

*The Birth of Venus, Sandro Botticelli, c. 1484*

## Ephemeria ~ July 2023

*Isis is lifting her veil; she is shining in all the colors of the depths and the heights.*

*Behind her stands the All.*

*The colors form the rainbow bridge, onto which those who overcome  
the force of gravity may step.*

*Past and future light up, while the dark present is made to yield.*

*The bridge is the newly won consciousness,  
through which the light is shining in the darkness.*

~Marie Steiner  
Eurythmy as Visible Singing  
First Edition Forward 1927



*By Mary Stewart Adams, with design by Patricia DeLisa*



# THIS MONTH IT'S ALL ABOUT VENUS, *as she walks in beauty, like the night,*

to borrow from Byron. Astronomically, Venus is the second planet from the Sun; esoterically, Venus is the guardian of the “third heaven,” to which Paul makes reference in his second letter to the Corinthians:

*“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago,  
(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot  
tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven..”*

*-Paul 2 Corinthians 12:2*

Of all the planets in our system, Venus spends the least amount of time in retrograde, making this apparent motion only every 18 months, for about 40 days and 40 nights at a time. This July, 2023, such a move is upon us.

The *retrograde “proper,”* when the planet of love and beauty seems to stop in its forward momentum moving eastward against the backdrop of stars, begins on July 22nd; and Venus will make this apparent motion until September 3rd, 2023. Venus trades her evening gown for the vestments of the dawn in such a move, but not before meeting Sun at *inferior conjunction*, the peak of the cycle on Sunday, August 13th, just as the annual Perseid Meteor Shower is reaching its peak level of activity.

To take hold of the Venus cycle as a guide to biographical study, there are several dates beyond the retrograde proper to consider:

*Superior conjunction*, when Venus met the Sun on the far side from Earth. This last occurred on October 25, 2022.

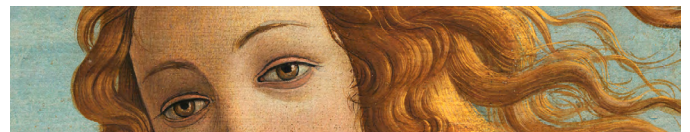
Then there's the *ingress into shadow*, when Venus crosses over the degree of zodiac to which it will retrograde back. This occurred June 20, 2023.

The retrograde proper begins on July 22nd, at 9:33 pm edt.

During the retrograde, Venus will come to *inferior conjunction* with the Sun, when the meeting occurs on this side (as opposed to on the far side) of Sun. This can be considered the peak moment of the retrograde, and will occur Sunday, August 13th at 7:16 am edt

Venus resumes *direct motion* on September 3rd at 9:20 pm edt; which is followed by moving out of the path of its retrograde shadow (called its *egress*) on October 7th, 2023. On this date, Venus will complete its third pass through the same region of the zodiac, which can be imagined as a place from which the goddess of love and beauty is looking deeply into the heart of the human being and contemplating its secrets within the context of the stars in front of which it's moving. In this current cycle, Venus is making this move in the vicinity of the heart of the lion, *Cor Leonis*, known formally as the star Regulus.

The current Venus cycle fulfills in its next *superior conjunction* with the Sun, which will occur on June 3rd, in 2024.



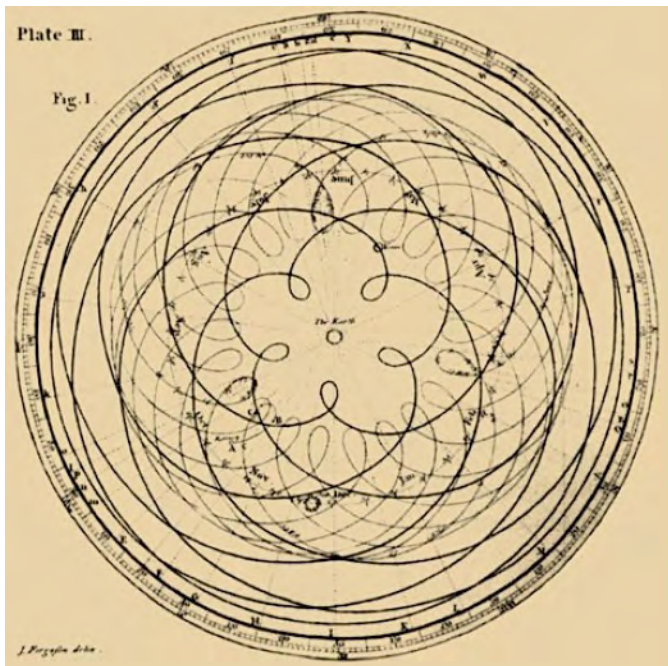
*She walks in beauty, like the night, of cloudless climes and starry skies,  
and all that's best of dark and bright meets in her aspect and her eyes,  
thus mellowed to the tender light, which heaven to gaudy day denies...*

