

6-14-2017

After the Splash

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Recommended Citation

Moore, Leslie S. (2017) "After the Splash," *The Catch*: Vol. 5 , Article 4.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/the_catch/vol5/iss1/4

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After the Splash

we step to the porch railing—
wine glasses in hand, Scrabble forgotten—
to spy a bird floundering in the cove,
dashing the sea with great, feathered
downbeats, almost obscured by the spray.
It's a bald eagle and my heart thrashes with it.

I'm ready to canoe to the rescue,
my husband paddling, me leaning
over the bow, poised to pluck a frantic,
flapping, full-grown eagle out of the sea
in my bare arms. Its wing span is wider
than I am tall, its beak a scimitar.

But the bald eagle doesn't need me.
It settles onto the water, plump as a duck,
turns beak to shore, scoops the sea with
feathery palms, and climbs out on a rocky
shelf, dragging in one talon a fish,
huge and silvery in the sunlight.