# ARBIT it happens here...

#### **#TREATING DEPRESSION**

### Magic Mushrooms

Psilocybin mushrooms and other hallucinogens have been used for generations by indigenous cultures in religious or spiritual rituals







gests that *psilocybin* has similar side effects to traditional antidepressants. Commonly referred to as 'magic mush

ew research sug-

rooms,' psilocybin is a promising alternative treatment for people with medication for resistant depression and anxiety. Previous studies have suggested that the *psychedelic fungi* can have positive effects for patients suffering from some mental illnesses, but one question remains. Is psilo*cybin* actually a safe alternative to traditional medications

A new meta-analysis suggests that it may be. The study finds that when given as a therapeutic single-dose, psilo cybin has similar side effects to traditional antidepressant medications. These side effects include headache, nausea, anxiety, dizziness, and elevated blood pressure.

But the side effects are generally well-tolerated by participants and fade within 24 to 48 hours.

"The acute side effects are what we may expect from your traditional antidepressants because those medications work in a similar fash ion to psilocybin. They both target serotonin receptors, says Joshua Caballero, an associate professor in the University of Georgia's College of Pharmacy and corresponding senior author of the paper published in JAMA Network Open.

"It's very encouraging because the studies, that we examined, consist of just one or two doses per patient, and we're finding that the beneficial effects of psilocybin may stay for months when treating depression.

Psilocybin is designated a Schedule 1 drug by US federal law because of its hallucinogenic properties. Drugs, in this classification, also typically have a high potential for

abuse However. psilocybin mushrooms and other hallucinogens have been used for generations by indigenous cultures in religious or spiri tual rituals. And as early as the 1950s and 1960s, researchers began examining its possible medical applications in treating substance use disorders and mental illness, according to the

National Institutes of Health. Beginning in 2019, some states have begun decriminalizing the psychedelic drug, making it possible for more research to be conducted on s possible medicinal value. Until the present study, though, most psilocybin research focused on efficacy.

"At some point. I do think that psilocybin will become a treatment option, and when it does, we need to know what the side effects and potential long-term complications are. Caballero says. "I would urge caution for people who are thinking that this is a magic cure and then go out and take excess mushrooms. Without proper monitoring, you won't know the concentration of psilocybin in those mushrooms and you could have a bad trip or other negative outcome.

The meta-analysis included multiple studies, compris ing 528 participants.

The included studies took place under close supervision with trained therapists and healthcare providers, who walked patients through the process and kept them calm hroughout the treatment. Caballero emphasizes that

professional supervision is kev when dealing with potentially dangerous substances. "There is still a lot we don't know about the potential long-term side effects and more serious rare side effects

of psilocybin use," Caballero Most psilocybin research has been conducted in adults in the 30s and 40s. So, it's

could have a similar effect on adults under 26. "If we can safely use this drug in a controlled environment. I think it could be ground-breaking for a lot of natients who need it.' Caballero says.



writing poems for decades. She feels that poems help in releasing all the emotions on to the paper and letting go.

#### How does poetry help in healing the heart?

I have been writing personal poetry for a long time. Poetry helps in healing because you write your emo tions out of yourself. When you look for words, it helps and then you need precise words. So, if someone is writing about losing a friend, he will not look for a word like sorrow which is quite common place but he will use words like angst or anguish or trauma. In doing so, I think you actually enter the premises of 'healing.' A prose needs narrative but poetry doesn't. It just needs images and phrases. Personally, I think that every one is a poet in some way.

