

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.