

ANALYSIS

“The Enduring Chill” (1958)

Flannery O’Connor

(1925-1964)

“‘The Enduring Chill’ [is] a devastatingly funny, if ultimately serious, story of a pretentious young man whose dramatic coming home to die turns out badly. The story mows down its targets with general ruthlessness: the Church is wickedly satirized in a scatterbrained and irascible old priest, blind in one eye and deaf in one ear; such secular ‘experience of communion’ as racial integration comes off no better. The symbols are masterly. When Asbury, the romantic invalid, turns his head away in irritation from his mother’s talk about the dairy herd, he confronts ‘a small, wall-eyed Guernsey... watching him steadily as if she sensed some bond between them.’ When he gets up to his room, there is a water stain on the ceiling that looks like ‘a fierce bird with spread wings,’ with ‘an icicle crosswise in his beak.’ In the comic ending, the bond between Asbury and the wall-eyed Guernsey is the discovery, by the local doctor Asbury despises, that his supposedly fatal disease is only undulant fever, caught from drinking unpasteurized milk; in the apocalyptic ending that follows the comedy, the fierce bird on the ceiling is discovered to be the Holy Ghost, ‘emblazoned in ice instead of fire,’ and, implacably, that terrible swift mercy descends upon him.”

Stanley Edgar Hyman
Flannery O’Connor
(U Minnesota 1966) 27

“Of no group is she more scornful than the modern intellectuals, particularly those who look on Christianity as merely the paraphernalia of outmoded superstition. This is particularly evident in... ‘The Enduring Chill.’ Here Asbury Fox, a Southern intellectual, has come home from New York to die (he thinks). And mainly to annoy his Methodist mother... he asks to see a Jesuit priest. (Miss O’Connor does seem fond of good Methodist names like ‘Wesley’ and ‘Asbury’... [characters who] lack the evangelical spirit of such men as John Wesley and Francis Asbury.) Asbury Fox of course expects to find in the Jesuit a charming sophisticated man of the world with whom he can at last, even in Georgia, hold an intellectual conversation. Instead he gets old Father Finn, deaf in one ear and blind in one eye, who cares not a whit for the intellect as such but wants to know whether Asbury knows his catechism and says his prayers... ‘What do you think of Joyce?’ Asbury said louder. ‘Joyce? Joyce who?’ asked the priest...”

One by one, all Asbury’s attempts at self-justification are revealed as stale, flat, and unprofitable. Ironically, he isn’t even going to die: the local doctor, for whom of course he has the greatest contempt, has found that he is suffering from undulant fever... And Miss O’Connor even hints that, ironically, Asbury may have contracted the disease when he insisted once on drinking fresh, unpasteurized milk with his mother’s Negro dairymen as an act of racial ‘communion,’ largely to spite her, good traditional Southern woman that she is. Now at the end of the story, with all his illusions about life and himself stripped away, Asbury lies awaiting the coming of some new life to supplant the old, which is now exhausted. ‘The last film of illusion was torn as if by a whirlwind from his eyes,’ and he sees that for the rest of his life he will live in the face of a ‘purifying terror.’ Asbury vainly struggles; but... ‘the Holy Ghost, emblazoned in ice instead of fire, continued, implacable, to descend’.”

Robert Drake
Flannery O’Connor
(William B. Eerdmans 1966) 30-31

“‘The Enduring Chill’... reads almost like a Southern caricature of late Salinger. There are the Salinger overtones of Buddhist orientalism, of the impending nervous breakdown. Flannery O’Connor manages to get inside the mind of Asbury who suffers from the spiritual irresolution of so many of the Glass clan.... There is also a suspicion of the existential... (one of the rare moments in her work when this fashionable creed is at all apparent).”

Melvin J. Friedman
The Added Dimension: The Art and Mind of Flannery O'Connor
eds. Friedman and Lewis A. Lawson
(Fordham 1966, 1977) 19

“Father Finn...is...old and conventional, concerned with the basic truths of his faith and dismayed at those who live outside the state of grace; he is not a modern liberal Jesuit of the type Asbury Fox had known in the Bohemian circles in New York.... Asbury Fox is a pitifully immature literary poseur, fearful of his own disillusionment and eager to find solace from someone whom he considers his equal. Mistakenly believing himself to be dying, he chooses to summon a Catholic priest, expecting someone like the Jesuit who acknowledged him in New York at a Zen Buddhist lecture on Vedanta. Contrary to Asbury's expectations, Father Finn, blind in one eye and somewhat deaf, knows nothing of James Joyce and has little patience with Asbury's pseudo-intellectual, agnostic dialectic.... He...warns him of the dangers of ignoring God's grace.... Father Finn correctly refers to him as an ignorant youth, and finally Asbury's agnosticism, intellectual superiority, and self-righteous liberalism succumb to the implacable descent of the Holy Ghost. His acceptance of grace takes him by surprise, for in the extremity of his fear of death, he is unaware that his own will has become inclined to God.

