

Following Flannery into the Faith

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When a certain young woman attended
her first Mass, she wept at its beauty
and bowed, later vowed, to become
a part of it, though barred, of course,
from hallowed office. Oh yes, the priest
by now had turned to face the people,
and when he raised the wafer, the simple
ringing of the bell woke her sleeping heart.

She'd read Maritain, Day, and Merton;
she'd climbed that storied mountain
so she believed everybody could rise
with her, for she'd been hungry and fed.
Then she read the recently dead O'Connor.

The sunsets from then on were eucharistic
(*a huge red ball like an elevated Host*).
Encountering Flannery was like stumbling
over barbed wire! Those folks—familiar,
crippled, blasphemous, bitter, even silly—
nicked her ankles, stung her heart,
to say nothing of her soul,
nothing of that.