#### You seem to be very fond of *Sita*. Many poems in the book talk about her.

Sita has seeped into my consciousness ever since Namita Gokhale and I wrote 'In Search of Sita.' It was the first of our Goddess trilogy books that we did. When we were working on our book on Sita, and we were looking at her as a figure of strength, intelligence and decisionmaking, she, sort of, became a part of psyche. We were getting into her mind and thoughts and therefore giving her dialogues, conversations and scenarios. I wrote this poem at a time when there had been a fair amount of discussion in the newspapers regarding Sita's rasoi, which was an area found during the excavations in Ayodhya. It struck me at that time that generally we think of rasoi as being the centre and the heart of the mother's domain. Sita, in my mind, stood for equality, fairness and justice. I could just imagine her sitting and making *rotis* not only for her two children but also for a third orphan child, who would be a playmate. There was a mix of what I had grown up with, that you play with the children your age, doesn't matter what caste or community they come from. That is what I had seen in Jaipur. The notion of mathematical equality is very different to woman's idea of equality because emotions always have a part to play and that is what I have tried to por-



no favourite child. Sita's rasoi, a stone slab on which

warmed single mounds of flour rest. Rotis dance into a shape, flat, brown-edged, uneven

rounds. Take one each. Little Bakha, you too. Be sure it's an equal share, not a morsel must exceed anyone's due

What did you savthe rotis are not exact rounds so what is an equal share?

That puzzles a mathematical Who may know enough to

solve this query. Uneven jagged edges, uncertainties they might mull over as Father, Priest, Teacher."

But Sita seeped into your consciousness so much that she even followed you to Italy in the poem ellagio, Italy?'

I don't find that strange at all. You see. Namita Gokhale and I had a joint fellowship at this place called Bellagio, which is a residency run the Harvard University. It is fully funded, month-long residency. We got the opportunity because we had finished writing our manu-



Malashri Lal at Ethos Literary Festival 2023.

script ('In Search of Sita') and we were now editing it. When you are editing, you need to be together much more. We applied for this residency and we got it. It was a huge, beautiful estate on the banks of Lake Como. So, Sita was with us in Bellagio. It was February, the rees were covered with snow. They had icicles, some of which had melted while some were still suspended on the trees. Sometimes, the sun would sparkle through these icicles. We found a grotto there during one of our daily walks. Interestingly, no one knew what it was or who it was for. It didn't feature in any of the material that we had read about the place and history. So, we did our own research and came upon the history of this Celtic Goddess. whose name was Belisama. She, like many ancient goddesses including *Gaia*, was linked to the earth. It was then that this link happened between Sita and Belisama, in my mind

Pil

#### **Bellagio, Italy**

"Belisama's shrine and Sita's Met strangely on the hilltop of an ancient manor house Villa Serbolini, Bellagio, over looking Lake Como. "How did I come here?" asked the prisoner of Ashoka Van "Was it the power of a writer's

pen that propelled this jour-"A Goddess lives beyond time and geography,"

Said the deity of the Lake **Remembering hoary Roman** Celtic chalice of stone and

water from secret wells. Sita of my imagination fol lowed me

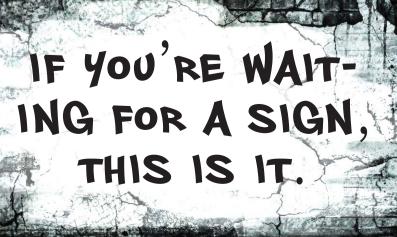
Through the snow-clad landscape of pines

#### Your poem 'Hawa Mahal' talks about some latent desires.

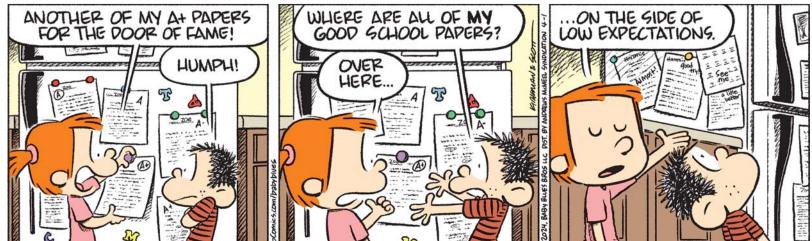
In Endurance and in Hope."

of ice

I wrote this poem for two reasons. One, it was such an obvious tourist spot. Second, from the very childhood, I had always wondered why would any one put up a façade with nothing behind it? Then, ] used to talk to my father about the architecture and purdah since he was a history person. *Purdah* is not just about certain clothes, there are differ ent types of *purdahs* like there is a Janana Mahal and Mardana Mahal, where you have segregated domestic spaces. Then, I realized that it was made so that women could sit behind those jalis and look down upon the procession that happened along the Jauhri bazaar road.



