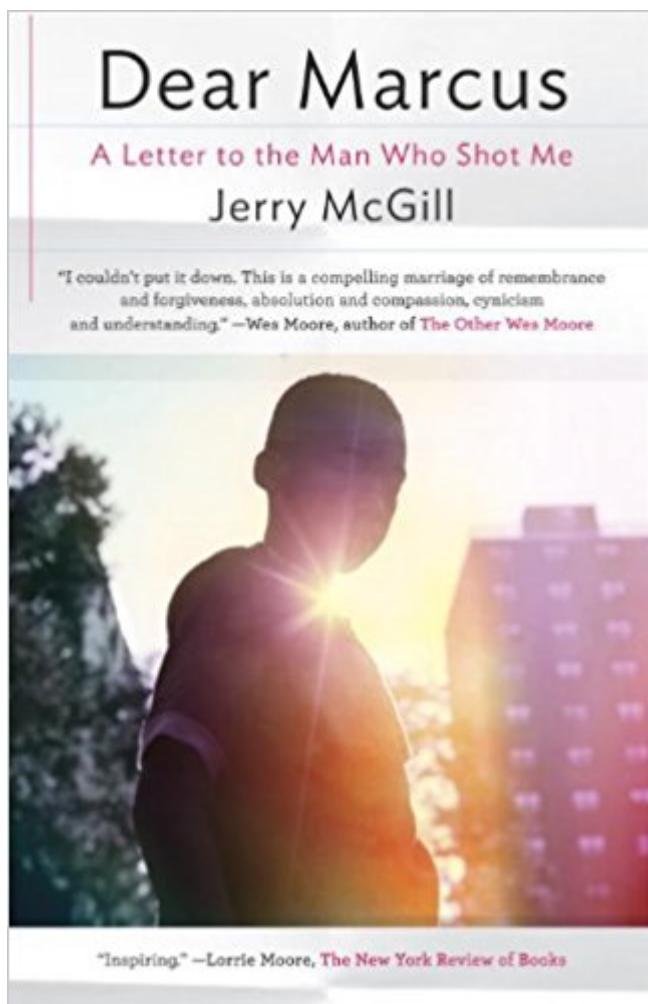


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# Dear Marcus: A Letter To The Man Who Shot Me



## Synopsis

The idea to write to you was not an easy one. The scar from where the bullet entered my back is still there. *Jerry McGill* was thirteen years old, walking home through the projects of Manhattan's Lower East Side, when he was shot in the back by a stranger. Jerry survived, wheelchair-bound for life; his assailant was never caught. Thirty years later, Jerry wants to say something to the man who shot him. I have decided to give you a name. I am going to call you Marcus. With profound grace, brutal honesty, and devastating humor, Jerry McGill takes us on a dramatic and inspiring journey from the streets of 1980s New York, where poverty and violence were part of growing up, to the challenges of living with a disability and learning to help and inspire others, to the long, difficult road to acceptance, forgiveness, and, ultimately, triumph. I didn't write this book for you, Marcus. I wrote this for those who endure. Those who manage. Those who are determined to move on.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Inspiring." Lorrie Moore, *The New York Review of Books* "I couldn't put it down. This is a compelling marriage of remembrance and forgiveness, absolution and compassion, cynicism and understanding." Wes Moore, author of *The Other Wes Moore* "An unforgettable and intriguing journey . . . Violence, hope, despair, forgiveness, anger, and living with a disability are explored both lightly and deeply, humorously and profoundly, and always honestly." Library Journal (starred review)

“An inspirational memoir by a writer who refuses to be defined by his paralysis, as he comes to terms with the unknown man who shot him.” Kirkus Reviews “Written with passion, honesty, humor, and a stubborn, rebellious optimism, Dear Marcus is like nothing I’ve ever read. When a bullet in the back told Jerry McGill not to go on, Jerry went on smiling.” Shalom Auslander, author of *Hope: A Tragedy*

Jerry McGill is a writer and artist. He received a BA in English literature from Fordham University in the Bronx and a master’s degree in education from Pacific University in Oregon. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

At thirteen years old, Jerome (later known as Jerry) was shot in the back by an unknown perpetrator while walking with a friend in a bad neighborhood in New York City. Jerome’s injury renders him a quadraplegic. This book is a letter to his perpetrator who he calls ‘Marcus’. It is the story of Jerome’s life and how his disability made him the man he becomes. Jerome spent six months in St. Vincent’s hospital after the shooting getting all kinds of treatment following his injury. Once released, his life takes on new meaning. Prior to his injury he saw promise in himself as a dancer or an actor and had dreams of attending one of the prestigious arts high schools in Manhattan. Following his injury he has to reevaluate his life and dreams. With his disability, he becomes a mentor to others with disabilities, finding his own mentors along the way. He teaches drama, directs a travel program for the disabled, and travels the world himself. He even makes short films which is his real passion. He writes openly and with poignant candor about his intimate relationships with women. At times he is furious with Marcus but this anger subsides as Jerome sees all the strengths and abilities that have come to him through his own disability. He questions Marcus throughout the book - who is he, why did he do this, what was his life like, etc. Ultimately, this is a book about thriving rather than surviving. The novel takes us to Jerome at 43 years old, a graduate of Fordham University and possessor of an MFA in writing. I wish him continued success and hope he breaks into the world of movies and Hollywood which is his ultimate dream.

I just finished “Dear Marcus” by Jerry McGill and I have to say that it was one of the best books I have read in 2012. If I think forward to the NY Times Best Books of 2012 it is hard for me to imagine a list that does not include this book. Jerry writes a book in the form in a letter to the unknown person who shot him in the back many years ago. That unfortunate event led to McGill being paralyzed and literally changed his life. The thing about this book that is amazing is that it gives hope to so many

people who find themselves facing what must seem like insurmountable odds. McGill after much soul-searching decides to do everything humanly possible to overcome these odds and make for himself a great life. He gets involved in theater. He teaches. He enjoys what seem to be fairly descriptive sexual experiences (with an Australian gal). Overall he lives life to its fullest. And the book-albeit a super tough subject to deal with, is written in such a funny way that you can't help but laugh out loud several times. Overall I highly recommend it.

You started out with, what some would consider, a disadvantage, being a young black child. Then you were given a disability. You took all that and succeeded more than most able-bodied people. Also, the story is written very well. I like the way you did that.

Easy reading, and engaging, yet dealing with core societal issues of violence and the treatment of disabilities. I was encouraged to read the book for work, and I found it a pleasure.

Awesome and enlightening book.

This was an awesome read that kept me riveted to each chapter. It is well written with language that allows me to see into a world I could not have imagined.

Somerset Maugham once wrote that whenever he was unable to rid himself of the memory of some experience, pleasant or unpleasant, the best way was to write about it, usually by weaving it into a play or novel. Once that was done, he ceased being haunted by the recall and life resumed. Mr. McGill seems to be doing that here. This is not a sloppy outpouring of pity and understanding on the part of Mr. McGill - he has no idea who "Marcus" was/is - but rather the story of how the injury, a gunshot to the upper spine which left him almost quadriplegic, transformed his life so completely for the better. Left unsaid, but palpable, is the message to "Marcus" that his arbitrary act of violence resulted in great good. If he now finds the proverbial coals of fire falling on his head, he richly deserves them.

This was a heartwarming story, one that everyone should read who has felt like life has dealt them a bad hand. It gives hope to the hopeless, and joy for ashes.

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