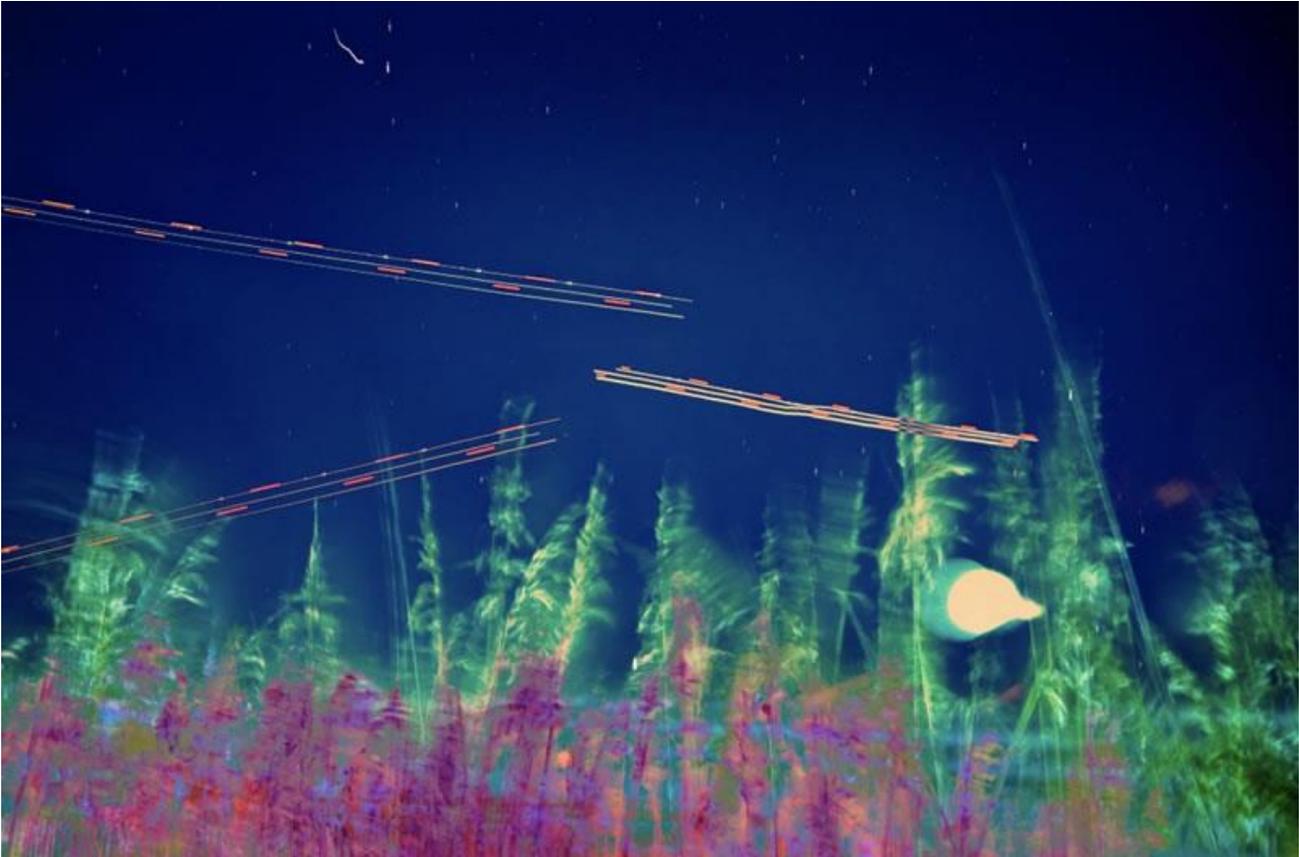


# Sculpting Your Reality



'cosmic ocean in twilight' by Lanvi Nguyen

## **INTELLIGENCE for Virgo by Eric Francis**

*"The poet, the artist, the sleuth — whoever sharpens our perception tends to be antisocial; rarely 'well-adjusted', s/he cannot go along with currents and trends. A strange bond often exists between antisocial types in their power to see environments as they really are."*

*"Art at its most significant is a distant early warning system that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen."*

— Marshall McLuhan

Virgo is famous for its orientation on service. At some point in the 20th century there was a revolt in astrology against typecasting Virgos as secretaries, nurses and teachers. This way, all the Virgo race car drivers, underwater demolition experts and computer engineers could finally feel more at home in their sign.

