

**THE  
LONG BODY  
THAT CONNECTS US ALL**



**THE  
LONG BODY  
THAT CONNECTS US ALL**  
*Poetry*

RICH MARCELLO

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*The Color of Home*

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*IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER  
AND DONNA ANCTIL,  
BOTH WHO LEFT THIS WORLD MUCH TOO SOON*





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## **Part I — In the Coming**



## **A Piece of Bark**

I go into the woods behind my house  
searching for a tree just my age.  
I cut from it a jagged piece of bark  
in your memory.

I place the bark between my hands,  
scraping back and forth until I see red,  
until I see every gurgling, blue-faced,  
moment from our helpless night.

I know the tree is in great pain now  
as vulnerable as I am,  
having lost its armor, its beauty,  
its guide, its sleeve of hope.

I will visit this place often,  
to watch the tree heal,  
to grieve what I have done  
and what I have lost.

## **Existential Bullets**

His father was wild.  
Or brilliant.  
Or broken.  
Or silver-tongued.  
Or violent.

Take your pick.

One summer night,  
the man shot squirrels  
from the front porch  
with a semi-automatic rifle  
as he taught the boy  
about Kierkegaard.

After that, he, just a teenager,  
too young to know better,  
did the only thing he could:

He followed.

## **I Do Now**

When you cast  
your lodestar my way,  
I basked in love.  
I became the hologram king,  
the warrior spirit,  
the lover of light.

I didn't know then  
that a lodestar's intensity  
is inextricably linked to its shadow,  
and that left unnourished,  
it will darken with time.  
I didn't know then  
how to become more than  
a hologram, a spirit or lover,  
or how to accept your shadow  
as much as your light.

## **The Erie Lackawanna**

On the train ride to my hometown,  
I forget all I've learned about  
being vulnerable, opening or crying.  
His shoes are too big again.  
The train is accelerating toward the past,  
on the verge of becoming a runaway.  
Your smile, generous, no longer widens.

You take my hand anyway,  
gently circling your thumb around my palm,  
as you speak of working through a place  
I thought I'd put behind me more  
than a few times.

The past circles, doesn't it?

Your beautiful sleeveless red dress,  
the white pearls your grandmother gave you,  
your blonde hair pulled back in a ponytail,  
the scent of your favorite perfume,  
all conjure me back.

The strength on your face is daunting.

We circle until I find my own steady,  
until I remember we men, too,  
are sometimes passengers on a cattle car,  
trying to find our way back to  
a place that no longer exists.



## Blue Gears

The blue gears took hold and  
tried to turn me  
like the others  
into the sum of parts

The worker of power, of money  
The father, the son, the ghost walker  
The lover, the projection, the artist

And while those parts come and go like  
tall waves, stage personas parading,  
heroes or villains warring,  
they're not me

I'm a witness sitting in the big chair,  
a student of mysteries,  
striving to grind down  
abundant but finite gear teeth,  
not only for me,  
but for all those lost in blue