

For Immediate Release

Performances: August 10 and 11 in Santa Fe, NM

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**National Geographic Explorer Learns Humility in New Solo Show
“WHEN THE UNSEEN BIT: From Invincible to Vulnerable”**



Santa Fe, NM - “My whole world physically, emotionally, and my entire sense of self came crashing down,” says Maria Fadiman, writer, and performer of the new autobiographical solo show, “When the Unseen Bit.”

A two-time TEDx speaker, National Geographic Emerging Explorer, professor, and ethnobotanist, she started her journey as the woman who could “do it all.” Traveling the world, working in the rainforests, and even dealing with rebel armies in Mexico, intrepid Maria spent her summers on fieldwork from Africa to the Amazon.

Her interest? The relationship between people and plants. What she didn’t realize was how much that relationship would shake up her personal life.

In 2015, Maria was diagnosed with a debilitating autoimmune disorder. Exposure to mycotoxins released by mold cause her muscles to seize and skin to feel painful, as well as trigger a host of emotional upheavals.

“It was a relief to get the diagnosis because I thought I might be going crazy,” says Maria. “I was about to go onstage for my TEDx talk, and my muscles were burning and seizing. I thought maybe I had just stressed myself out to a breaking point, but it was something more.”

Once the diagnosis came, that's when the work began - the work of tearing her home, life, and identity apart. "There were people coming into my home to disinfect surfaces three times over, telling me to throw out couches and rugs and eventually all of my clothing just so I could get some relief. Nowhere felt safe to me, which absolutely rocked my sense of self. I felt like all the walls were crumbling around me," says Maria.

Several years later, Maria can do field work again, but with some new limitations. "I used to pride myself in being the woman who could handle any discomfort, any circumstance and not wince. Since the diagnosis, I've had to learn to be okay with needing to ask for help. It's humbling."

As her sense of self returned, Maria was encouraged by her family to share her story (her mother, Dorothy Fadiman is a documentary filmmaker). "Working with Tanya Rubinstein to develop the show became the next right step," said Maria. "I've had to let go and trust the process, which is unlike me, but so far it's been amazing. I hope that what people take from the show is the feeling that they aren't alone - and that they can get through difficult things."

When The Unseen Bit will be performed August 10th and 11th at Railyard Performance Center at 8 pm.

Written and performed by Maria Fadiman.

Developed with and directed by Tanya Taylor Rubinstein