

POETRY | SPRING 2023

## Last Summer

By Susannah Lujan-Bear

There is the embarrassment  
of eating in front of the dying.  
Then, that constant desire to be doing—  
*Can I get you some juice, another blanket?*  
I want to say *trust your body, it knows what to do,*  
but I can only help with the living part,  
morphine, popsicles, ice cubes—cold, cold things.  
Even the air feels elegiac, autumn in August.  
The sun has a long quality, a slowing down.  
I would sit with her if she asked, yet my heart  
yearns northward—the front porch, down the road, home.  
The Virgin of Guadalupe candle is guttering—  
*whose prayer is being answered today?*  
I'm fluttering pages in the kitchen so she knows I'm here.  
I pick up small boxes, plums, pencils,  
put them back slightly askew. She moans,  
rustling in her sheets. Last year's oleander  
roots by the back door,  
leaning in, leaning in.

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