Yet we might seek a deeper understanding of where your orientation on service comes from. However you may feel about it, and whatever you may do, it's there, and most days, it works for you. The winter solstice 2020 chart is resplendent with this theme, and your ability to offer what you have to the human race (and potentially other critters as well) appears as a reward and an opportunity. Above all else, your opportunity will be to participate in a meaningful way.

The *meaning* element is the one that seems to be lacking from so many lives: the direct experience of relevance, of contributing, of making a difference. The world is so chaotic, there seems to be little way to make contact. There are so many problems that appear to have no solution at all; it's easy to think that one person cannot make a difference. And our lives seem so complex and stressed out, and so lacking in resiliency, that the notion of making changes can feel terrifying.

In describing the destination your astrology is pointing to, I'm not talking about merely "helping people," which is what everyone needs to be doing anyway at this stage of history, however meekly or modestly. The arrival of Jupiter and Saturn in Aquarius and their once-per-generation conjunction on Dec. 21, 2020, places you in the position of leadership around urgently needed projects whose time is coming due. Yet this is a deep personal calling, and if you want to respond, you will need preparation — and that is what you're getting at the moment. It's as if you receive your commission as an officer and are assigned to your new command.

Therefore, it's vital that you think of your life now as preparation for something else. You will need every bit of what you learn, whether in theory or from direct experience; whether you do things that seem to go well or not.

Because you're likely to become responsible for many people other than yourself, you will need to make a careful study of yourself, and of the dynamics of groups — in that order. You won't understand the way that group psychology works, in any meaningful way, until you figure out your place within group and family dynamics.

**One of the most important dynamics to understand is how family structures, and what seem to be the expectations of society, have shaped what you think is possible for you. It is this conditioning that, in order to get where you're going, you must get underneath and unravel, not merely in concept but in practice. You have help. You have many of the necessary skills, and you are gaining more of them with each passing day.**

Most of your preparation is coming in through two sectors of your chart — one related to your creative and self-creative process (the 5th house); and the other related to your orientation on relationships (the 8th house). The current scenario will hold its pattern and indeed intensify, until there is a sudden release point in late 2020 and you are jettisoned into new territory and many new responsibilities.

Movement in Capricorn (your 5th solar or whole sign house) has you excavating your deeper creativity, something that has likely always been a challenge for you.

Movement in your 8th solar house or whole sign house (Aries) describes a sudden change in the way you see (and seek) yourself in your most intimate relationships. There is some overlap; the 5th describes the pleasure and play aspect of relationships, and the 8th describes any collaboration where there is some mutual investment.

The two houses are 90 degrees apart from one another and are mutually activated by many planets in square aspects to one another. This might feel like pressure to express yourself, if you could get at exactly what you want to express. Some days you may have an obsessive urgency to “find yourself,” only to discover that your idea of relationship gets in the way. Other days, you may feel like you’ve got an idea that wants to explode out of you, if only you could get a handle on what it is.

This is all preparation. You will want to make the most of it, though it’s challenging; it is difficult; there are times when you may really be struggling to see the purpose of it all — of all you’re experiencing, and the frustrations you may encounter. Difficult though it may be, you can relax, because you have strong currents in your psyche that make several breakthroughs possible and even inevitable. Yet this comes with an acceleration of your process, and some moments when you may feel like you’re transforming so fast that the process is out of control.

## **Neptune and Nessus in Your Face**

Before we go more deeply into houses 5 and 8 (check here for a [full listing of house delineations](#)), let’s consider the one that describes your immediate environment, your opposite sign Pisces, which is your 7th house or place. The 7th describes your immediately available relationships and partnerships; it describes the most obvious level of psychic weather; it describes what you see when you look around, and how your mind processes that information. Most of our psychic and sensory environment is oriented around relationships, and that is the link.

One of the long-term visitors to Pisces is Neptune. It’s been present there since the 2012 era, though recently, something significant has changed: Chiron has just left

Pisces. For the past seven or so years, Chiron provided an energetic counterbalance to Neptune, in the form of focusing what might ordinarily be difficult to see.

Neptune tends to blur what you perceive; Chiron tends to focus. As you experience any challenges associated with Neptune in Pisces, you'll need to dial back in what you learned from Chiron.

