

Do You Come Here Often?

Jill Sell

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