

# Excavation and Recuperation

## Apparition Poems Adam Field



Built into the structure of the Internet is a certain amount of depth and density. Google searches do not manifest everything; some sites are "embedded" more than others, and this varies country to country, continent to continent. Excavation can become a wonted task, and old texts which were not widely noted upon release can be recuperated. Excavation and recuperation are not just Internet processes; they are artistic processes as well. One goal I set to/for myself with the Blazevox book *Apparition Poems* (2010), was to excavate and recuperate certain aspects of the Romantic ethos; specifically, the ethos that was set in place by **William Wordsworth** in his Preface (to *Lyrical Ballads*). That the task of this self-respecting Author was to enlarge the mind-capacity of his/her audience; that the dignity of the human mind is inherent and indestructible; that the human mind may be subtly, rather than grossly, stimulated; and that common situations can embody portentous meanings when recuperated with and by imagination; this corpus of notions hinged for me onto other interests that were certainly not Wordsworth's (what about sexuality and sexual situations, pornography-as-topos?) Almost precisely eighteen months after the release of the Blazevox book, I was able to excavate the following List-Serve directed (and quite jocular) missive from a UK website, scribed by **Desmond Swords**:

*Bob Sheppard's Star Student Scott Desmond's Words Flyte Fielded.*

*Yes, yes, one read the pose by this 'poet, critic, and musician' colleague, currently where erm, you were a year ago, nearing the end of that long hard road to attainment as a pro in doctoral po-biz, Jeff - collegiately alleging a claim that nearly everything to follow Four Quartets has been 'dross'.*

*One chuckled at the ambition, audacity and foolishness of deploying such a term in the forum of Letters; before turning one's focus to adducing the verse and other critical prose essays by the author Adam attempting to pull off such a theatrically audacious play as this.*

*"She told me I love boy/girl poems, love scenes in them based on a deep degeneracy inherited from too much heat around my genitals, as manifest in tangents I could only see if I was getting laid. She told me this as I was getting laid in such a way that any notion*

*of telling was subsumed in an ass as stately as a mansion, which I filled with the liquid cobwebs of my imagination."*

*Yeats would be proud of the cant and ergo argoist, very very classy Adam Fieled's verse. Proper spillage. High Art indeed from our playboy crown-prince doing what one does.*

*Effecting agreement among this reader, on X and Y being the only two one is on collegiate amity and perfect accord with Adam about, as a bosom buddy chum and prophetic practitioner with the imbas to know why, when, what and how, for example, Eliot can successfully operate as a symbol for agreement between Fieled and oneself.*

*High and Low Art in the 'making' of verse activity, you know, as a 'poetry' - there's often very little agreement about, and in America, poetry atomised into 10,000 different individual, unique and original practices, all curated by a genius with big ideas about what kind of reality Poetry is, adam, the only critical debate in AmPo parish at present, as you know, has one essential point of agreement most practitioners of contemporary American poetry found as your datum: MFA.*

*After this, a forking occurs and we diverge into our own pool of plod and production sailor, not believing any*

*of it matters. That our thinking is nought but a performance in print, anything other than that: Not real. Thought, Fielding.*

*Have a think about it. I'll get back to you.*

What's interesting (and gratifying) to me about this piece is the context it arose from. I had just published a piece in the UK online journal *The Argotist* entitled "Century XX after Four Quartets." The gist of the piece was that poetry in the English language decayed horribly in the second half of the twentieth century. Other critical forays from this period, like "On the Necessity of Bad Reviews" and "The Decay of Spirituality in Poetry" got a bigger instant public reaction than this one did. A response which defended me with my Apparition Poems, and their excavated/recuperated Romantic ethos, was written and placed in a context which straddled public and private spheres. Did Mr. Swords know he was being archived? The letter mixes his (even, at points, to the edge of the absurd) jocularity with serious overtones. What could've been a representatively post-modern performance from Mr. Swords was nudged in the direction of the Romantic by earnest edges. The dynamic between "Century XX," the Apparition Poems, and Mr. Swords piece are interesting; on one level, radical and provocative conservatism is getting "rounded" by the ironic humor that is post-modernity's trademark. The Apparition Poems form a middle ground here, as a site—not bereft of absurdities or earnestness, ironies or direct iterations. The meta-nature of the poem quoted is heightened by an intellectually challenging and substantial narrative. Mr. Swords chose to defend me with a poem that would be offensive to a "pure" Romantic ethos. It includes sexual slang, and the aforementioned pornographic subtexts. But that I was excavating and recuperating something Romantic amidst the carnage (and many consider **Yeats** a latter-day Romantic) is hinted at. The structure of the Internet has created many concentric circles like this in poetry. Excavation and recuperation are processes that force the issue of repetition. What is, and matters most, must recur.

Adam Field, 2011/2013