One of the most vital teachings was the nature of perception, and how much of it is based on projection. The two are closely related, and we live in a world where, on one level, we must perceive using our mind and our senses. Yet it's possible to draw that in a bit, and at least to be aware of some of the possible themes involved.

Neptune in the 7th comes with a sensation that is difficult to describe, though at least you have Pisces there, and the energies are similar. Neptune, however, pushes things, as if a bubble is swelling; the sensation is likely to be something like an odd feeling of isolation that you cannot describe. Many facets of your life, especially certain relationships and your emotions about them, may seem like a dream that you want to enter, but which you cannot quite penetrate. People can give you the odd impression of appearing ideal, then morphing out of your life. It's difficult to sense anything tangible in certain aspects of your relationships.

At times, your whole environment may seem to have you at arm's length, just out of reach of what you want. Chiron provided a portal to get in, and sometimes dragged you into situations where you had to respond by focusing on the healing aspect of the exchange. With Neptune as the main presence, you must do a lot of sorting out what is real and what is not.

Another presence is Nessus, the third centaur. Fortunately, you have experience with Chiron, and know something of the double-edged nature of centaurs. Nessus is urging you to take a boldly self-aware approach to who you relate to and what you exchange. You may be coming into contact with many people whose primary identity surrounds the way they have been injured in relationships.

This is something of a cultural obsession at the moment, and sadly, it is not being matched by healing modalities, ideas about new approaches to relating to others, or even questioning the old ones. Many people and even massive institutions of society (such as *The New York Times*) are accepting that it's OK to have a problem that's defined in a way that cannot be solved. Beware of these, and people who proffer them.

Beware of paradoxes, and of humanity's love affair with them. If you find yourself looking at a problem without a solution, a double bind or a no-win situation, stop and shift your narrative. It's likely to be a trap.

There are two other 7th house influences that I don't think I've mentioned yet anywhere in INTELLIGENCE — two long-term visitors to Pisces. I mention them here because they are in your relationship house and you are among those most likely to encounter something resembling them in your physical life or dream life. These are slow-movers out in the Kuiper Belt, orbiting our Sun, astronomically similar to Pluto though slightly more distant. They are named for creation gods rather than death/underworld gods (such as Pluto). Interestingly, both are named for fictional deities rather than mythological figures (I only know of three Kuiper objects named this way, Varda being the other).

One is called Manwe, based on a deity from the legendarium of J.R.R. Tolkien. He was the chief of the gods, a Jupiter-like figure, though considerably more noble and ethical. He is not prime creator (God himself, the One, a figure named Eru Iluvatar) but rather one of the gods who chose to be assigned to Middle Earth (meaning, the Earth). So he is a local god rather than the creator of the universe. I do not have an astrological delineation of Manwe.

The other is called Borasisi, based on a deity described by Kurt Vonnegut in the book *Cat's Cradle*. I can't find anyone who can explain how it got this name, though astrologically, it's related to matters dealing with truth and lies, and what we believe based on faith. In particular, Borasisi seems to describe the lies of science that are taken as religious truths (such as the need for the atomic bomb, or any globally destructive technology). I have [covered Borasisi in one article](#); I had an astonishing astrological experience with it back in 2011. Note what happened just days after the article was written.

Here is my take, subject to much review and discussion. The presence of Neptune in your 7th would rightly push the questions of what is real and what is not real in the world around you. Neptune was named for a "real" god — meaning one from ancient mythology; but how is that substantially different from ones named from modern myths? Borasisi was named for a "fictional god," associated with nuclear proliferation and, in particular, the crimes of a company called GE. It may be fictional, but it's certainly got real implications.

Second, we do have "gods" on our planet, in the sense of individuals who have made great contributions to society. You might know one or two; you might get to meet

them. How do you relate to them? What is your relationship to them? Is it more about adulation, or more about respect? In what ways do you hold them as examples, and in what ways do you recognize that they are humans just like you?

## **Your Self-Creative Process**

Creative process is described in astrology in the 5th place, which for you is Capricorn. There's an inherent contradiction here, as the 5th is about fun, pleasure and taking chances, while Capricorn has an austere quality to it. I have seen with both Virgo Sun and rising that there is often the element of a missing childhood, and this carries into adulthood as a struggle with something so basic as feeling good.

