

Letter to a Friend - Fra Giovanni, 1513, Venice

I am your friend
and my love for you goes deep.
There is nothing I can give you
which you do not have:
but there is much, very much
that while I cannot give it,
you can take.

No heaven can come to us
unless our hearts find rest
in today. Take heaven!
No peace lies in the future
which is not hidden
in this present little instant.
Take peace!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow.
Behind it, yet within reach, is joy.
There is radiance and glory
in the darkness, could we but see,
and to see we have only to look.
I beseech you to look!

Life is so generous a giver,
but we, judging its gifts by
the covering, cast them away
as ugly, or heavy or hard.
Remove the covering and
you will find beneath it
a living splendor,
woven of love,
by wisdom, with power.

Welcome it, grasp it,
touch the angel's hand
that brings it to you.
Everything we call a trial,
a sorrow, or a duty, believe me,
that angel's hand is there,
the gift is there, and the wonder
of an overshadowing presence.
Our joys, too, be not
content with them as joys.
They, too, conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and purpose,
so full of beauty,
beneath its covering—

that you will find earth
but cloaks your heaven.

Courage, then, to claim it, that is all.

But courage you have,
and the knowledge that
we are all pilgrims together,
wending through unknown country, home.

And so, at this time, I greet you,
not quite as the world sends greetings,
but with profound esteem
and with the prayer that for you
now and forever, the day breaks,
and the shadows flee away.

- Fra Giovanni, 1513, Venice

Ishwari Sollohub, LPCC

Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor, Santa Fe, NM

(505) 231-1697

www.ishwari.org