

## **Karen Friedland**

### **Angel Eyes**

Her name was Mary,  
as a Catholic girl from West Roxbury  
ought to be named,

but she moved to Colorado  
and came back as “Angel”  
and took up with Johnny,  
the Vietnam vet with a drinking problem  
who grew up across the street.

She was only in her 50s  
when she died of a fast-moving cancer,  
having moved back in with her mother around the corner,  
who was failing, too  
but out-lived her.

Once, when things were still good,  
Angel and Johnny showed up in fringed, black,  
leather motorcycle gear,  
proud,  
to tell us they were going up to New Hampshire for the weekend.

Before she died,  
Angel had cards made up,  
fashioning herself a dog-walker named “Angel-Eyes,”  
though she rarely walked her own tiny Yorkie,  
whose name now escapes me  
as so many things do.

She was just one  
of my neighbors who died.

I went to her funeral mass,  
where her quote-unquote normal relatives shook their heads sadly  
and scoffed.

“Her *real* name was Mary,”  
they said.

A nonprofit grant writer by day, **Karen Friedland**'s poems have been published in *Nixes Mate Review*, *Writing in a Women's Voice*, the *Lily Poetry Review*, *Vox Populi* and others. She currently has a poem hanging on the walls of Boston's City Hall, selected by Boston's Poet Laureate. Her book of poems, *Places That Are Gone*, was published in 2019 by Nixes Mate Books, and she has a chapbook forthcoming in late 2020. Karen is a member of Cervena Barva Press and is a founding member of the Boston-based Poetry Sisters collective.