

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)



BRITISH ACADEMY  
*for the humanities and social sciences*