



**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*



# I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC

By John Engle

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.