

Award-Winning Journalist Erica Rex Confronts Big Pharma and Therapy Culture in SEEING WHAT IS THERE

For fans of Aldous Huxley and Timothy Leary, this memoir charts one woman's battle with CPTSD and her search for healing through psychedelics.

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“

A brave, passionate, and powerful book that combines research and lived truth. Difficult at times, but impossible to put down—it will leave you wiser, shaken, and opened in ways few books ever do”

*Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson,
author of Assault on Truth*

cancer survivor [Erica Rex](#), one of the first patients in the Johns Hopkins psilocybin trials, will release her memoir [SEEING WHAT IS THERE: My Search for Sanity in the Psychedelic Era](#) in January 2026. Distributed by Simon & Schuster, the book blends lived trauma, science reporting, and cultural critique into one of the most unflinching accounts of the modern psychedelic movement.

This is not a utopian tale of wellness retreats and miracle cures. Rex rejects the myth of psychedelic medicine as sacred salvation wrapped in neuroscience. Instead, her book dissects the human cost of trauma and recovery inside medical systems that are too often guided by

money, ego, and a desperation for answers. She argues that psychedelic medicine today is being shaped not by patients or science, but by a cultural appetite for fast healing and a corporate industry hungry for profit.

A longtime journalist, Rex has reported for The New York Times, Scientific American, The Independent, Salon, and Poets & Writers. She is a National Magazine Award winner for fiction and a former Columbia Journalism School fellow whose work has focused on science, health, and the mind. In 2012, during breast cancer treatment and clinical depression, she enrolled in the Johns Hopkins psilocybin-assisted therapy trial. Her account of that experience, published as “Calming a Turbulent Mind” in Scientific American Mind, became one of the earliest first-person insights into clinical psychedelic therapy.

But SEEING WHAT IS THERE makes clear that her experience was not a simple story of cure. Rex uses her history to expose deeper failures in psychiatry and medicine. As the daughter of two

psychiatrists—her mother having trained under Harvard’s Henry A. Murray, whose human experiments influenced the Unabomber—Rex survived violent psychiatric “treatments” as a child. That abuse resulted in lifelong Complex PTSD. Her book confronts the systems that failed her and many others, including a mental health industry that pathologizes suffering but routinely overlooks the causes of it.

Rex threads investigative reporting through personal narrative to examine the uncomfortable truth behind the psychedelic revival: altered states alone do not heal trauma. Psychedelics may open suppressed memory and emotion, but without ethical guidance, support, and stability, the outcomes can be harmful. She challenges unchecked psychedelic evangelism and demands accountability in a field now driven by venture capital, aggressive clinics, and celebrity-backed “healing brands.”

Rex explores why vulnerable people—especially women—are often retraumatized in psychedelic settings. She examines case studies of boundary violations, financial exploitation, and power abuse inside therapeutic environments where emotional exposure is extreme and regulation is minimal. She also questions why so many psychedelic advocates use spiritual language to disguise commercialization, and why a drug once tied to counterculture rebellion is now sold in glossy “wellness” packaging.

Her central argument is clear: psychedelic therapy is not medicine without ethics, and it is not healing without community. True recovery, she writes, requires structural safety—economic, emotional, and social—not just chemically induced breakthroughs. Psychedelics, she warns, risk becoming another instrument of Big Pharma if stripped from context and sold as quick-access transformation.

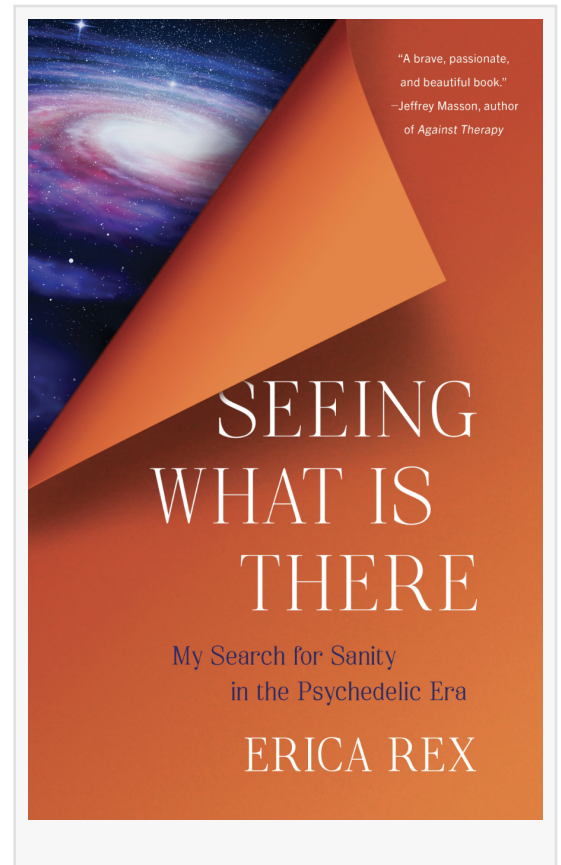
“An extraordinary, beautifully written account of one woman’s lifelong journey out of unimaginable childhood trauma... Hers is a singular and prophetic voice, summoning the healing power of community in a culture that has pathologized human suffering.”

— Stephen Mills, *Chosen: A Memoir of Stolen Boyhood*

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SEEING WHAT IS THERE comes at a pivotal moment. Psilocybin and MDMA are moving toward



FDA approval, psychedelic therapy startups are attracting billions in investment, and dozens of states are debating legalization or medicalization. More than 13 million Americans suffer from Complex PTSD, and trauma-related disorders remain poorly treated by mainstream psychiatry. Rex brings urgency and precision to a conversation clouded by hype, cautioning that a psychedelic “revolution” without justice will repeat the same harms as the systems it claims to fix.

Her reporting has appeared in Scientific American and The Independent. She has presented at the NIH/NCI’s psilocybin research series and advised policymakers, including the Congressional Psychedelic Therapy Caucus.

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