

Lac caninum

Canis lupus familiaris

Canis lupus familiaris, or the domestic dog, is a member of the Canidae family and a subspecies of the wolf or *Canis lupus*. DNA evidence suggests that the dog split from the wolf lineage approximately 100,000 years ago, with archaeological remains demonstrating morphological differences at least 14,000 years ago. One theory is that the dog was bred in Asia from wolves and these disseminated throughout the rest of the world as people traded and traveled. Another theory suggests that there is not one unique ancestor but that different breeds of dogs came from different kinds of wolves and foxes such as the arctic fox, Ethiopian wolf, and the South American maned wolf.

What is remarkable is the extraordinary diversity and rapid plasticity of the dog, ranging in size and color into hundreds of breeds.

Dogs also share similarities with humans making them attractive companions. They are social, trainable and playful. The loyalty they display as pack animals is perceived as love and friendship by humans, and the dog views its human guardian as a member of its pack.

The dog has a polyvalent symbolism, with loyalty, watchfulness, safety and reliability being hallmark characteristics. In addition, the dog is known for attachment, pure friendship, fairness, kindness, compassion and understanding, as well as an ability to forgive and forget.

The dog is also symbolically linked to death. In some ancient cultures the dog is the guardian of the gates of Hades, as well as a psychopompos, serving to guide the dead to the afterlife. Anubis, the Egyptian god of the dead, is represented with the head of a dog or jackal. Garm is a monstrous dog that guards the underworld in Norse mythology.

Dog's milk has been used medicinally for several millennia. Dioscorides, Rhasis, Pliny, Sammonicus and Sextus discuss its varied uses: affections of the ear and eye such as otitis and photophobia, as well as gynecological uses such as ulceration of the os and removal of the fetus. It was also used as an antidote to poison.

The original dog that was milked in the production and proving of this remedy was a Rottweiler. Since that time, different breeds have been used to make the remedy, without apparent concern that these may evidence different qualities.

Common Ailments

Adenoma, prostate / Aphthous ulcers / Arthritis, juvenile / Back pain, cervical, lumbar / Bruxism / Bulimia / Conjunctivitis / Constipation, chronic / Cystitis, recurrent / Diabetes, gestational / Diabetes, senile / Dysmenorrhea / Enuresis / Food intolerance, milk / Gout / Headache, frontal and digestive / Hearing loss, early / Herniation, inguinal / Herniation, lumbar disc / Hyperemesis gravidarum / Hyperprolactinemia / Incontinence, urinary, female / Insomnia / Mastodynia / Ménière's disease / Myopia / Nausea / Neuralgia, trigeminal / Osteoarthritis, hip / Panic / Pharyngitis, chronic / Photophobia / Pituitary insufficiency, human growth hormone / Polyps, vocal cords / Ptyalism of pregnancy / Reflux esophagitis / Sinusitis / Spasm, masseter muscle / Vaginitis, recurrent / Varices, lower limbs / Vertigo

Themes and Symptom Patterns

MOTIFS

Abandonment

Lac caninum tends to fear that their family will abandon them unless they conform to the family's demands. Whether or not this is objectively true, *Lac caninum* perceives this threat to be real and it generates anguish. This remedy is over-identified with the idea of their family, feeling dominated and suffocated by them, as if they can't escape their influence.

Dependent

While all Milks are dependent to some degree on their family, this aspect is especially pronounced in *Lac caninum*, and easily observable in the very first intake. A complicating factor is that they can feel extraordinarily dependent on and obligated to two different families at the same time—their original family and their nuclear family, where they are the spouse and/or parent. In situations where there is conflict, and they cannot adequately serve both, *Lac caninum* can become extremely stressed and confused about what to do.

FUNDAMENTAL THEMES

Familial Identity

To *Lac caninum*, and many other Milks, 'family' seems like a giant entity, a huge monolithic structure that extends back across time, across generations. On the one hand, they tend to feel great pride and admiration for their family, their history, and all that's been accomplished by them. They also feel gratitude to the family for simply being alive, for having been given permission to exist, as well as for the ongoing support that they have received over time. In response, *Lac caninum* feels a tremendous debt to them that must be repaid.

On the other hand, these strong ties can make it difficult to differentiate oneself from the stream and flow of family. The family influence simply feels too strong and too limiting to escape, though *Lac caninum* may not be consciously aware of this. They typically feel as though they must adapt and submit to whatever the family wants, like a small insignificant cog in a much bigger machine. Humbly taking their submissive role in the family, they become completely identified with the family's needs and expectations—some of which seem overwhelming—and cut off from their own individual needs, wants and desires. Because they constantly dread conflict or disapproval, for fear it will lead to rejection, if such an impulse does come into consciousness, they suppress it.

Lac caninum may dream about the ghosts of family members who have passed away. These dreams may suggest the enduring quality of the family even across the boundary of generations and death. Ghosts in general tend to represent something that was unresolved in life that does not allow one to pass over. As such, these images can represent projections of problematic parts of *Lac caninum* as they are unable to differentiate from the family and individuate. These dreams might also point to the pain and regret related to squelching who they are.

Abandonment

Lac caninum tends to be deeply enmeshed with their family and fears any potential abandonment from them; they may be too insecure to manage on their own. In general, they believe that they must please others and avoid conflict or their family might abandon them. If such a loss were to occur, they would be doubly devastated by the inability to give back to their family. In general, they feel a burden to repay all that was done for them, and would feel awful guilt if unable to do so.

Any loss can be especially difficult for them. If a family member dies or goes away, they often suffer terribly for a very long time, all the while having no idea what to do with themselves. As a result, they are not only overwhelmed about the loss itself, but by the fact that they have such a poor ability to cope with it. In other words, it reminds them how truly deficient they are. And it may seem to them as if they are *always* losing someone.

Integration of Instincts

Lac caninum may feel hindered in expressing their own needs, assertiveness and anger. They may actively suppress this part of who they are because they don't have a strong sense of self, and basically subjugate themselves in service to their family. This can lead to anger and frustration, but they're too afraid to let it out for fear it will injure the other person or permanently damage essential relationships.

In their mind, indulging the most minute personal need could have the same effect. A possible break in relationship might, in turn, prevent repayment of the all-important debt to their family, which could inspire tremendous guilt. For these reasons, they don't dare express who they really are, that would be far too risky. Additionally, they often feel that their desires are innately wrong, bad, dirty, disgusting.

Lac caninum is often afraid of injuring others. They may hesitate to ride a bike or drive a car lest they accidentally run somebody over. They might be concerned about walking around the house for fear of stepping on their child's foot, or hesitate to use a knife, as they might not see what they're doing. Such fears may be an expression of suppressed aggression. Somatically, all this constriction may affect their vision, making them myopic, which also gives them an excuse *not* to ride a bike or drive a car.

They may have an ambivalent feeling about animals. They can be mesmerized watching a snake on a footpath or on their TV, as if this creature resonates with some hidden instinctual force inside them. On the other hand, because they are so uncomfortable with their instinctive side, any symbol of this can cause alarm. So the appearance of a snake can also create fear about hidden forces, i.e., their instincts, creeping through the nooks and crannies of their defensive structure and escaping into their conscious life.

Finally, all this suppression may be too much to hold back, and a burst of rage finally punches through. Usually they are more verbally than physically angry; their bark is worse than their bite. Sometimes this anger is directed at a supernatural force, like Mother Nature or God, and they may privately curse, as if this being is somehow responsible for the problems occurring within their family situation.

Irresolution

In most cases, it's extremely difficult for *Lac caninum* to make up their mind because they usually don't know who they are. Even if they could figure out what they wanted, this might conflict with what they think their family prefers. In general, they fear change, but also find the status quo insufferable, so they just stay stuck, unable to move one way or the other.

Even the most basic decisions can be difficult for *Lac caninum*. When choosing a pair of shoes, they're typically more concerned about whether others will like them, and don't have any idea what their own preferences are.

Lac caninum can feel stuck about how they manage their emotions. They have such a bad image of themselves that they tend to stay away from their feelings in general. And when feelings do arise, they're not sure what to share; they don't want to bore or annoy other people so they restrain how they engage their feelings and share their emotions. They just feel blocked at times.