Upon learning from Dr. Block that he has been spared the death he pretended romantically to relish but which actually terrified him, he sees in the bedroom mirror that his eyes, like those of so many other O'Connor characters, have been burned clean by the experience and thus prepared for the imminent vision: a peculiar chill overtakes him and the bird outlined by water stains over his bed appears to move. ‘The Holy Ghost, emblazoned in ice instead of fire, continued, implacable, to descend’.... At the end of the story when Asbury learns that he is not dying, he has a vision of the inevitability of his own salvation, signaled by a red-gold sun moving from under a cloud and by the fierce bird's descent. The bird in this final appearance in the story is described specifically as ‘the Holy Ghost, emblazoned in ice instead of fire’.... In the end, his epiphany is objectified in his own mind (through the limited point of view) and not by the author's authority.”

Carter W. Martin
The True Country: Themes in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor
(Vanderbilt 1968) 98-99, 129-30, 139-40

“The comic irony of the story...depends upon the central character's living... In the end Asbury learns that he is not to die and that his disobeying his mother by drinking unpasteurized milk is the cause of his illness. He has undulant fever, which the country doctor tells him is ‘the same as Bang's in a cow,’ thus explaining...Asbury's feelings for ‘a small, wall-eyed Guernsey...watching him steadily as if she sensed some bond between them’....

Just as Asbury's contact with the Church fails, so does his effort to establish secular communion with his mother's Negro servants... In the dairy his defiance of his mother (drinking milk and smoking) thinly disguises his own inadequacy while revealing his ignorance... His humanist substitute for a meaningful relationship, his phony liberalism, proves a miserable failure.... The Negroes are notably dishonest in their conversation with the sick man, arguing together about how fine he looks.... He faces not death but life without the protection of his age or of its secularism, both of which obscure man's oneness with God....

Asbury's victory is his total defeat: he has nothing left, not even the romantic self-pity which had made death seem delicious.... As always, the image of grace arises from within the story in terms of its details; it is not imposed from outside.... Rarely does [O'Connor] so specify the moment of Christian rebirth—the death of the old and the emergence of the new in Christ.... The setting reiterates her symbols of grace... ‘a blinding red-gold sun moved serenely from under a purple cloud’.... ‘The treeline was black against the crimson sky. It formed a brittle wall, standing as if it were the frail defense he had set up in his mind to protect him from what was coming’.... [O'Connor] daringly seeks to realize the descent of the Holy Ghost upon a chastened and receptive Asbury Fox.... She dramatizes, as few writers since the seventeenth-century metaphysicals have done, the full mystery and terror of the descent of the Holy Ghost.”

Leon V. Driskell & Joan T. Brittain

“Asbury Fox in ‘The Enduring Chill’ is quite similar to Hulga [“Good Country People”] in character, situation, and defensive illusion. Asbury is no philosopher, but he has an ‘artistic temperament,’ which keeps him disdainfully aloof from the dairy farm on which he has grown up. Again, the consciously intellectual character is surrounded by an earthy life he finds disgusting and a bit humiliating.... When Asbury arrived home from New York, he became immediately aware again that this humiliating earthiness was imposing on him; as he rode up the driveway, he saw that ‘a small, walleyed Guernsey was watching him steadily as if she sensed some bond between them.’

But Asbury will admit no bonds with the cows; his vain intellect will not be compromised by his animality. Nevertheless, he will not accept the affected oriental mysticism of his New York friend Goetz, since it would deny his significance as an individual. Denying his relation to the cows below and the spirit above, he tries to work out his private substitute for salvation. He has failed completely as a writer, and he seems to be dying at twenty-five from a strange prolonged illness. But he has made adequate psychological provisions for his failure, and he is intent on keeping it from destroying his vanity....