*-George Gordon, Lord Byron*





Over an eight-year period, Venus will make five such retrograde loops, describing what appears to be a pentagram in the sky about the Earth. Though any point in this journey can be considered its starting point, I have been contemplating the cycle that began on January 8, 2022 with inferior conjunction. This cycle will culminate eight years later, on Epiphany Sunday, January 6, 2030. To study this in my own life means contemplating the dates in the cycle, and practicing discernment about what of my experience, if anything, reveals the nature of Venus in my life? The year 2030 is its own remarkable centenary rhythm with regard to the mysteries of the Etheric Christ, as first described by Rudolf Steiner in 1911.



What else can we know about the Venus retrograde? Astrologically, any retrograde motion is described as a time of “going back to source.” Venus, as noted by Rudolf Steiner, is particularly attentive to what lives in the heart of the human being (see [\*Spiritual Individualities of the Planets GA 228\*](#), given July 27, 1923 in Dornach, 100 years before this current retrograde cycle). It is here that Rudolf Steiner describes how Venus shuns the attention of everything in her celestial environment, save

the utterances of Mars, and how what interests Venus most is what lives in the heart of the human being on Earth:

*The planet Venus is again different. In a certain way, I could say, Venus repels, wards off the whole universe. She is demure, prudish, aloof concerning the universe; she does not wish to know anything about the universe. She regards any submission to the universe, I might say, any external universal exposure and submission, as if it would cause her maiden purity, her virginity, to be lost. She is deeply shocked when any impression from the external universe attempts to approach her. She has no desire for the universe and rejects every dancing-partner – it is very difficult to express these things, because the circumstances and conditions have to be described in terms of earthly language –. On the other hand, Venus is highly responsive to everything that comes from the Earth. The Earth is, so to speak, her lover. Whereas the Moon reflects the whole surrounding universe, Venus reflects nothing at all of the universe, and wants to know nothing of it, but she lovingly reflects whatever comes from the Earth. If we are able to glimpse the mysteries of Venus with the eyes of soul, the whole Earth with all of her soulful secrets is there before us once again.*

*The truth is that human beings on Earth can do nothing in the secrecy of their souls without it being reflected back again by Venus. Venus gazes deeply into the hearts of human beings, for that is what interests her, that is what she will allow to approach her, so that the most intimate experiences of earthly life are reflected again from Venus, in a mysterious and wonderful way. In the reflection she transforms everything, just as a dream transforms the happenings of physical existence. Venus transforms the occurrences of earthly life into dream-pictures. In reality, therefore, the whole sphere of Venus is a world of dreaming. The secrets of human beings in their earthly existence are transformed by Venus into dream-pictures of infinite diversity. She has a very great deal to do with poets, although they are not aware of it.*

*Venus gazes deeply into the hearts of human beings, for that is what interests her.*

–Rudolf Steiner



During the Christmas Conference, at which the Foundation Stone Meditation was first spoken, beginning at 10 am in Dornach on Christmas Day 1923, the planet Venus was rising, as though the planet assumed a sacred position for witnessing the mighty deed of the spiritual initiate, which he described as a laying into the hearts of those called to the event, this Foundation Stone of Love.

At the close of the Christmas Conference one week later, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the proper place for this stone to be laid: into the heart of the human being.

*And so, my dear friends, carry out into the world your warm hearts in which you have laid the Foundation Stone for the Anthroposophical Society, carry out into the world these warm hearts which promote strong, health-giving activity in the world. And help will be vouchsafed to you, enlightening your heads in what you would fain direct with single purpose. We will set about this with all possible strength. And if we prove to be worthy of this aim we shall see that a good star will hold sway over what is willed from here. Follow this good star, my dear friends! We shall see whither the Gods will lead us by the light of this star.*