The *Lac caninum* child, even if bright, might appear slow and may struggle with disabilities that affect their communication. Sometimes when they talk, they stammer, as if undecided about what words to choose. This indecision can manifest in their body as well. When elderly, they may have tenesmus, with a strong and sometimes painful urge to urinate or defecate, yet are too blocked to go.

Lac caninum generally has a static temperament and dislikes change. This can make them ambivalent about treatment. Though generally submissive to the doctor, they can become resistant to deeper treatment that attempts to change their way of functioning. Any alteration from the norm, even a positive one, may be too overwhelming to manage.

CHARACTERISTIC THEMES

Dependence // Independence (3)

Lac caninum is one of the most dependent of all the Milks. He tends to be closely tied to the maternal image in his life and feels that he must morph himself to be whatever the family requires: 'I am what you want me to be'. He feels that he cannot possibly survive in life without the support and structure of his original family. When decompensated, he may feel emotionally blackmailed as if the family were saying, "Serve us in the way we require or we'll withdraw support." Some of these issues are represented by his problem with clothes. If he happens to wear clothes that he feels aren't his style, he can have symptoms of being constricted and uncomfortable. This could lead the homeopath to consider a Snake remedy, but the real issue is not about being choked, but about feeling as if one's identity were suffocated. Additionally, he has dreams of being pressured toward the floor, to the ground, by a sense of gravity and weight, not allowing him to rise up and stand on his own feet. This weight is not limited to one area, for example, the perineum as in Sepia, but is felt throughout the entire body.

Obligatory Oblativity (2)

Lac caninum feels that he has no choice but to be oblativous in precisely the way that others, especially his family, need him to be. Thus he tends to become very obsequious to those within his family circle. (It is interesting to note that breast symptoms are more common for this remedy than other Milks.) It's as if *Lac caninum* must consume his body, his blood, to make milk, constantly giving to others at tremendous cost to himself.

Submission

Lac caninum is one of the most adaptable and submissive remedies of the materia medica. He makes himself completely submissive to his family, especially his parents, yielding to their power and authority and dutifully attending to their every need. He may vigilantly attune to others' desires, trying to anticipate what they want before it is even expressed, like a surgeon's assistant with the required tool in hand before it is requested, or a caretaker who, without a word, knows when to run a bath for his employer. Being so obsequious to others impedes his ability to evolve into a differentiated individual.

Immaturity

As with other themes, *Lac caninum* can express immaturity throughout his entire system—mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically. He tends to be relatively young and delayed emotionally; overly dependent on his family and later on his spouse; and generally unable to stand on his own two feet. Physical immaturity might also be expressed by late hormonal development.

Painful Withdrawal

Lac caninum's system can produce different symptoms that require him to withdraw from the world into his own space. Most typically, he gets headaches, which he uses to retire from company into the dark and silence. Though he needs this to feel better

physically, it also provides a temporary break from serving others and is one of the few ways that he can partially connect to himself.

Lac caninum may sustain a variety of small injuries, like falling on the floor and getting bruised. It is difficult to say whether he does this intentionally or subconsciously. Either way, these injuries provide another reason to withdraw. At the same time, they may be how he punishes himself for having an instinctive urge. He fears that such impulses make him less compliant and could create friction with his family. If his family was vegetarian, for example, and he had a desire to eat sausage, he might ‘accidentally’ bite his tongue for even having this thought. In these situations, he seeks refuge more out of shame than a need for repose.

Swelling

Lac caninum, like other Milks, tends to feel strong swelling in the head. Meanwhile there can be an uncomfortable sense that different parts or regions of the body function differently. In terms of swelling, this difference is often felt between the upper and lower parts of the body. If the swelling in the head is much more than that in the belly, *Lac caninum* may have an ambivalent desire for the belly to feel an equal level of pain and congestion to balance the two.

Passive Congestion

Lac caninum has a tendency to retain too much liquid, leading to a heavy, congested feeling, particularly in the lower part of his body. Subjectively, he feels as though there is a blockage impeding flow, just as he feels blocked with his family and with his work. He describes his pains as inescapable, as something he must simply submit to (like his family).

Difficult Discharge

Lac caninum finds it difficult to discharge. He can have the sensation that something is blocked inside and not moving easily to the outside. It may be associated with dryness and inadequate flow of fluids, generating pain when pushing something out. His discharges often leave a little smell or leave a light spot as if he were making a mild, timid attempt to mark his territory.

Symmetry-Asymmetry

Pain appears in one half of the body—either right or left, or upper or lower—and then moves to the other half. There can be many kinds of pain or symptoms, including headaches, skin eruptions and pain in the testes or ovaries. What is specific to *Lac caninum* is that the symptom is generally stronger on one side than the other (and usually stronger on the side where it starts). Thus there may be head pain starting on the right, moving to the left, then returning to the right where it is most painful. Or in PMS, the left breast hurts terribly and then the right breast begins to hurt, though less than on the other side.

COHERENT SYMPTOM GROUPS

Congestive Pain (3)

Lac caninum has a tone that is more vagal than sympathetic. Along with this, he can have a feeling of being cold and flabby, with low blood pressure. All this leads to a state of passive congestion that is typical for Milk remedies. These congestions take place all over the body, especially the head, chest (lungs or breasts), and stomach. There is often a feeling that something is blocked, leading to fullness and eventually to painful congestion. This can be a somatic representation of how his family seems to block the flow of his life and energy. That the congestion is passive is also significant, since *Lac caninum* is such a passive person himself. The pains seem to come toward him and he must simply endure them; there is no other choice. Even so, these pains have a positive aspect in that they allow him to withdraw and enjoy some peace and quiet by himself.

Recurrent Pain (3)

Lac caninum believes that his suffering is unavoidable; it's the price he must pay in life. On a somatic level, this belief manifests as recurrent pains that cannot be avoided—because they keep returning, with slight alterations—and so must simply be endured. A similar pattern occurs in other Milks, though to a lesser degree. Symbolically, this pattern is lunar because it is mutable and cyclical, whereas a solar pattern is immutable and fixed. In some cultures, there is an association between the moon and the wolf—and by extension, his close domesticated relative, the dog.

Digestive Headache

Most *Lac caninum* cases present with a digestive headache. Subjectively, it seems to emanate from deep within his system, traveling to the head and settling in the frontal region. From there, it may extend to other parts of the head or body, including down the spine to the coccyx or the feet. The location of the pain is often symmetrical, starting on one side of the head and moving to the other, or moving from the upper to the lower part of the body. The sensation is an expansion that won't stop and therefore becomes increasingly, painfully compressed when it meets a physical barrier.

Difficult Digestion

Digestive complaints are common and may start with weaning, as if the infant wanted to keep breastfeeding forever. His system is slow to mature and assimilate a variety of foods and changes in feeding patterns. With time, *Lac caninum* never seems to graduate to an adult relationship with food, preferring to avoid complex cuisine for simpler fare that is easier to digest. *Lac caninum* lacks a sophisticated palate and generally derives little enjoyment from the experience of eating.

Hyperphagia

Lac caninum often channels his unexpressed aggression into food. He overeats and then feels guilty about it—either of which can make his stomach upset. He tries to keep his

gluttony secret. When decompensated, he seeks more savory food (but is still unsatisfied), and has a tendency toward bulimia.

Hyperosmia

Lac caninum can have unusually keen senses, particularly sight and smell. When compensated, *Lac caninum* may complain about smelling bad environmental odors that seem to attach themselves to his body. As he becomes more decompensated, he may believe himself to be the cause of these horrendous odors. Feeling terribly guilty about this, he may become obsessive-compulsive about cleaning and washing.

Photophobia

Lac caninum is sensitive to light. This often comes into play with other symptoms such as headache. Photophobia may reflect his desire to withdraw into darkness, and quiet so that he can be alone and undisturbed.

Vertigo

Lac caninum can have vertigo associated with different pathologies such as headaches, Ménière's, cervical rigidity and spasm, stomach complaints with nausea, etc. But if the other complaint resolves, the vertigo often remains or reappears. This symptom can be functional in that it allows him to withdraw. He may like the sensation: feeling detached as if his head were floating away. On a somatic level, vertigo can reflect his inability to be strong and grounded, and to stand on his own two feet.

Symmetrical Eruption

Lac caninum can have a variety of skin eruptions with a symmetrical presentation. Usually there are two types: eruptions that are typically painful for the general population, like herpes, but rather painless for *Lac caninum* and vice versa.

