

All Saints communion

by [Scott Cairns](#) in the [October 19, 2004](#) issue

—All Saints Episcopal Church,
Virginia Beach, April 1996

Having accepted from one palsied priest the cool,
the lucent wafer, having dipped it duly in the cup,
I pressed that sweet enormity fast against my tongue,
where on its sudden dissolution, I received a taste
of whose I was. I rose again and found my place.

As I knelt and tried to pray, I heard a little differently
the words the priest intoned as he continued offering
what passed for bread among high Protestants. His words:
the body of Christ, repeated as he set that emblem
into each pair of outstretched hands. My eyes were shut,

so each communicant returning down the aisle became
something of a shadow illustration of the words. In that
fraught moment, they became as well absorbed into the vast
array of witnesses, whose cloud invisibly attended
our sacramental blurring of the edge that keeps us separate.