
POETRY | Fall 2021

Sleeping Breath

By Katya Lavine

we ordered pizza while you were
dying because it seemed simple,
but they asked
if we wanted gluten-free
crust and dairy-free cheese and a
spinach salad on the side,
your chest was up

down

normal crust,
normal cheese,
okay, a salad

the pizza was supposed to be cheap
because you never spent money on
food, but here was a bourgeois entrée in your
simple room
with a menorah leftover from Hanukkah
sitting on the only chair,
so we sat on the floor.

your mouth fell open and we
chewed the pizza,
and closed again,

& warm wind blew through a
cracked window, her breath on the
hot soup:
*it takes time to do it right,
but we can make plenty.*

six years old watching
the chicken's pink skin crust, carrots
soaking in bubbling broth, you
pointed at my legs and called them
chickens, I ate
the pizza,

you always wanted me
to be fatter

then you carried me
outside to howl back at the
coyotes until there was no sound
but my sleeping breath

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