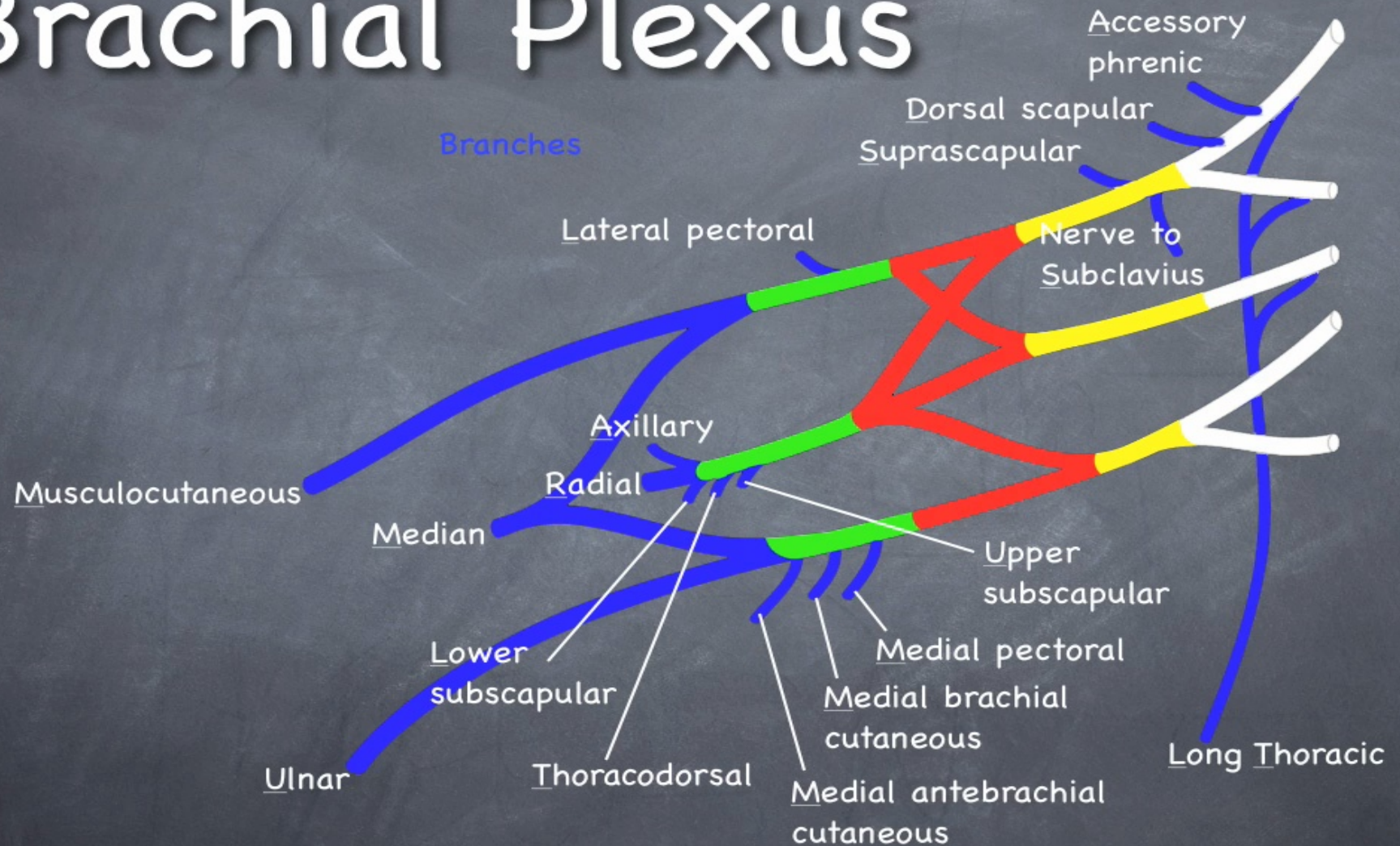


# Brachial Plexus



# Anatomy of the Brachial Plexus

## Structure of the brachial plexus

### Roots

Ventral rami of cervical spinal nerves 5,6,7,8 and thoracic spinal nerve 1

### Trunks

Superior

Middle

Inferior

### Divisions

Anterior

Posterior

### Cords

Lateral

Medial

Posterior

### Large Branches

Musculocutaneous nerve

Median nerve

Ulnar nerve

Radial nerve

Axillary nerve

### Smaller branches

Upper subscapular nerve

Lower subscapular nerve

Thoracodorsal nerve

