



Woody Woodpecker Day

Every year on April 27, fans of animation celebrate *Woody Woodpecker Day*, marking the lasting impact of this iconic animated character. Created by Walter Lantz in 1940, Woody quickly became a symbol of mischief and humour with his unmistakable laugh and playful antics. This day gives everyone a chance to relive the joy and laughter that Woody has brought into lives, for decades. The celebration of *Woody Woodpecker Day* isn't just about nostalgia. It's also a recognition of animated cartoons' artistic and cultural significance. Woody Woodpecker's adventures have delighted fans around the world.

#MIND & BODY

What pain in specific areas of the body might mean

What pain in the body could mean for your health



Did you know that pain in one part of the body might indicate a more serious problem elsewhere? This fascinating phenomenon, called *referred pain*, happens because the nerves from different parts of the body can share neural pathways with the brain, which can get confused about where the pain is coming from. While referred pain is a well-documented clinical observation, using it as the sole method to determine the source of a problem



is not always reliable. Accurate diagnosis often requires comprehensive clinical evaluation, including medical history, physical examination, and sometimes imaging or other diagnostic tests.

What pain in specific areas of the body might mean

- Right abdomen and shoulder:** Pain in the right abdomen and shoulder can indeed indicate gallbladder issues, specifically gallstones or cholecystitis, which aggravates on bending forward and it is due to the *phrenic nerve referral*.
- Left arm:** Pain in the left arm is classically associated with heart problems, such as a heart attack, because of shared sensory pathways. It can be also due to *cervical radiculopathy*.
- Lower back:** Kidney pain can refer to the lower back, but attributing all low back pain to kidney issues is overly simplistic, as *musculoskeletal problems* are more common causes. Renal stones have joints to groin pain.
- Lower right side:** *Appendicitis* typically causes pain in the lower right abdomen, but not all pain in this area is due to the appendix.
- Chest and neck:** While pain in the chest and neck can indicate issues with the lungs, such as pneumonia or pleurisy, it can also be due to *cardiovascular problems*.
- Hip or thigh:** Pain in the hip or thigh, being referred from the intestines, is unlikely. Such pain more commonly arises from musculoskeletal or nerve issues. Referred pain is a complex aspect of the nervous system and often requires careful examination and diagnosis by healthcare professionals to identify and address the root cause. Below are some additional examples of this phenomenon.
- Testicular issues:** Pain from testicular issues can indeed refer to the lower abdomen or inner thigh due to the shared sensory nerves.
- Ovarian cysts/issues:** These can cause referred pain to the lower back due to pelvic inflammation extending to the sensory nerves around the spine.
- Ear/throat infections:** Pain from these areas can indeed refer to the jaw or neck because of the interconnected nature of *cranial nerves*.
- Cervical spine problems:** Issues here can cause pain referred down to the arm or to the shoulder due to nerve compression or irritation.

Diagnostic approaches to determine the source of pain

- Understanding and diagnosing pain,** based on referred patterns, requires a holistic approach that considers all possible sources and uses an array of diagnostic tools to pinpoint the exact cause. Here is a list of some of the diagnostic methods to get more accurate results.
- Clinical evaluation:** A thorough history and physical examination are the first steps, focusing on the nature, duration, and specific characteristics of the pain.
- Imaging tests:** X-rays, MRI scans, and CT scans can help visualize the internal structures and identify abnormalities that might be causing pain.
- Lab tests:** Blood tests can detect markers of inflammation, infection, or other biochemical states associated with pain.



The poet in Malashri Lal is a quiet observer. She finds her muse everywhere, in her daily life and in the people she meets. Her poems talk to and talk about everything that catches her attention, from trees to lost souls to flowers and even *Gulzar Sahab*.

The Words And The Muse Just Come... PART:4



Malashri Lal at a book event.



Shailaza Singh
Published author, poet and a YouTuber

How does a poet write a poem? Is it a logical process like prose or is it a play of mind, intuition, experiences? Malashri Lal believes that the process of 'writing a poem' involves more than just words and rhythm.

