



**I SING
THE BODY
ELECTRIC**

By John Engle

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Formatted by M. D. Friedman for publication
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With grateful acknowledgement to
The Woman
who inspired these poems and to
Walt Whitman
who provided the title and the push.

Feel me flying
toward you now
electrically
instantaneous,
gliding down
each tiny hair of you,
entering you
at every pore
and orifice.

Transformed
as I am now
Into pure current,
I leap from the pole
of my being to yours,
discharging myself
into you
in perpetual
transmission.

While the dynamo
of love
feeds me
with the current
that I feed to you,
I shall keep
the system active.
I shall keep
love's circuits open
all the way

*"Come,
said my Soul,
Such verses for my Body
let us write,
(for we are one.)"*

Walt Whitman

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You know already that I like it down.
Down is best for framing loveliness.
Up is for sophistication and formality.
Please unpin it now and let it ripple out
to kiss your neck and nudge your shoulders.
Brush it if you wish. I love to watch
the charged strands fluff and fly.
Or leave it tousled, for soon it will be tousled.
Let me come near to breathe its perfume,
to feel its softness on my throbbing lips,
to let my fingers seek the satin thrill.

Answering the wistful welcome in your eyes,
with both hands intertwined, I pull
till at the point where pain and pleasure merge,
your ears come into view.

I shall not call them shells.
They are not shells, but cups—
cups of honey for finger and for tongue.
Gently now, my finger rides
along the rim of one while my tongue
leaps out to tease the other,
first with touch and then
with whispered words,
then with probe
to find the hidden honey
which is a mystic nectar never seen
and never tasted but by lips of love.
As the nectar drips down to the lobe
my hunger follows it.
I nibble there until your masochistic yield
tells me to bite, so I gently bite
then move to other zones.

The bridge from ear to lips
is one cheek span.
Your lips are curved
and parted for my lips,
but I shall seek a minor touch for now.
With fingers first I trace the crimson arc,
sampling the tingle,
wooing the waiting warmth,
savoring the whispers,
and contemplating bliss.
Then, as your lips droop
in that impatient pout,
I lead my lips to yours
and leave them there.
Mild at first, and with a gentle moan,
they meet. Wedded in wonder,
merged in mutual meaning,
they tremble timidly awhile together,
and then your tongue
darts through the oval door.

Your tongue is the prober
of moist meanings.
Passionately swollen,
it explores the wet wonder,
tasting the titillating tremors.
Speaking now in a slick
and silent language,
unknown to the ordinary words
it daily uses, your tongue
engages mine in a playful contest.
They touch, then tip to tip, they push
and wrestle in delightful acrobatics.
How sad that many still believe
all tongues were made alone
for speech and acts of eating.
How fortunate we are
that our tongues have found
a taste beyond all food,
a language beyond all words.

Your throat contains the throbbing
of the pulse that measures out
the rhythm of your soul.

Your throat is sculptured poetry
that sighs. I love the sounds
originating there. I bend to trace
its pattern with my lips,
to fill its pulsing hollow
with my tongue.

From hair to ears
to lips to tongue to eyes,
and now to throat, my seeking tongue
has swung with easy grace
as on a jeweled chain.

Here, let me weave a necklace
of my kisses while my hands
undo the jealous blouse
that hides your white twin hills
of heaven from me.

"With world enough and time,"
as Marvel said,
"two hundred years
to adore each breast" *would do*.
There's no such time for us,
of course, and yet one hour with each
will bless eternity with memories
that even death can't touch.
The blouse removed,
there yet remains the bra,
and as my fingers fumble
with the clasp, your fingers,
busy with my buttons, too,
tremble their patterned passion
on my chest. I pause
to give you freedom and to breathe.
Shedding my shirt, I pivot you around,
unclasp the stubborn bra and let it fall,
and then my hands replace its jealous cups.

Your back is toward me now.
My arms extend beneath your arms.
My fingers fondle hardened nipples,
and my lips follow
the curve, of neck
and back and shoulders.
Shivers race along
the route my kisses travel,
and I can feel the vibrant tingle underneath.
You are all willingness and all response.
I guide you backward with me
toward the bed.
Reluctantly my hands
release your breasts
and seek your hands
to lower you gently down.
For awhile I stand admiring you.
Your hands still cling to mine; your eyes invite.
Your breasts now rise and fall in rapid rhythm
as you pull me slowly down upon them.

Your naked breasts
against my naked chest
make kissing double.
As my lips find yours again
love multiplies its thrills,
and yet we have but started.
I know those white twin hills
of yours now yearn
to be climbed slowly
by my lips and tongue,
and so I shall oblige them,
but your mouth
begs my mouth linger,
even as your breasts arise
to meet my lips. And so my mouth is caught
between two blisses; no, really three!
Thus I build triangular caresses
from breast to breast to lips
and back to breasts again in geometric patterns
of delight until I find a stronger need arising.