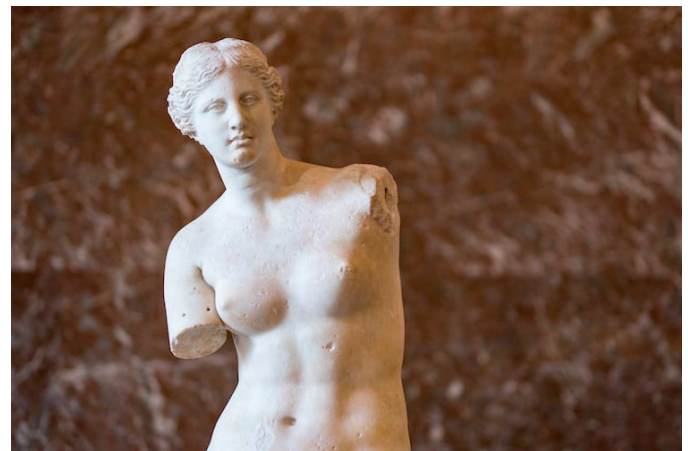
In this centenary year, it seems fitting to contemplate one's relationship to Venus, to note whether anything presents itself on the dates of Venus' cycle as noted above, and to ask myself, how that which I understand to be a "Venusian quality" or characteristic of life presents itself now. Conversely, I could ask: "What lives in my heart? What is Venus witnessing? How does the Foundation Stone 'live' in me, through thought, through feeling, through deed?"

In the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz, his witnessing of Venus is pivotal with regard to the outcome of his initiation.

In Botticelli's Birth of Venus, it is possible to experience the symbolism of the Pentecost, which may be described as the capacity for a speaking from *heart to heart*

On [October 14, 2023, an annual solar eclipse](#) will cast its shadow across the Earth, including through the southwest region of the United States. During such an event, Venus becomes visible in the daytime, at a time and place during which we might not otherwise see the planet. How can we prepare ourselves for such an "unveiling"?

As further consideration, there is Venus' relationship with the Moon, especially given their similar roles as celestial bodies reflecting their environment: Moon reflecting the celestial world; Venus reflecting what streams forth from the heart of the human being on the Earth. In order of brightness, the three brightest objects in our sky are Sun, Moon, and Venus. There is tremendous mystery in the fact that even though the Moon can outshine Venus, it will never do so, because the Moon will only ever pass by Venus at crescent phase, whether in the morning or evening twilight, as if to say, that which you reflect into the cosmos is greater than what I am bearing; or, that which lives in the heart of the human being is given primacy among the celestial gods of our planetary environment.



*Venus de Milo, Alexandros of Antioch, c.150 and 125 BC*

*Here lies buried Venus, that beauty which hath undone many a great man  
both in fortune, honor, blessing and prosperity.*

[-Day 5, The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz](#)



THE CRESCENT MOON will be with Venus July 19&20, just before the planet turns retrograde. Also, throughout the month of July, Venus is within five degrees of [Regulus](#), from the 9th to the 25th. Their date of minimum separation is July 15&16. With Regulus as ruler of the affairs of the heavens and ancient leader of the Four Royal Stars of Persia, such an encounter seems like an invitation to offer the highest strivings of our hearts. Astrologer Adam Sommer refers to Venus retrograde near Leo as an opportunity for “retuning our heart strings.”



*Like the moon venus exhibits crescent phases as pictured here.*

*May we all walk in beauty, with warm hearts, enlightened heads,  
toward the mysteries of our great becoming.*

## Here are dates to consider:

**October 25, 2022**

Venus at superior conjunction with the Sun

**June 20, 2023**

Ingress into the shadow of its retrograde

**July 22, 2023 at 9:33 pm edt**

Begins retrograde

**August 13, 2023 at 7:16 am edt**

Inferior conjunction with the sun

**September 3, 2023 at 9:20 pm**

Resumes direct motion

**October 7, 2023**

Egress from shadow of its retrograde journey

**June 3, 2024**

Next superior conjunction of Venus with the Sun





# Vixen

*Comet of stillness princess of what is over  
high note held without trembling without voice without sound  
aura of complete darkness keeper of the kept secrets  
of the destroyed stories the escaped dreams the sentences  
never caught in words warden of where the river went  
touch of its surface sibyl of the extinguished  
window onto the hidden place and the other time  
at the foot of the wall by the road patient without waiting  
in the full moonlight of autumn at the hour when I was born  
you no longer go out like a flame at the sight of me  
you are still warmer than the moonlight gleaming on you  
even now you are unharmed even now perfect  
as you have always been now when your light paws are running  
on the breathless night on the bridge with one end I remember you  
when I have heard you the soles of my feet have made answer  
when I have seen you I have waked and slipped from the calendars  
from the creeds of difference and the contradictions  
that were my life and all the crumbling fabrications  
as long as it lasted until something that we were  
had ended when you are no longer anything  
let me catch sight of you again going over the wall  
and before the garden is extinct and the woods are figures  
guttering on a screen let my words find their own  
places in the silence after the animals*

*~by [WS Merwin](#)*



*Venus and Mars, Sandro Botticelli, 1483*