

# Grace Among the Ferns

Analia Sotelo

The ferns—sharp lime green, lean over  
the concrete like a woman over a boardwalk  
on a bright spring day like this, though maybe it is better  
with Grace's curious nose assessing the damp earth  
while ignoring its copious lizards.

There is joy in the soft butt  
of a dog disappearing into its daily necessities.  
I am not sure I have ever had such a joy,  
either in discovery or expectation. Looking out  
over the side of a boat  
with a hat as wide as this fern  
is Grace, of the delicate paws.

I have never liked it: The Spring. But this is the  
end of Spring! First yellow of summer. They say a poet  
can never write a purely happy poem about a dog  
greeting the sun and what it has done to rain.

I don't know about that.

I am light like a canine's memory;  
a minute, a world. Where one of the greatest  
and most daring feats is to enjoy  
the breeze's slow boat of fertilization  
made by other dogs of other years—the scent of  
living in and of itself. Grace among the ferns  
likes to place her body right over the pulpit  
of the last dog, so they know. I am here, too. Living.  
Lime green ribbons touch her soft, wet nose.

### *About This Poem*

“I wrote this poem by following one sentence after another in a rare, uncomplicated moment of appreciation for the most beautiful things in life. It was inspired by my dog, Gracie, who I love dearly and who has a proclivity for slamming her tiny body into my thigh while I watch shows or read a book. I'm interested right now in writing poems that aren't weighed down by my desire to make them more significant than they are, and by the time I'm done, as with this poem, the significance often shows up—having arrived without me. I like them better that way, independent and undetermined. Gracie approved this message.”

—*Analicia Sotelo*



Analicia Sotelo is the author of *Virgin* (Milkweed Editions, 2018) and lives in Houston, TX.