Admitting to himself that he has no talent despite his desire to create, he can feel, like Hulga, that he has no illusions. If he has not seen through to nothing, he has at least seen through himself, and he has written a long letter...to introduce his mother to reality. But real self-knowledge would not be an adequate defense for Asbury. His is only a partial insight combined with sufficient escapes and twisted into a comic self-justification. For one thing, he has convinced himself that his mother has caused his failure, that her solicitude and dullness have stifled his imagination.

Although this claim probably has some truth in it, especially since he has become self-consciously esthetic in rebellion against her, it hardly justifies his role as a victim. Still more importantly, he cherishes the image of himself as tragic hero, not just because it shifts the blame and demands pity, but also because it enables him to succeed as a dramatic character where he had failed as an author. Art has given him the chance to be redeemed by living his one great work, and in the ‘unique tragedy of his death,’ he finds great meaning. He sees himself as dying of a broken imagination because his spirit is too great to endure the failure forced upon it....

Asbury, however, is as much an artistic and spiritual failure in creating his own tragedy as he was in writing his lifeless works. His ‘unique tragedy’ is a trite, third-rate decadent melodramatic prose-poem. It has stock characters, like the *fin de siecle* Jesuit whose face shows a ‘subtle blend of asceticism and corruption.’ It has some sensuous morbidity, a good deal of dated nonsense about serving the god, Art, and very little action. Asbury even intends to conclude his life with a ‘meaningful experience,’ a sophisticated talk with a priest about Joyce or a smoke with the Negro dairy workers. But he cannot even bring off this artificial tragedy, since reality keeps intruding on his artifice.

The Jesuit who comes to his sickbed turns out to be a half-blind, half-deaf, old Irishman who knows nothing about Joyce, who insists on discussing Asbury’s neglect of prayers and the catechism, and who calls him a ‘lazy ignorant conceited youth.’ The Negroes are painfully ill at ease, and in their cultivated polite and cheerful manner they assure him that he looks fine. Worst of all, old Dr. Block, whom Asbury has scorned, finds out that he is not going to die after all, that he has undulant fever...from drinking unpasteurized milk. After these attacks on his fantasies, Asbury is left to endure his chronic illness and to experience the terrifying grace of God, which descends metaphorically as the bird image stained on his bedroom ceiling....

The final symbol of the Holy Ghost is anticipated in cleverly contrasted images of birds. For example, Asbury wanted to let his imagination free like a hawk and ‘set it “whirling off into the widening gyre”...; this misquoted line from Yeats is doubly ironic, because it is ridiculously pretentious and because in ‘The Second Coming’ it refers to anarchy when ‘the centre cannot hold’ and the ‘falcon cannot hear the falconer.’ In the story it becomes a comment on the futility of seeking creativity and freedom in complete

independence from man's center.... Asbury has used the bird-shaped stain since childhood as a symbol of what he fears; so, the religious connotations...accrue about the psychological symbol....

Like Hulga, he is forced to experience what he has pretended to believe; despair, which has been partly an affectation, becomes real and not very romantically appealing; and as his defenses collapse, his fears, desires, and past experiences coalesce in the final vision. The story is so thoroughly structured that a psychologist could probably account for the vision in purely natural terms.... Grace can be experienced by any man when he is fleeing from it, especially when he stumbles in his flight. In Hulga and Asbury [O'Connor] represents such flight as the domestication of despair, either through philosophical or artistic posturing. Although the specific forms of these...characters' estrangement are fairly modern—popularized existentialism and late romantic estheticism—the basic patterns are not; self-congratulating nihilists and melancholics are common enough.”

David Eggenschwiler
The Christian Humanism of Flannery O'Connor
(Wayne State 1972) 57-60

“In ‘The Enduring Chill,’ not only the rhetoric of the hero (‘He had failed his God, Art, but he had been a faithful servant and Art was sending him Death’), but his histrionic gestures as well are handled with a deft and chilling irony. Thus, for example, as Asbury nears what he takes to be his death, he imagines a final fulfilling communion with the Negroes who work on his mother’s farm, and accordingly he orders his mother to bring in Randall and Morgan, ‘preparing himself for the encounter as a religious man might prepare himself for the last sacrament.’ The scene that follows is one of O'Connor’s finest, though it depends on comic caricatures of the two Negroes.... The communion of kindred spirits disintegrates as Randall and Morgan argue over cold remedies... A similar ironic deflation of the protagonist’s desire for an unholy communion in ‘Everything That Rises Must Converge’ also emphasizes a Negro figure, but this time he has a human shape free from caricature.”