Milk

Lac caninum may crave milk and other *simple* dairy items such as ricotta and mozzarella cheese, rather than more *complex*, strongly flavored, aged cheeses like Parmesan. He may consume these foods to excess even though he has trouble digesting them. With reduced consumption, his symptoms tend to improve.

Organization of Personality

DREAMS

Lac caninum often dreams about family members, present or deceased, some of whom appear as ghosts. These dreams can represent how enmeshed he is with his family. Many dreams highlight how inadequate he feels about himself.

Lac caninum has many dreams about animals, particularly worms, snakes, insects and other (symbolically) dirty creatures that invade his most intimate spaces, like his bathroom, bedroom, and bed. The phylogenetic distance of these animals from humans reveals that these elements of instinct and shadow are poorly integrated and far removed from consciousness. They get very close to him in a way that is aggressive, terrifying and unavoidable, as well as fascinating, compelling, and perhaps sexual.

STRUCTURE & CORPUS

Lac caninum has a weak constitution mentally, emotionally and physically, and he is not able to organize himself in a mature and independent way. Like other Milks, he has an emotional temperament, but tends to clamp down on his emotional expression for fear that he won't be appropriate or will somehow cause injury to someone else.

He can be quite intelligent, using this to be responsible, adaptive and pleasing to others, as well as to avoid potential conflicts. He can accomplish a lot if he commits himself to an ideal of service and stays well-connected to his family structure. However, if there are problems within the family that cause him to not feel supported, his system becomes much weaker.

Like all Milks, *Lac caninum* has a tendency to be sensitive and excitable, but, his corpus, more than the others, reacts efficiently to dampen this down. This tendency to suppress while everything keeps piling up underneath can make him heavy and congested. He has what might be called a 'silent corpus': there is much going on inside, but he is not in touch with it, and very little of this is expressed. As a result, *Lac caninum* may produce a variety of somatic complaints related to congestion such as mastitis, constipation and retention of fluids. But this level of suppression can also predispose to more serious illnesses such as cancer.

VULNERABILITIES

Lac caninum can be deeply impacted by loss, particularly losses associated with family members, such as when children leave home. Any loss seems to get stuck in his system, and so it seems impossible to ever address or resolve his grief and move forward.

Important life choices are overwhelming since he seems incapable of making a decision. This vulnerability may be translated to his body where he becomes stiff and unable to physically respond to a choice.

Lac caninum can be extremely uncomfortable with his instinctive desires and aggressive impulses. He tends to suffocate both and submissively defer to what other people need. In general, to show aggression is much more complicated and problematic for *Lac caninum* compared to the other Milks. Being blocked from expressing this part of himself can lead to decompensation and the development of diseases, like rheumatism, that block the body from natural movement.

Additional points of decompensation can occur when his needs are too severely suppressed; his autonomy must be asserted, e.g., in adolescence, launching into adulthood, or during a crisis; too many demands are made that he cannot uphold; a relationship fails; a family member dies; or he faces a situational change, e.g., moving to a new school as a child or a new job as an adult.

COMPENSATION

Lac caninum does not believe that he can manage on his own. He is enmeshed with his family and relies on them heavily for support. He acts subservient to them, suppressing his own needs and desires in order to support them in whatever ways they specify. By serving them, he believes that he will remain in their good graces, continue to receive their support and avoid potential abandonment. Rather than attempting to develop and mature into adulthood, he maintains a child-like state of dependency on his family. He can remain well-compensated so long as he can receive his family's support; his situation doesn't change too much or too often, and he can continue to fulfill his self-prescribed role of obsequious service to others.

COMPLICATIONS

As with other Milks, *Lac caninum* is between a rock and a hard place. He feels caged and suffocated by his family but is too afraid to wean himself from their support and become his own person. The more he reaches for support, the more dependent he becomes.

Lac caninum mistakenly believes that his family could abandon him if he were to displease them. This fear unnecessarily locks him into a permanent dependency, preventing him from gaining the maturity and self-reliance that would help him to become his own person and overcome such fears.

Different from some other Milks, *Lac caninum* may try to satisfy an ever-growing number of people. This can create more internal conflict since he keeps displacing his own needs, and in a sense, humiliating himself, while taking on relationships that invade him and press down on him. Meanwhile, as things get worse, he must work even harder to adapt, to keep his discomfort hidden, and act as if everything is perfectly fine.

Instinctive anger is designed to help him stand up for himself. When he suppresses this anger so as not to disturb others, he deprives himself of the very tool that could help him overcome the need to be dependent and subservient in the first place.

DECOMPENSATION

When his strategy begins to break down, he can feel depressed, full of anguish and lost. He may seek for guidance: "Tell me what to do. I did whatever possible to make you

happy and now I don't know what else to do." His pathologies of blocking and passive congestion may increase, and his system may gravitate toward a severe, long-lasting pathology. This is an expression of his pain, but also a means to gain sympathy, attention and care. As with less severe symptoms, major decompensation also gives him the opportunity to withdraw. On the other hand, if he is not adequately cared for, he can feel forsaken and alone.

RESTORATION

With treatment, *Lac caninum* can learn to express his needs and become his own person. This means allowing himself to become more assertive without having to feel guilty about it or fear that he is risking his relationship. He can start to have honest discussions with his partner, declaring what is important to him, and have this be understood rather than rejected. This represents a tremendous accomplishment for *Lac caninum*.

Besides helping him to stand up for himself, instinctive aggression can be used in a positive way to help him become more interesting, lively, solid and real. Meanwhile, he can establish healthier connections within his extended family without needing to be so subservient. He can also let go of the expectation that his children need to be dependent and subservient too.

FAMILY SYSTEM

Family of Origin

The original family typically provides much love, care and affection, and a solid structure to lean on. They tend to stress education, politeness and nonviolence, which can influence *Lac caninum* to become conflict-avoidant and compliant. In part because of all that he receives from them, *Lac caninum* feels that he must play an oblativ role. The feeling is that the family is investing in him with the expectation that he will repay this someday with interest.

Nuclear Family

In the nuclear family, *Lac caninum* is usually loyal, devoted, highly responsible, overly giving and extremely affectionate. He tends to create a family system that is enmeshed and codependent. He may impose his presence, like a parent-in-law who insinuates himself into the lives of their grown children, perhaps moving into one of their bedrooms or buying the house next door. He may eventually develop an illness that obliges them to take him in and provide care.

RELATIONSHIP PATTERNS

Lac caninum often looks for a strong partner whom he is subservient to and constantly tries to please. But because he has not developed a self, there is no self for this partner to

interact with. He is so conflict avoidant and subservient that it is difficult to generate any heat or spice in the relationship, and eventually the partner may seek some romantic excitement elsewhere.

In most relationships, he comes across as steady, conservative and boring. Because he lacks passion and personality, he may struggle to find people who want to be in relationship with him. In some cases, he does so by soliciting their pity and compassion.

DEVELOPMENTAL PROFILE

Child & Adolescent

As a child, *Lac caninum* tends to be kind, obedient, yielding and eager to please. Compared to other children, he can be overly dependent though this is not always obviously apparent (given that all children are dependent). Because he lacks inner strength and a sense of self, developmental steps can be extremely difficult for him.

As a teen, he's not usually rebellious but remains consistently obedient. His schoolmates may find him too compliant and somewhat boring. Meanwhile, adapting to his new sexual body and feelings can be quite problematic.

Adult

Despite having worked diligently to achieve a good life, by adulthood, years of neglecting his own needs can take their toll. Though life 'should be good', he's becoming more melancholic, not sleeping well or struggling with illness. His spouse may betray him; his children, defying his values, may support the political opposition. Despite all this, he seldom voices his dissatisfaction, which can drive the depression even deeper into his system.

Elder

As an elder, he becomes increasingly submissive. He may pity himself for not being taken care of the same way he did for others before him. At this age *Lac caninum's* manner and mood may become heavy, making him burdensome to others. He frequently complains about his suffering in order to solicit compassion and support.

TREATMENT ISSUES

On the first visit, if well-compensated, *Lac caninum* can seem open and communicative, relating what he thinks the homeopath wants to hear. As the homeopath goes deeper, she may sense that he is covering up certain things. It may take many sessions for him to access these protected areas, either because he feels ashamed or he simply doesn't know how to explore his own feelings. Some of this information is available in his dreams or the metaphorical images he uses when he talks.

