

# Not the Postage Stamp of the Christmas Island Pipistrelle!

John Kinsella

To drag you back into viability  
mainland scientists descended  
to haul you into a breeding colony.

But vanishing was fast, and the last  
of your brethren we heard echo-locating  
in August 2009. What on earth led

to your demise, so many now ask,  
weltering through herbicides and pesticides,  
closing their eyes as they drive past

pockets of vegetation being emptied  
out, mined, harvested. World is your  
island. World is a roost under

dried fronds of *Arenga* palms,  
with your few-gram-body  
the soft-spot of reminisce

and distress. What is vanity  
in bringing one's self into the blank  
mirror of clichés—

extinction shows nothing back,  
nothing we can learn from,  
nothing we can focus on,

make up, repair. This picture  
in which you're edited out?  
Who found you roosting

in that hollow of a *syzygium*  
*nervosum*. Why should they know  
about the size of your testes, your voracity?

Night sleep. Day forage. In and out  
of primary forest. So familiar,  
and yet, the details, the reports,

then nothing. An ad in the personal  
column of — — to you in your space,  
and to those people who lived

in and around you. Just passing through  
from Cocos (Keeling) to the mainland,  
but taken into custody by the Feds

at Christmas Island airport  
because of a failure to cross back & forth  
between material and spirit worlds.

No cultural lift, just loss of connect  
on both planes. And yet, as your  
echolocation reached across

the twilight before twilight  
arrived, a waking sleep, moths  
testing the walls of constraint,

I tuned in—haunting premonition  
of loss, forage zone of the spiritually lost,  
the vulnerable, the lonely. What family

will post your obituary—trapped  
in descriptors and comparatives, analogies  
and desperate metaphors? Your thin-

membraned wing, your other-materials nose,  
your veined-ears, your fur—all brushed me  
under interrogation as you pieced a life together

in your splendid isolation, a nation's  
flexing of manifest destiny. Human refugees  
floundering, lost in surrounding seas.