

Sylvia Kelso

NATURA AQUILAE
(After the Middle English)

Consider the eagle according to
Ancient authors.
Grown decrepit this bird
Muscles weak
Beak astray
Incontinently moulting
Seeks out a spring
(O font eternal!)
Ever fresh, ever flowing.
Overhead he towers
Beyond the seventh heaven
And hoves
Before the sun.
Which searing out his pinions
Burning clear his vision
Drops him down with feathers plucked
Into the spring's foundation.
Whence he comes
All refined
Except the beak
Which remains crooked —
Until
Upon a stone
He diligently whets it.
Whereupon
A raptor
He can go forth to take
His proper meat
At will.