One house over, you have Aquarius on the 6th, which is about service. This is more accessible; it makes more sense than Capricorn on the 5th, so it's easier to go there as a default mode. Aquarius has the property of forming patterns, and once those patterns form, they are difficult to change. While for most people "escapism" means doing pleasurable things that distract them from their responsibility, for you, it's about diving into responsibility and commitment.

In a sense, it's easy for you to bypass the play-oriented themes of the 5th house and go right into the 6th house. The 6th for you contains Aquarius, where patterns take hold.

Over the past decade, Pluto has been activating your 5th house, on its trip through Capricorn. Pluto has had a destabilizing influence on all that Capricorn represents, which is placing a stress on society but which is ultimately helpful for you. Pluto possesses a passionate, Dionysian side as well. It has been working over the parochial, family and duty oriented quality of your 5th, and doing everything in its power to set you free.

In the past year or so, three other points have entered Capricorn, including Saturn. You will read in astrology books that Saturn through the 5th is the opposite of the trend I am suggesting you encourage in yourself, though in its home sign, Saturn brings out the best in Capricorn. It can also work as an agent of change, which it does dependably. Saturn can help you bring your sense of duty and devotion somewhere you need it now.

The feeling of these planets in Capricorn is, for you, less like the artistic process of painting and more like building a studio for yourself. Then, you might work on your artwork for a while after the day of building is done. It has more the feeling of sculpture than of collage. Think of this as being self-creative rather than being about

external things or what's extrinsic to you. You are in a process of both discovering and shaping who you are. Parts of the process will be subtractive (carving or peeling away) and parts will be additive (building, constructing, shaping).

There are elements of this that you can plan; there are elements that will reveal themselves as time goes on. The thing to bear in mind is that as you change elements of your world, by making contact with the physical materials of the world, you are changing yourself — and this is at the core of your growth and preparation. It is at the core of centering on yourself rather than on others. This may be a real challenge. In fact it may be the very essence of the situation you have faced for much of your life.

I'll say that again: what I am calling your creative and self-creative focus is at the core of you learning to center on yourself rather than on others. That is essential at this phase of your growth, ahead of Jupiter and Saturn entering Aquarius.

You might think of it this way; hopefully this metaphor is not too astrological. Your growth process in Capricorn — your 5th house, therefore what you might think of as inner-child recovery work — is conditioning both Capricorn and Saturn; and at the end of 2019 Jupiter will get into the act. At that point you will start to reap the rewards of your new approach to life.

I am not suggesting you abandon any responsibility that you are truly committed to, but rather that you begin to shift your emphasis to a more self-oriented approach; and that you begin to let go of involvements that do not serve you, or the common good. Begin with influences that seek to distance you from yourself. You may need to rethink what you invest in your family of origin (not your current family or young children, if you have any) but rather your older family, who may have you cast as a certain kind of person who you have outgrown.

It's worth understanding this — it's neurological. The programming of kids that happens in families is about brain structure. When we get around those people, they have a way of dialing in the pre-installed patterns in our brains, and suddenly we can feel like we're four years old, somehow stripped of any capacity to actually make adult choices for ourselves.

On some level, this may be going on all the time, and that's what you're dismantling. In order to do that effectively, you may need to feel it more strongly before you're able to fully understand it. Denying and resisting will not work; on some level, you need to draw strength from your quest to be free, and from honestly confronting whatever you discover is controlling you from the background. Be particularly alert to feelings such as guilt and shame.

For more information about the astrological details, I suggest you read the [Capricorn reference reading](#).

### **Self-Discovery: Chiron and Your Investment in Others**

One of the most intriguing features of the Virgo chart (whether Sun or rising) is that Aries is placed on your 8th house. Translating, your sign of self-discovery (Aries) is placed on the house associated with surrender of your being to others — such as through long-term relationships, marriage, financial investment or sexual involvement. It is natural for you to strive to find yourself through deep involvements with others. Intimate relationships are a dependable source of self-knowledge for you. To some extent this is true for everyone, though it is a particularly strong motivation for you to bond with others.

