

Venus mercenaria, the clam or quahog

Jo Evans

Keywords: Venus mercenaria, materia medica, of clam.

The following materia medica of *Venus mercenaria* is extracted from the book *Sea Remedies: Evolution of the Senses*. Although the structure will hopefully feel generally familiar to readers, there are subtle differences. This is a sensory materia medica, constructed with a focus on the senses and on Hahnemann's idea of observing sensation and function. It is organized in a way that allows a more user-friendly access to the patients' language, as they describe their physical sensations and inner, psychological feelings of ill-health. *Venus mercenaria* was first proved in 1960-1961, but it has remained a lesser-used remedy. The four cases included here enhance and clarify the true remedy picture, and will hopefully allow the remedy to be brought to wider use.

Venus mercenaria
Common edible clam

Summary

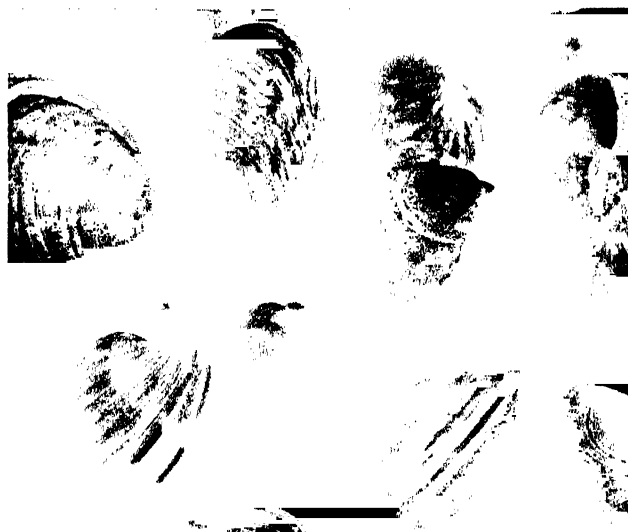
Main Polarities: Split, detached, disconnected or Clamped, closed, tight. Open or Closed. Giving or Receiving. Material or Spiritual. Money or Love.

Mind: Dr Raeside writes of the proving that "thinking and coordination were more disturbed than feelings."⁽¹⁾ Aware of acute senses and their emotional effects; sensitive heart. Feels the need to cut off or detach from others due to acute emotional sensitivity and excessive sympathy. The patient experiences the inability to feel emotion as a sensation of inner coldness. Fears losing control; such as, screaming on a bus. Unconscious life and dreams are violent and fearful: dreams of murder, violence, spiders. Claustrophobia.

Sensations: Split, disconnected, detached, separated. No emotional feeling, yet sensitive to touch. Cramping, clamping, band-like, constriction. Stabbing. Heavy, stone-like, pressing. Tingling, itching. Throbbing.

Dreams: Spiders, violence ending in death, disturbing

1 Raeside, JR., *A Proving of Venus mercenaria* (clam), British Homoeopathic Journal 1962 ;51(3): pp. 200-206.



dreams of death and disease.

System Affinities: Cardiovascular. Respiratory. Reproductive. Musculoskeletal. Skin.

Clinical Affinities: Psychopathology. Inflammations. Arthritis, peritonitis, enteritis. Dysmenorrhoea. Headaches, migraine: like a band, clamp or helmet. Bilious headache with constipation, frequent urination and nausea. Chronic constipation. Boils, eczema, urticaria, ulcers. Stabbing sensation in heart, tender sternum, anaemia, bruised sensation, phlebitis. Paralysis of the diaphragm.

Generals: Generally sensitive to touch, sound and odors. Better for movement. The physical particulars are of an inflammatory nature ("-itis"): ulceration (mouth, stomach, gastrointestinal), while the general sensation is of being cold, often with a cold or even icy sensation in particular parts. Cold or icy sensations. Desire for cold food and drink.

Classification

Kingdom: Animalia Phylum: Mollusca Class: Bivalvia Order: Veneroida Family: Veneridae Genus: *Mercenaria*.

Homeopathic name: *Venus mercenaria*. Abbreviation: *Ven-m*.

Latin names: *Venus mercenaria*, *Mercenaria mercenaria*

Common names: Common edible clam, American hard shell clam, quahog.

Etymology: *Venus*: goddess of love; *mercenaria*: concerned with trading, exchange or money.

Remedy Source

The remedy is prepared from the mother tincture of the animal, plus an equal part of a trituration, at 1/100, of the shell. For the original proving, in 1960, Nelsons pharmacy, London, received a live clam sent to them in seawater from Marine Biological Laboratories, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, USA. They minced the fleshy portion and preserved it in alcohol. A portion of shell was triturated up to 3C and used to make a 4C liquid potency. The provers' powders were medicated with a combination of the clam shell and clam flesh, prescribed in three potencies – 30C, 12C, and 6C.

Proving

The proving substance was chosen by Dr Foubister and the proving itself was conducted by Dr John Robertson Raeside² (2) in 1960-61, in the United Kingdom. There were nineteen provers during three terms (nine men and ten women, plus three controls in the first term and four in the second and none in the third); powders were taken, one dose morning and evening for fourteen days, using the following potencies: 30C in the first term, 12C in the second term and 6C in the third term. The third term produced the most symptoms. Dr Foubister suggested that these potencies might be more suitable than lower ones (in the 'X' range), since the clam is a food and therefore less likely to produce symptoms in low potency. ('A Proving of *Venus mercenaria* (clam)', by J.R. Raeside. *British Homoeopathic Journal* 1962; 51(3): pp.200-206.)

Confusion in homeopathic literature

The common name of the remedy has been confusingly and incorrectly given as 'American scallop', despite being correctly named by the original prover, Raeside, as American clam. This has led to some errors in homeopathic literature, confusing *Pecten jacobaeus* and *Venus mercenaria*. Samuel Swan experimented with the scallop, *Pecten*, as a medicine, half a century earlier.

