



For Those Old Hands **in a Culture**

God, whether I came here with the plan to stay for years  
or one year turned into many,  
thank you that I have (or we have)  
built a home and life here.

As I look back and think of my first-year self in this place  
I marvel at all I have learned  
I am humbled by what I arrogantly thought I knew  
I see the kind companions you brought across my path.

Thank you for this place, these people, this rich culture.  
Thank you for the ways they have  
welcomed me in  
fed me  
taught me  
challenged me  
expanded me.

I see you, oh God, in ways I could not have seen you  
without my years here.  
You have shown me you are too big and glorious to  
be held by any one culture.  
And yet you are specific and detailed enough to weave  
a glorious tapestry of  
flavors, sounds, colors, textures, and smells.

Lord, in my comfort here protect me from  
thinking I don't have much to learn.  
Keep me in the posture of a student.

And in those areas of the culture where I encounter  
injustice  
broken systems  
blatant disregard for human dignity,  
help me to stay tender towards those I've come to serve.  
Help me not to harden my heart or shut my hand.

Lord, this place is now a part of me and  
I am grateful it has become  
my teacher  
my friend  
my home.

Thank you for seeing fit to let me  
live, learn, and love you here.

Amen