Lateral pectoral nerve

Medial pectoral nerve

Medial brachial cutaneous nerve

Medial antebrachial cutaneous nerve

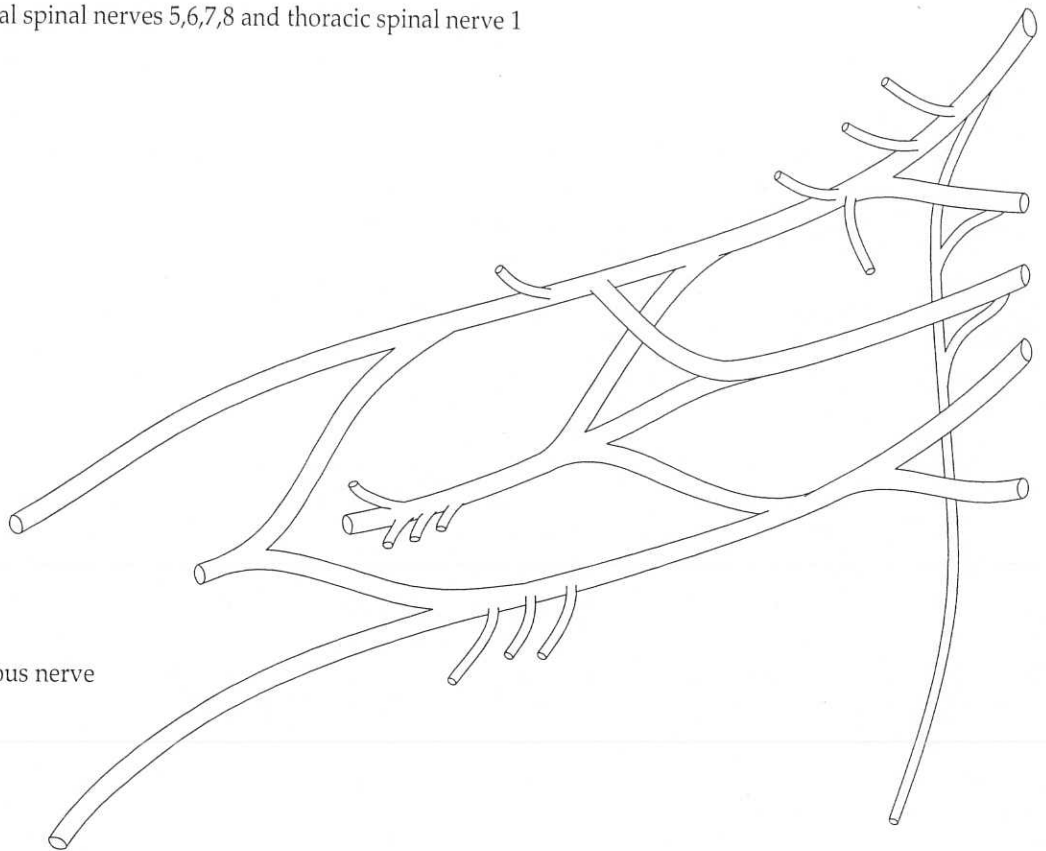
Suprascapular nerve

Dorsal scapular nerve

Nerve to Subclavius

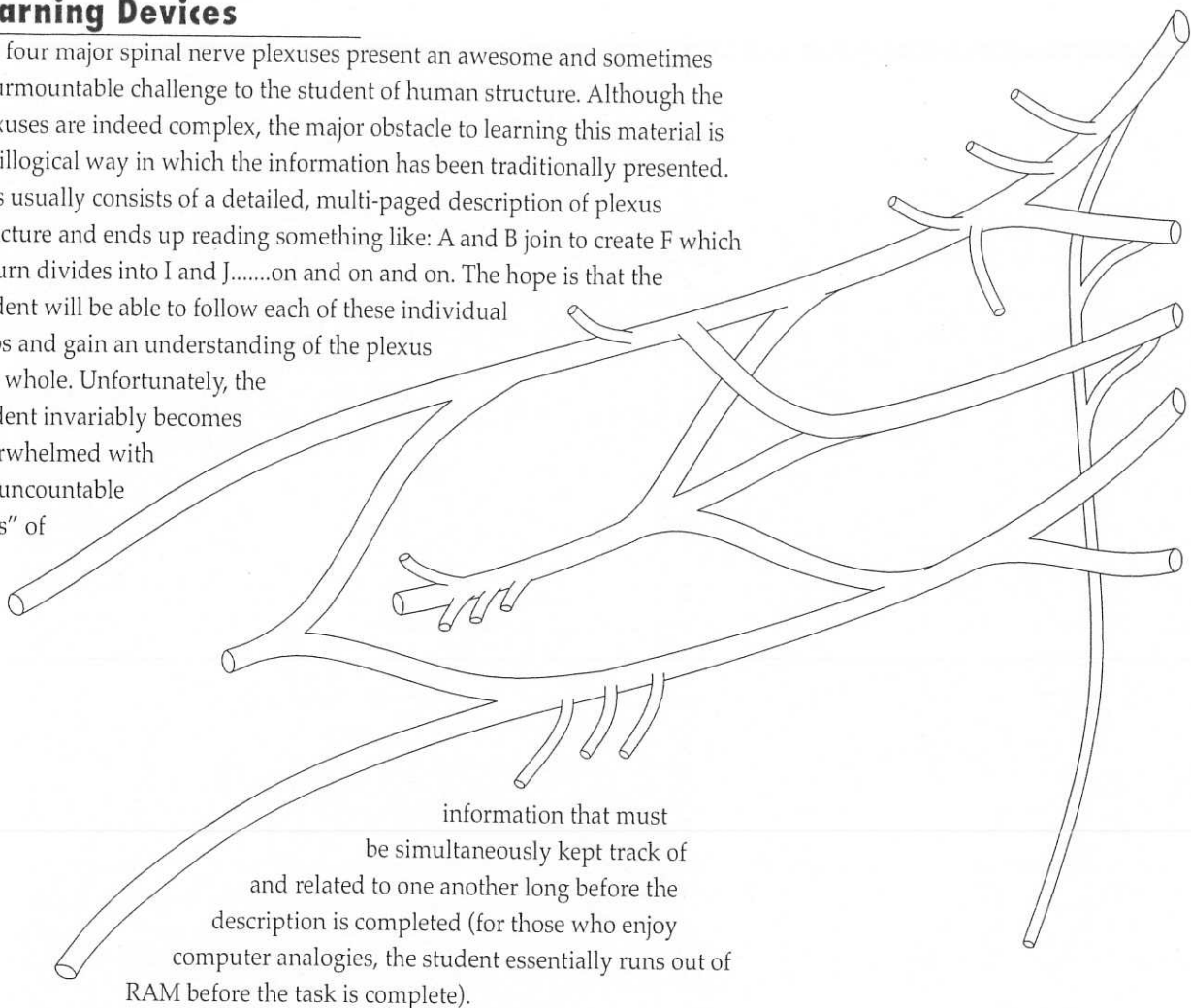
Accessory phrenic nerve

Long thoracic nerve



## Learning Devices

The four major spinal nerve plexuses present an awesome and sometimes insurmountable challenge to the student of human structure. Although the plexuses are indeed complex, the major obstacle to learning this material is the illogical way in which the information has been traditionally presented. This usually consists of a detailed, multi-paged description of plexus structure and ends up reading something like: A and B join to create F which in turn divides into I and J.....on and on and on. The hope is that the student will be able to follow each of these individual steps and gain an understanding of the plexus as a whole. Unfortunately, the student invariably becomes overwhelmed with the uncountable "bits" of