Compare

O.A. Julian states that *Carcinosin* is complementary to *Venus mercenaria*. *Conchiolinum*, another mollusc shell remedy, is also comparable to *Carcinosin*. Prescribing *Carcinosin* or *Venus mercenaria* does not necessarily relate to cancer pathology, but it should perhaps be noted here that the clam, and extracts of clam, are important in cancer research, and the clinical data, below, reveals some similarities to the *Carcinosin* remedy picture.

² Dr John Robertson Raeside, 1926-72, Glasgow trained. Proving director and researcher, and assistant to Dr M Blackie. Died in the Staines air crash, 1972, along with his wife and 11 other homeopaths.

Generalities

Sensation: Weakness, exhaustion, desire to lie down, frailty. Sensation as if the body is bruised on being touched or pressed. Sensation of extreme coldness (worse 3-5pm). Weakness on rising. Stabbing pains.

Function: Faintness at 10am. Symptoms are similar to those at the beginning of influenza. Allergies of psychological origin. "Allergic (psoric) sycotic types, tending towards a cancerous condition following severe self-intoxication."³ (3) Bilious headaches.⁴(4) Inflammation: gastrointestinal, arthritis, cystitis, phlebitis.

Desires: To be left in peace.

Amelioration: Motion.

Aggravation: Touch: great sensitivity. On waking. Morning: 5am to 9am. Afternoon: 1pm to 6pm. People. Noise. Odors.

Environmental: Allergies.

Mind

Sensation: Split, detached, disconnected. Cut-off. Senses acute: irritability from company and noise: "keep away from me". Boredom, indifference, apathy. Delusion bus goes too slow, time passes slowly. Concentration difficult. Thoughts disconnected. Difficulty writing. Dreams of spiders, death, murder, violence. Fear of crying or screaming for no reason. Intoxicated feeling: as if drunk, cannot think or coordinate well. Split mind: schizophrenia, delusions; rift between emotion, thought and behaviour.

Function: Concentration: difficult. Thoughts: disconnected. Depression on first day of menstrual bleeding. Tired and dizzy in the morning. Schizoid conditions.⁵

Aversions: Noise, company. Claustrophobia.

Desires: Wide empty spaces. To go home. To be left alone. Peace. Bright or light colours.⁶ Light.⁷

Dreams: Spiders. Violence ending in death. Disturbing dreams of death and disease.

Sleep

Restless or disturbed sleep. Waking (after midnight, 2am). Waking from dreams.

Face

Sensation: Itching skin.

Function: Spots turn into boils.

Head

Sensation: Mind/brain/head is not coordinated with

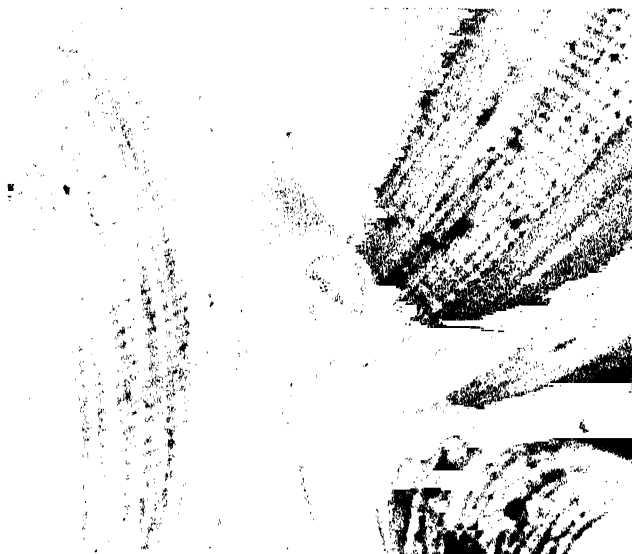
³ Julian, O.A., 1979, *Materia Medica of New Remedies*. Beaconsfield Publishers Ltd, UK. With permission from the publisher.

⁴ 'Use of *Venus mercenaria*', letter to *British Homoeopathic Journal* 1965 ;54(1): pp. 65-66, Dr Hui Bon Hoa.

⁵ Julian, O.A., op.cit.

⁶ Clinical additions.

⁷ Ibid.



body.

Headache

Sensation: Dull, depressing, heavy, sensation as if head is being held tightly: gripping, constricting, tightness. Sensation of headache on waking, with blood rushing to the head and tingling, itching of the scalp. Throbbing, stabbing, sharp pain.

Function: Migraine accompanied by digestive or urinary concomitants.

Location: Frontal, occipital, **left-sided**, right-sided, behind the eyes, over left eye, at the back of the head, vertex.

Aggravation: Morning on waking, afternoon, going upstairs, mental effort.

Amelioration: Darkness, quiet, sitting still, late evening.

Concomitants: Vertigo, nausea, buzzing, vomiting, frequency of urination, digestive symptoms, difficulty thinking.

Time modalities: 4 pm, 1 pm, 10.30 am to 1.30 pm, 3.30 pm, 2 pm, 5 pm.

Vision

Blurred vision.

Eye

Sensation: Of inflammation.

Function: Swollen. Redness and inflammation of lower eyelid.

Hearing

Sensation: Pain in left ear. Buzzing. Burning itch behind ears.

Concomitants: Irritability from noise.

Sounds: Buzzing.

Taste and Appetite

Mind Sensation: Desires cold food and drink.

Taste: Metallic taste in the mouth, food tastes metallic.

Desires: Cold food and drink.

Aggravation: Nausea after eating followed by vomiting.

Amelioration: Nervous tension in stomach > eating.

Tongue

Sensation: Cold.

Function: White-coated; white at the root, furred.

