



Psilocybin mushroom Trip

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I celebrate the unusually warm and moist peak of autumn with a strong dose (2.5 grams) of dried *Psilocybin cubensis* mushrooms. This is not intended to be a recreational party (I am tripping solo), nor is it intended to be mere escapism. Instead, I intend to have a primary religious experience using the mushrooms as a psychoactive sacrament (or entheogen). I have used psilocybin mushrooms before, but I have not done so for more than ten years.

I ingest the dried mushrooms at approximately 4:30 pm, after fasting since a late morning breakfast. I have left the larger pieces of stalks and caps intact and chew on those first. The taste is relatively flat: slightly woody, moderately musky and richly earthen. The texture is only lightly fibrous, the stalks, in fact, almost appear to melt in my mouth. This, I attribute, to the freshness of the mushrooms: they were harvested, dried and stored in glass less than a month ago. I try to keep chewing as long as I can, absorbing as much liquid as I can through the soft tissues of my mouth before swallowing. As the chewing continues, however, the mustiness grows stronger, and so I am forced to swallow the now

slightly rubbery mash. Two more mouthfuls of big pieces leave me one final gulp of dried powder. By this time I just swallow it without much chewing.

I notice the first tell-tale sensations within 15 minutes: a mild sense of anxiety “butterflies” in the stomach (I have never been particularly susceptible to the initial psilocybin nausea that many/most people experience) and a growing giddiness. After 30 minutes, I am pleasantly surprised by the strength of the mushrooms that I have consumed (this being my first experience with this source and this strain). By now, I am experiencing very pronounced open-eyed visual effects: a halo-ing of light sources and reflections, a prismatic rainbow-outlining of most objects, a merging of field and vision into shifting patterns, and the ability to focus my vision at great distances. The overriding feeling, however, is the great sense of having been comfortably returned to “home.”

I decide to listen to some music (*Morning View* by Incubus had been my pre-determined selection), but while doing so, I become increasing restless (but not uncomfortably so). I spend the next half hour “playing:” sometimes sitting, exploring the layers of music; other times moving/dancing through the palpable textures of air and space; sometimes laughing out loud at the beauty unmasked; still other times walking onto the deck at the rear of my house and becoming captivated by the swirling patterns of wind-blown autumn leaves high on the tree branches, and by the mushroom-blown patterns shifting and pulsating down below me on the back lawn. (My “lawn” is not a solid carpet of uniform green; instead it is a largely uncultivated mass of multi-colored mosses, clovers, grasses and “weeds.”)

Eventually (at about the one-hour mark), I shut off the music and go out into the natural world, as planned. This is, after all, the guiding spiritual purpose of my entheogenic experience: to commune with the natural world ablaze in its autumnal majesty. I had no specific agenda, other than an eventual hike along the river trail on my property. I walk out of my front door, and take in my surroundings. It is as if I am looking at my front yard for the first time since I bought this Connecticut home 10 years ago – the stone

walls, the long dirt driveway, the thick woods masking street and neighbors, the “island” of wilderness in the center of the turn-around, the wetlands to the North – but at the same time everything is comfortably familiar. Everything, that is, except for an unseen neighbor, who is using a leaf-blower – an irritating mechanical intrusion that I was wary of obsessing over, so I move around to the even more secluded back yard.

Everywhere I look is a calliope of sights and sounds: every vista of the landscape offers a potential rest stop for my heightened awareness, and every microscopic detail offers a panorama of secret sensual delights. I am particularly captivated by an acorn, the myriad colors emanating a life-force in the here and now with an even stronger aura for the future. The bark-like husk undulates with knobby protuberances, both hard and soft at the same time. The nut is sleek and smooth, with contrasting accents pointing towards the pin-sharp point. Turned edgewise, looking at the point, the ochre accents join together, pointing a direction, drawing me in. Drawing me into the acorn, a seed barely containing the generations of oaks to come. This is the source of All – this force, this energy, this potential. The ochre lines twist into spirals, drawing me into myself, a seed. My seed. My vital seed drawn against a barren plain. (Don’t go there.) I pocket the acorn, with more than a tinge of guilt... (You’re doing the same thing, leaving the seed nowhere to take root!) and later gave it to Heidi to help her find her way home from New York City the next day. I don’t think it worked.

