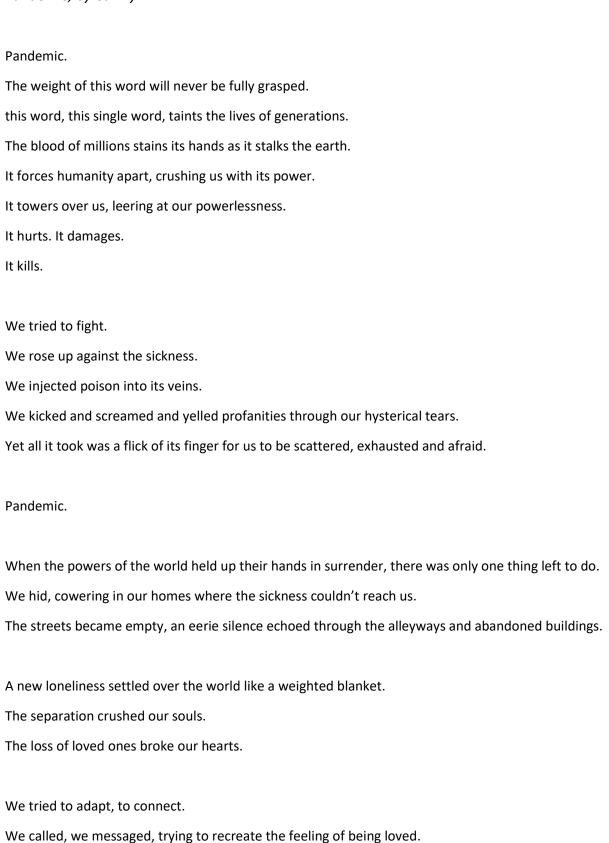
## Pandemic, by Camryn



Of being safe.

We talked through our screens, ignoring the faltering smiles and teary eyes.

And when news reached us of another loss, another life, we cried in the dark with only the garish light of technology as comfort.

As the pandemic slowed its tyrannic rampage, watching and waiting, we emerged.

Crawling out of our holes, we blinked in the light and breathed in the fresh air.

We looked with awe at the world outside.

We hardly recognised it.

The smog had lifted enough to see the beauty of the skyline.

Wildlife flourished, taking advantage of an abandoned world.

The waters had turned blue, a blue that had been long forgotten.

It was a haven, a stark contrast to the dystopian nightmare we'd been living in.

The world had healed, yet we were broken.

Broken by the fear of the unknown.

By the separation from the ones who love us.

By the opinions and choices that tore families apart.

By the suffering of others, fighting, hurting, dying.

And yet we found the strength to move on.

We listened to the sounds of a world awakening.

We took in the views that had once been taken for granted.

We tried to rescue our broken economy.

We mourned for the time we had lost.

We moved, we walked, we worked, trying to hold onto what made life worth living.

was normal.

We covered our faces, hid our anxieties and smothered our pain.

We tried to survive.

We tried to fight.

A different fight.

The fight for normalcy.

For connection.

For love, peace, hope, joy and strength.

We fought for those who had been lost, for their deaths to be more than just a statistic, a number.

And we continue to fight.

We rise up against adversity.

We push for a better world.

We hold and comfort each other, whispering encouragement to those who need it.

All it took was a pandemic to remind us just how important life is to us. To remind us how we can

overcome any challenge through love. To remind us how to love.

We carried those we had lost in our hearts, tried to remember them from all those years ago, when life