
POETRY | SPRING 2013

Zodiac

By VyVy Trinh

i spend tonight dipping my heart in wine
with a friend divided between two bodies
she, mouth flapping with new stories
he, reclined, coughing, offering small thoughts on
this american life

around dinner, talk wanes away from oncology
toward astrology, how the holes in our hearts
are cut according to patterns set in the stars
and we are left aching in one of twelve different ways

on four occasions he excuses himself
his coughs spiral off the tiled bathroom walls,
and she, smiling, as not to panic
explains the mechanics of his body's slow betrayal

gemini, he says, when i ask him his sign
and he explains his duality, caught between
his private buoyant reality and his stoic image

i nod but disagree
we all know
that if he is a Gemini
it is because she
is half of him

standing later in her doorway i say hey
take care of yourself
aw baby, she says, everybody got something

they've cut so much more than holes in his heart

while driving home it becomes tomorrow,
the bud of a new day already itching toward the bloom of noon,
and i can't convince one minute to stop metastasizing into the next

in secret i plead to the designer of these astrologies
if he can't slow it down, god, i just want more of it

VyVy Trinh is a medical student at the Warren Alpert Medical School at Brown University. She wrote "Zodiac" for a friend who has since passed from metastatic colorectal cancer, leaving behind "a wife whose courage is radiant."
