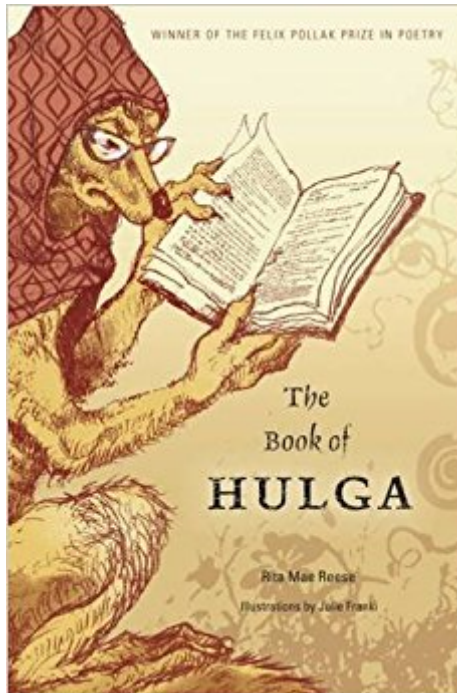


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The Book Of Hulga (Wisconsin Poetry Series)



Synopsis

The Book of Hulga speculates—•with humor, tenderness, and a brutal precision—•on a character that Flannery O’Connor envisioned but did not live long enough to write: “the angular intellectual proud woman approaching God inch by inch with ground teeth.” These striking poems look to the same sources that O’Connor sought out, from Gerard Manley Hopkins to Edgar Allan Poe to Simone Weil. Original illustrations by Julie Franki further illuminate Reese’s imaginative verse biography of a modern-day hillbilly saint.

Book Information

Series: Wisconsin Poetry Series

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Customer Reviews

Reese places Hulga amongst both detritus and dogma. [She] hits many high points during The Book of Hulga, but perhaps the highest is her recognition that what made O’Connor legendary was her theological uniqueness, her ability to gaze into the grotesque and see God. The Book of Hulga, channeling O’Connor and Weil, reminds us that “the stories about miracles confuse everything.” See more at:

uscatholic.org/blog/201604/approaching-god-inch-inch-30621#sthash.kluMxi0u.dpuf “This collection is a must-read, must-own for all O’Connor enthusiasts. Will non-Flannery fans enjoy the book as well? It’s hard to say (having never been one). Play it safe and pick up a copy of O’Connor’s short stories at the bookstore while you’re buying The Book of Hulga.” --Tahoma Literary Review “Like the peacock lifting that magnificent tail into an arch,

Rita Mae Reese's poems of affliction and epiphany shiver and extend a structure so stunning, so moving, it's nearly impossible to respond justly in language. Flannery O'Connor would have kept *The Book of Hulga* on her bedside table. Amy Newman, author of *Dear Editor*: "A mesmerizing imagination at work. The language is pared but rich, philosophical and earthy. These poems are fiercely individual, but dovetail into a narrative bright with revelations and wonder. *The Book of Hulga* is a triumph." Eduardo C. Corral, author of *Slow Lightning*: "To read these poems is to inhabit the body of a penitent climbing, on hands and knees, the long stone steps toward God. The book's three crowns of finely interwoven sonnets leave no doubt that Reese is an equal to Donne or Hopkins." Nick Lantz, author of *We Don't Know We Don't Know*: "Making meaning out of suffering and loss, one of poetry's most fundamental aims, suffuses this collection. . . . Reese ingeniously uses forms—short poems, long poems, short lines, long lines, punctuation, and lack of punctuation—to explore philosophical and theological questions. The book includes magnificent illustrations by artist Julie Franki that complement Reese's searing poems." *The Christian Century*: "If this rich collection of poems on [Flannery] O'Connor's life, family, work, and religious philosophy is any indication, the wildly talented Rita Mae Reese is part of that die-hard fan club, too. It would be challenge enough for most poets to write a compelling sequence on any great artist, but Reese doesn't just succeed in creating moving, original poems on O'Connor—she also inhabits the rhythms, tones, and voices O'Connor used in her own work." *Tahoma Literary Review*

"My heroine already is, and is Hulga." Flannery O'Connor, on the novel she didn't live long enough to write

Reese has accomplished a masterpiece in *The Book of Hulga*. Her jumping off point is Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People." In fact, reading that short story is essential to appreciating the poems. In fact, reading about Flannery O'Connor's life (cut short by lupus) is important too. With those two types of background, reading the poems becomes a delight of complexity. The myriad ways of reading the poems expand so that additional options come to light. Themes of darkness, death, spirituality, human foibles, and human tragedies are woven within and between the poems.

Thought provoking book of poetry which should be read by fans of Flannery O'Connor. Some of the

poems are absolutely beautiful and have great clarity while others are more complex. I would love to have some of the poems explained to me by the poet. Although not essential, it is helpful to have read some of O'Connor's biography and short stories before reading these poems. I loved the artwork. Very creative poems and art.

This is a beautiful collection. I highly recommend it. Reese's elegant and thoughtful poems bring together a range of meditations that are at once arresting and moving, generous, exacting, and deeply felt. The formal dexterity--crowns of sonnets, brief lyrics, longer narratives--is wonderful, too. On a practical level, it was refreshing to think intensely and differently about Flannery O'Connor, Hulga, Simone Weil. A great read.

I love this collection. Music and meaning make it so spectacular. I recommend it highly.

We know that all words that rise don't converge, and a good poem is hard to find, except in this latest award-winning collection by the astonishingly talented Rita Mae Reese. "The Book of Hulga" is just plain flat-out beautiful.

The Book of Hulga is a wonderful book even if you know nothing about Flannery O'Connor and her work. And if you drifted away from modern poetry because [fill in your personal blank], Hulga would be a good choice to reacquaint yourself with what poetry can do. Buy this remarkable collection of poetry today. Not only is it beautifully written, it's beautifully illustrated, which is unusual for a book of this nature.

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