

**After I Introduce My Brother to Person X,
I am Asked by this Person if I was Adopted**

My brother says following Asian stereotypes
could all describe him: good at math,
the violin, science and Kung Fu.
I suck at all these things.

In these ways, our parents can tell us apart.
Another difference is the color of our skin.
And this is why, at the airport, he is more
often “randomly” searched,
and also why this won’t be the last time
someone will nod, understandingly,
and ask, *Are you sure that’s your brother?*

I’ve been asked stranger things but, yes,
I’m sure that that’s my brother
stepping into the belly of a silver bird, flying
back across this spinning rock, back
to a glitter-speck on a map called California.
There, he’ll materialize in his lab
and explore the mysteries of DNA, a country
whose citizens are always confused.

I too am a country whose citizens
contradict each other.
A hybrid of competing designs,
one part German engineering,
one part Filipino Catholicism.
I’ve got questions that blur like metal
on an Autobahn and others that drift
like pieces of an archipelago.

I’m not adopted. But did I mention
that I’m bad at science?
I have no idea why we look
nothing alike, why the Gods of genetics
build one façade from pale marble,
and another from the deepest bronze.

It is midnight in Michigan, three hours
later than Palo Alto. I wonder
about my brother, what discoveries
he might make when he peels
open the membrane
of an embryonic kidney cell, peers inside

at string after linear string
of amino acids. One after another,
they'll be nearly identical,
like tiny, crumpled balls of coding.
But then, without any explanation,
a new string will emerge,
somehow, different.