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Sinopsis

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Flannery O'Connor was among the greatest American writers of the second half of the 20th century; she was a writer in the Southern tradition of Eudora Welty, William Faulkner, and Carson McCullers, who wrote such classic novels and short stories as *Wise Blood*, *The Violent Bear It Away*, and "A Good Man is Hard to Find." She is perhaps as well known for her tantalizing brand of Southern Gothic humor as she is for her Catholicism. That these tendencies should be so happily married in her fiction is no longer a surprise. The real surprise is learning that this much beloved icon of American literature did not set out to be a fiction writer, but a cartoonist. This seems to be the last well-kept secret of her creative life.

Flannery O'Connor: *The Cartoons*, the first book devoted to the author's work in the visual arts, emphasizes O'Connor's most prolific period as a cartoonist, drawing for her high school and college publications in the early 1940s. While many of these images lampoon student life and the impact of World War II on the home front, something much more is happening. Her cartoons are a creative threshing floor for experimenting and trying out techniques that are deployed later with such great success in her fiction.

O'Connor learns how to set up and carry a joke visually, how to write a good one-liner and set it off against a background of complex visual narration. She develops and asserts her taste for a stock set of character types, attitudes, situations, exaggerations, and grotesques, and she learns how to present them not to distort the truth, but to expose her vision of it.

She worked in both pen & ink and linoleum cuts, and her rough-hewn technique combined with her acidic observations to form a visual precursor to her prose. Fantagraphics is honored to bring the early cartoons of this American literary treasure to a 21st century readership.

For an audience resistant to your views, O'Connor once wrote, "draw large and startling figures." In her fiction, as in her cartoons, these shocks to the system never come without a laugh. 120 pages of full-color comics