#### **BABY BLUES**





unclear whether psilocybin tray in this poem. THE WALL

#### **Clean Comedy Day**



et's dive into the world of chuckles with *Clean Cornedy Day*, a special occasion that tickles everyone's funny bone without the worry of any blush-worthy punchlines. You ask why we mark this day on our calendars. It's simple! Clean Comedy Day is all about spotlighting humour that skips the dirt and goes straight for the heart. Think of it as comedy's way of showing us that laughter truly is a universal language, one doesn't need to dip into the crude or the rude to get a hearty guffaw out of its audience.

## Tree., PART 5

Malashri Lal believes that poems help in healing one's self because a poet writes pure emotions. She feels that everyone is a poet though every one may not be Kalidas or Valmiki. To her, Bhopa singer dancing in Rajasthan is as much a poet as a person who is reciting poetry in the bylanes of Shanti Niketan.

#### **#BOOKS**





Pendent with glistening drops Sita murmured to me of her travails and her choices Sita was completely at home in what I thought was an alien For she and the Celtic Goddess had a common sisterhood



ried off to someone who you hardly know or don't even know. A lot of my MGD classmates were *Rajputs*. So, this whole idea of watching from behind the veil, with desires playing up, since you are young woman. You dream of omance and see so much of it depicted around you like the Rajput paintings. It is all about longing and desire.

"Who sits behind those tiered

Waiting to tremble into action

Arched like Ram's bow

For a hunt yet to start?

The colour of Diwali

A princess in royal blue

Peers from the shadows

Looking eagerly at the car-

Thirsting for a paramour

Hawa Mahal

windows

riages below

Krishna

Not vet known

Cloistered girlhood,

Controlled womanhood

How did she learn to dream

Was it from the legends of

In pursuing the call of the

Intricately drawn on the walls?

Was it her prayers which held

Guarded puberty,

Of love and desire?

hidden meaning

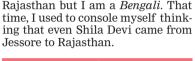


Malashri I al with her friends

Shila Devi to me is a netaphor for migrant



thinking of doing a book on the link between 'Bengal and Rajasthan. Shila Devi is one of the earliest examples of how a stone image from Jessore came to Raja Man Singh in a dream (as the legend says). Along with her came the cooks and the *pujaris*, who were and still are Bengalis. Half of our school teachers in MGD were Bengali. Many doctors were also Bengalis. All of these came because of their jobs and settled here. Both the worlds (Bengali and *Rajasthani*) existed together. Shila Devi came to me as a migrant divinity and therefore legitimizing migrant movement as something which I have written about and spo-



bhila Devi of Amber

"Gilded silver doors encase me now with a retinue of priests who determine my hours

of shayan, darshan and bhog. I think of my freedoms in Jessore In a marshy pit, I lay hidden

When Mansingh found me as a black miracle stone. travelled to the golden Rajasthan Honour, glory, wealth was

but what happened to my companions in the marsh? The dolorous fish, the rau-

cous frogs. the earth-hugging worms? Did they find adoration too?"

You have dedicated your book 'Mandalas of Time' to the poets under the Pilkhan tree. What is your relationship with the Pilkhan tree?

The *Pilkhan* tree is a humongous tree in our garden, which is three storeys high. Ours is a bungalow in the heart of Delhi. When we were reading poetry and books and finalalmost like a witness to whatever is going on in the house. It keeps listening quietly to everything. I spend a lot of time sitting under the tree.