Mouth

Sensation: Cold feeling in mouth and throat. Soreness of the lower lip, corners of the mouth.

Function: Blisters on the lips. Soreness in corners of mouth and lower lip. Cracks in corners of mouth with mastitis.⁸

Teeth

Sensation: Teeth sensitive to hot and cold, toothache (upper left side).

Gastrointestinal

Stomach Sensation: Nervous tension. Nausea. Heaviness, sensation of a stone. Pressing pain. Constricting feeling.

Sensation Abdomen: Waking at 4:30 am with pain in left side of the abdomen, worse lying on left side. Sensation of wind and rumbling. Pains feel like menstrual pain.

Function: Indigestion. Stomach ulcers. Nausea. Vomiting. Flatulence (extreme, continual). Slight diarrhea (with stomach pain and nausea). Inflammation, peritonitis, enteritis. Chronic, severe constipation (no urging).

Ameliorations: Eating.

Aggravations: Nausea, worse after eating, during headache, during pain in stomach, cycling, at night.

Concomitants: Heat and perspiration. Migraine.

Thirst

Thirsty for cold drinks, better in the evening

Rectum

Sensation: No urging or desire for stool despite chronic constipation.

Function: Diarrhea or extreme constipation. Flatulence.

Stool

Function: Loose. Diarrhoea.

Urinary

Sensation: Pain in the right kidney, worse on waking.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Brief pain in left kidney. Pain in bladder.⁹

Function: Frequency of urination day and night (disturbing sleep).

Urine: Profuse, frothy, cloudy, offensive urine.

Nose and Sense of Smell

Sensitive to odors.¹⁰

Sensation: Sensitive to odors.

Function: Common cold with discharge initially watery, becoming thick. Green post-nasal catarrh.

Discharge: Green, watery, thick.

Aggravation: Morning, change of temperature, heat, right side.

Amelioration: Evening.

Respiratory System

Throat Sensation: Dryness. Constriction in the pharynx and larynx. Tight pain in the glands. Pain, worse on the right side, extending to the ear, with pain on swallowing, dryness and tightness.

Throat Function: Sore throat, going from left to right.

External Throat: Swollen lymph glands. Boils on the neck.

Chest Sensation: Very tender over sternum. Short, stabbing pain in heart.

Heart

Sensation: Short stabbing pains. Marked tenderness over the sternum.

Circulation

Sensation: Pain in veins of leg (left). Sensation of blood rushing to the head. Faintness: morning, 10 am.

Veins: Phlebitis (inflammation of the veins).

Sex: Female

Menstruation Sensation: Strong cramping, better heat, lying down.

Menstruation Function: Dysmenorrhoea.

Breasts Function: Mastitis.¹¹

Touch, Movement and Temperature

Subjective Perception of the Body: Mind and body feel uncoordinated when trying to concentrate. General heavy, painful, cold sensation. Loss of sensation in limbs.¹² Emotions are felt in the right hypochondrium.¹³

9 Hui Bon Hoa J (MD, DFHom), 'A case of Venus mercenaria', British Homoeopathic Journal 1963;52(2): pp. 116-117. See also Case IV below under clinical data.

10 Use of *Venus mercenaria*, letter to British Homoeopathic Journal 1965 ;54(1): pp65-66 Dr Hui Bon Hoa

11 Clinical observation, see Clinical Data, Case II.

12 Clinical observation, see Clinical Data, Case II.

13 Use of *Venus mercenaria*, Br Homoeopath J. 1965; 54(1): 65-66) Dr Hui Bon Hoa.

Perception of Space: The patient guards his space and privacy, intensely disliking any invasion of his privacy.¹⁴

Balance: Dizzy headache. Dizziness worse when tired. Faintness (morning; 10 am). Vertigo, worse on rising after sitting for a long time, and with migraine, better pressure.

Perception of Pressure: Pressure and touch aggravate.

Pains: Pressing, stone sensation, sensation of being bound or held tightly, helmet-like pain in headache, stabbing, throbbing.

Heat/Cold: Sensations of extreme coldness in parts; e.g., the mouth, limbs, vagina. Desire for cold food and cold water. Period pain, better application of heat.

Skin

Skin Sensation: Itchiness of face, ears, back and limbs. Tingling, crawling, burning (worse 9 am and night).

Skin Function: Urticaria (left hand). Boils. Pimples. Eczema. Prurigo. Bruises easily.

Back

Back and Spine Sensation: Stiffness in muscles of back and nape of neck on waking. Pain under right scapula.

Back and Spine Function: Arthritic pain.

Musculoskeletal

Musculoskeletal Sensation: Cramps. Heaviness. Pains in hip, knee and ankle joint. Dull, rheumatic or sharp muscular pains in arms, with heaviness, tiredness, heat and stiffness (worse right arm). Tingling in fingers (worse right hand). Arms and legs itching (arms worse at night).

Musculoskeletal Function: Arthritis. Swelling in general; swelling of the lower limbs with heat and pain (knees, right knee). Motion ameliorates.

Clinical Data

Case 1: Hui Bon Hoa, J. (MD, DFHom), *A case of Venus mercenaria*, British Homoeopathic Journal 1963; 52(2): pp.116-117.

Patient: Female, aged 32.

Presenting Complaint: Frontal headache (first appearing in suboccipital region), lasting fifteen days, with nausea, bladder pain and constipation. Has experienced similar episodes (of lesser duration) ever since appendectomy.

Language: Headache, "feels like a helmet". Black ideas; sees everything black.

Sensation: Irritability. Constricting head pain: like a helmet. Tiredness.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* and see Case IV.

Function: Desire to stay in bed. Weakness and tiredness.

Aversions: Noise, even of her own children around her.