I rise with my stronger need,
remembering we are still half dressed,
and as I reach to help remove your skirt,
you arch your back to make it easier.
The skirt is off, and just above
your panties' rim there winks
that single eye of your nativity,
the symmetrical scar of your beginning,
your body's whirlpool funneling my psyche
to the pulsing Eden of your mortal center.
Umbilical in my longing now,
I touch and trace, this time,
an inverted pyramid design
from breast to breast to navel
where I pause to meditate
the wonders of your body,
to contemplate
the splendors of your soul.

Your panties and your sandals
still remain. I stoop to free your feet,
then kneel to worship them.
Are they not as romantic as the rest?
They brought you to me,
leaping barriers and kicking
warped convention on the way.
For that I kiss them now.
I hold your toes, your instep,
then your heel against my lips.
Each foot, in turn, receives
its share of praise.
They are such delicate,
yet such dauntless feet,
for they have dared to walk
where love has led. The stones of doubt
have never made them stumble;
the moralizing briars have not detained them.
Yours are the feet of a realistic dreamer.
They walk with ease on either earth or air.

From feet to ankle, then to shin and calf,
I trace the upward lines of your allure,
but pausing long enough
to praise each part
as it rewards my touch
with tremors of delight.

There's not one narrow inch
of your anatomy the current
of my passion will not probe.

For now your feet, your ankles, shins,
and calves glow with the hot stream
rushing from your heart.

I feel a pulsing in my fingertips
to match the eager pulsing of your calves.

We are now all pulse.

It is as though our separate
bloods would try
to break their fragile barriers of skin,
and blend in love.

There are those who say the knees
are the least attractive part
of all the female form, but they
are either blind or not in love.

Whether you are walking toward me
or sitting across the room from me,
I find your knees are the signature
of your body, just as your eyes
are the love-projecting signature
of your soul. And now by touch and kiss
I let them know the pattern of my passion
and desire. For this bright moment here,
your knees are you. I cuddle and embrace
them in my arms. Then gently I turn
you over on your side and tongue
the little wells behind your knees.

Your thighs are trembling now
with jealousy. I know they want
my touch; they need my kiss.

And they have waited,
not too patiently,
so I must move to them,
give them my love.

How warm, how soft,
how delicate the skin that leads
to your body's velvet intersection.

Your spreading thighs
reveal their inner softness.

My fingers tremble with your trembling now.
I hear your muffled moan and rise to see
your left index knuckle clinched
between your teeth while your right hand
pushes at your panties.

This is the signal!

Here, let me assist you.

But now that all of you is visible,
where are the words?
Can I ever find the words to praise
the centered wonder
of your anatomy?
Here is where all roads
of love converge.
This is the capital
of your body's map.
By kiss and touch your curves
and lures have led me
here to this throbbing,
yearning mine of moistness.
Softly now my hands caress the hair,
and then my fingers spread those dewy lips,
revealing the small, pink serpent
rising there—awaiting the warm
awareness of my taming touch.
Gently I fondle your yielding femininity
until I feel your hot hands reaching for me.

Your fingers are upon me now,
rippling down my abdomen,
soft and sure, gentle and tender,
teaching as they touch--
teaching love and warmth and truth.
Now your lips upon my lips again;
now again your tongue upon my tongue
probing with passionate precision
into the mystic moistness;
and now your hand guiding
the throbbing central limb of me
down to the eager,
arching ache of you;
now the upward surge,
the melding movement
till all is hip and lip and breast and tongue,
till all is centered at the center
as you receive me with a cry of joy.

The taking, taking, taking;
the giving, giving, giving,
the muted moan,
the sweet sound in the throat,
the rhythmic movement
of the hands and hips,
the tremor in the pelvis and the thighs—
the one great drama
where motion finds its meaning.
Now comes the swift spasmodic thrust,
the long, withdrawing sigh,
the petals of the eyes unfolding—
the glow of gratefulness, the cuddle-comfort,
the awareness of harmony made palpable,
miracles fulfilled,
goodness without guilt,
perfection without pretense,
and love without lies.

We are merged, but not in matter only.
Our bodies and our souls are truly one.
Withdrawal does not bring division;
as one, we lie relaxed, fulfilled,
blended in beauty, woven in wonder.
You are the warp, and I am the woof,
even though we do not even touch.
As we rise to dress, our spirits cling.
Eyes meet across the room
to freeze and hold the motion
of our bodies, proving love
is the spirit that controls our flesh.
We've learned the body
is the spirit's house
in spite of what the moralists may say.
Flesh is the temple that we worship in,
a holy temple that is filled with soul.