A much more effective (and infinitely less painful) method of learning the nerve plexuses exists. The student should first learn to physically draw the plexus being studied without the burden of simultaneously assimilating the abundant detail. A mental image of the plexus is thus formed and can serve as a conceptual framework on which to add the detail.

The intent of this lecture is to provide students with a method of learning to draw the brachial plexus (the first step in learning the anatomy) and thus gain an appreciation of the plexus as a whole prior to pursuing the detail. This is accomplished through the use of a simple mnemonic. Mnemonics are frowned upon by some who claim their use sidesteps intellectual study. However, if used as a means to an end rather than an end in themselves, mnemonics are a useful first step in the intellectual pursuit, allowing one to begin an otherwise insurmountable journey. Although mnemonics should never be used as substitutes for true intellectual understanding, they can be very useful tools for efficiently mastering the voluminous detail of complex topics (like nerve plexuses). Once the details are conquered, the broad concepts are more easily appreciated and intellectual understanding is enhanced. Thus mnemonics can serve as catalysts for learning as well as tools for retaining what we learn. After all, it is not what you learn, but what you remember that makes you wise.

## Learning the Brachial Plexus

### Brachial plexus mnemonic

#### Poseidon and the mermaids

Imagine Poseidon, the god of the sea, swimming around in his expansive surroundings when a group of young mermaids just happen to swim by. Poseidon wants to talk to the young mermaids so he shouts out:

"You Young Mermaids LINE UP in front of Poseidon's  
U L T R A TRIDENT."

Once in line he hollers out:

"LSD Salts Made Many Mermaids Undergo Mass Misery"

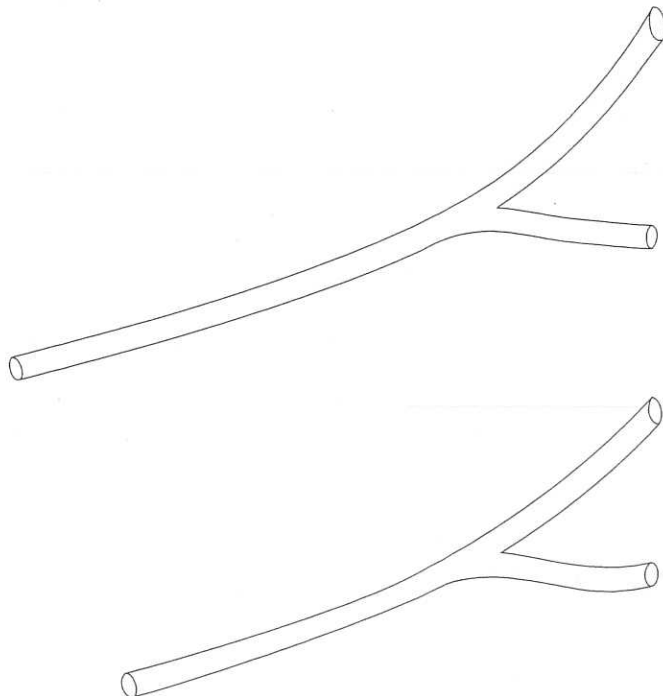
and

"Robert Taylor Drinks Cold Beer."

All the mermaids wandered off pondering this crazy message, while thinking to themselves that Poseidon had lost a few marbles. However, the little mermaid had rubbed shoulders with anatomists during her time on land, and as a result understood the sagacious musing of Poseidon.