Generals and Mentals: Worse heat and cold; desires fresh air; aversion to crowded places; "suffocates" in closed spaces and crowded shops, had to get off a bus before reaching her destination. Sensitive to noise. Desires salty food and fruit. Aversion to fatty food. Good appetite, even when ill. Aggravated by pulses (headache, not flatulence). Normally lively, impulsive and erratic when well. Fearful, hypochondriacal 'black moods' when ill; fears the worst. Anxiety over her children (regarding the possibility of accidents).

Sea remedy indications: Constricting, compression-type pain. General weakness and tiredness. Crowds and closed spaces aggravate. Sensitive to noise (shelled sea creatures). Desires salty food and cold, refreshing things. Digestive disturbance.

Venus mercenaria indications: Inflammation/-itis as causation: complaint came on since appendicitis. Headache and digestive disturbance combined. Long-lasting compression type headache with nausea, dizziness and constipation. Chronic or severe constipation. Aversion to noise and being disturbed, with general weariness and weakness (like influenza).

Results: Patient better within two-and-one-half hours of *Ven-m.* 30C. No head pain, nausea or bladder pain; her energy returned. Her chronic constipation later disappeared, color returned to her face, and she felt more rested on rising, with more vitality generally.

In a separate correspondence, two years later (Use of *Venus mercenaria*, British Homoeopathic Journal 1965; 54(1): 65-66), Dr. Hui Bon Hoa emphasized the success he has had in curing chronic cases of bilious headache; i.e., periodic headache with vertigo, nausea, sometimes vomiting, pain in the right hypochondrium and constipation.

Two symptoms frequently observed were: sensitive to smells and emotion felt in the right hypochondrium. Although prescribed during the acute presentation of a recurring symptom, the remedy brought about a lasting cure in a number of cases, prescribed in only one or two doses of 30C at very long intervals.

Case 2

Homeopath: Jenni Tree (MA, BEd., DipHom., FRSA.); previously unpublished case from 2002.

Patient: Female, aged 36.

Presenting complaint: Recurring mastitis with fever and influenza.

Other complaints: Mouth ulcers. History of severe, chronic constipation. Past history of difficulties in labor.

Language: "I needed a wall around me, like a baby. I can't feel my heart. I feel empty. Not in the here

and now. I miss the connection with myself. I had a psychotic episode: nearly died. The world was dying, falling apart. I lost the sense of my legs. I wanted guidance, not to go alone but to go with a mentor. My body was cold – my vagina, legs, body. I said: 'I want to be here and feel.' I was withholding contact. I didn't know how to be there. I need to shut things out. I was looking for God in people's eyes and I didn't see it; I saw only fear. I long to be integrated: soul-body-mind. After the psychosis I felt blissed-out, as if I was newly born into the world."

Sensation: Water, clear, clean, flowing, smooth, bliss, in heaven, nurtured (when connected to self/heart). Empty, lost, icy coldness (to the point of loss of sensation in limbs and vagina). I am too thin; no mother's body yet. Not grounded. Separation between soul and body. Disturbed, watched, patronized, not understood, angry, disrespected.

Function: Inflammations. Mastitis ('-itis'). Mind/Body split. Shuts things out.

Gesture: Waving hands above head.

Aversions: Being disturbed, observed.

Desires: To be alone, privacy, rest. Warm bed, under blankets. To feel truly connected to another.

Modalities: Ameliorated: closing the eyes (sees beautiful things); cold water.

Mentals and Generals: Felt no grief on the death of her brother; experienced only a sensation of love. Internally icy cold despite fever and inflammations

Sea remedy indications: Aversion to being looked at or watched; sense of invasion of privacy. Protection, home. Grief. A feeling of being invisible, disembodied, not connected. Mother, nurture (muriaticum). Use of watery waving flowing gestures. *Natrum muriaticum* progressed the birth, but did not help with the ensuing mastitis.

Venus mercenaria indications: Inflammations (mastitis). No feeling, coldness. Mentalised: "I had it in my head how to give birth." Sensation of icy coldness, despite fever or inflammation.

Results: *Ven-m.* 30C, plussed as needed. Later, *Ven-m.* 200C split dose, morning and evening, repeated over eight months. No return of mastitis. Mother and baby thriving. Good relationship established with the father. Feels connected with her heart. In 2005 second baby born. Mother remained totally healthy throughout the pregnancy. Quick, easy birth.

Differential: *Natrum muriaticum*.

The characteristics seen in the case below corresponds to those of other patients responding to this remedy. These patients, often women, are organized, with the desire to succeed, and both a longing for freedom and space. There is mention of the void, and in one case a longing for the 'big emptiness'. They can feel inner splits and contradictions. A tremendous sensitivity

and alertness in their senses can be seen, especially to sounds, and they find they need to separate and isolate in order to feel secure: retreating inside their shells. Case 3 uses the Sensation Method.

Case 3

Homeopath: Jane Harter, RSHom, UK

Patient is female, 40, teaches film and media.

Summary: Allergy. Eye infection. Kidney infection. Anxiety about health. Fear of cancer. Panic. Shut down. Aversion to conflict. Desires movement and travel and is restless and easily bored, but also desires stability, security, home. High performer at work. Split: contradictions. Nervous sensitivity. Fear of the opinion of others. Very alert senses. Claustrophobic. Hemmed in. Barrier. Move into my shell. Feels better outside, by the coast. Fear of water – invertebrates and shells. Desires empty spaces, no people. Void and lack of confidence. Desires bright colors.

Chief complaint: Health worries. Kidney infections in first pregnancy and convinced herself she was dying. “I always imagine the worst case scenario with my health. I withdraw, retreat internally, panic about death. If someone tells me to calm down, I do. I’m easily reassured. I ask for help. The rest of the time I’m upbeat.

