

Flannery's confession

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [September 27, 2017](#) issue

"I hate to say most of these prayers written by saints-in-an-emotional-state. You feel you are wearing someone else's finery and I can never describe my heart as 'burning' to the Lord (who knows better) without snickering."

—Flannery O'Connor

And so I limit myself to the saints
who are sensible, the ones who wear flats
to a party, prickly wool skirts and pink
shirts with a Peter Pan collar. I think
too much, my mother claims. Still, it's my aim
to talk to God in a voice that's just my own,
not one on loan from a lonely nun
or a love-starved Spanish priest. The least
I can do is try to be true
though often my words betray me. Like just
now. I tried to read Thérèse of Lisieux
but couldn't choke down all the icing, a feast
for the sweet tooth where my soul loves salt.
I know. I'm a sinner. I know it's my fault.