

Red Right Ankle

Words and music by Colin Meloy



"Red Right Ankle," recorded on the Decemberists 2003 album *Her Majesty*, shows the pervasive influence of Robyn Hitchcock on Meloy's songwriting. It's hard to imagine any other pop singer melding a lyric that begins, "This is the story of your red right ankle / And how it came to meet your leg / And how the muscle, bone, and sinews tangled / And how the skin was softly shed" with a simple, folky strum pattern that could have been played by Gillian Welch or Neil Young. Typically, Meloy subverts the sunny strum and major-key melody by starting on an ambiguous G/F# chord. The song takes on a more

emotional aspect in the third verse, though Meloy can't stay away from his biological textbook for long: "Some had crawled their way into your heart / To rend its ventricles apart." The recording is as close to a solo performance as Meloy gets, with Jenny Conlee's organ joining his acoustic guitar only on the short instrumental interlude.

—SCOTT NYGAARD

Capo V Intro

1. **G** 120034

2. **G** 120034

G/F# 100034

♩ = 94

Rhythm Figure 1

End Rhythm Figure 1

Verse

With Rhythm Figure 1, 4 times, simile

G/F# 100034

G 120034

G/F# 100034

G 120034

4 1. This is the sto-ry of ___ your ___ red ___ right an - kle And how it came to meet your ___ leg
2-3. See additional lyrics.

G/F# 100034

G 120034

G/F# 100034

G 120034

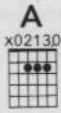
8 And how the mus-cle bone ___ and ___ sin - ews ___ tang - led ___ And how the skin was soft - ly shed

Em7 012034

A x02130

Em7 012034

12 And how it whisp - ered "Oh ___ ad - here to me ___ For we ___ are bound ___ by ___



15 *sym - me - try* *What - ev - er* *dif - ferences* *our* *lives* *have been*



To Coda ⊕

18 *We to - geth - er* *make* *a limb"* *This is the sto - ry* *of* *your* *red* *right an -*

With Rhythm Figure 1, 2 times, simile



22 *kle*

magical
 extraordinary
 inspired
LEGENDARY

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Interlude

D.C. al Coda

Em7 012034 Em9 012043 A x02130 Asus4 x0214x A x02130 Em 023000 Em9 012043 Em 023000 A x02130 Asus2 x0132x A x02130 A6 x031xx A x02130

27

Coda

Bm11 x13120 G/A x0000x G 120034 G/F# 100034 Em7 012034 A x02130 D x00132

31

This is the sto-ry of ___ your red right an - kle ___

<p>1. G/F# This is the story of your red right ankle</p> <p>G/F# And how it came to meet your leg</p> <p>G/F# And how the muscle, bone and sinews tangled</p> <p>G/F# And how the skin was softly shed</p>	<p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p> <p>G</p>	<p>Em7 And how it whispered, "Oh, adhere to me</p> <p>Em7 For we are bound by symmetry</p> <p>Em7 And whatever differences our lives have been</p> <p>D We together make a limb"</p> <p>Em7 This is the story of your red right ankle</p>	<p>A</p> <p>A Asus4 A</p> <p>A Asus4</p> <p>G G/F#</p> <p>A G/F# G G/F# G</p>
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