“I’ll talk easily, but I’ll also shut down. I’m torn down the middle between being a worrier and feeling that I can sort anything out, that it will always work out. I don’t like health worries or confrontation. I bury my head in the sand and take the abuse and don’t answer; then wish I had forever and ever, but I worry I’ll hurt the person. My other tactic is to write a list and memorize it all and say it very positively. My family never had arguments, yet I find them very stressful. I avoid them. I avoid nasty people. I never have outright anger with pupils; I talk to them in a positive way and appeal to their better nature. I can’t act like a dragon. I deal with it tactically.

“As a child, in spring and summer, I’d wake up with a strange feeling in my stomach of not belonging anywhere. I’m always looking forward to going places, but I need it organized and planned. As a child I wanted to break out. I’m from a very working class home and we never went anywhere. I was bored.

“Teachers thought I was completely laid back; they always misread me. It’s the opposite of how I am. I’m a real contradiction of laid back and uptight. I’m very interested in people watching and knowing what everyone is about. I take it all in. I am very alert. I went backpacking after University (English degree), but being on the move isn’t me. I like security, like to know I’m safe – a hotel room with a door. I lived on my nerves a lot.

“I always enjoy coming home. I like traffic lights:

two minutes to gather myself. I feel regrouped. Love to get home before I go off again. I need stability, and then I can go out. I get easily bored in jobs; the civil service was so claustrophobic. Teaching was the first thing that really used up my energy. I started in a really rough school in London and loved it. I’m not claustrophobic at all in London. In (home town) I was rooted but didn’t fit in. Here it’s like always being on holiday, always somewhere to go, we’re not hemmed in. We go to Cornwall a lot. It’s great; I can breathe. I like a wide expanse, love the coast. Hate enclosed towns. When I paint, I paint a huge expanse of space and bright color; I can’t bear to put people in them. I’m claustrophobic if my sister follows me around. I need the outdoors. If anything goes wrong, I’ll sit out in my garden. I feel free in the outdoors.

“There are huge contradictions. My husband has to fight me for his share of cooking and cleaning, but I let him do anything important with the kids so I don’t run the risk of getting it wrong. I really worry if I make more work for other people or annoy them. I want to be seen to cope and not make mistakes. I’m extremely sensitive and I really lack confidence. I have inner confidence and feel secure in the world I’ve set up with people I know. I’m happy inside but unconfident if I feel judged by others. I make comparisons and see others do better. I don’t like being head of department – too restrictive, wanted to branch out. I feel hemmed in. I’m a perfectionist and want to do things well. I’m organized, but I don’t like too many responsibilities. I carry a list book and constantly add to it. I’m shy about my creative side.

“I have had eye infections, diagnosed as allergy, but one pupil was slightly bigger and I was terrified it was a brain tumor. Completely obsessive, I’d spend hours on the internet finding the scariest articles and making my husband read them. I get into rituals and can only get out of them when I forget.”

[*Homeopath:* First prescription *Argentum nitricum* 200, cleared the eyes and helped the anxiety, and *Beryllium* 200C also helped her confidence, but I didn’t really feel I’d hit the spot. I went to learn from Sankaran in October; so I started using the Sensation Method with this patient at the follow-up.]

Follow-up

“I’m a lot better, but I feel unfinished. Christmas holidays, I had this amazing restlessness. I just needed something to do.” Felt empty and dissatisfied – everything was a waste of time. Overwhelmed by noise of TV and people talking.

She had a week of headaches from hurting her neck but convinced it was a tumor. “I couldn’t stay home in case I collapsed with a brain tumor.”

“There’s a deep-seated void and a lack of confidence

in doing things for myself. I'll be good at something secretly. I house hunt and arrange mortgages for friends just as a favour, but I'd be scared to do it for myself. I do all my dad's banking, but I'm terrible with money for us. I'm scared of failure and being responsible if something goes wrong. Simple things make me happy, like seeing the sea, but I'll get caught up in buying a lifestyle. I'm disappointed in myself. I get sidetracked trying to fit in. I want more confidence so I can get away from all that. I stopped painting after Christmas, like I fell into a trap.

"The past week I've been nauseous and light-headed and I imagine my vision going. I move into my shell to try and control everything and be protected."

Describe your shell?

"Nothing can get at you and you can control how things are. You don't let anything in or out. A barrier. I don't even turn my head; I move very gingerly. There are such contradictions. I hate rules and being tied to timetables, but the only way to counteract being restless was to have a pattern and routine. But I hate being tied to a time. I kick against the rules. Feel closed in. It's a struggle being punctual; I feel trapped. I spend all my time trying to feel free. Going out for coffee anchors me. Then I come out of my shell, like shedding a layer, liberating someone, exposing something. Getting rid of baggage, exposing a new part."

Describe anchored?

"Anchored is stable, safe, immovable, strong."

Dreams?

"I was out in the sea to knee deep. My husband and the kids were surfing. I was dizzy. I turned to look at the land but couldn't see which way. I shouted to my husband to help me but he was chatting to people. I was so frightened!"

"I love the sea, but I have a real fear of water. I get dizzy if I go into the sea. I never swim. It feels so powerful, pulling me in. There's no way out; it's alive. You can't see the bottom. Everything I love about it is what I'm scared of. Very scared of going underwater. I can't bear sea creatures – they're slimy and unknown. I hate shells on the beach; you can't see what's in them. In the sea if there's the slightest brush on my leg, I'll run out. I can't bear anything that scurries like mice or rats. I like to see things. For them to be solid."

Prescription: Venus Mercenaria 200C

Follow-up

Dream after remedy: "We were all together in an underground car park. We went down in the lift to get to the car, but the crowd was trying to move away from this mad man. He was fluid with this weird distorted

face. He walked along with us. We saw the car. I said to my husband, 'Get to the car, close the doors and drive.'" But the man was in the way. He was fluid, grey-blue, like water, with moving features, but man-shaped. I awoke in panic.

