

THE BRITISH ACADEMY CHATTERTON LECTURE ON POETRY

Edward Lear's Lines of Flight

Dr Matthew Bevis

6pm, Wednesday 28 November 2012

The Bowland Auditorium, Berrick Saul Building
with a drinks reception to follow

'Verily I am an odd bird', Edward Lear wrote in his diary in 1860. This lecture will examine a range of odd encounters between birds and people in Lear's paintings, illustrations, and poems, considering how Lear's interest in birds – an interest at once scientific and aesthetic – helped to shape his nonsense writings. Matthew Bevis suggests that poetic and pictorial lines of flight became, for Lear, a means of exploring the claims that art might make on our attention, and the insights that this attention may foster.

About the Speaker

Matthew Bevis, previously of the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York, is now Lecturer in English and a Fellow of Keble College at the University of Oxford. He is the author of *The Art of Eloquence: Byron, Dickens, Tennyson, Joyce* (2007), *Some Versions of Empson*, ed. (2007), and *Comedy: A Very Short Introduction* (2012).



Edward Lear, 'A Feather and the Artist's Business Card' (1827)