Miles Orvell
Invisible Parade: The Fiction of Flannery O'Connor
(Temple U 1972) 48-49

“Asbury’s relationship with his mother, his sister, and the two Negroes on the farm show the falseness of his ‘artistic’ personality. His encounters with two Jesuits ultimately lead him to the recognition of his spiritual illness: he has cut himself off from *the Holy Spirit—the spirit of Truth*. Connecting these two orders [flesh and spirit] (which, of course, are intrinsically united in the spiritual man) is Asbury’s visible malady, which he believes to be a physical manifestation of intellectual frustration, and which Dr. Block diagnoses as undulant fever.... [Italics added]

He has written [his mother] a letter in which he tells her bluntly that she has destroyed him as a literary artist. He hopes this letter will leave her with ‘an enduring chill.’ But the vacuous, cliché-prone mother is depicted sympathetically, and it is soon apparent that Asbury’s ego, rather than his mother, is destroying him. In the end, the chill which Asbury’s letter was designed to bestow upon his mother falls, transformed, upon himself.... Principal of a country elementary school and self-styled intellectual, Mary George realizes Asbury’s artistic delusions, but, coldly cynical, sees no possibility of a new life for him. A self-sufficient atheist...she represents a perversion of truth called ‘intellectualism’....

The scenes which show the relationship between Asbury and the Negroes, Morgan and Randall, illuminate Asbury’s duplicity and the innate integrity of the black farmhands.... Asbury’s insincerity in trying to establish any real equality is revealed when he calls Morgan ‘boy’ while seeking communion with him in a glass of milk. Randall’s unlettered integrity becomes evident when [he says of Asbury], ‘What he do is him; what I do is me.’ The Negroes do not see that what Asbury does is not really ‘him,’ but rather his concept of the way an artist should express himself.... Feeling that he is on the verge of death, Asbury summons the Negroes to his room so that he can have ‘some last meaningful experience.’ He intends to smoke with them once more, and to tell them good-by. But his mother has evidently told the Negroes not to allude to Asbury’s debilitated condition, so they keep repeating, ‘You looks well,’ ‘You looks fine,’ ‘I ain’t ever seen you looking so well before,’ and the scene turns into a farce....

Once again in search of a significant intellectual experience, Asbury forces his mother to invite a local Jesuit, Father Finn, to visit, so he can 'talk to a man of culture' before he dies.... Father Flynn summarizes the action of the story when he says: 'The Holy Ghost will not come until you see yourself as you are—a lazy, ignorant, conceited youth.' The priest pummels Asbury with a theological catechesis, but the boy turns the questioning into a game.... Grace comes freely; it cannot be forced or earned....

The link between the flesh and the spirit is Dr. Block, who diagnoses Asbury's disease and thus helps to free him from his artistic illusions.... By diagnosing the physical illness, Block unwittingly prepares the boy for the advent of the Spirit of Truth.... The symbolic link between the natural and the supernatural order is 'a fierce bird with spread wings' which a water leak has made on the ceiling of Asbury's bedroom.... The dove becomes a fierce watermark bird with an icicle in his beak, whose descent causes a peculiar chill—'a warm rippled across a deeper sea of cold.' Contemporary man, who 'plays it cool' by noninvolvement, 'keeps his cool' by self-control, and lives constantly in a cold-war climate, is conditioned to respond to such imagery....

Another bond which connects man and nature in the story is undulant fever, which is known as Bang's disease in a cow. This link is suggested in the beginning of the story when a 'wall-eyed Guernsey' stares at Asbury 'as if she sense some bond between them.' This story suggests that, for better or worse, man is a creature of flesh and spirit, participating in both orders of nature.... By the extremes of low comedy and high seriousness, Flannery O'Connor attempted to show man's return to truth."

