

2021

A new year is coming.

We thought, back then,
by now,
Things would return to normal.
We didn't know that normal would
change its definition.

Normal now, is like old brakes squeaking
like hiding Jews and Lesbians in Hitler's Germany.
The tension of death and fear are all around us.

It was comfortable then, before we knew,
more or less.
Now, normal is the tightwire between the scream that wants to
break these invisible cages of isolation
And the patient Aunti that speaks calmly,
"wait, just a bit longer. Breathe.
Everything is temporary."

Normal now is connection from the shoulders up,
across miles without
smell or presence.

I miss full bodies in motion. I miss hugs and
inconsequential touch.
I miss not having to worry about the consequences of
every potential interaction.

Or having to pit my
physical survival against my emotional stability.

I miss small groups and
human puppy piles. I miss
noses and lips and jawlines.
I miss the contours of faces I love so dearly.
I miss my family.

But,
I also miss Glenda Trapp,
Kathy Lee Kappemeir,
Kay Frances Rowe,
Rebecca Bradley,
Sue Wallingford.
Even after all this time.

I know what it is like to grieve.
I know what the loss of forever feels like.

So, in spite of all my misses,
I heed the Aunti's voice,
I breathe,
I wait,
just a little bit longer knowing
everything is temporary,
even this.