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Why is the Sky?; Thoughts Like an Ocean

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Why is the Sky? is a stimulating and deeply satisfying anthology. Agard (best known for such entertaining and celebratory collections as **Laughter is an Egg** and **No Hickory, No Dickory, No Dock**) has trawled the historical scope of world poetry in order to land a miraculous haul of enigmatic poems. All of them are inspired by those unanswerable questions with which children and philosophers respond to the world in matters both celestial and trivial. Sources range from Milligan to Baudelaire, and from fifteenth-century India to twentieth-century Chile. The blend of humour and speculation in Agard's own poem about the attributes of God, 'How Laughter Helped Stop the Argument', encapsulates the charm of this rich and compact little volume.

The title poem of **Thoughts Like an Ocean** also features in **Why is the Sky?**, and presents a similar keynote: a sense of shimmering perplexity that has been described as the 'astonishment that anything exists'. This feeling seems to come more easily to children than adults, and this volume accordingly gives plenty of space to children's quizzical observations of the everyday bizarreness of the world. Most of the writers are Welsh, as are many of the geographical and cultural references. This does not, however, limit the scope of the book, as the universe observed from Wales is at least as interesting to look at as from any other perspective.

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