Now that we're apart,
the dream takes over.
Memory is a spirit with me now,
a spirit of splendor that possesses me
and echoes golden moments of our love.
I close my eyes against the commonplace
and make myself receptive to your touch.
Here, take me now, wild spirit of delight.
Let my probing fingers
fondle your desires
till each sleeping cell,
like a pupa in a dark cocoon,
grows wings and flutters out into the light
of perfect passion,
defying bleak impossibilities.
Let us merge apart,
as we have merged together,
proving once again that dreams know how
to build their own secure realities.

**ABOUT JOHN ENGLE, aka John D. Engle, Jr.
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More than two thousand of John Engle's poems have appeared in various magazines, including **The Saturday Evening Post, Good Housekeeping, Ladies' Home Journal, Commonweal, Writers Digest, and Poem**. In addition to his two books of light verse, **Laugh Lightly** and **Laugh Lightly II**, his light verse is also included in three hardcover anthologies, **Light Year '86, Light Year '87, and Light Year '88**, published by Bits Press, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH, and in **Light** magazine which took up where these anthologies left off. His latest books are **Leaning Toward the Light**, an illustrated handbook on how to write and publish light verse and **How to Write that Theme**, a book for junior and senior high school students on how to write themes of all kinds, along with detailed instructions on how to prepare and mail manuscripts to editors, using the same method with which he coached hundreds of his students into getting published and winning writing contests. He has published serious poetry and prose in his books, **Modern Odyssey, Sea Songs, Tree People, Cycle of Beauty**, and **Present Perfect**.

His poetry is also included in the hardcover **Anthology of Magazine Verse & Yearbook of Modern Poetry, 1980, 1981, and 1985**. His poetic voice went international when his poetry was selected for two Japanese college texts, **A College Anthology of American Literature** and **American Poetry for College Students**.

As a teacher of creative writing and a participant in the **Ohio Arts Council Writers-in-the-Schools** program, he has coached hundreds of young people and adults into print. He served many years as editorial associate of **Writer's Digest**, and has had many poems and articles published in that magazine and in other **Writer's Digest** publications, including the hardcover book, **A Beginner's Guide to Getting Published**. He has read, lectured, conducted workshops for groups, schools, and conferences; and for several years he edited a column of poetry called **Engle's Angle** in a magazine and newspapers. He has also published short fiction, a one-act play and has had a full-length historical drama produced. At present he is concentrating on the creation of what he calls **PhotoPoems** in which he combines his poetry and original photography on greeting cards, post cards, wall hangings, and in books.

He has received many awards for his poetry, including a **special award** at the **Indiana University Writers Conference**, the **Convention Award** from the **National Federation of State Poetry Societies** in Birmingham and the **Grand Prize** in the annual **ByLine Magazine** poetry contest. In 1980 he was awarded a plaque by the **Ohio Poetry Day Association for Outstanding Service to Poetry in Ohio**. In **1995** The **Kentucky State Poetry Society** gave him an **Award of Special Recognition for the Advancement of Poetry in Kentucky and the Nation**.

THE POET'S OWN PORTRAIT ON THE COVER OF "I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC" INADVERTENTLY SERVES TO PROVE THAT THE FACE CAN BE THE MOST SENSUOUS PART OF THE ANATOMY. READERS WILL BE DRAWN INTO JOHN ENGLE'S SHORT COLLECTION OF SENSUOUS POEMS BY THE FORTHRIGHT ALLURE OF HIS INVITING GAZE. UPON READING THE POEMS, ANY WOMAN WHO HAS KNOWN THE POET INTIMATELY WILL SURELY HAVE REASON TO IMAGINE SHE IS THE SUBJECT OF HIS ARDOR, AND ANY WOMAN WHO ONLY DREAMED OF THAT INTIMACY WILL HOPE HIS DREAMS OF HER WERE HIS INSPIRATION. OLD MEN WILL THINK, YES, THAT'S HOW IT WAS, AND YOUNG MEN WILL THINK THAT'S HOW IT WILL BE. THOSE, MALE AND FEMALE, WHO ARE VERY BLESSED, WILL KNOW THAT'S HOW IT IS WHEN ALL IS BEST, AND THOSE NOT SO BLESSED WILL THINK IT COULD WELL HAPPEN YET. READERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES RETURNING TO THE POEMS AGAIN AND AGAIN AND WILL FIND THEIR THOUGHTS DWELLING ON WORDS AS SENSUOUSLY COMPELLING AS THE FACE ON THE COVER.