

Eagle 1986

John Bellany



Etching from 'The Scottish Bestiary'

Sheet Size: 45.2 x 30 cm

Edition of

EAGLE

(The Child Stolen from the Harvest-field)

AN EAGLE, circling high,
The swaddled child
Lay in the bronze
Shadow of a barley stook.
The mother,
Bronze-throated, bent and gathered and bound.
The eagle
Hovered, stooped, threshed.
The child hung
Hooked in talons, dragged
Up blue steps of sky
To a burning nest
In a crag of Coolag hill.

THE harvest mother
Followed. She changed
Burnish for blue wind,
Bleeding hands. She
Lifted the boy like an egg
From the broken
Circle of beak and claw and scream.
She brought him down
To her nest of crib and milk.
She kissed him,
She lit the lamp.
She rocked the cradle. She sang.

OLD grand-da muttered
Through the grey
Spittle and smoke of his pipe,
'Better for the boy, maybe
That freedom of rock and cloud,
A guest
In the house of the king of birds -
Not what must come,
Ten thousand brutish days
Yoked with clay and sea-time.'



John Bellany, Eagle

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