### Brachial plexus - step by step

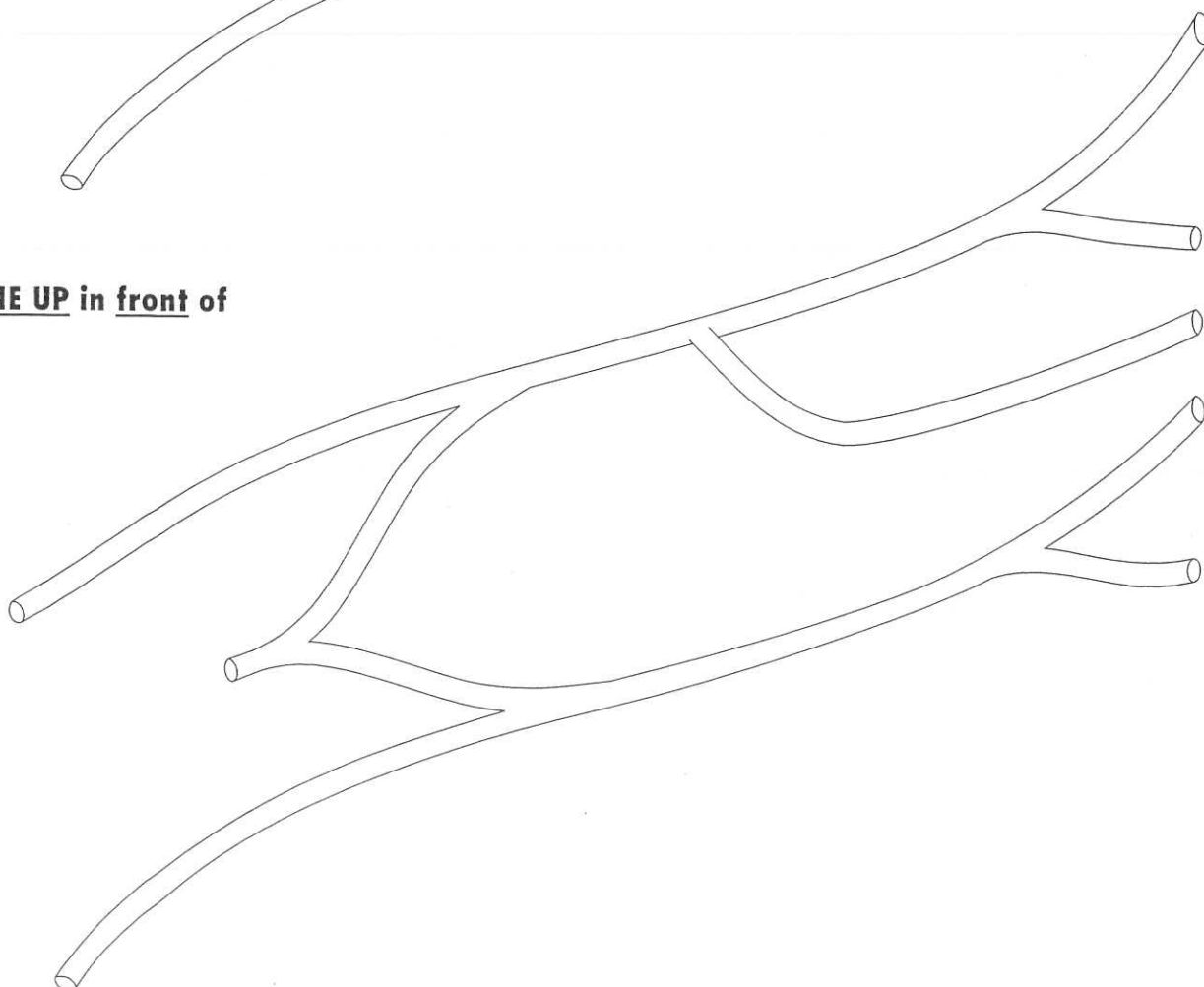
#### You Young



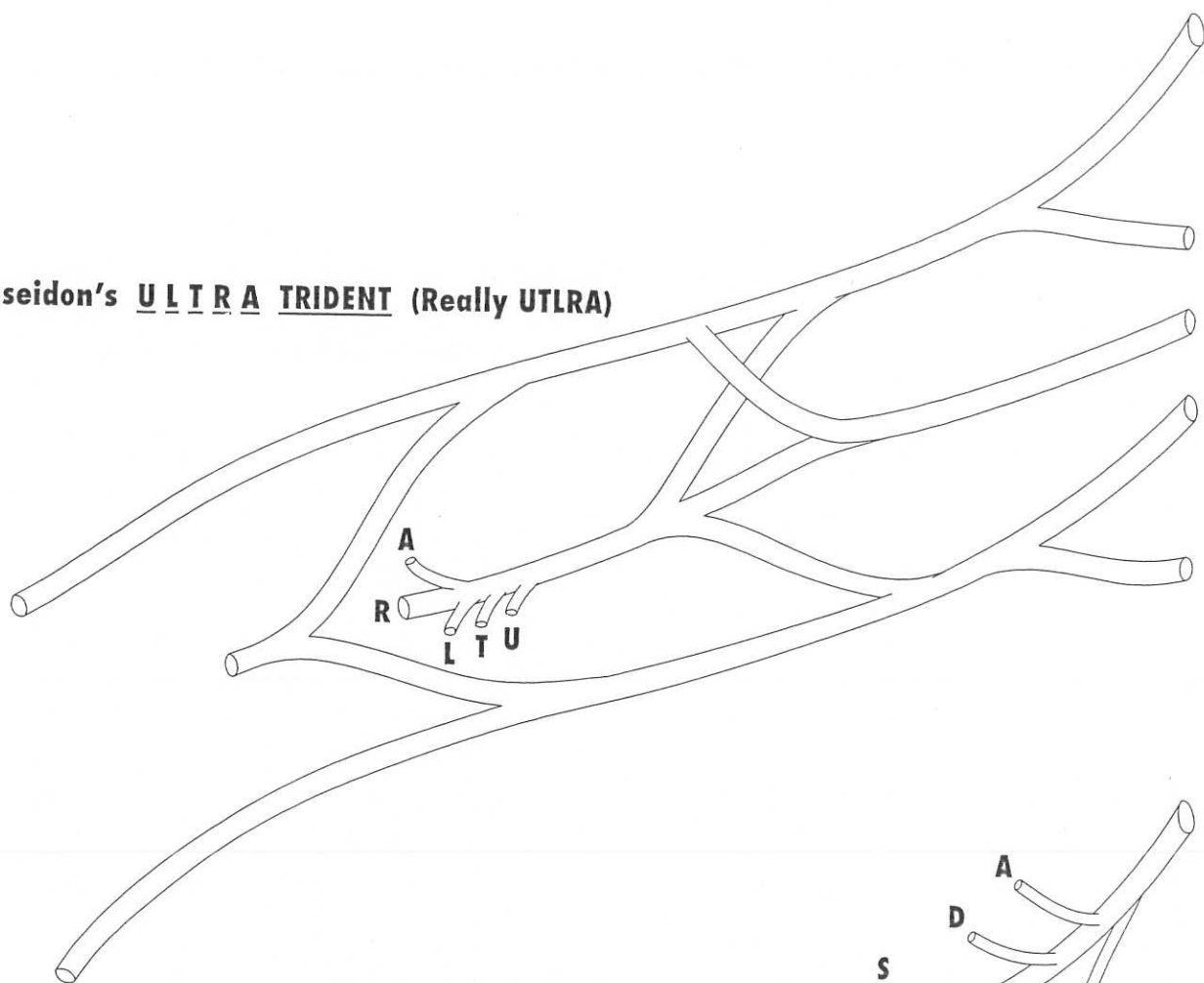