In most cases, *Lac caninum* wants to seduce the doctor into a close, long-term therapeutic relationship. He needs to feel special and favored, or fears that the relationship won't work. As a 'good patient', he may say the treatment is going better than it really is. On the other hand, he may keep generating symptoms so that there's a reason to keep seeing the doctor. In either case, this can be confusing for the doctor. Generally speaking, he is comfortable with having his symptoms treated, but may be afraid of deeper level change. He may be willing to grow so long as he doesn't have to alter his pattern of dependency.

Differential Diagnosis

Lac caninum was the first Milk remedy to be proven and has the largest number of symptoms of Milk remedies in our literature. For these reasons, it is the most well-known and well-studied Milk remedy and inadvertently serves as the paradigm for all the other Milks in our materia medica. This does not mean that it is the most representative remedy of this homeopathic family. What this means is when Milk themes and symptoms appear in a case, the patient is often prescribed this remedy. Preferably, these indicators guide one to the Milk family, where the precise differential could then be made.

While the fundamental themes between this and other Milk remedies are similar, what is specific to *Lac caninum* is an extremely yielding, submissive attitude and an oblativity that feels obligatory. Physical symptoms are similar to other Milks with headaches, sinusitis and vomiting. What is different is that *Lac caninum's* suffering seems so unresolvable and recurrent, hence inescapable, whether the periodicity is daily, weekly, monthly or another interval. While some other Milk remedies such as *Lac vaccinum defloratum* or *Lac asinum* also have periodicity, it is quite marked in the case of this remedy.

At first glance the *Calcarea* salts, especially *Calcarea carbonica*, may be somewhat difficult to distinguish from *Lac caninum*. Both are very dependent, submissive, and irresolute. They share many symptoms of physical pathology such as headaches, breast pathology, and symptoms of passive congestion. They have similar relationships with milk and food. However, there are some essential differences. The *Calcareas*, unlike most of the Milks, don't struggle to develop their own identity or to become independent. These remedies are *materially* dependent on another person, most likely a partner, to feel secure in life, whereas Milk remedies are *emotionally* dependent upon their original family, and the *idea* of family in its broadest sense, for their security. Different from *Calcareas*, *Lac caninum* feels immense gratitude and strong ties to his family, and is careful not to rock the boat lest he displease them and hurt their feelings, or worse, be rejected and abandoned.

A fairly decompensated case of *Lac caninum* can be compared to *Calcarea bromatum*, *Calcarea silicata* or *Calcarea fluoricum*. In these particular *Calcarea* remedies, the strong dependence on another, more powerful person can seem like servitude. They might allow this individual to take extreme advantage of them to the point that they become debased, doing whatever they must not to be alone. A similar subjugation can

occur for a decompensated *Lac caninum* who strives, in a very plastic way, to be whatever the other person wants him to be.

Considering the theme of compulsory oblativity, we can compare *Lac caninum* with *Rhus toxicodendron* and some of the Rosaceae, especially *Prunus*. *Lac caninum* is oblativous because he is so dependent on and enmeshed with his family. *Rhus toxicodendron*'s service, in the form of practical help, is directed more to a group or community, and specifically those who comply with the idealized standards of that community. Break the rules or question convention, and that service is no longer merited. Neither *Lac caninum* nor *Prunus* impose their ideals on those they serve. *Prunus*, like *Lac caninum*, directs her care primarily toward family members, though *Prunus* will also provide extensive help to friends. Both prefer to serve others rather than seek pleasure for themselves or attend to their own needs. Whereas *Prunus* wants to exemplify a personal idealized standard of altruism, *Lac caninum* simply wants to gain approval and maintain a secure place in the family.

Lac caninum is one of the most irresolute remedies in our materia medica. Other remedies that struggle so severely with this issue include some of the Carbon remedies, especially *Carbo vegetabilis*, as well as *Carcinosinum*, *Onosmodium* and *Lepidium bonariense*. *Lac caninum*'s irresolution stems from an undeveloped sense of self and an over-identification with his family, whereas the Carbons do not generally have a strong family connection. Their indecision is more related to their weakness and fatigue, as if they don't have the strength and stamina to participate fully in life and proactively make decisions; they would rather simply withdraw. Further reflective of this tendency to be passive and non-participatory, when forced to make a decision, Carbons have an easier time to say what they don't like than what they do.

Carcinosinum comes from a loving and protective family she feels obligated to please by being smart and successful. She does the same with numerous relationships outside of her family, attempting to meet the expectations of those who love and esteem her. Her irresolution stems in part from the fact that all these expectations are not in alignment and may conflict with one another. Similar to *Lac caninum* there is a tension between learning to become her own person and please herself and pleasing others—but while *Lac caninum* has only his own family to please, *Carcinosinum* feels she must meet the expectations of many others and has greater assertiveness and drive toward individuation.

Onosmodium's irresolution comes from making mountains out of molehills. He hesitates on decisions about easy tasks, believing they may take much more effort than he can muster. For this reason, when he does engage to possibly do something, he constantly over-prepares. Even in everyday physical movements, he may lift his leg much higher than necessary to clear an obstacle, or approaches picking up his cell phone like he is curling a 5-lb. weight.

Lepidium, in contrast to *Carcinosinum* and *Lac caninum*, does not usually have strong support from her family. She tries to care for others according to her own unmet needs. "I suffered because my family did not recognize or support me. I will do my best so that others do not have to suffer as I did." The irresolution of *Lepidium* stems from the

conflict that doing so much for others causes her own needs to go unmet again. “I never have time for myself because I am always helping my friends.”

Other remedies to consider include *Cocculus*, *Candida albicans* and *Saccharum album*. Each of these can, like *Lac caninum*, be very oblativ in a plastic, obsequious way. Like *Lac caninum*, *Cocculus* is oblativ in order to guarantee her place in the family, in this case, an idealized, loving family that she never wants to leave. *Candida albicans* is a peacekeeper who masochistically inhibits her own anger to keep harmony in the home (often leading to skin somatization). *Saccharum album* has a similar difficulty coping with suppressed anger and aggression, preferring to act sweet—with no hint of discord—even when there is good reason to be upset. Like *Lac caninum*, she struggles with issues of loss. While all these remedies are hyper-adaptable, *Lac caninum* is especially so, attempting to become what the other person expects him to be.

Case of Matilde

Matilde is 28 years old and has a striking appearance, in large part owing to her expressive eyes and face. Despite her strong myopia and thick glasses, her eyes are extremely communicative. They inspire tenderness, special attention and a feeling of protectiveness toward her.

She is soberly dressed and tries as well as she can to hide her abundant bosom. She designs ceramic tiles while attending night school in hopes of getting a better job and achieving other dreams and desires.

[*Matilde begins:*]

Eight years ago I had a very strong burning pain, then a ‘loss’ [spotting]. I did not menstruate again for another six months so the gynecologist prescribed the Pill. I continued to see this doctor, but also others in order to ask for their advice. When I stopped taking the Pill, I did not have my cycle for eight months. I also went to a psychotherapist and, thanks to his relaxation exercises, I seldom get burning pains anymore. However, when I do they make up for all the ones I missed.

§ Recently, while in class, I had burning and then a ‘loss of blood’ (*perdita di sangue*). The pain was very strong, reaching all the way to my navel.

§ I always have this pain since then, especially when I am nervous or uncomfortable. The only way to get rid of it is to use the bidet with cold water and drink a lot of water. I drink 2-3 liters of water, one right after the other. It’s as if the pain is somehow concentrated and has to be diluted. I always try to drink a lot to avoid it coming. § The pains are very strong at the beginning of the cycle and as soon as I take the Pill. § I don’t feel any ailment in particular, but I feel better if I don’t take it. I don’t like to take drugs or chemicals that interfere with my body.

§ I was in Florence and studied architecture, but I stopped when I became engaged to a boy from my town. § I always wanted to attend art school, but my mother would not

permit it because she didn't think it would lead to a good job. I do not like my job at all, but by grace at least I have one.