One thing to check here is whether you're ever not in a relationship; this is a setup for always being in one. This will vary based on your age, your level of experience in life, and your personal circumstances, though note that your tropism to bond is strong, and that you may not feel like a "whole person" when you're not in a relationship. This recalls Erica Jong's famous line from *Fear of Flying* about wanting to be a whole person and not half of a couple; that would be a worthy goal for you.

Yet it would seem, more accurately, that you want to be a whole person within a relationship; you want to hold your identity in the presence and context of a partner. For that to really work, though, you need to spend significant periods of time outside the context of a partnership, and living on your own.

The past seven years have been an interesting spin on this, as you have been challenged to hold your own through circumstances that have changed faster than you could keep up. Also there may have been more people in the scenario than just you and one partner — other suitors, polyamorous situations, nonsexual friends of yours or your partner's (including in groups) and other situations that were different from your idea of a solid, dependable, one-on-one bond. (For more information on Uranus and Chiron in Aries, [please check out the Aries reference reading](#).)

Over the past year, there's been a significant change in the atmosphere of this zone of your chart. Uranus, the planet associated with odd developments and groups mentioned above, is moving on to Taurus, your 9th house, as of March 6 (see next section). Chiron has entered Aries, your 8th, pulling the whole seeking-self-through-

relationship-bonding matter into focus. If it has not, it soon will — and developments of the past three or four seasons may offer a clue.

Whatever your relationship or emotional status, what Chiron is likely to do is alert you to your urgent need to be yourself in all circumstances — one-on-one, within groups, with a partner within groups, and on your own. The essential teaching would seem to be about being the same person all the time, whatever your circumstance. I don't mean this in a robotic way, but rather in the sense that you always know who you are and that your locus of identity is placed within you — not within another person or persons.

This can be a challenging place to learn, and to hold your center. It's especially so given the presence of Salacia in Aries, which will be in a long conjunction with Chiron through 2019 and 2020. The sexual bonding potential is very strong with this setup, though at the same time you are likely to keep being jolted back into the need to be your own person at all times.

If this makes it difficult to be in relationships under your previous terms, that's a sign of success and not of failure: success at holding your center as a discrete individual. In times when society seems to be trying to question sex roles, this is a big one. The 8th is the house of civil death, where Miss Jane Smith transforms into Mrs. John Jones and, in effect, disappears. Even if people (women) keep their original name in marriage, the basic quality of this house remains the same — a kind of total merging of self and other into a corporate entity — though now Chiron's presence is striving to change this situation, starting with you.

Be prepared for this to have the quality of a potentially rude awakening, at first, which you're grateful about later. Chiron can have that "seeing what you've been missing" quality, and the thing you might see is the way that you give away your power.

There may be something going on that concerns when it's "appropriate" to have sex with another person. When we consider the energy of both the 5th and the 8th, you might have issues with whether it's appropriate to be sexual outside a "committed partnership" — however you define that term. Usually, it's a definition of convenience, used as a hedge against guilt.

The more relevant issue is: what do you want? What if what you want is the thing that's appropriate? In other words, what if your desire is the measure of appropriateness? The next question would inevitably be, what would your partner think, plus the quietly lurking issue of what would mother/father/grandmother think?

These may seem like your garden variety, everyday emotions or mental chatter. Yet they engage the most significant question of your life right now: to what extent are you your own person? And to the extent that you are not, and want to be, what do you have to do in order to claim yourself back?

Chiron will provoke you again and again into taking this to heart — taking it seriously, and not forgetting. You may not enter this territory boldly and with gusto. Your 5th and 8th house transits are calling you to express yourself, though you may do so tentatively, especially where sexual exploration is concerned.

The day I'm writing this, I'm also in a discussion on one of the Planet Waves lists regarding the issue of "enthusiastic consent." I proposed that there are many ways to enter erotic situations, which for you will also include places where you aspire to express your inner creative being. Here is what I wrote, in response to the notion that "enthusiastic consent" should be the standard for "yes."

I am a pretty bold sexual explorer. And there are many times when I enter sexual situations quietly, tentatively, and in a spirit of curiosity. I might need to gradually seduce myself. That's OK. That's my style. I might sit in the corner at a party for an hour before moving to the middle of the room, or getting someone's attention.

I might "give consent" to a man to play with me (i.e., show up at his place knowing he wants sex), and see where he takes it, as a conscious act — I will depend on his yang energy and bring my yin energy to the equation. That is balance.