Kathleen Feeley, S.S.N.D.
Flannery O'Connor: Voice of the Peacock
(Rutgers 1972; Fordham 1982) 39-45

"The imminence of death prepares Asbury for the descent of the Holy Ghost. Asbury, returned from New York City to wait extinction in the provinces, desperately yearns to undergo one significant experience before his life ends. He first seeks intellectual communion with a local priest, but the attempt fails when the cleric proves to be hopelessly uninformed about esthetic and cultural topics. Asbury next tries to arrange a last meeting with the black laborers on his mother's farm, in an attempt to re-create an earlier occasion when, smoking with the blacks in the barn, Asbury has felt racial differences dissolve in a moment of close communion. His efforts are futile, for the helpers, who do not understand Asbury's motives, leave amidst embarrassed confusion on their part and exasperation on his. Thus, the two experiences on which much of modern society relies to give 'meaning' to its existence—sophisticated intellectual exchange and interracial involvement—prove worthless to Asbury in his need....

Asbury...consumed the milk daily to show his liberation from his mother's domination and his generous acceptance of the blacks as equals. From drinking the milk, he contracts undulant fever.... His intended ritual of communal experience is thwarted, for the helper to whom he offers the first cigarette assumes the entire package is a gift and deposits it in his pocket. Asbury is thus forced to produce another package for the second helper, who plainly resents Asbury's apparent favoritism. The blacks leave, continuing to assure Asbury of his healthy appearance... The scenes with the black characters are subordinate to the larger theme of enlightenment through grace, and the primary 'convergences' are thus spiritual rather than racial. The whites attempt—at times—to break through the communication barrier to the black audience; but no real confrontation occurs because the participants in the dialogue move along parallel tracks which permit no real points of contact....

He is informed that his malady, though serious, will not be fatal. It is then that he finally captures the sense of meaning which he had so desperately sought, but the terms are vastly different from those he had expected.... The 'enduring terror' which Asbury's fate prepares for him arises out of his tardily awakened sense of his own insufficiency. He was prepared to die supported by a firm sense of his own superiority to the world he had already rejected. He is unprepared for a 'life sentence' to a world in which he must daily confront the evidence of his own essential inadequacy."

Dorothy Walters
Flannery O'Connor
(Twayne 1973) 107-08, 125-26

“In ‘The Enduring Chill,’ Asbury is returning home to Timberboro to die, or so he thinks. His redeeming feature is undoubtedly the fact that he is taking at least death seriously. He is not prepared, as his friend Goetz in New York had urged, ‘to see it all as illusion.’ He is convinced that death is ‘coming to him legitimately, as a justification, as a gift from life.’ Even though ‘he had failed his god, Art, he had nevertheless been its faithful servant,’ and so he believes ‘Art [is] sending him Death.’ Asbury has so romanticized his projected escape from inadequacy that the personification of his god appears in his dream alongside the verifiable ‘lean dark figure in a Roman collar.’ Death will be ‘his greatest triumph’ because he will use it as an occasion to introduce his mother to reality. The Kafkaesque letter that he has written for her benefit and that will be given to her only after his death will assist her, he hopes, ‘in the process of growing up,’ if the experience does not kill her first.

As a foretaste of the displeasure that his mother will experience in reading his letter, Asbury insists that she send for a nearby Jesuit priest, knowing that his request will offend her traditionalist views. ‘He would talk to a man of culture before he died—even in this desert!’ He hopes that the neighboring priest will be ‘a trifle more worldly perhaps, a trifle more cynical’ than Ignatius Vogle, the sophisticated young Jesuit he had met in New York. Instead, Asbury is visited by Father Finn, a ‘massive’ old man, deaf in one ear and blind in one eye, who is concerned about whether Asbury is saying his morning and night prayers, whether he has any ‘trouble with purity,’ whether he knows his catechism.

Asbury responds with a series of agnostic declarations; there is clearly no meeting of minds. In response to Father Finn’s insistence that he ‘pray regularly,’ Asbury shouts that ‘the myth of the dying god has always fascinated [him].’ God is after all ‘an idea created by man’; moreover, the artist, he insists, ‘prays by creating.’ Father Finn assures Asbury that there is still hope for his salvation, since he is not dead yet; but he must ask God ‘to send the Holy Ghost.’ Asbury says furiously, ‘The Holy Ghost is the last thing I’m looking for!’ ‘He may be the last thing you get’ is the priest’s illuminating response. Before leaving Asbury, Father Finn, one of the Gospel ‘babes’ to whom revelation is given in place of the ‘learned and wise,’ completes his judgment of the sick writer: ‘The Holy Ghost will not come until you see yourself as you are—a lazy ignorant conceited youth!’