"The Pilkhan tree nods its farewell to the year. Its squirrels scamper looking for nuts left over From Christmas festivities And the days of social revelry The Pilkhan is tired of hear-

Scandal, gossip, iokes

Of the young The worries and health bulletins of the old, The strategic plans of family and builders

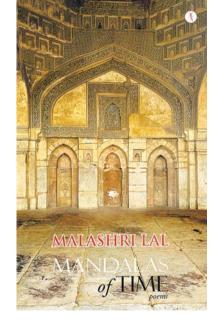
OF knocking down the old house For commercial profit. The Pilkhan tree thinks of its

many years Of shedding leaves, bearing inedible fruit, of losing limbs But smiles at his troubles being far less unfortunate Thank of

humans Who kill each other in word and deed But gather around the tree each Christmas

With fulsome gifts and vacant smiles To bring in another New

> **Concluded.**



#### **#INSIGHT**

## Pinhole Photography

Get creative with your photography by using a pinhole camera, a simple lightexcluding box with the ability to take stunning pictures of many kinds



for

tep back into the past just a bit while learning about an interesting example from science and technology, by getting involved with celebrating World Pinhole

*Photography Day*! **History** 

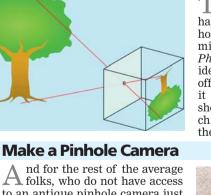
Historians have found the earliest mention on record of a *pinhole camera*, which dates back much further than might be expected by most people. In fact, it seems that as far back as the 5th century BC (around 2500 years ago), the concept of a pinhole camera was being used by scholars for viewing images. Of course, film had not yet been invented to capture the images permanently, but it was still a unique form of scientific discovery.

A pinhole camera is an interesting invention that is really not very complicated. It consists of a light-proof box that has a hole in one side. The image from the hole is projected onto the other side of the box, called the *obscura* old-style images.

#### **How to Celebrate**

Celebrate *World Pinhole Photography Day* by throwing back in a wide variety of ways, including some of these.

#### **Use an Antique Pinhole Camera**

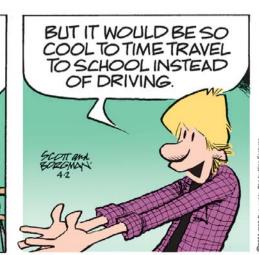


A folks, who do not have access to an antique pinhole camera just lying around in an attic? That's okay! It's actually possible to make one in a special activity, just in celebration of World Pinhole Photography Day. Several websites offer detailed instructions.





#### ITS IME AND SPACE HARDER DIDN'T WORK THAN IT OUT? SOUNDS





Year. rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

house-hunting about eight years back, the tree in this place somehow spoke to me. I don't claim that I have any mystical connection with objects of nature but I think I am attuned to them in a way. We often organize Pilkhan poetry sessions under this tree, with a group of 20 people. We celebrate being together, ly, we cut a cake and have eats. I believe that the *Pilkhan* tree is

SO, BENDING

that was 'positive.' Personally, needed that in my life. For a long time, I had a very split identity, ken about where I was from or who I was. Today, I can say that I am from





*effect*. This natural optical phenomenon has been used centuries and was improved with the use of a mirror, sometime around the 15th century AD.

Though the concept for modern cameras still used obscura technology, it wasn't until the photographic camera was invented in the early 1900s that these images could be captured on film. And, real ly that changed everything about cameras! World Pinhold *Photography day* was established to celebrate the art of pinhole photography. In an age of ever-growing digital photography, Pinhole Photography Day gives hon our and pays heed to the original and humble pinhol camera. The purpose of the day was to establish a time of retro-thinking and old school days, when technology was simple and the world was a bit less chaotic. Sometimes. just referred to as 'Pinhole Day,' this day takes place on a Sunday in late spring to give the ideal weather and lighting for capturing some

hose, who are collec tors of antiques or perhaps inherited an old pinhole camera from a relative might take World Pinhole Photography Day as the ideal opportunity to dust it off and use it. Perhaps, take it into the kids' school for show and tell to let school children learn a bit about the history of photography.



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman WHY DO IHAVE ALL THE GOOD IDEAS?