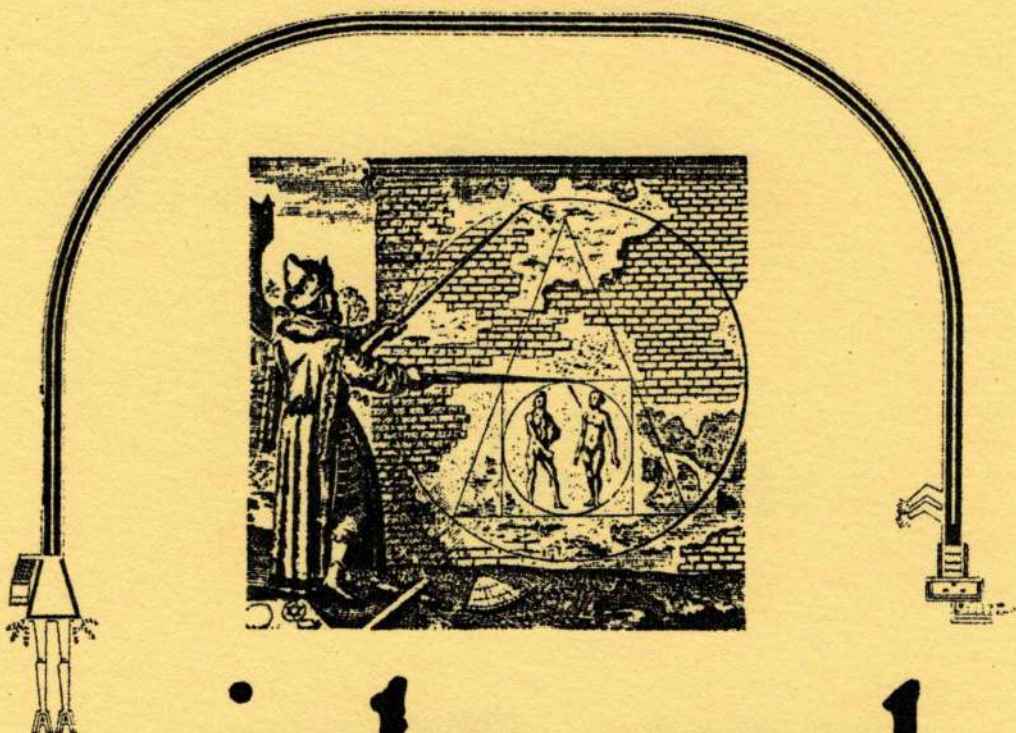


# COSMIC ATHLETICS



john curl

COLMIE

For William and Walt.

ATHELETIC

Some of these poems have appeared in The Universalist and What Is Real?

poems by

John Curl



Poetry for the People

San Francisco : 1980

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For William and Walt.

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Also by John Curl:

Poetry

Ride the Wind  
Insurrection/Resurrection  
Commu 1  
Change/Tears

History

Worker Cooperatives vs. Wage Slavery  
(A History of Cooperation, Cooperative  
Movements & Communalism in America)

Poetry for the People

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how you were resigned to servitude three years at most,  
well maybe five or ten,  
how you panicked when you saw the gate swing closed  
and the prophets of gloom turn out to be the wise,  
remember how the lackies in their cocked silk hats  
drove smartly past your pen  
while their children sobbed and mocked at you  
for having drunk their fathers' lies?

Daddy, I know you only did what you thought you had to do  
Momma, where'd you find the strength to pull us through?  
Daddy, don't try to stop me, I know what I got to do,  
they aint going to check-mate me  
like they trumped all over you,  
all pawns are wild now and so are the knights of hearts,  
Momma, we got to light candles from the stars



On Protecting Our Earth and Souls from the Price of Bread

- 1 -

put away Their deeds and capital gains  
and put them to work tending  
the trees and cleaning the drains.  
ocean breeze, smells like rain

- 2 -

the Democracy of

Money is a curious land  
everybody in line  
because I told you to  
you're going to stay after school  
it's for your own good  
that's woman's work  
your rent will be thirty dollars  
more next month can't you work a  
little faster late again we'll have  
to let you go failure to comply with  
this warning every body clear the  
area let's see your  
i.d. hands upon the car if  
you don't quiet down we'll have to  
give you another injection  
"but this isn't direct democracy, this is  
representitive democracy..."

- 3 -

inequality among the children: quake--  
faults slash across the land.  
sand absorbing waves, waves  
pounding sand.

forbidden

by plundering businessmen to share the  
necessities of common skies,  
gulls gather hills trem  
ble valleys groan and str  
etch and begin to rise

- 4 -

moving quietly at first, like  
plants in our coming  
together. fuscias buds un-  
fold into clouds of  
moths. Struggling toward  
transformation moths  
burst into flame.  
throwing open all the doors and  
windows sweeping the shadows  
of ten thousand years from every  
closet of our brain. What  
has never been  
seen before which  
way will the storm  
blow the rain?