The day after this depressing interview, Asbury feels ‘as if he were a shell that had to be filled with something but he did not know what’; he concludes that he needs ‘some last significant culminating experience that he must make for himself before he [dies]—make for himself out of his own intelligence,’ because he has ‘always relied on himself and...never been a sniveler after the ineffable.’ His last attempt to redeem the time, unlike his first the summer before, is simply ineffectual; the previous summer’s ‘moment of communion’ was the cause of his illness. Wanting to ‘smoke together one last time,’ he calls for the black farm hands Randall and Morgan, but they merely pocket the packages of cigarettes, commenting how Asbury ‘certainly does look well.’ The summer before Asbury had smoked with them in the barn and ruined two cans of milk as a result; but when he poured the communion cup of unpasteurized milk, only they were smart enough not to drink it. The illness which he thought was unto death is undulant fever. ‘It’ll keep coming back but it won’t kill you!’ his mother announces happily.

Robbed of the easy but dramatic escape of death and the opportunity to give the letter to his mother from the protected distance of the grave, Asbury is left to himself and his problems—and to the presence of the ‘fierce bird with spread wings,’ formed by the water stains on the ceiling of his bedroom. ‘An icicle crosswise in its beak,’ the bird—which often gave the illusion of being in motion and about to descend mysteriously—had been with him throughout his life, from childhood on, but especially during his illness as he lay gazing at the ceiling. Now the ‘purifying terror’ of its descent coincides with the recurring waves of the chill that grip his body. He knows that for the rest of his life he will be visited regularly by the salutary realization of the futility of self-reliance. The last film of illusion is stripped from his eyes ‘as if by a whirlwind.’ Death will not spare him the agony of rebirth to new life.

Father Finn’s prophetic judgment has come to literal fulfillment, as well as Father Vogle’s more cautious assertion that ‘there is a real probability of the New Man, assisted, of course...by the Third Person of the Trinity.’ The last thing Asbury wanted is, providentially, the last thing he gets—the implacable descent of the chastening Spirit ‘emblazoned in ice instead of fire.’ The Holy Ghost, whom Scripture calls

the Spirit of Truth, reveals to Asbury and the reader the icy warning that the fate of the self-made savior may seem worse than death.”

John R. May
The Pruning Word: The Parables of Flannery O'Connor
(U Notre Dame 1976) 105-07

“If Asbury Fox’s liberal cliches and aesthetic pretensions are subjected to a mocking tone...his mother’s provincial practicality and officious optimism are treated with a comparable comic irony... Provincial Timberboro is the embodiment of everything Asbury scorns... ‘this collapsing country junction’.... By the end of the story Asbury will no longer be able to suppress his imagination, but he will also discover that it is not simply a cozy artistic faculty when it opens him to the enduring vision of purifying terror.... We are in the familiar territory of the divided will.

The descent of the Holy Ghost is at the same time the release of Asbury’s stifled imagination, the bird that has been ‘sitting huffy’ in the case of his ego and that has peeked out in his brief vision of the town’s transformation at the story’s start. It is, we note, Asbury’s mind that protests, the false consciousness that is broken through when bird calls to bird, as it were, and imagination and grace become one to produce the story’s final vision. The menacing motif of the pursuing God appears here in the ‘fierce bird’ that has hovered on the boy’s ceiling since childhood, but the use of bird imagery through the story reveals that although Asbury’s mind attempts to deny it, this is a bird that he deeply desires to know....

Under the combined forces of his mother’s relentless determination, his doctor’s assured persistence...an old priest’s ‘battering’ catechistical attack, and his own failure at ‘communion’ with the black farmhands, Asbury Fox is finally left emptied of ‘old life,’ ‘shocked clean,’ prepared to undergo the ‘purifying terror’ of an icy Holy Ghost... The God of Wrath and the God of Love seem to be one: mercy and judgment, like the horns of the Greenleaf bull, come together in an awesomeness suggested in Asbury Fox’s discovery that the Holy Ghost is a ‘purifying terror’.... O’Connor might well have agreed with Pascal that the apparent violence of God is a function of the evil in man... ‘It would be very unfair to impute this violence to God, who is drawing us on, instead of to the world, which is holding us back’.”

Frederick Asals
Flannery O'Connor: The Imagination of Extremity
(U Georgia 1982) 125, 128, 140, 204-05, 224

Michael Hollister (2016)