In one situation in Europe, I answered the door naked to make sure that the sex would happen despite my inhibitions.

There are many wholesome situations where sexual exploration is tentative — young people, inexperienced people, or first-time (first few times) same-sex experiences, for example, and others. First-time threesomes are almost always tentative. It is new territory.

People are testing the water. The spirit is, "OK, I'm ready to explore a little. I'm not sure how I feel about this but I am willing to find out." This is beautiful, delicate sexual ground, where lots of growth happens.

De Beauvoir devotes many pages of *Second Sex* (in her biology chapter) to the topic of female ambiguity around sex, across the species — not just in humans.

Many women consciously rely on the decisiveness of men to get them past their inhibitions. (The writer of one of the better KT articles last summer said to me [in person], something like, "I'm glad men are assertive. If I had to rely on my own assertiveness to have sex, I would still be a virgin.")

Many people need to drink to get past their inhibitions — inhibitions are an issue and a fact of life. Fear is an issue and a fact of life, and people have different ways of getting around it, addressing it, transcending it. This takes experience, and that means experiments.

We can't be talking about enthusiasm without talking about inhibition too; and inhibited people deserve to have sex on their terms. There is more though — some of the very best sex happens on that delicate line between yes and no, between desire and uncertainty, where people gently lean into their yes because they need to stretch and become. Because something is quietly calling them — quietly, not boldly.

### **Uranus in the 9th House: A Spiritual Revolution**

Uranus is about to enter Taurus, where it will be for seven years. Taurus for you is the 9th place from Virgo, the house of one's spirituality or understanding with the universe. Taurus on this house is another way that your chart suggests you are more comfortable with what might be called "conventional values."

Things that are conventional tend to go unquestioned. Uranus in Taurus will open up a vast realm of questioning for you, and of adventure. *Uranus represents freedom from the known.* The 9th house represents a vast expanse of culture, of potential, and of worldly experience. Normally awareness of these things is regulated by what people typically think of (or don't think of) as their spiritual beliefs.

It is this "regulating" function of Taurus that is going to be thrown into some disarray by Uranus. And the comfort-zone quality of Taurus is likely to be shaken up as well, as you're presented with ideas, from both within and without, that show you what is possible in the world once you leave the familiar territory of your beliefs.

Given the nature of Uranus, you may find that your beliefs leave the familiar territory of 'you' — that is, surprise experiences and events that challenge you to match your ideas

about life to the reality of life that you perceive and experience.

## **The Jupiter-Saturn Conjunction in Aquarius**

Let's review the major movements in your chart leading into the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn on Dec. 21, 2020. Think of these as the four points of initiation.

1. Movements of Saturn, Pluto and other points through your 5th house or Capricorn are teaching you to penetrate your family conditioning to be cautious and reserved and your inhibitions. You will learn to map out the family conditioning that leaves you afraid or reluctant to be yourself. This is always an experiment, and is best driven by curiosity and the thirst for freedom.
2. Movement of Neptune through your 7th house or Pisces is teaching you to pay attention to your environment, and to sort out what is real and what is not so real. Neptune is always a reminder to mind your boundaries, as is Nessus. Manwe and Borasisi are saying pay attention to who you meet and how you respond to famous, powerful or accomplished people.
3. Movement of Chiron through your 8th house or Aries is calling your attention to the degree that you invest yourself in others, and use relationships to find out who you are. Chiron will insist that this be a conscious process, and teach you how to maintain your individuality even when invested in a relationship. The presence of Salacia is calling on you to question your prior ideas of "appropriateness" and to understand that sexuality can exist for its own sake.
4. Movement of Uranus through your 9th house or Taurus will guide you to leave your familiar comfort zones and stretch your horizons. Travel will help keep you young, and will expand your sense of what is possible. This is a transit that can help set you free, and teach you how to explore your own ideas about life in the context of people with other beliefs.

Think of all of this as preparation for when Jupiter and Saturn take up residence in your 6th house of service. When that happens, you will be VERY happy you were going through these four points of initiation described above. When you wonder what Jupiter and Saturn in the 6th will be about, think of answering a calling that requires you to have some degree of mastery and direct experience of all of these areas.

In one sense you don't have to concern yourself with the result, only the preparation. The result is still a variable, and it will take care of itself.