

# Of Flannery O'Connor and Peacocks: A Visit to Andalusia

When my children are adults, I hope that they remember with fondness our family road trips, especially this one.



Writer Susanna Spencer visits Andalusia, the home of author Flannery O'Connor (photo: Courtesy of Susanna Spencer)

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Andalusia, with its white siding and red roof, is happily situated on a hill facing a lawn framed by forest on one side and the avenue and a path leading to a natural pond on the other side.

Walking out of the home onto the grounds, one could picture Flannery O'Connor's various short stories — which took place in old houses, cow barns, down lonely lanes, and on farms in need of repair. In her day-to-day experience of the people around her on the farm and in the town of Milledgeville, Georgia, the writer had a wide experience of human nature and its quirks.

We have often made religious pilgrimages on our road trips, but this was a literary one, to get to know a literary friend.

When my children are adults, I hope that they remember with fondness our family road trips, both those we take to visit family and friends, those we take to beautiful places, and those that are a little bit of each. We began the longer of our on-the-road treks, from our home in St. Paul, Minnesota, this past summer with a visit to my husband Mark's grandparents in northern Georgia. A friend of mine, on hearing that we would be in Georgia, suggested that we stop at Andalusia, the farm where writer O'Connor lived from 1951, after her diagnosis with lupus at the age of 25, until her death in 1964. Unknown to this friend, Mark and I had just seen the new biopic of O'Connor, *Wildcat*, and read her novel *Wiseblood*. It was almost as if O'Connor herself