There must be some kind of serendipity and intuition at play when writing a poem?

Both happen. *Serendipity* also happens and the accidental development of a poem also happens. I had written a poem about Geeta Chandran, a well-known dancer and a very good friend. I had gone to see Geeta. She was doing this absolutely stunning performance, which is on the life of 'Gandhi'. She is such a beautiful dancer and she did that whole thing wearing a stark white saree with a black border. She did not wear a *kanjeevaram* saree like the dancers usually wear. There were no props, nothing! I was so moved with what she had done with the 'Charkha' and 'Gandhi' using simply light. I came and wrote this poem and sent it off to Geeta and Rajiv. She liked it so much that she shared it with everyone.

In Gandhi's Shadow

"For Geeta Chandran The dancer's taut body Bent to the bullets Of hate embedded in the history Of my country. Her body curved into the grace Of supple Satyagraha Pangs of hunger Self-induced silence Never retaliating when violated"



Malashri Lal with Gulzar.

By lathi charge, insults, aggression. The scavengers bent double To scoop up human waste While others blocked their nose And eyes and ears to the wretched poor. Gandhi watched alone Stricken to the core by the Assaults on human dignity. The dancer's hands wove subtle ropes On the invisible charkha The warp and weft of India's independence. That even today drives us together And also apart While Bapu sighs, Hey Ram."

It is interesting that you have written a poem on the poet himself!

I, along with some others in a group, had worked very closely with Gulzar *sahab* on a project in Chamba, in 2010 or 2012. It was about preserving the old history of older women. We had done a conference in the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (formerly known as the Viceregal Lodge) in Shimla with Gulzar *sahab*. This building is

quite old. It has a seminar room which is quite beautiful. It has silk brocade walls and chandeliers. Gulzar *sahab* was reading his famous poem, "*Kitabe jhankti hai band almari ke sheesha se*" in that room. It goes back to those old days when boys and girls could not communicate directly with each other and hence, they used to hide love notes and petals, pressed in these books and meet on the pretext of returning the books. A world that today's children will never resonate with. It struck me that he was reading it at time when digitization had come in and hence, I wrote this poem.

A Poet's Remembrance For Gulzar Sahab

"In the brocade-lined old hall, the poet read, *Kitabe jhankti hai band almari ke sheesha se* And time stood still while images wrote their story in the air Resonant with words His deep genteel voice and crisp words meld lyric and memory Of yesteryears without digital exuberance When love was wrapped in dried rose petals And modesty was not an anti-feminist term Libraries of books have lost their role as mediators in young romance The ubiquitous cell phone has abbreviated both love and intimacy The poet though nostalgic has a wry smile Giving voice to those pages locked behind the glass."

Your poem 'Afternoon Serenade' talks about lost souls in search of company.

Yes, I frequent this place in Delhi, where a lot of elderly people come and I have years of memory of older aunts and uncles, frequenting that place. You can go there any time after 4 in the evening, and they

#BOOKS

are always willing to give you a coffee and a pastry or a patty. In Delhi, people don't visit each other's homes like they do in Jaipur. So, a lot of elderly people find company in such places around Delhi. These places are impersonal, affordable, beautiful and you are not obligated to anyone. I used to feel so grateful for such places for these elderly people because had they not been there, they would have been sitting alone in their homes. Whenever I go there, it is a kind of an impromptu companionship, where you will meet someone or the other and then have coffee with them or go for a walk with them. Many such people, I know, live completely on their own. They aren't financially dependent and have caregivers but where is the human company or the intellectual companionship? These are people who have been government officers, professors. They have had positions of authority. Today, they are sitting and reading the newspapers in such places. But the image, that I want to convey through this, is a positive image because these people still



Malashri Lal with Rama Pandey, Geeta Chandran and Sudhir Mathur.



have places like these where they can find company and spend their time nicely.

