

# Inner GRACE

WORDS BY LESBIA GABRIELA PERDOMO

No matter the subject, no matter the situation, and no matter the company — I have a tendency to over-think things. This makes me a slow thinker. Not slow in the sense that it takes me longer to conceptualize things, but rather slow in the sense that I must look at things from all possible angles. Nowhere is this truer for me than when it comes to words.

When *Bella Grace* came out, I was incredibly hung up on the name of the publication. So much so, that I couldn't savor the images or the narratives. Those around me sang praises about the magazine, but all the while I sat at my desk, unable to move past its name. *Bella Grace*, what could it possibly mean? My initial sentiment was annoyance — the name seemed so completely full of itself. Or, as Peter Griffin from "Family Guy" said about *The Godfather*, "It insists upon itself." Yes, that about summed it up nicely for me — *Bella Grace*, the title, insisted upon itself.

Grace, that's what really struck a chord with me. **Growing up as a "big-boned" girl, I was conditioned to think that the word beautiful, or bella, would never be synonymous with me.** That's a battle I have to fight every day, one that I am hyperaware of. But grace — I just wasn't ready for that one. The word, for me, has always conjured images of dainty ballerinas, lithe dancers with long and elegant bodies. I didn't resent those women, but I did resent the word. »





I've gotten to the point where I can finally allow myself to believe that when someone tells me I am beautiful, they mean it. And that's no small victory for someone who has suffered quite a bit of body shaming. But who in their right mind would ever say that there's even an ounce of grace inside of me? I stumble, I bump into things, I am painfully aware of the space that my body takes up. This is what bothered me about the title *Bella Grace* — that it would never represent me, and yet I wanted so much to be a part of it.

It began with the Bella Grace Blog Hop. Being invited into the emotional space of not only the co-hosts and published contributors, but also some of our readers who decided to tag along with their own *Bella Grace*-inspired posts, gave me my first real look into what this whole thing actually meant — and boy, was I off. There's nothing graceful about trekking up a mountain, being led by the wild wind before a storm — hair tangled, and running to beat the rain like Jillian Lukiwski described in her post. And what sort of grace can be found in the victory lap of a young man after his favorite soccer team wins? Cathryn Mezzo compared her son's joy and pure emotion to that of religious exhilaration. Is there really anything graceful in exposing raw emotion like Hannah Marcotti did in her post, "A Letter to Your Forgiveness"? Is it really beautiful to reveal some of your most painful secrets to complete strangers?

Yes, it is. It really, really is. ...

Grace has another meaning, beyond the physical representations of elegance and refinement. It is enlightenment, it is divinity, it is transcendence — it's being able to lie on a grassy hill, with your hands behind your head, staring up at the speckled sunshine pouring through a swaying canopy of leaves. **Having grace is about being able to hear the wind, smell the grass, and feel the heat of the sun — all while knowing that your own tiny existence has meaning and magnitude.** There's divinity in each and every one of us that often gets pushed aside or flat out ignored. We're so hung up on the exterior that we can't see the value of our perspective.

There is no one like you — your experience of the world is wholly unique. Let that sink in. Isn't that amazing?

True grace is experiencing all the beauty of the universe, and allowing yourself to be overwhelmed by it. *Bella Grace* is not about the exterior, but rather it's a celebration of an inner virtue — a gift given to us all by a higher power, which allows us to soak up even the smallest ounce of beauty, full of wonder and always with a grateful heart. ≈

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