

The Presence of Christmas

by Suzanne W. Zoglio, Ph.D.

"May I take your wrap?" he said
As I stepped just past the door.
His words were clear and welcoming,
But his eyes said so much more.

With arms outstretched he beckoned me;
I stepped quickly to his side.
With clasp released and belt unfurled,
My coat began to slide.

Off my shoulders strained from the day,
Away from my hungry heart.
Down my back of history,
Exposing each tender part.

"I'll set it here," he said protectively,
"In case you feel a chill."
Then he led me by the hand
And whispered, "I truly doubt you will."

Mixing with others, I soon lost sight of him,
And yet I felt his warmth all night.
I wore a cloak of threads unseen,
Woven from love and light.

"Who was that man who took my coat?" I asked,
But no one seemed to care.
"Perhaps it was my Uncle Bill," Jane said.
"Or maybe our neighbor upstairs."

He was kind and calm and so accepting.
Such non-judgment is truly rare.
I felt so loved and safe with him,
That I freely shed my cloak of fear.

"I wish that others could feel his presence,"
I thought. "I wish that I could see him again."
Suddenly I was drawn to a flickering candle
And there at its base, a card read:

*"May you find grace in the face of adversity;
And see the fear that blinds a critic's eye;
May you embrace love and joy as they're offered;
And give generously of your heart and time;
For then... you'll feel the presence of Christmas."*

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