Afternoon Serenade

"Lost souls in search of company Seek out tables Overlooking the pond Staring at the water and trees beyond Pretending not to hear The loneliness within That yearns for voices And finds it answered by birds Longs for movement Kindly activated by squirrels Hopps for glorious flights Then finds butterflies enacting this dream In teacups, the images float one into another While the afternoon turns to dusk God's creatures steal into their nests and lairs, The lost souls wrap blankets of forgetfulness Around their frail shoulders And quietly doze into the next dawn."

So, when you visit such places, you write your poems there and then? Do you carry a pen and paper with you?

Yes, sometimes I write it, there and then, and sometimes, the image stays with me and I come back home and write it. These days, I write my poems on my phone and email them to myself. Before the phone, I used to write them in diaries or pieces of paper.

What is the story behind the poem 'Easter Lilies in an Empty Home? Whose home is this?'

When I shifted into this other house (which belonged to my parents), that we have in Jaipur due to personal reasons, I had bought some 'Easter lilies' that had been in the old house, right from my parents' time and planted them here. I live in Delhi and visit Jaipur every now and then. But now what happens is every April, these bulbs have proliferated. I do nothing during the year. But every April, it is like a riot of colours with these lilies. Every year, the bulbs are growing in

Easter Lilies in an Empty Home

"Come' they call out, 'It's the season of forgiveness' A hundred lilies stand tall Renewed by the magic of seasons The pink stripes may be scars from yesterday The white streaks are healing balm To be washed by the dew The supple leaves flat and curved cradle the flowers that have no other family Some do, maybe three lilies on a stem But they squabble like siblings Pushing for space They calmly grace the garden of a silent home The owners alive only in obituaries The lilies don't worry on that count Buried bulbs know they will creep upwards in season Life's renewal is a beautiful certainty."



Geeta Chandran performing 'Gandhi Warp and Weft'.

There is another poem in which you talk about your mother.

I wrote this poem when I was abroad, visiting my son and daughter-in-law. We were on a vacation somewhere, and I was looking at the sky changing colours in the evening. Somehow this poem came to me. I lost both my parents in a tragic car accident. I was very close to my parents. They were my friends, teachers and mentors. I had a very open relationship with both of them. They had a very complementary relationship with each other. My father never went to the kitchen. Not that he didn't want to but he made such a mess of it that my mother told him to stay out and let the cooking be handled by her. Today, there are these talks about feminism and equality. My concept is somewhat different. A relationship between a husband and wife should be more about complementary rather than division of labour.

Dreaming of Ma by the Sea

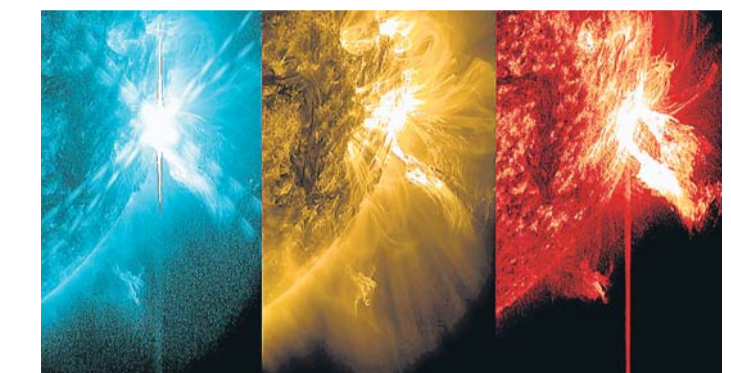
"You live somewhere between the black night and the bright star, Free of body and its temporal limits. In green leaves turning to red in a mellow autumn I catch a glimpse of the saree pallav on that day You knew life was short and might become shorter. In the shimmer of an unsteady wave on the lake I recall your tremulous smile when you whispered trying a hopeless cure. In the rough hewn rocks that line the harbour, I remember your will to fight an uneven battle with the rouge cells. Here, on shores unknown to you and me, We meet again. When the dark sky rests on the sparkle of stars, Living and dying are no longer apart."

-To be continued
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#SOLAR FLARE

4 flares erupt from Sun in rare celestial event

Current solar activity points to the Sun likely nearing or reaching the peak of its 11-year solar cycle known as solar maximum. The sight of 'sympathetic solar flares' in different regions of the star was captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, according to *Weather and Radar*, showing complex magnetic interactions.