Who Are You Anyway

two deer jump through an emotion  
a snapdragon bends beneath a bee's weight  
you turn a corner and meet your shadow  
mommy I'm afraid of the dark  
reading a William Blake poem out loud  
you got a bad grade on your report card  
sapwood encircles a douglas fir  
childhood in the house of trauma  
a spiral of mayflies above a stream  
you try to concieve of your mind  
stop playing with yourself  
those electrons spinning in your armpits  
sitting around depressed  
cops charging picket line  
the guard strolls past your cell  
the ribs on your back remind me of a young antelope  
these lines change with the seasons  
they're strapping you down to the table  
you watch your lover take a bath  
sharing this bread and cheese  
    who are you anyway  
    what is this place  
    what'll we do now  
rubbing elbows with the neighbors  
look at that pretty girl  
this is going down on your permanent record  
no boss I won't do it  
your lover isn't your truelove  
you deserve better than this  
hurling back teargas cannister  
workers militia stopping scabs  
you take the club away from a cop  
national strike committee shuts down the highway  
emeralds bounce against buttocks  
neighborhood committee tearing down fences  
ex-banker shuffles on the employment line  
watering the garden

you swim through your lover's chest  
kissing your beautiful stretch marks  
your lover really is your true love  
you gaze into a weathered face and see a child  
    who are you anyway  
    what is this place  
    what'll we do now  
a peach drops from a tree  
the circle of our lives  
tiny kisses on your breasts  
fire blows through your navel  
seed looks for a spot to put down roots  
you make love to a wind  
earthshadow move slowly across moonvalley  
an old man plays with a puppy  
we owe each other a living  
the reconciliation of the packs  
snake sheds its skin  
stepping through a stone into the wind  
moon energy birth shine  
the tribe climbs through a cloud into a new world



Disarming Ameroshima

sun energy blow from the east  
river energy glow from the south  
wind energy flow from the west  
mind energy drone from the north

the sweetsmell of damp pubes  
the first time you ever tonguekissed  
your lover giving you a gift  
garbage islands drift in the middle of the ocean  
chemical fog approaching playground  
security guard splithead bloodgutter slum  
your boss eyes you suspiciously  
bankercancer added to preserve freshness  
boardmembers expressing confidence in management  
nuclear wastes trickle through cell walls  
statistics hiding bureaucrat  
fallout hovers over turtlenest  
a leukemia of dividends  
your grandchild plays with her birth defect

picketing moneyplague headquarters  
stormriders lifecyclone sit-in  
general staff surrenders to forest  
energymafia caught at the airport

poisons breaking down into vitamins  
financiers flow into plows  
the laugh of a weekold baby  
your honey's mouth like the beach sun  
rabbitfamily goes for a picnic  
a million old people look up at the full moon  
waking in your sweetheart's arms

## Marigolds

marigolds drip with dew  
dogs sniff each other in a circle  
you walk barefoot across clover  
a shower of plum blossoms  
birds hop in a strange dance  
a hippopotamus goes into labor  
sunflowers sway in a thunderstorm  
flowers are genitals  
you disagree about the sexes of a litter of kittens  
a rolling wave leaps from your lover's tongue  
you wonder if you should say no  
your lover plays with your toes  
your fingers tremble on a button  
you watch the part in your lover's hair  
a turtle chomps on a daisy  
you hold a succulent in each hand  
a rainbow opens before you and the keeper bids you come in  
you tickle god under the covers  
a morning glory sniffs the wind  
bumblebee snuggling blackeyed susan  
waterlily watching the clouds  
you spear a broccoli bouquet with your fork  
flowers are genitals  
genitals are flowers



Because

because of the moon through the branches of the trees  
because you slipped out of your dress  
because this shoppingcenter was once a hollow where at  
  dusk whippoorwill sang  
because the teacher said so  
because of the shine in an infant's eye  
because your hips feel like waterfalls  
because they don't care what else happens as long as  
  they get theirs  
because if you sit here very quietly redbelt deer will  
  walk by  
because my mouth is filled with you  
because there's a universe under every fallen log and  
  a wilderness under every flat stone  
because hungry hearts prowl the streets of dream  
because they're tattooing the seaturtles with sulphur  
because you don't want to lose what little you've got  
because talking on the telephone too much can give you cancer  
because madrone trees don't lie  
because the atmospheric ozone layer is worth more than deodorant  
because Kickass rules the world  
because these handcuffs are bleeding  
because they installed a tiny microphone inside your ear  
because an American factory is almost a perfect miniature  
  of a fascist state  
because of the markings on this ring  
because you and I are only now and here  
because a bird doesn't care about its scientific name  
because these symbols scare the bribes off judges  
because employees and tenants are in bondage and bondage  
  is supposed to be abolished in America  
because these plums know exactly when to blossom  
because this is neither this nor that and that is both that  
  and this  
because you were born to walk this picket line  
because every pore of your body is a star

