

Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas by Jan L. Richardson,  
from her book: *Night Visions, Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas*,  
Gospeller Press, 1998

You remind us  
that it is our delight you seek,  
not our suffering.  
And you tell us  
it is not the wounds  
that give us life,  
but the tending of them  
in each other.

And you say  
it is not the breaking  
that makes us whole  
but the mending of the pieces  
that brings us life anew.  
When we are spent  
from the labor  
and longing to rest  
in our deliverance,  
when we hunger  
to stay  
in the celebration  
and crave a lasting sabbath,  
you tell us  
this is where  
our work begins.

For the labor  
that is never over,  
give us strength;  
for the healing  
that is ever before us,  
give us courage.

May our resting  
be for renewal,  
not forever;  
and may we work  
for nothing  
save that  
which makes  
your people whole.

