

## Poems by Sam Friedman

### 71 years old

As a special treat,  
my dainty cat  
brings me birds,  
birds she has stalked,  
surprised,  
slain:  
a bird who had been quietly contemplating  
why the pate of a perplexed poet  
was a tempting target for birdshit;  
or one who had been gently pursuing  
a worm of her own.

When I was 30, 40, or even 45,  
I thought my death  
would be like that bird's.  
Contemplating revolution one moment,  
then shot or clubbed by a cop at a demo  
while still thinking of the old mole  
burrowing its way beneath  
a fatal civilization.

But at seventy –one,  
I now only contemplate revolution,  
limited by obligations  
and by a faulty imagination that knows not what to do,  
so my balding head merely poses  
a bulls-eye for geese honking ever over  
head.

Rarely do I contemplate billy clubs or bullets  
giving my brain its final pink slip.

Nor does the bird  
contemplate  
the cat.

### **Visualize Eurydice**

Visualize Eurydice, in that final moment,  
hours after Orpheus sang her free  
from a grasping Hades  
with his lyre-plucking fingers.  
Her feet oozing blood after hours climbing wordless  
behind his swaying rump  
up into the light of life,  
visualize Eurydice's screaming lips  
as he turned his head to see her  
in the moment memorialized  
by Jorie Graham,

Eurydice screaming

“Yes! Yes! Yes!

Let me return

to my wonted ways!

No Orphean undies to scrape clean

against the river’s rocks!

No more bossing fists or pawing fingers

from that string-plucking musician!

Let me return

to what men call Hell,

and I call

release!”