



Queensland University of Technology
Brisbane Australia

This is the author's version of a work that was submitted/accepted for publication in the following source:

[Holland-Batt, Sarah](#)
(2017)
Light years.
[Textual Work]

This file was downloaded from: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/107504/>

© 2017 [Please consult the author]

Notice: *Changes introduced as a result of publishing processes such as copy-editing and formatting may not be reflected in this document. For a definitive version of this work, please refer to the published source:*

<http://www.kenyonreview.org/journal/marapr-2017/index/>

Research Statement

Research Background

Recent developments in animal studies and ecocriticism have revealed a need for creative research to respond to the depletion of natural habitats of the animal world, and to contend with human agency as a prime driver in environmental threat and degradation. Animal philosophers such as Matthew Calarco have called for a radical reenvisioning of the way in which we think about the categories of animal and human, and an ontologically integrated and unified understanding of humans and animals as deeply interconnected.

Research Contribution

This poem engages with recent ecocritical and posthuman understandings of the animal intelligence to represent animal agency, intelligence and knowledge anew. The poem draws on ecocritical theories of the posthuman and recent developments in animal studies in order to consider conditions of nonhuman agency and knowledge, and in particular the ways in which animal and human dwellings and habitats intersect and result in environmental violence and habitat depletion. The poem documents the poet's encounter with northern flickers, a common woodpecker considered a 'pest' in North America, and documents the threat to such animals' habitats by the human sphere, figuring such an encounter in which nonhuman and human thought merge as one of dual and duelling languages. The poem contributes to a broader poetic project underlining the permeability between the categories of 'animal' and human', especially in relation to their

shared mortality.

Research Significance

The poem was first published in *Kenyon Review* journal in the United States, one of the most prestigious English language literary publications in the world, in a special Australian Literature edition edited by Prof. John Kinsella. It appeared alongside leading Australian writers such as Kim Scott, Robert Drewe, David Brookes, Chris Wallace-Crabbe and Judith Beveridge.