"Since then I'm so much more confident. The fog has cleared. A little lump came up on my neck. I saw the GP and he said it was a little cyst. I took him at his word, very out of character, and didn't panic. I realize all my fears are really about cancer, but the fog has cleared and I can see it clearly.

"The other big thing is what people think. I'm lots better at taking myself out of it. I can't recognize myself in terms of confidence and people are way more respectful. I feel people like me more. There's a hierarchy in life, and it's usually the more powerful people I worry about, yet I'd like their qualities. It's always those people that I worry don't like me, but, since the remedy, I realize people don't care as much as I think they do. Before all I could see was a cloud, but now I see the contradiction in what I'm thinking.

"The very thought of cancer has paralyzed me in the past. I freeze as if it's World War II; I hunch over. Since the fog has cleared, I realize that's the basic fear. I remember in my teens my parents talking about friends with cancer, and they died. Adults call it the Big C" and whisper. You're closeted, frightened; there's no way out. Behind closed doors you think they don't have a chance – the end. It's here now, always coming, waiting for you.

"More and more, I can't lie and hide my opinions. I spoke out at a dinner party. I need a chair where I can get out, my escape route. I can feel very trapped. I'm a fish out of water., but much more confident.

"The other thing is that I went out further in the sea, without fear and having to get back to land. I feel much less stressed. I didn't get dizzy, didn't have to run to land.

"I've got my personality back since the remedy. The opinionated, thoughtful bit of me that had been buried."

Other medical uses of *Venus mercenaria*

Cardiac research, Haematology, Leukemia, Cancer, Antibiotics

The clam heart serves as a model for studies of cardiac muscle control in conventional medical research.

Mercenene, extracted from the clam liver, is used in cancer research, particularly in relation to the treatment

of leukemia. It was found to slow tumor growth in mice.¹⁵

Cancer: The transparent eggs and embryos of the clam make it suitable for studying cell division. In the

15 [www.manandmollusc.net/beginners_uses/3.html] Last accessed October 2008.

1980's MBL researchers¹⁶ discovered that a protein in the developing clam, called cyclin, was responsible for regulating cell division. This is being studied in relation to cancer research: "Further work... revealed that some cancer cells produce too much of a particular kind of cyclin at the wrong time, causing cells to divide inappropriately and contributing to cancer. Today, physicians are exploring the use of cyclins for early diagnosis of breast cancer."¹⁷

Some twenty years earlier MBL researcher Laszlo G. Együd had discussed the presence of a cell growth inhibitor termed 'retine' and its biological antagonist (which promoted cell growth) called 'promine.' He was studying this in clams, fungi and various human tissues. He found retine to have carcinostatic activity; in other words, it stopped cancer cells multiplying. He termed it an 'autobiotic.'¹⁸

Traditional Chinese Medicine: Hai Ge Ke. In China, the two most commonly used clams used in Traditional Chinese Medicine are the triangular sail clam (*Hyriopsis cumingii* L.) and the wrinkled crown clam (*Cristaria plicata* L.). Uses: To clear heat, direct lung Qi down: transform thick sputum with chest and/or rib pain. To soften hardness, dissipate nodules: phlegm fire goitre and scrofula; epigastric pain, acid reflux.

Signature and Symbol

Love, heart, blood and DNA: *ancestral message.* Open or closed valves: clamming up. The question of exchange: giving and receiving; money and spiritual exchange. Connected or disconnected? Reconciliation of opposites: war and peace, male and female, dark and light, death and birth. Passport to the world of spirit.

Love, Heart and Blood¹⁹

Venus, also known as Aphrodite, is goddess of Love, born of the sea. Despite her name, Botticelli's Venus²⁰

16 [<http://www.mbl.edu/inside/about/animals.html>] Last accessed October 2008, Ruderman, J Hunt, T.

17 Ibid.

18 Együd, Laszlo G., *Studies on Autobiotics: Chemical Nature of Retine*, MBL, Biochemistry, Vol. 54, 1965, pp. 200-202.

19 This initial section is partially based on an article published in *The Homeopath*, journal of The Society of Homeopaths UK, Winter 2005, 24:3, p75, editorial, by Jo Evans.

20 Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, Medici Gallery, Flor-



(above) hovers between sea and shore, transported from the depths of the ocean on a giant scallop shell, *not* a clam. According to mythology, she has been born of the sea, fully formed as a woman. Her face is classically beautiful and innocent but somehow wistful; her body is voluptuous, yet cold, looking more like marble than flesh. Zephyrs blow her towards the land, while Ores attempts to slip her naked body into a flowered coat.

Venus seems unaware of her nakedness; hers is an inward gaze. She is lost in her own thoughts, rather than fully participating in her grand arrival. Her right hand appears to be making a strong expression of emotion, held over her heart chakra. Etymologically, *Venus* is related to the Sanskrit *vanas*: meaning loveliness, longing, desire. Botticelli seems to suggest that desire is a beautiful, innocent, inner sensation. In language and time, the word *vanas* mutates into such diverse meanings as venerate and venereal.

Symbolically shells are synonymous with the feminine, watery principle: the universal matrix, birth, regeneration, life, love, marriage, fertility, the vulva and sexual passion. Mollusc shells are also symbols of the moon and virginity.²¹ The expression 'coming out of our shell,' implies becoming more communicative and integrating more with others, instead of hiding behind a self-created, protective barrier. There is a strong sense of being separated and a desire to remain isolated in the shelled sea remedies.