§ Eighteen months ago my sight started to wane. I am being treated with *strong lenses*. § I noticed that I couldn't see very well from a distance. In the meantime, I am taking bilberry, beta-carotene and vitamin E. § I have difficulty driving at night. The light from oncoming headlights appears refracted. If someone is walking in front of me, I am afraid I will hit him. They seem right there! It's true, I do use the computer nine hours a day.

I wake up with clenched teeth. Also, my jaw hurts. § It wakes me up during the night. § I only have pain at night. § I don't have any dental problem, and there is no damage to my teeth at the moment. But they say that is the reason I used to—and still—suffer from terrible headaches § Really terrible! The pain bounces from one side to the other, and it seems as if my head is going to explode from the pressure.

§ Eating is the only thing that I can do for it. § When I was a child, my mother would give me a cup of milk. If the headache were strong, she would give me broth. After drinking, I would regain my strength and feel better. This was her opinion, but actually I would throw up. Maybe that's why I felt better. § In my opinion the vomiting was a release, but she insists that her preparation is what really helped. Actually I do not like anything she cooks. That might be the reason I eat the way I do. I wonder if the food reaches my head and that's why my head feels like blowing up.

§ I have had headaches since I was a child and have the same headache symptoms my mother has. My memory of it goes back to before I was 10 years old. It would come on before or after the menstruation, seldom during. If the cycle is interrupted I get a headache apart from my menses.

§ My menarche came when I was 10, but I was already suffering from headaches before that. § They can be very strong and last two days. § I feel a sort of tingling sensation on one side, then it spreads all over my head, all at once. It comes on suddenly, and a few hours later, it feels like an explosion. It always starts from a different point. If the headache starts out localized in one area, it does not spread to the whole head, but it can change places. My neck becomes very rigid, on one side or the other. § I cannot stand up. I have to stay alone and motionless in the dark with closed eyes.

§ Strong smells and noises irritate me. Perfumes, cheese and stewed foods affect me. § I feel nauseous, and if I throw up, my headache stops, but not always. That was more common when I was a child. Pain medicines do not have any effect on me. § Milk will bother me for sure, but whenever I go home, I can't tell my mother that I don't want the milk she prepares for me. So I vomit.

§ I used to throw up quite often because of dizzy spells. § The first diagnosis was Ménière's, but I don't believe it. § Because of how this comes on. When I feel the headache starting, I feel bad and become deeply worried.

§ The emotional sensation is sort of like being lost: “My God, how can I get back home?” Anyone who is not taking care of me—I feel like I could rip them to pieces with my teeth. § How do they *not* understand that I need some help?

I am really moody. I am calm and serene one minute, and in the next, I pull such a long face. § I've always been like that, but it got worse after I started my diet three years ago.

§ Now I eat a lot of fruits and vegetables—some foods I just can't eat. I am a little better if I stay away from certain foods: they make me gain weight and I am afraid they will make me feel bad. Also, I might vomit and have diarrhea.

§ If it were up to me, I would eat every kind of food, then vomit after eating. But then I feel guilty. Yet I need to eat something or I get a strange sensation as if—I cannot explain. I am a very emotional type of person, and I can't translate all this into words.

§ When I get this burning, I cannot have sexual intercourse. I don't have a desire for it. I often have some red pimples on my thighs—which move from one side to the other. § I never see just one of these by itself. One appears here and soon another appears there. It's just like my headaches.

§ Apart from work and study, I am really fond of dogs. I am in debt just so I can have a house in the countryside where I can keep a dog. § It's enough that it barks and has four paws—all are beautiful animals.

§ I used to dream of a very large black wolf with eyes as red as rubies. It was completely dark in the room where I was playing. I was the only one that could see it and it called to me. It started to speak to me as if we were friends. I was afraid, despite that it only spoke to me. In the end, everything went well. I often had that dream when I slept with my parents. We lived in a house in the country, and I had to sleep with them. When I started sleeping with my grandmother, I stopped having that dream.

§ I often dream about snakes, but it is because I like them. In the dream I have them inside my house or I bring them with me in the car. I often dream of a cobra; I feel very attracted to it but I am also afraid. I hate the slimy snakes that hide among the leaves because you never know where they are. I would dream that the bed or the room was full of snakes. It gives me angst that they are so slimy, slender and small.

Follow-up

Based on well-known repertory symptoms, I prescribe Lac caninum 200c for four days and then have her continue with placebo.

Two months later she returns for her first follow-up. During this period she does not contact me at all. When she arrives to the consultation, she is quite enthusiastic.

[*She begins:*]

As soon as I started your treatment, I decided to stop the Pill. I noticed that I did not have acne or pimples all over my body as usual. And I had no more burning, not even

before my menses. Before I came it was nearly constant, perhaps because I am a nervous person. I had nothing at all!

I originally came here to regulate my period. This time it was more profuse and came by itself without having to take anything! § I notice that I have no more pain in my breasts at all. I'm so happy. Even my period is much less painful.

§ Since I reacted so well there is something else I would like to improve. § I need something to help me answer promptly, and to say what I mean when I am at work and in my daily life. § I never know what I can say or what I must say. I think my key phrase is "*I am as you want me.*" I think this is why men tire of me. § I appreciate their personality, but in the end, all they get from me is some kind of faithful toy. § I am the same in my family. You know my father never took notice of me; he was usually out hunting. § My mother always makes me feel as though I'm not as she wants me to be. Somehow I try to look at this as an opportunity to learn how to better please her.

At this moment she says nothing else and starts to sob. After a while she says: You know, when I was a child I thought many times that I was just there to keep her company. Despite her fucking care, nothing that I wanted to do was good enough. I'm not a Xerox copy of her! Just because she gave birth to me does not give her the right to expect I will be her lifelong servant.

This is the first time I heard such a strong expression from this usually polite and proper woman.

§ She doesn't ask me directly for what she wants from me, but makes me suffer all the same if I don't comply. § I always had to go on vacation with my parents and so I always felt split in two: between them and my boyfriend. It's not really about my boyfriend; it's more about how *I* want to be with my boyfriend.

In other words, the issue is who she wants to be with her boyfriend, based on her projections and expectations, which may conflict with how she is with her parents. Ultimately this says more about who she is.

§ The issue is I don't have the courage; I'm not able. And I suffer even more because of this. I feel broken, *split in two* and then neither of these two parts is happy—each one injures the other. It's like a mirror reflected in another mirror, breaking into it—not even that—they both break and shatter over me.

[She continues to cry and after a long pause, she says:]

Can you see that even with you, I'm not able to talk directly without thinking about what I want to say? The second time is always better no matter what I say or what I do. I *must* make a mistake the first time, because if I don't, I'm not able to learn.

I have the impression that humans, even animals, learn from mistakes.

§ The fact is that whenever I make a mistake, my mother takes out her stick. *[This is a figurative rather than literal expression meaning that her mother does not accept or attempt to understand her mistakes.]*

And what happens when you are able to do something well?

§ When I do something well? I don't know what I do well. I do whatever I can, as best as I can, but I never receive any approval. I never receive any real support, not even from men.

There is a long silence, after which she begins to shed some tears. I decide to change the subject and ask about her sleep.

§ I still wake up clenching my teeth. Not just that; often I wake up because I bite the inside of my cheek. I do this even during the day. It's like a nervous tic; it's what I do in order to calm down. § Anything can trigger a moment of stress. A few days ago I was looking at a beautiful drawing—a field of poppies. I became choked up and started biting my cheeks. I was crying and I had to bite the inside of my cheek in order not to cry.

Why is this situation so significant?

§ I get immersed and carried away—when I read a good book; when I design; when I'm watching a movie; when I immerse myself, I'm really taken into that realm. I do it with such intensity that it's traumatic to detach from that experience and come back to normal life.

It's as if I have two parallel worlds that move together but never merge. I'm so protective of this; I love it. But it creates such strong emotions with all things.

And this is very private; I never allow anyone to enter this world of mine. § Not even my boyfriend. This is something that is just mine and allows me to be who I really am. § It is made only of pure instinct and pure emotion. I can't explain it to you. I only know that when I feel this so strongly, I have to cry. I don't know what else I can do, and in that moment I also feel a kind of fear.

I haven't told you something important. I'm really in trouble now because I decided to leave my work and I am getting married.

Instead of saying this with a happy expression, she looked very sad, as if she had to go to a funeral.

§ I will be the accountant for my boyfriend and I will work in his gas station. I'm happy but I had to fight with my family because they don't like it at all. My mother drives me crazy.

I am really shocked. She declares how fundamental her emotional life is for her; in the meantime, she is marrying someone whom she doesn't trust enough to reveal her intimate world. And she is giving up her artistic talent to work as an accountant in a gas station. Her expression clearly reveals how upsetting this is for her—as if she were subjecting herself to a prison sentence. I thought that the remedy, Lac caninum, might be helping a little, but there was not significant movement. I prescribe Lac caninum 10M and don't hear from her again until she comes in for a follow-up three months later.

[She begins:]

Now my period comes two days early! *[Her cycle is now 26 days.]* I no longer have spotting at night; this never happened even when I took the Pill. Before I could only have my period with medicines. This is really a revelation! Even the burning I had is completely gone—just a bit before my period, but it's light.

§ I still bite my cheek during the day. It helps me cool down and relieve my stress. Now I bite so that I can even have a little bit of blood. § It's a kind of internal relief. I never allow other people to see how worried I am. § I keep biting; I keep clenching my teeth during the day. I am pretty sure I only do this during the day; before I would wake with sore cheeks and I don't anymore. This might mean I am sleeping much better.

§ I have a recurrent dream every time I have to face something difficult in my life. I had a professor of literature who was really despicable and would yell at me and call me stupid in front of the class. She would apologize later, but I was so embarrassed that her apology was meaningless.

This really happened and you still dream about it?

§ I do and whenever it happens I wake up almost in tears and say to myself, "Thank goodness, I'm not at school anymore."

[She indicated with her hands that she could not talk about this anymore. I asked about her wedding.]

§ I decided to honeymoon in Africa and I hope to have direct contact with a snake. I have always been very attracted to these animals and I would like to visit a serpentaria and touch a real one. *[Though she always loved snakes, previously she was afraid to touch one.]*

Wow! You would like to touch a snake? What happened to you?

§ I don't know what happened to me. I changed. What can I tell you? I changed my relationship with snakes. § These are the only documentaries I never miss on TV, even if they give me goose bumps. But it's stronger than me; I cannot pull myself away.

Why do you think you like looking at these animals?

§ I have the impression that I'm seeing myself. They have a double side, a mysterious personality that they never show others, just as I do. § This is a quality of mine. This is my strength. Those around me never know if I'm telling the truth or a lie. My truth is too absurd for other people to bear—I'm always around very rational people. Snakes always seem to be hiding and then coming out of nowhere. They fascinate me—especially the cobra.

I have the impression that Matilde is improving and prefer to continue with a placebo. I ask to see her in two months. The beginning of the consult is always about her cycle. Then she surprises me by bringing up various snippets, followed by a quick change of topics. She gives me a bit of intriguing information, but it's always difficult for her to go deeper.

§ The first periods I had were much fuller. § Now they come every month and are regular—not as profuse as these last few months. During this last period I had no symptoms at all, not even a little burning. I had a little pain and burning with the one before while I was on vacation

Were you on your honeymoon?

§ Yes. When I was on my honeymoon trip I had some absurd [vaginal] burning and then I started to spot, and then I had my period. As soon as I returned home, there was no more pain, no more burning. You know, I was in Kenya.

Tell me more...

§ I saw the snakes in the serpentaria. I was hoping to have a picture taken of me with a python. I also saw snakes during the safari.

[She changes topics:]

I used to chew and grind my teeth during sleep and would wake up with pain in my jaw. I had a ridge inside my cheek where I used to bite. Now it is rare for me to bite myself. I would like to bite someone else.

Who would you like to bite?

§ First of all, my boyfriend [*her husband now*]*—*when we do it [*have sex*] I can't help myself. And then I would like to bite my mother, but in her case I would like to bite her breast.

Now I have continuous swelling and nausea, and I am getting a lot of pimples.

§ I'm really terrified of putting on weight. I quarrel a lot with my husband because of this. I cannot avoid eating a lot and then I have crocodile tears. [*In English, this expression means tears that are insincere; in Italian it connotes crying because one is ashamed.*]

I used to take pills to slim down right after eating—to dispose of it immediately!

§ I eat a lot but am afraid of putting on weight and looking bad. When I eat I think about whether this is good or bad for me, whether this will make me fat. I look to others for a kind of confirmation for what I'm doing. § I don't truly receive any confirmation. What really concerns me is to try and be like all the other women. I would like to leave a piece of myself—like a *mezzo busto* (sculpture of head and chest) as a beautiful reminder of me.

I'm blocked by the idea of joining the crowd and being like everybody else. I would like to be part of a group that contributes something special. It would destroy me to think I was just another person in the world.

It's difficult for me to fully understand you because you change topics before I can ask you more.

§ I have a moody temperament. Usually I'm pretty insecure but lately I've been more decisive. I can say right away what I have to say. I've become very direct, intense, and particular. If I make a decision now no one can change my mind, even if I'm mistaken.

I had the impression that Matilde had more to say but was still too inhibited to do so. To give her a little push, I advise her to take Lac caninum 30M. A few weeks later she calls me for an urgent appointment.

[She begins:]

I feel more in charge. When I came here the first time I was pretty insecure, but now I feel good. Previously I lost many nights of sleep from a lot of burning [*in the genital area*] and I don't have this anymore. Now I could say that I have less than 10 percent of what I suffered from before and it's infrequent.

I had the impression last time that you wanted to say more. What is so urgent about asking for a consultation?

§ My life is pretty normal without any plot twists; it's too flat and this makes me sad. It's like my flame is about to be extinguished and I feel like dying. I need to change. I'm not excited at all about married life. Maybe I did not choose the right person. He's the opposite of me: too calm and sedentary. When I wake up in the morning I'm all charged up and want to explode and have to get all this energy out. I feel like a Martian who emits strong yellow rays from my hands and chest.

Staying at home puts me in a panic; it was a stupid thing for me to get married. I feel bound to this person and it bothers me; it's the same way I feel with my mother. But I was the one who made this choice—as usual. I have the impression that I am bound and I miss my freedom.

Is there a problem with your husband?

§ My husband allows me to do whatever I want—now. I can go out with my friends. It's my family that reminds me of my circumstance: I'm married and so have to behave differently. They are the ones who control me and tell me that our marriage is not going well. § I avoid having sex. I would give everything to have a baby, but not with my husband. Instead, I have very regular menstruation.

Please tell me more about your husband and your relationship.

§ Shortly after we met I started avoiding any arguments. He was the right boy, and my family liked him. A few nights ago I started crying while we were having sex; I couldn't stop myself.

What do you feel about your love for this man?

§ In my opinion, I'm not in love with him and never have been.

[I let her cry for some time and ask if there is someone else. She answers timidly:]

§ I'm interested in another person, but it's better if I don't think about it. I have become more and more intolerant of my husband; I'm not even able to watch TV with him anymore. § I am very passionate and I need to express this. I'm all or nothing. So when I get to the point of indifference, it's as if he's dead and buried. I'm not impulsive; I'm just instinctive.

Can you tell me more about your previous relationships?

§ I was the one who left them. My family never liked the boys I liked—and vice versa.

I have started clenching my teeth at night again. Even if I don't bite the inside of cheek anymore, when I wake up in the morning, my face is sore.

I can see that your present situation is not that easy. Is there anything that you enjoy doing?

§ The only thing I could think of to help me get through all this was to take in an abandoned dog. She's a shepherd and very fond of me. If I could, I would take another three. I have very strong feelings toward this animal; we really understand each other. Meanwhile, my husband and parents would like a baby, a grandchild.

She starts crying. I suggest that she give serious consideration to what she told me and for us to meet again in a few days, if she would like. After one week, Matilde suddenly leaves her husband—with a long letter of apology—and an equally long letter to her family with more to say than just an apology. Meanwhile, she moves in with a sculptor from another city whom she has known for a few months.

I have now followed Matilde and her family for 22 years. She has not presented any significant problems. I've never had to change the remedy and have only had to repeat it a few times for mastitis that appeared after her two pregnancies. This resolved in a few hours with Lac caninum Q5.

Case of Manlio

Manlio is a 46-year-old man who speaks indecisively, makes many contradictory statements, and sometimes struggles to finish a sentence. His large eyes seem like those of a frightened and melancholic child. His face is dry and taut.

[He begins:]

I have been getting headaches since I was 10 years old; they are always located in my forehead. For years I have noticed them on waking. I don't have problems sleeping, but I often wake up with a headache. This happens one to three times a week.

§ I feel it in my whole forehead. I feel angry because I always have this headache. § It is a non-stop, irritating pain. I went to the headache center, and after being treated with *Flunarizine*, the pain decreased in intensity. At present I take *Naprosyn*. It stops the headache in a couple of hours, but not always. I don't want to take the other things they suggested because they hurt my stomach, and chemicals are not for me.

§ If I can, I stay at home on the sofa with my head leaning to the right. Turning my head decreases the pain, or so it seems. § In winter and spring I feel worse. It is extremely punctual. I will get it on the same weekday, usually a Thursday or Friday for two months; then the day may change. It typically goes away after 5 PM.

§ When I have a headache, I need to be alone and close my eyes. I need to avoid any odors and be in the dark, in complete silence. § It always begins on one side and then it moves to the other side. § I have thought about this many times—even as a child when I had a stomachache. The pain would move into my chest and then to my throat. It was

always like that. § When I first learned at school how we are made inside, I asked myself how this pain could move upward, since there is a kind of barrier between the two.

Many years later my doctor explained that we have nerves that transfer impulses everywhere, but that did not persuade me.

§ When I have a pain it starts at a precise point and then it goes to another point, until it finally spreads everywhere. § It reminds me that I am a whole, that I cannot just feel the pain on one side only. If it hurts, it hurts everywhere. For example, if you break a tooth you might walk badly because it hurts so much.

My back always hurts. If I raise my arms beyond a certain point, I feel pain in my back. § It started 7 or 8 years ago while I was at the seaside. I was lying down with my shoulders raised.

I have extrasystoles. It feels like a wrong beat, something short. It may happen at any time of day, especially when I am relaxed. § If it happens when I am alone, it actually creates a sense of anguish. § I don't know how to explain it. It makes me feel *alone*.

Since returning from my holiday, I had such fatigue that I felt out of tune with everything. Then I passed through a phase where nothing moved me—I thought this situation would never resolve. I had a bad year with my mother being seriously ill. She underwent surgery for cancer, and now has relapsed with a metastasis. We don't know what to do or what will happen. I thought it was useless to tell her about it, but she had to be treated.

I can't have an honest relationship with her anymore. She knows me so well, and I live with the terror that she will ask me how serious her condition is. I made this appointment with you some time ago, and in the interim there has not been improvement.

I have already experienced a kind of separation from her—the separation when I left home the first time—so I have already worked on this, but I'm very anxious about everyone in my family.

§ I have felt as if this separation has already occurred. My mother, and all she represents to me, connects me like a bridge to this town.

With the loss of her I will also lose that connection, that piece of my life, and it will be lost forever. I saw her becoming disfigured and ugly. I watched her body age badly.

§ The fatigue is a bit better. You get used to it and keep going. After these difficult moments in life, you have to take account of all this, and that can be confusing. Then my mother's doctor said her treatment is going better.

§ My relationship with food is traumatic—my mother always tormented me because I was skinny. I had many bouts of indigestion when I was little. I would eat and it would sit on my stomach; the only thing to do was to throw up. This happened regularly.

§ My headache and stomachache would go away after throwing up. This continued until I married.

§ My mother always gave me too much to eat. I never gave her the pleasure of being a nice chubby boy. I ate very little. I don't pressure my daughter about eating because I remember what I experienced. She's very thin and eats like a bird.

§ Now I appreciate food; but in the past eating was an obligation. § I appreciate good food, but I am not a hearty eater. I don't eat a lot. § I prefer pasta, especially tortellini. I eat vegetables because they are healthy, not because I like them. If it were up to me, I would live on rice and meat. Rice with boiled meat is the best! It is simple, easily digestible, and doesn't require much effort to prepare it. I enjoy eating and drinking. I also like cooking, but I like serving the dishes even more.

My son is 25 and comes home late on Saturday nights and I worry—he frequents the discos. The passage of years underscores that there is no going back. I would like to have spent more time with my family, but it was not possible. Between my work and my son who wouldn't listen to me, I realized I was losing him. Luckily there's my daughter, but soon enough she'll be grown up too.

§ My wife and I have always had an adversarial relationship; we are very different. She did not choose to marry me. We only married because she was pregnant. She found the pregnancy difficult to tolerate. When we were younger, she had an affair with another man, and I had a nervous breakdown. She's not even a good mother—she's not good at talking with them or educating them. She didn't even breastfeed them.

§ It took a long time to forget my wife's affair. I became numb. I recovered only when I was able to stop thinking about it constantly. § I was in anguish for two years because I couldn't decide what to do. I didn't understand why.

§ It often happens that I *cannot make a decision*. Seeing her lover made me anxious. Their relationship seemed pretty serious. It was probably the first major sorrow in my life. § I just didn't want to believe it.

§ I don't have clear ideas of what I want. I *change my mind from day to day*. I don't know if what I want is what others want; I don't know what I should do. I try to be firm with my son, but I don't have any firmness inside of me.

I feel like there are two parts of me. One is just cause and effect, dictated by impulse and instinct. It's aggressive and a little destructive, and makes me say more than I should—and a lot of rubbish. I'm almost afraid of what can come out of my mouth. The other side is full of doubts and hesitation. It's fine when I'm just following. I can't handle conflict. If I argue with someone, I feel bad. § If after a quarrel, I don't get a chance to talk with this person, I feel guilty. § Even if I have my own ideas about things, I feel better when I agree with others. I'm like a seesaw. I am better at being the underdog—but I also claim to be right.

When I had that problem with my wife I thought about living alone just to avoid the whole situation. It seemed like a good solution. It was my responsibility to look after the

financial side since my wife, like my mother, doesn't bother to take care of these things. I have to do everything all by myself.

I thought I would like the arrangement, but instead, I realized I didn't want to live alone. I have a colleague who lives alone and he is very sad. Seeing him is a daily reminder of this fear.

§ Being separated from my mother was instrumental in creating this fear of being alone. I still behave like a child around her. No one spoils me like that, and no one lets me...

§ If I ask for some water she gets it without asking why. I know that in the near future I won't have her care any longer. I want the pampering and protection. My son starts an argument if I ask him to go and get me some water.

§ Everything that cannot be explained frightens me. The news frightens me. I avoid watching war scenes. Witchcraft frightens me, especially when I was a child. Anything connected with magic is scary. § I always think that something bad is going to happen. For example, if my son does not come home, I am sure he has had an accident. It is fear, but most of all it is a melancholic feeling. I was never carefree.

At home we always had health problems. It's not that I was feeling guilty—but these problems *did* exist. § I coped with this, but I am afraid of death. I read a lot about this and regret not being able to learn something more about life after death. I force myself not to think about the fact that you cannot learn anything once you are dead.

§ I am afraid of spiders. I dreamt they blocked my way. The shaggy black ones disgust me. I am even afraid of spiders made of plastic. The light colored ones are not as bad.

§ I forgot that I have a bad back. § I don't pay much attention to the pain, anyway. I just endure it. I know it will go away. I don't care much about physical pains.

Follow-up

I give him Lac caninum Q1 to be taken daily. After two weeks he phones because of a severe headache.

I want Manlio to stop the remedy for a few days, but he perceives this as an absence of therapy. I decide to give him a placebo.

The next consultation is three months later. My general impression this time is that he's calmer.

[*Manlio begins:*]

It went very well until a few days ago. Then I had the flu and felt achy and tired. I did as you suggested and took the remedy every hour [*ten drops of the remedy in one liter of water; shake and sip every hour*]. Pretty soon I felt much better. § I seemed to have some stomach pain with this flu—but I had eaten too much.

§ I have the impression that I feel better because I have almost forgotten my mother is sick. I have not had to take her from doctor to doctor and she seems pretty good right now.

§ In general I feel that everything is much better with my family. It's going well with my wife, but with my son it's still on and off. It's not that easy with him—he does what he wants. My son was away on vacation for a week and my wife and I had a nice time together. He was with his girlfriend and her family. I was at home and had only to think about myself; it was pretty good.

What do you mean by 'pretty good'?

§ The more I can work around things to avoid conflict, the better I am. I become so plagued by doubts and uncertainty if an argument happens or something doesn't go well.

§ I'm always worried about what might happen to my son. Getting through Saturday night is always difficult for me. I have this fear of the world—who you don't know, what you don't know—because kids nowadays don't talk about what's going on.

§ I have several concerns about my son: that he will not be able to find his own way, that he flutters around like a butterfly and has no goals. He seems like a slacker and this affects me because I educated him properly. I worry about a car accident, about drugs, smoking pot. Luckily, he has a girlfriend; the little I know about him is through her. My son is a good person, when he's not in our house. When he's home, we just butt heads.

Manlio's view of his son's behavior needs to be considered in light of how difficult it is for him to feel his own anger and express this. It is likely that his son behaves like most boys his age, though for Manlio, this causes extreme stress.

[Manlio continues:]

I feel bad that our relationship is not more open. I realize how strict I have been with him and that's probably why he is so closed.

I have the impression that it was not easy for Manlio to admit that he made some mistakes in parenting.

§ For long periods over the last few months, I've been experiencing less back pain. § I don't know why. It's hard to say if it's related to something else or not. I mentioned this last time and didn't think your treatment was going to help this particular symptom any.

§ I had an interesting dream about a woman whom I really like, but I can't remember it anymore.

[I have the impression that he does remember the dream, but is simply hesitant to share it. I ask what the dream meant to him.]

§ For a long time I was not able to dream. I don't know if she was interested in me. I just know that I did my best to please her, even doing things I don't like to do. Then I realized this is how I usually am. I mean that I'm happy that other people accept me, but where am I going? Who am I?

Really, what's most important is that I'm not as gloomy as before and this makes me feel so much better!

I have the impression that his general situation is improving without the need to provide more of the remedy. I continue with a placebo until there is no further progress.

Two months later he phones me again because of another severe headache. With repetition of Lac caninum Q1 there was a significant improvement within a few hours. Two months later he has another episode, but this time it does not resolve with repetition of the dose at this potency and so we move on to the Q3.

This next consultation is five months after the second one. Again, he looks more relaxed, but he also seems 'buttoned up'. I feel that he has something important to say, but it's not easy for him to share it.

[*He begins:*]

So far I have not had even one headache per month. And when I do, it's much less intense and, as usual, goes away by itself by evening. Before I started your treatment, I woke up most mornings with a mild headache. Now I have no discomfort at all and I wake up feeling good. I had some indigestion with those two episodes of headache and did not feel well until I was able to throw up.

§ Before I always had shoulder pain. Now it's just a little annoyance in my left shoulder that gets slightly irritated when I move it, but it's nothing compared to what I had before.

Lately I have not had any trouble with extrasystoles.

I think that his bringing this up might mean that he wants to say more about his heart. I decide to ask a very direct question about death and dying, and he is a bit taken aback by my question.

§ I noticed that recently I haven't thought that much about death. Before, I used to think about it every free moment, but I haven't paid much attention to it lately. I'm not feeling as tormented by my mother recently even though she had a relapse over the past few weeks. Sooner or later we will have to face that moment.

After saying this, he was not able to talk and was almost crying. I gave him some space, then asked about his thoughts on his mother's imminent passing.

§ This will be an enormous loss—huge! *I realized I was never able to separate from her.* I'm ashamed to tell you this, but in some moments I'm almost glad she has to die—otherwise I would not be able to put an end to this torture.

[*He started to cry and afterwards collects himself.*] And then I feel like a terrible person.

In that moment it was impossible for him to continue the consultation. He was not even able to speak and could only signal with his hands that he had to leave.

A few days later he phones to apologize and ask for a recommendation for a psychotherapist—specifically a woman.

Four months later he has a new episode of his usual headache. There is no significant improvement with repetition of the Q3 but with the Q5 his symptoms improve in a few hours. He is working with a psychotherapist, but has not yet told her about his bulimia.

A few months later his mother dies and he would like to see me. He has not been sleeping for several days, but all in all, he looks good.

[*Manlio begins:*]

I have a little bit of a headache sometimes and then it goes away by itself in a half an hour—it's really mild. I realized recently that I used to wake up cross, while now I wake up feeling more relaxed. I have a better appetite and feel better overall.

[*I ask him why he is underlining this issue of his appetite and he starts to look at the floor as if he had been reproached.*]

§ I wanted tell you about my episodes of bulimia but I was ashamed. Then one day I was able to talk about this with my psychotherapist who helped me understand that I'm not bulimic, that bulimia is a symptom; it's not a disease. According to her my real problem has to do with my difficult integration—this is what she says—of my aggression. So perhaps I used to eat like that because of my anger.

§ I said 'used to' because now I'm really changed. I can tell you for sure that I eat with *pleasure*—something that I'm starting to learn at the age of 50. § My mood is better. It's really great to wake up in the morning in good spirits—I am much more relaxed as I face my day.

My mother died. I took a week of vacation and I stayed with her in the hospital the whole time. It was a unique experience, the ultimate experience of my life. We spoke for a week and after a week we still had so much to say. Then she really went downhill and we knew she was leaving. I told her I thought it was useless to keep talking and I squeezed her hand and she did the same. Despite being so weak, she was able to squeeze my hand stronger than I did. You know, there are moments when words are useless—they're only noise.

When I was with her in the hospital I had a headache. My usual desire is to be alone but instead I was able to be there with her. I had the sensation that we were together and that we will stay together forever, despite all the crud she did in her life, and all the bad things I did, and surely will do with my kids. She died squeezing my hand and smiling at me. I never saw a more beautiful smile, a more authentic smile in my life. I told her, thank you, and then she died.

That same night I dreamt about spiders. The spiders really made me shudder. I looked in every corner of the room to see if there were cobwebs. And then I realized even spiders have a family. In the dream, they looked like any other animal, just different from us. I know that's my own stuff—that spiders are spiders and men are men. You know, I think that dream is proof that something really big is changing in my life.

The follow-up has been over fifteen years. He has another family now and a good life with his new wife. His primary symptoms never returned. Occasionally when he has difficulty at work or when he lost a close friend, he has needed to repeat the remedy.

Lac caninum

Motifs: Abandonment; Dependent		
Fundamental Themes Family Identity Abandonment Integration of Instincts Irresolution	Characteristic Themes Dependence // Independence (3) Oblativity: obligatory (2) Submission Immaturity Withdrawal: painful Swelling Congestion: passive Discharge: difficult Symmetry-Asymmetry	Coherent Symptom Groups Pain: congestive (3) Pain: recurrent (3) Headache: digestive (2) Digestion: difficult Hyperphagia Hyperosmia Photophobia Vertigo Eruptions: symmetrical Milk
Common Ailments Adenoma, prostate / Aphthous ulcers / Arthritis, juvenile / Back pain, cervical, lumbar / Bruxism / Bulimia / Conjunctivitis / Constipation, chronic / Cystitis, recurrent / Diabetes, gestational / Diabetes, senile / Dysmenorrhea / Enuresis / Food intolerance, milk / Gout / Headache, frontal and digestive / Hearing loss, early / Herniation, inguinal / Herniation, lumbar disc / Hyperemesis gravidarum / Hyperprolactinemia / Incontinence, urinary, female / Insomnia / Mastodynia / Ménière's disease / Myopia / Nausea / Neuralgia, trigeminal / Osteoarthritis, hip / Panic / Pharyngitis, chronic / Photophobia / Pituitary insufficiency, human growth hormone / Polyps, vocal cords / Ptyalism of pregnancy / Reflux esophagitis / Sinusitis / Spasm, masseter muscle / Vaginitis, recurrent / Varices, lower limbs / Vertigo		
Differential Diagnosis Milks: <i>Lac asinum</i> ; <i>Lac vaccinum defloratum</i> Other: Calcareae: <i>Calcarea bromatum</i> , <i>Calcarea carbonica</i> , <i>Calcarea fluoricum</i> , <i>Calcarea silicata</i> ; <i>Candida albicans</i> ; Carbons: <i>Carbo vegetabilis</i> ; <i>Carcinosinum</i> ; <i>Cocculus</i> ; <i>Lepidium bonariense</i> ; <i>Onosmodium</i> ; <i>Oxalic acidum</i> ; <i>Rhus toxicodendron</i> ; Rosaceae: <i>Prunus</i> ; <i>Saccharum album</i>		