

Flannery's donkey

by [Angela Alaimo O'Donnell](#) in the [September 25, 2019](#) issue

*"Ernest did the honors for the burros this Christmas pageant. He did all right at the Methodist dress rehearsal but when the big moment came and the church full of Methodists, he wouldn't put his foot inside the door."*

—Flannery O'Connor

My mama's donkey *would be* a Catholic.  
In this house there's no other way to be.  
Braying his rosary on his rote rounds,  
chewing his consecrated hay,  
standing steady beneath the baptizing rain.  
If ever there was a holy burro  
Ernest is it. The Methodists see  
only an ordinary donkey,  
dumb creature, four hooves on the ground,  
happy as a pig at a potluck  
to preside at their Protestant play.  
We shoulda known he would say *no*.  
Our Catholic ass just could not feign  
or hide his scrupulous disdain.