Intimacy generates the desire to create privacy: to cover, protect or hide. We know this symptom so well from *Calcarea carbonica*, from the oyster shell (which fears being observed and has great self-consciousness),

ence. Italy

21 Cooper, J.C., 1978, *An Illustrated Encyclopaedia Of Traditional Symbols*, publ. Thames and Hudson, UK.



Aphrodite

but we often ignore the amorous, even lascivious, side of *Calcarea carbonica*, mistakenly characterizing the remedy as sedentary and sexless. A similar contradiction can be seen in the fact that we think of calcium as the enemy of the heart. The degree to which arteriosclerosis affects heart arteries is related to the presence or absence of calcium (although other factors play a role too); but calcium, the stuff of shells, is also absolutely necessary for cardiac muscle control.

In Botticelli's painting, Venus, goddess of love, steps out of her isolation in the sea (a symbol of the collective unconscious and oneness, as in the uterus), and out of a hard shell, onto land, as if walking into society (consciousness, integration and birth) with an open and pure heart. Thus, Venus is born of the sea, bringing a message of love.

As a remedy, *Venus mercenaria* has the feeling of being separated from the world and feels cold emotionally, as well as experiencing an icy coldness in isolated parts of the body. Dr Raeside the original prover wrote that "Thinking and coordination were more disturbed than feelings".²² The cases cited above show the extreme sense of alienation experienced by the *Venus mercenaria* patient, with a simultaneous desire to connect deeply and genuinely with another. The *Venus mercenaria* patient also experiences a sensation of tenderness over their heart. Generally they feel 'tender,' sensitive to touch, as if bruised. The clam is used in cardiology research, while mercenene, extracted from the clam liver, is used in leukemia research. The visual signature reveals a heart shape and the natural history shows that the clam lives by means of its valve system.

Venus, or Aphrodite, has been portrayed in many forms over time, from the bulbous and fecund Venus of Lespugue,²³ a mammoth ivory figurine, to Botticelli's cold and distant blonde. Botticelli's Venus – with averted eyes and marble-flesh, one hand over her secretly straining heart, the other shyly covering her

modesty – is close to the emotional state of the remedy *Venus mercenaria*.

Money or Spiritual Exchange?

The clam serves mainly as a food to humans. Its external shell does not have the beauty of *Pecten* or other collectible shells; however its value is hidden in the purple interior.

The inner purple-colored shell of *Venus mercenaria* was used by the Native American Indians as the basis for the worked shell bead known as wampum, used for medicine rituals, council ceremonies, ornamentation, as a memory aid for an agreement and as an important element in marriage ceremonies. Later, colonialists (mainly Dutch, English, French and American) adopted it as a form of currency, and it was used to pay taxes, buy goods, and in every sense, as money. This redefinition of wampum is something that Native American Indians wish to identify as a misinterpretation of the true, or originally intended, meaning of wampum.

The Hiawatha Wampum Belt encapsulates the origins of the Haudenosaunee's guiding principle, The Great Law of Peace, which was first described to them by a man called the Peacemaker: "Basically it's called the Great Law of Peace because it's aimed at satisfying people's needs to use their minds instead of violence to settle their problems. So it is really aimed at passions. It's aimed at hatreds, and it constructed a very elaborate culture based on negotiations and on the principle of coming together to solve problems using your mind and not your weapons," says John Mohawk, Ph.D. (Seneca) Professor of American Studies, SUNY Buffalo.²⁴

The proving and clinical data show that *Venus mercenaria* has a strong desire to be left in peace. They are very sensitive to sounds. They withdraw and do not like to be looked at. They will fight for personal space. Violent dreams. Inner battles. Aversion to conflict and confrontation. Tender hearted.

No exchange: "Not for love or money"

The heart connects us. It connects us emotionally to other people, in all our relationships. It also pumps the blood that unites all the organs and systems of the body, having two chambers, one giving and one receiving. Each chamber has an opposite aim, but works for the good of the whole, unifying our physical interior in all its diverse physiological activities.

The saying, 'not for love or money' (love and money being the two words that make up the name *Venus mercenaria*) means: no way, absolutely impossible for me to do or find or get or give what you are asking – for any amount of love or money. The phrase conveys the implicit impossibility of giving or exchanging, despite

22 Raeside, JR., *A Proving of Venus mercenaria (clam)*, British Homoeopathic Journal 1962 :51(3): pp. 200-206.

23 Circa 25000BC, Musée de l'Homme, Paris.

24 [www.pbs.org/warrior/content/timeline/crisis/hiawatha.html] Last accessed October 2008.

a desire to.

The remedy picture of *Venus mercenaria* is of someone who feels 'cut off' in his or her shell. In the 1600's clams were known as *clampes*, being clamp-like, with their valves tightly shut. There is a saying: "*happy as a clam*" (1636), which was originally "*happy as a clam in the mud at high tide*;" i.e., when it cannot be accessed, dug up and eaten. If we 'clam up,' we are finding it difficult to speak or communicate, usually out of fear. In the Raeside proving, provers felt cut off, detached, with a tender, bruised feeling and a painful tenderness over the heart. The feeling is: don't touch me, don't come near or even make a noise around me. The cases cited above corroborate this.

An anemic picture emerges, and on a deeper level of hematology, it is worth noting that extract of clam liver is used in leukemia research.

The remedy proving also shows the symptom: paralysis of the diaphragm. If the diaphragm is paralyzed, there can be no exchange of oxygen. The diaphragm is the muscular partition separating the abdominal cavity from the chest cavity. It is of vital importance in respiration, controlling the volume of the lungs as air is inhaled and exhaled. [DD *Pecten*, the scallop, a remedy for asthma, with a sensation of constriction in the chest and ribs. In *Venus mercenaria* the shell and animal are used, in *Pecten* just the animal.]