Our solar flares erupted simultaneously on April 23 in a rare celestial event, possibly heralding in the Sun's dynamic 11-year cycle. The sight of 'sympathetic solar flares' in different regions of the star was captured by NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory, according to *Weather and Radar*, showing complex magnetic interactions.

The four-part eruption began around 1 A.M. EDT (Eastern Daylight Time) on Tuesday (April 23), originating from three sunspots and a large magnetic filament. Each of the blast sites were separated by hundreds of thousands of miles and the area between them covered around a third of the solar surface facing Earth. The concurrent blasts were part of one single eruption, known as a *sympathetic solar flare*.

What are Sympathetic Flares?

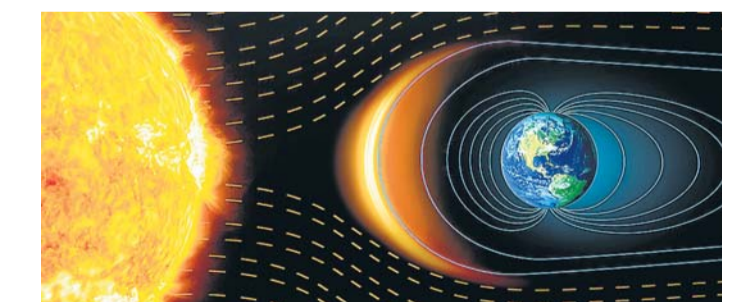
Sympathetic flares are caused by multiple eruptions across the Sun's magnetic field, linked by massive magnetic field loops that lie above the solar surface. When one spot detonates, others follow suit. This leads to *coronal mass ejections (CMEs)* and massive bursts of plasma. Such solar activity is likely an indication of the Sun reaching the peak of its 11-year solar cycle known as 'solar maximum'. The peak is marked by increased solar events like flares and CMEs. As scientists continue to monitor the event and its aftermath, the event offers a peek into understanding the Sun's complex life cycle. This is the third sympathetic solar flare this year, following a pair of explosions in January and a duo of X-class flares in March.

Why is this event rare?

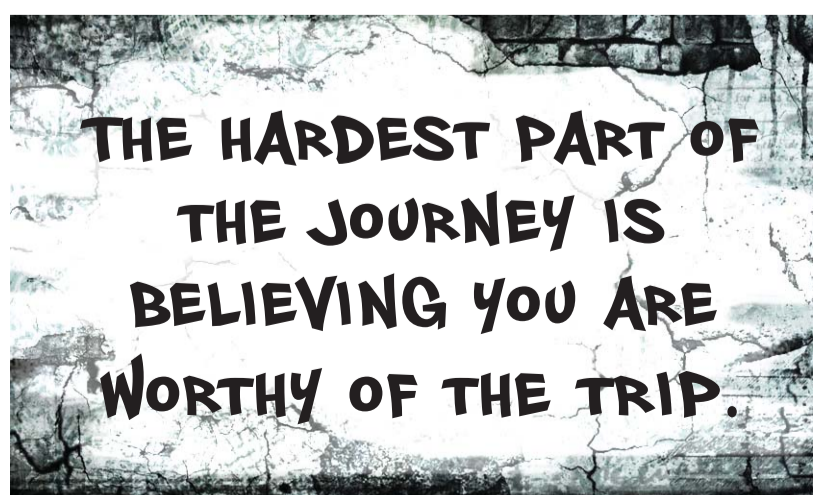
Most sympathetic flares reported so far include two linked flares, ranging from small outbursts to X-class flares, the most powerful class of solar flares that the sun can produce. The emission of four flares in unison makes this event 'super-sympathetic.'

How can they impact Earth?

If directed towards the Earth, they have the potential to disrupt power grids, telecommunication networks and orbiting satellites and expose astronauts to dangerous doses of radiation. Minor class G1 geomagnetic storms around April 25 and April 26 could also illuminate skies at lower latitudes with auroras.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman