all of whom said they could do nothing. I was in therapy at the time, and the more intense it became, the louder the bells rang and the mosquito flew, until I was certain I would go crazy. I had a dream in which someone and I were working on a machine that transforms one kind of energy into another (metaphor means "to cross over" It was a metaphor machine. I became confused because I didn't know how to work the very complicated switches. But the other presence in the dream did. Then a voice said, "How do you feel on the eve of becoming everything you have fought against all your life?"

The ringing was now so loud that I rushed out of bed and landed on the floor of the kitchen before I knew I was awake. I prayed to God to take away the ringing or let me die. Immediately a vision of a mock-orange bush in full bloom appeared in my inner vision with its delicate ivory colored blossoms that scent the month of June. I was so enthralled by the beauty of the bush that I was not at first aware of the scent in my feet. But slowly, slowly the scent rose into my legs and its sweetness moved into every cell of my body until the scent and I were one. *I became the metaphor.* Gradually, unknowingly

I had come to a standing position with my arms raised in victory. When the vision faded, the ringing in my ears had ceased. It has never returned.

I had gone to the kitchen and was fed: my body was ensouled. This, of course, changed my life. The efficient, clock and calendar, always-in-control-woman was no more. I realized my transformation was made possible through concentration on an image, a gift from the unconscious. I realized that the fear and chaos in my rational mind could be stilled by the order of my unconscious. The archetypal image rising out of the depths of my body.. the Dark Goddess permeating the orange blossom bush with Her love .. could bring conscious and unconscious into harmony with each other and with the natural order. Then I could be whole. At the time, I did not care much about what had happened intellectually, psychologically. I only knew that I had been visited by divine light, that I had experience a love I never knew before, a love within matter that shattered the world as I had known it. Reason was silenced. I could only say, "Yes. Thank you!" The image, the orange blossom bush pouring scent into every cell of my body, brought about a harmony that transcended any feeling I have ever experienced. Someone who knew how to "work the switches" created the metaphor of the blossoming bush and transformed the energy of my distraught consciousness into the harmonic energy embodied in the unconscious. The archetype of the Dark Mother, Death, was transformed into the archetype of the loving mother Sophia, She whose light permeates matter. That was the dawn of becoming what I had fought against all my life. The sweetness of my body surrendered to Her love. In being known by Her, I knew myself as part of the One. In *yearning to be perfect, we have mistaken perfection for wholeness*. We think we cannot love ourselves until we and others meet some external standard. Most neurosis and emotional distortions are ultimately a defense against loving ourselves without condition. Surrendering to the wholeness that comes from harmony with the natural order, will make no sense to someone who is wedded to the rational, logical mind. There must be a leap into the Void of Her love." Marion Woodman