Reconciliation of Opposites

Dark and Light: The purple, more valuable wampum is made from the innermost shell of *Venus mercenaria*: "Wampum is a worked shell bead (made into strings, belts and other configurations) that was manufactured along the Eastern Seaboard. Its colors of purple to purple-black and white had, and still have, cosmological significance for the Haudenosaunee Indians. Purple is associated with earth, night and the mischievous forces of creation and white is associated with sky, day and the benign forces of creation. The story of creation includes creator twins who embody these opposing forces."²⁵

The purple inner clam shell was considered more valuable and often used to represent the darker or sometimes negative parts of a message, balancing the light, white parts of the shell

In Case 1, from Dr Hui Bon Hoa, cited above, the patient said of her own character: "lively, impulsive, erratic, gay when well, irritable when ill. Black ideas, sees everything black." The clinical material presented here reveals a strong sense of darkness and light, being in the light of day or hidden in darkness. The patient in Case 1 saw everything black and felt she had a helmet over her head. Case 2 buried her head under a blanket

and felt better when closing her eyes. Case 3 longed for the space, light and bright colour of the coast, and talked about the void and of getting back "the bit of me that was buried;" she could not bear the unseen that lurked in the depths of the sea.

Venus's dual nature is apparent in the poem by Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), *The Fortune Favoured*. Consider here the contrast between the German word for beauty, *schön*, and the etymological roots of the English word, *shine*, in contrast with the darkness. Luminosity is a quality associated with beauty, and aesthetic or other forms of approval are often synonymous with words for light: brilliant, radiant, being a star.

"Zürne der Schönheit nicht, das sie schön ist. . .

Jede irdische Venus ersteht, wie die erste des Himmels,

Eine dunkle Geburt aus dem unendlichen Meer."

"Do not rage at beauty for her luminosity. . .

Every earthly Venus, like the goddess Venus,

Is a dark birth, emerging from an eternal sea."²⁶

Death and Birth: In Greco-Roman funerary rites shells were used to signify resurrection; shells were also used in baptism rites.

Native American Indians considered wampum, from the clam-shell, one of the ceremonial passports to the world of spirit. In the story of Hiawanta it is the wampum strings which dry his tears, heal his grief over the murder of his family, and bring an end to his lonely wandering. Again, in this theme of holding on and letting go, the valves or gateways between two worlds appear.

Male and Female: The clam is partially hermaphroditic. In Cyprus, a bearded hermaphroditic Venus called Aphroditus was worshipped long before she took on the more familiar, blonde goddess form seen in Botticelli's painting. In Greek mythology, "Hermaphroditus was the son of Aphrodite and of Hermes, endowed with the beauty of both deities. When a grown youth, he was bathing in a fountain wherein dwelt the nymph Samalcis who fell in love with him. Samalcis embraced him, pleading for his love, which he rejected, but she prayed to the gods that she might be indissolubly united with him. The prayer was answered and a being sprang into existence which united the qualities of male and female. Of Eastern origin, Hermaphroditus came to Greece through Cyprus. In the early period, in Cyprus, a masculine Aphroditus with beard and female garb, possessing a phallus, was worshipped side by side with the goddess Aphrodite. When this masculine Aphroditus came to Greece, he changed character and became a

25 *Wampum And Money: Explorations Of Religion As Exchange*, Philip P. Arnold, via email

26 Translation by Jo Evans, with acknowledgement to Geoffrey Grigson's translation in *The Goddess of Love*, 1978, Quartet, London.

god of dual nature known as Hermaphroditus.”²⁷

In representations from the time before Christ, beginning around the fourth and third centuries BC, Venus usually emerges from two valves of the scallop, not one. Ancient history shows representations of Venus as white, black, hermaphrodite and female. She is usually at least partially naked, and often emerges from, or appears with, a scallop shell. In earlier sculptural representations the valves of the scallop are open at her back, causing the two halves of the ridged shell to appear as wings. She is also associated with the dove and the rose.

The Greek Venus was Aphrodite Philommedes: lover of genitals and lover of laughter; it lends her a quality of lightness in the sexual realm. She was born of the foam created when Kronos cut off his father’s testicles and flung them into the sea, and she was said to have stepped ashore at Cyprus after maturing in her saline matrix.

The metamorphosis of the large-bellied, full-breasted earth-mother incarnations of Venus into Botticelli’s demure blonde Venus was also indirectly aided by another shell, *Murex purpurea*. The Phoenecians (*phoinike*: land of purple) traded in the Tyrian dye through to Cyprus: “Kythera, off the Pelopones, where Aphrodite had the most ancient of her Greek temples, may have served them as one of the fishing stations

27 Kyriazis, Constantine D. *Eternal Greece*. Translated by Harry T. Hionides. A Chat Publication. p. 48.

where they collected the small molluscs which gave the dye”.²⁸ Apart from their purple coloring, however, the two shells share almost no similarities as homeopathic remedies. Geoffrey Grigson’s, *The Goddess of Love*,²⁹ provides a wealth of information on Venus mythology and history. Aspects of Venus are also explored under *Pecten jacobaeus*, the scallop remedy.

This abridged version is extracted from: *Sea Remedies, Evolution of the Senses*, by Jo Evans, edited by Jenni Tree, published by Emryss. For more information on the book, as well as the contents list and free downloads, please see www.likecureslike.org

About the author: Jo Evans (RSHon, BA Hons) practices homeopathy in London, UK. She is a former editor of “The Homeopath,” quarterly journal of The Society of Homeopaths UK. Her book, “Sea Remedies, Evolution of the Senses” is a culmination of twenty years fascination with sea remedies, and five years of research and writing. A student of English and American literature before training in homeopathy, her background is also in publishing and journalism. AFIH

28 For more information, see under *Murex purpurea*

29 Grigson, Geoffrey, *The Goddess of Love: The Birth, Triumph, Death and return of Aphrodite*. Constable and Co Ltd, 1976, London.