

LILY DURHAM

I PULLED THE LONG END OF THE WISHING BONE

If you gave me one end of a wishing bone–
And her the other,
She would have most *certainly* pulled the short end–
And I the long.

One hand on either side of the bird carcass. Bones so fragile, so tender, so weak.
Void of the flesh that once lived amongst the marrow.
Ready?... 3, 2, 1– Snap!
You winced! Why'd you wince? It can't hurt you...

We were other halves to the same whole
...Her and I...
Born the same year, in the same town... that godforsaken town...
Almost the same day too, but not quite, as we were asymmetrical, uneven halves.

We then, unknown to each other, moved from the same town to another, same school
On the same day, same class, seated next to each other.
...She told her story, and I told mine...
What?! No way! Me too!

We found ourselves pulled apart and back together again over the years
How inseparable we thought we were, how immortal–
Do you know the story of how the Gemini constellation came to be?
Ha! How rich– *SHE* was a Gemini!

The Greek tell it like so:
Castor and Pollux were twins born of different fathers–
Castor of a mortal king, Pollux of Zeus.
The twins were inseparable from the moment they were born.

However, they were uneven halves to the same whole.
As Castor was mortal, he did what all mortal things must do...
Distraught, the immortal twin begged his father to be reunited with his late brother–
Thus, the constellation Gemini was born, where the twins could be together for eternity.

Some might consider Castor the unlucky one, given the short end, born from the mortal world–
I do not.

Having to live a life without his other half to make him feel whole. How empty that is.
That seems more unlucky, does it not?

Back to the bird–

Did it know its life was being taken?
Did it too feel how fragile it was at that moment?
That its bones could be snapped so easily if pulled apart? Never mind that...

If *she* were given a wish what would she have wished for?
I wish I would have asked her...
Would she have liked to travel the world, like I now get to?
How caged we were in that place, did she know that there was so much more?

Did she know how fragile she was–like that bird? She must have in the end.
Anyway–no more stupid questions–it's not important now.
Now that I'm here, and she's not.
What's important is that I live for her.

I get to do things she didn't.
I got to graduate from high school– she didn't.
I got to go to college, move away, ignore the hurt, ignore the history.
She will forever lay there on that mountain, next to *him*, rotting away, at the same pace.

He took her from me, from us.
I took the long end of the wishing bone, her the short.
I will never take from her again.
I'll give her the world, show her how beautiful the world could've been to her.

There's a little phrase that I've never said aloud that I tell myself when I think about giving up.
It's simple, but it rings true:
Do it for her.
Because she didn't get to.