because worker collectives can do a better job running the  
industries than bankers' henchmen can  
because willows love to watch the ripples in a quiet pond  
because we want to abolish their power not kill them or  
become them  
because our minds when left to float free always point north  
because overthrowing the government and overthrowing the  
dictatorship are not at all the same thing  
because socialism without democracy isn't socialist and democracy  
without socialism isn't democratic  
because in a mountain glade somewhere a yellow bird is warbling  
because even Richard Nixon was once a beautiful baby  
because consciousness purifies  
because you can find the answer by looking very closely in your  
garbage can  
because if you'll just wipe the blood from your face and climb  
back to your feet you'll fall helplessly hopelessly  
in love



America, a Miracle

your lover is very sick  
the manufacturers' association writes a new law  
the cop orders you to show your i.d.  
someone has dumped garbage on our mountain  
a row of skulls guards the tunnel to the vault  
brown paper bag being handed to labor racketeer  
hailstones hit the streets of Cincinatti  
a green grasshopper rubs its antennae  
four-year-old tying shoelace  
music envelops a maple tree  
worm eating its way through the soil beneath your feet  
a wind stretches your innermost muscles  
these words vibrating between our brains  
a gull looks down into a prison yard  
clouds tumble past the setting sun  
the crickets are suddenly quiet

this miracle

crown of a head pushing out through vagina  
your grandmother's last words  
two tongues encircle a comet  
something is happening under the boardwalk  
you wake up in a dream  
you find a poem in a sandwich  
baby watching bug on yellow weed flower  
spirits ride the rings of saturn  
the way you look on the molecular level  
two spotted blue eggs beneath a hummingbird  
a ladybug flies past your heart's desire  
you roll your eyes back and see sunrise  
your greatgrandmother giggles in the dark  
you remember the words to the song  
you pass beyond cosmic boredom  
you turn your lover over  
rain floods a cemetary of timeclocks  
a hundred pelicans join the picketline  
the phones go dead at the stockmarket

workers rummaging through boss' office  
 the boardmembers plead insanity  
 tenants abolishing landlords  
 rank-and-file-committee managing factory  
 you seize control of your job  
 the president calls for his mommy  
 you nestle your lover's nipples like eternity  
 you rediscover that work can be a joy  
 continents drifting toward marriage  
 languages mingle their seed  
 deer makes love to unicorn  
 the races go for a hayride  
 the wind laughs at all borders  
 the key fits your manacles  
 you lose all fear  
 you can't stop saying I love you  
 you step out into the morning  
 this miracle



## Riddle for a Browneyed Child

Sometimes this seems like the strangest story  
sometimes my rib cage feels like the sky  
sometimes it all seems an alegory  
sometimes I can only shake my head and cry  
sometimes my room keeps quaking and nothing  
    is ever what it seems  
sometimes the dawn keeps breaking as I  
    wake from dream after dream  
  
sometimes I feel like a coalminer  
    coughing up my black lungs  
sometimes like a crystal deep in an unknown cave  
sometimes I feel like a picketline when a wild  
    cat's just lunged  
sometimes like a coyote when the moon  
    begins to rave  
sometimes like a deaf mute in a dictatorship  
    of the blind  
sometimes like a hawk  
    soaring in an infinite mind  
  
sometimes I feel I've been laughing since  
    the first mud began to swell  
sometimes I see all history passing  
    in the space between two words  
sometimes I feel like a  
    thought being thought by the last living cell  
sometimes you change before my startled eyes  
    into a mynah bird  
  
sometimes I see meaning in  
    the boxcars of a train  
sometimes all is sunlight whirling through  
    my shining veins  
sometimes I see holy absolution in  
    every shattering of our chains  
sometimes I feel socialist  
    revolution in every healing of our mental pain  
  
sometimes I see we are progressing  
    along the fierce immobility of time  
sometimes I feel only your nipples pressed  
    like flowers against mine

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Poetry for the People is a multi-cultural collective of poets. We believe in the idea that poetry which comes from the people speaks to the people. Poetry for the People is a modern day incarnation of a very old practice. We are one manifestation of the rebirth of people's poetry.

We have offered our poetry in readings at the Food Stamp Office, the unemployment line, the county jail, the Greyhound Bus station, community centers, libraries, parks, streetcorners, and coffee houses.

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