

# Mahon, St. Eustace

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## St. Eustace

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Derek Mahon

The hunt ceases  
Here; there will be no more  
Deranged pursuit of the mild-eyed  
Creatures of the countryside.  
Startled, he reins before  
His nemesis

And stares amazed  
At the hanged man of wood--  
Gawain caught in the cold cathedral  
Light of a temperate forest, Paul  
Blind on a desert road,  
One hand upraised.

He will not burn,  
Now, with such nonchalance  
Agape beasts to the gods of Rome  
Whose strident, bronze imperium  
He served devoutly once  
But in his turn

Rotate above  
A charcoal brazier,  
Braised in his own fat for his contumacy  
And vision; in his dying briefly  
One with the hind, the hare  
And the ring-dove.

Antonio Pisanello, Saint Eustace (c. 1450)

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Egg tempera on wood, approximately 21.5 inches x 26 inches. National Gallery, London.

