God in a cup

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I wait
slightly less than patiently,
taking up slightly more
than my share of floor space
on the ladies’ side of church.

Distracted,
an inefficient ceiling fan
circulates monsoon-laden air;
someone’s two-year-old
crawls over, sits on my foot.

In the interlude,
I contemplate the walk home
through mud puddles, diesel fumes,
and poverty; I wonder
is there time for a cold shower
before lunch?

I receive communion from the common cup
then walk back to my space with the woman
who always shares my Bible,
smiling with pride and affection
though we both know she cannot read.

On the way home,
I buy a diet Coke.
It is cold and sweet
but leaves an aftertaste,
costing as it did,
more than two days’ worth of rice or
ten measles vaccinations.

In a few days,
I will once again board a plane,
spending a day, closer to a lifetime,
crossing the globe to reach a country called home.

As the fabric of my connection
to this land I love
grows thin at the edges
on this mid-monsoon morning,
I stretch to remind myself
there are other places
I also belong
where God is served in a cup.