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Some People See Colors in Words and Rainbows in Symphonies: The Emerging Phenomenon of Synesthesia

San Francisco, CA (March 1, 2010) -- A violinist sees a scarlet form when he plays a certain note. A rock star sees waves of blue and green as she composes a ballad, while an actress tastes cake when she utters the word "table." This fascinating mingling of the senses is called "synesthesia," and the people who possess this amazing gift are called "synesthetes."

In her new book, *Tasting the Universe*, Maureen Seaberg takes readers on an "Eat, Pray, Love" style exploration of this fascinating, newly discovered phenomenon. Occurring in about 5% of the American population, synesthesia is scientifically described as a cross-wiring, or lack of chemical inhibition, between brain neurons.

Musicians, artists, actors, writers and other creatives often possess this condition. In *Tasting the Universe*, Seaberg has collected the experiences of famous synesthetes such as Itzhak Perlman, Billy Joel, Pharrell Williams, and Marilyn Monroe (her biographer, Norman Mailer, asserted that she possessed this gift).

Have you ever heard that the reason we all type "www" countless times a day is because one of the inventors of the internet, Sir Robert Cailliau, is a synesthete who sees "w" in his favorite color, dark green, and settled on the name for it that way?

While scientific research of synesthesia is being conducted worldwide, some experts in the fields of spirituality and quantum physics are convinced that it is explained not only by traditional science, but also by the mystical and the ineffable. A long-time journalist for major media and a lecturer on synesthesia and spirituality, Seaberg, combines groundbreaking scientific research with deeper spiritual truths, answering the questions:

- *Why survivors of near-death experiences sometimes "return" possessing the gift of synesthesia*

- *Why all infants are believed to be synesthetes until four months of age*
- *Why artists, performers and other creatives are most likely to have this ability*

A synesthete herself since childhood, Seaberg is able to tap into a greater creative universe and even the divine. While working on the Synesthesia Project, she worked closely with Tibet House and researched Dr. Robert Thurman's theory about synesthesia and the Buddhist "mind sense".

About the Author: Maureen Seaberg has lectured on synesthesia and spirituality at the "Towards a Science of Consciousness Conference" at the University of Arizona-Tucson. A journalist for 20 years, she has written for the *New York Times*, *The Daily News*, *Irish America*, *ESPN the Magazine*, and other publications. And, she has covered breaking news for MSNBC and appeared on NBC, CNN, and PBS TV. Seaberg studied journalism and Spanish at Penn State University and at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

"As a child, I quickly learned that my perceptions were not common— in fact, they were strange. Like many synesthetes around the world, I learned to keep them to myself. Thus, I'm grateful for the present day climate of inquiry into and wonder about this nearly forgotten gift.

And while traditional medicine has always fascinated me, and research on this topic is currently burgeoning, I knew I must also call on consciousness experts. As someone who lived inside the experience, I knew that anatomy alone did not, could not, hold all the answers. The beauty of the individual testimonies in this book is that they are the subjects' truths about which only someone who knows the gift intimately can speak; many of them are speaking at length about it for the first time. Their words have helped me find my own."

— Maureen Seaberg in *Tasting the Universe*

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