

Do You Come Here Often?

Jill Sell

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Article abstract

If ferns went to bars...

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it isn't as easy

as picking someone up

in a bar

sporangium play hard to get

on undersides of fronds

sometimes hidden by the indusium –

 a cloak of modesty

 but dressed to show cleavage

sporangia cluster

on Girls Night Out

form a sorus—

safety in numbers

millions of spores

fall to the ground

or float awhile aimlessly

those that wander

into moist region

germinate

send out green filaments

that bear hearts as prothallia

only a few get lucky
others perish long before
the last song is played

prothallium grows
male and female organs
on its underside
antheridia meet archegonia
“What’s your sign?”

and like the 5 o’clock
watering holes downtown
it takes liquid to make it work
antheridia’s spermatozoids
need dew or raindrops
as well as courage
to meet and greet and swim
to the female

upon arrival
finally
a fern frond