

Sin eater

by [Sarah Rossiter](#) in the [July 14, 2021](#) issue

She enters the cottage to find
The corpse laid out for burial,
The family waiting for her to eat
The fresh-baked bread placed
On the body.

Hungry perhaps—the work pays
Little, and she is poor—she chews
And swallows greed, lust, rage,
Taking on sin so the soul slips
Free to rise to heaven, purified.

But what, I wonder, does she feel?
Is it just a job for her, or something
More, a sacred act, so that when
She takes the bread, all that binds her
Falls away.