The tree. He is mammoth: a Great White Oak maybe 60 feet tall, maybe 8 feet in circumference, probably 100 years old. Still, he is a shell of what he once was, crippled by Gypsy Moths and pollution...and broken promises. From a distance, he rules the hillside and lords over the river; up close his crusty features are weathered and tired. The path, a sometimes Spring run-off and wildlife route to the river, circles round his girth. His outstretched limbs have cradled climbing boys and swinging girls, but his own seed bears no fruit. His stream of acorns are mowed, raked, blown, plucked and plundered. None take root. He is surrounded by young saplings – white pine, black birch, maple, beech, and ash – sprightly, playful lads whose leafy tops tickle and tease, whatever you

please, competing with ease, his hard-fought-for lead: to the heaven above... and the river below. But none of the saplings are his.

I sit in the river – literally. Perched on a rock in the shadow of late afternoon. Swift whitewater and placid pools play symphonies to the setting sun, the flamboyant Fall and the psychedelic sorcerer sitting on the rocks. Up close the brilliance of the leaves is an illusion; it masks the shadow of death, as the chlorophyll flashes and fades. But which way to face? Upstream – the gold and yellow summer lingers: This is why I bought the house: This path. These woods. This river. I knew I wasn't buying them, merely renting. *What a great place to trip*, I had thought. Why? So I can pass on the secrets... Of what? This! To whom? My students? Sitting on the mossy banks of the river of hope with their aging hippie teacher while the scented breeze of rainbows tickles their mind's eyes? Is this just another guru-teacher-director dream of Senor Ego? NO! Then what do you think you Know? The river is the Source. All Life bends towards it, laps at its edges, feels for its currents. Even the translucent water bugs jitter and jive in the soup of a misty air flow.

I rise and stretch and almost fall in. How cold is the water? I reach in. Not frigid, but not swimming temperature. My butt is sore from sitting on the rocks. Has it been two hours, or ten minutes? I look at the reflection on the water's surface. I can see three worlds simultaneously: the reflection of squawking geese flying in formation overhead, a water bug skimming along the surface of the river, and a submerged leaf tumbling along through the current. And (w)here I am! This is what it means to really be alive. To live in the moment. The river will feed you, if you take the time. And if you can find it.

I sit again, facing the other direction. Facing downstream – the skeleton of a nearly shed tree arches over the distant pool, obscuring the rest of the river.

I laugh. It is Autumn. I am fifty years old. I have everything I ever dreamed of. A place to stop time and feel/feed the Universe. The River is Love. All Life bends towards it, laps at its edges, feels for its currents.

I cry. It is Autumn. I am fifty years old. I have nothing. No son. No daughter. The River weeps.

On the way back, I stop at the stump of a maple tree. The scene is sculpted surreal: a half-dozen flaming leaves, with mottled liver spots and cauterized veins nestled on this horribly amputated wooden plateau. The tree rings scream obscenities at the human violence, yet mesmerizing mandalas of the eternal life-force throb in verdant waves. A cicada, navigating the depths of the rubbery canopy, perches on viney purple strands – more animal than plant – in the alien landscape surrounding the tree bark. In the center of the stump, a moss-filled rotten core is host to a triple stalk of mushrooms.

A purely visionary sight! Mushrooms within and without! The mushrooms within force me to go explore the outside, the “natural” world. The mushrooms within send electromagnetic fields of attraction between my seemingly isolated human form and the nurturing bosom of Mother Earth. The mushrooms within remind me I am one in body and spirit with that very world. And the mushrooms without reach up to me from the dark bowels of the underworld where their heads spring up like ripe, naked apples. Mushrooms – at least that part of the life-form we call mushrooms – are just the fruited bodies of a massive underground network of filaments called mycelia. What appear to be separate and remote patches of mushrooms sprouting forth at random times of the year, are actually the continuously fruiting bodies of a single, enormous underground entity. Mushrooms – and all the world’s fungi – are unique in earth’s ecosystem. We think of them as plant life, yet they do not manufacture their own food. Like animals, they feast on the remains of other life forms. Fungi feed on, and promote, organic decay, providing the missing link between life, death and rebirth. Some people suggest the heretical notion that fungi do not fit into either the plant or animal kingdom, and must therefore represent a kingdom of their own.

Eating psilocybin mushrooms, one learns the short-sightedness of such divisions. Eating psilocybin mushrooms, one learns that all life is part of the same whole. No, it IS a

whole. Life on Earth – all Life on Earth – is just a fruited body springing forth in its ripe nakedness from the ever-expanding network of Universal Consciousness.