**Mermaids**



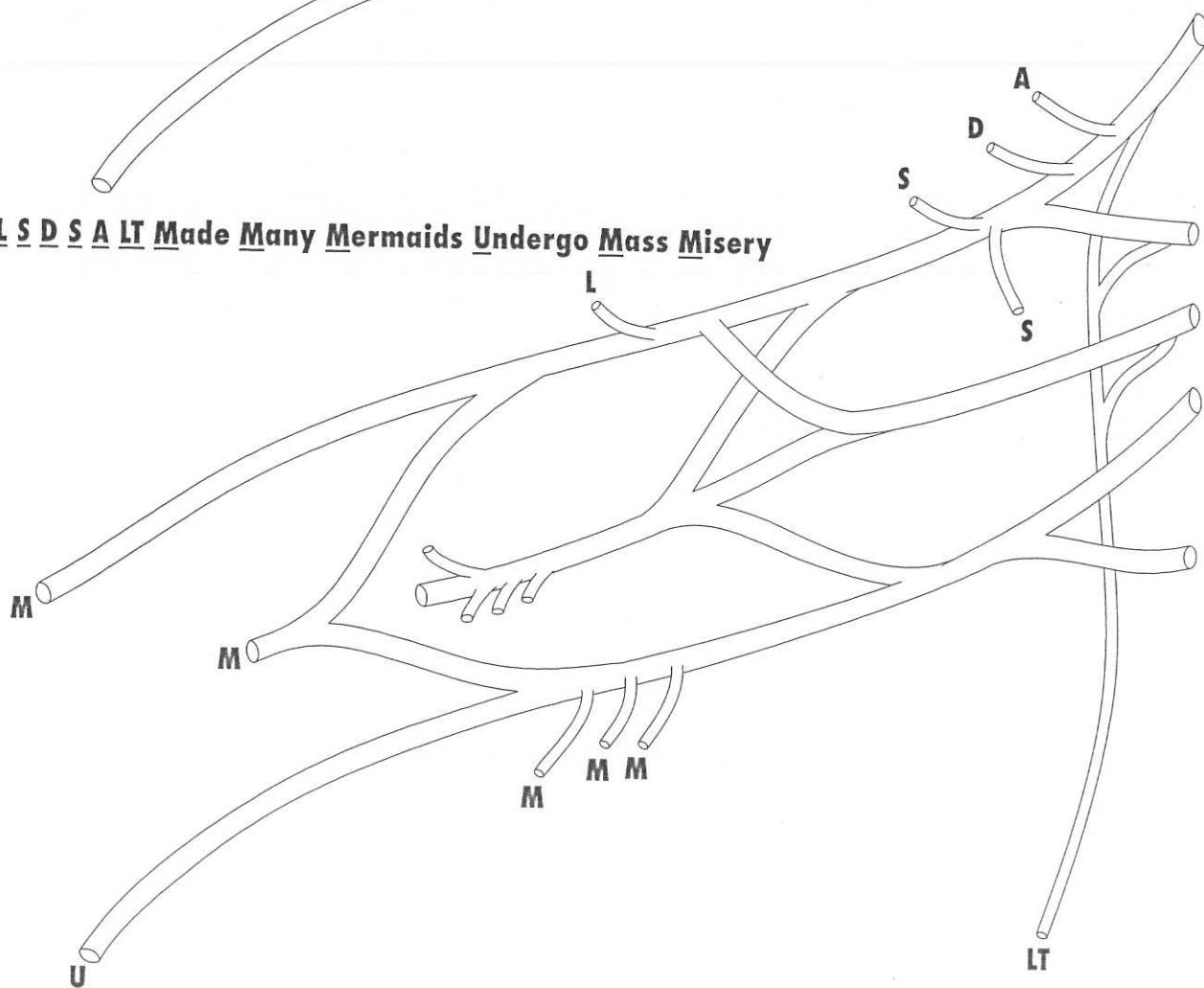
**LINE UP in front of**



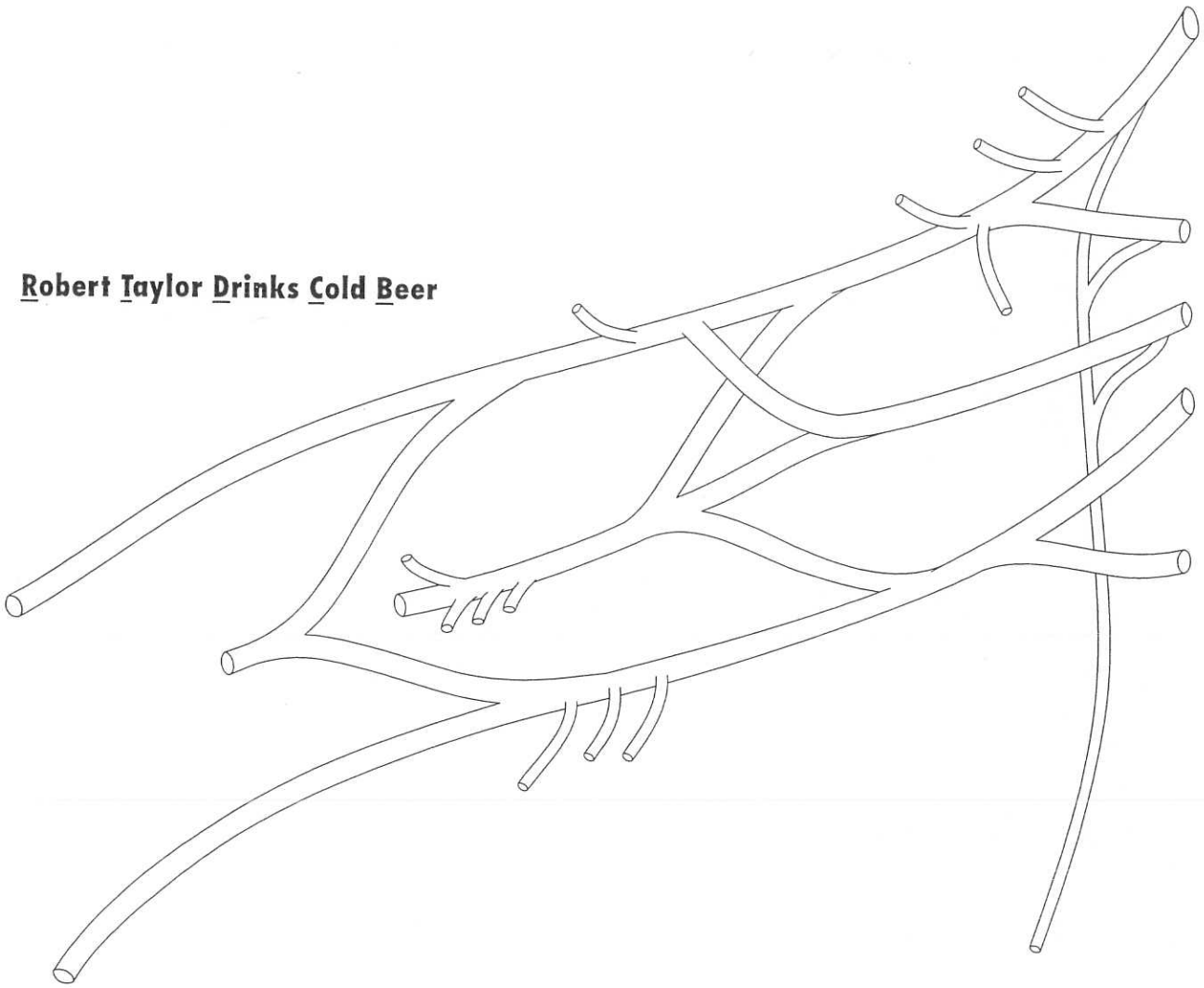
Poseidon's U L T R A TRIDENT (Really UTLRA)



L S D S A LT Made Many Mermaids Undergo Mass Misery



Robert Taylor Drinks Cold Beer



Branches

Cords

Divisions

Trunks

Roots

## **Drawing the Plexus on Your Own**