

Cheltenham by Adam Fieled

O this is fierce writing, dirty & sweaty, rain-drenched & squalid, caught out in the back seats of parked cars, all that mess of actual young lives – Adam Fieled's poetry moves with & through all this, carefully recording and arranging, natural history notes of the actual ecosystem so many of us live or lived within, savage, implacable and there on its own terms.

—Peter Philpott

Adam Fieled is a poet based in Philadelphia. He has released five print books: "Opera Bufo" (Otoliths, 2007), "When You Bit..." (Otoliths, 2008), "Chimes" (Blazevox, 2009), "Apparition Poems" (Blazevox, 2010), and "Equations" (blue & yellow dog press, 2011), as well as e-books like "Beams" (Blazevox, 2007), "Disturb the Universe: The Collected Essays of Adam Fieled" (Argotist e-books, 2010), and "Mother Earth" (Argotist e-books, 2011). He has work in or forthcoming in Jacket, Cordite, Pennsound, Poetry Salzburg Review, the Argotist, Great Works, Decanto, Tears in the Fence, Upstairs at Duroc, and in the & Now Awards Anthology from Lake Forest College Press. A magna cum laude graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, he also holds an MFA from New England College and an MA from Temple University.



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#261

Never one to cut corners about cutting corners, you spun the Subaru into a rough U-turn right in the middle of Old York Road at midnight, scaring the shit out of this self-declared “artist.” The issue, as ever, was nothing particular to celebrate. We could only connect nothing with nothing in our private suburban waste land. Here’s where the fun starts— I got out, motherfucker. I made it. I say “I,” and it works. But Old York Road at midnight is still what it is. I still have to live there the same way you do.

#412

Each thinks the other a lonesome reprobate.
That's what I guess when I see the picture.
It's Elkins Park Square on a cold spring night;
they're almost sitting on their hands. One
went up, as they say, one went down, but
you'll never hear a word of this in Cheltenham.
They can't gloat anymore, so they make an
art of obfuscation. That's why I seldom go
back. Elkins Park Square is scary at night.
There are ghosts by the ice skating rink.

#414

And out of this nexus, O sacred
scribe, came absolutely no one.
I don't know what you expected
to find here. This warm, safe,
comforting suburb has a smother
button by which souls are unraveled.
Who would know better than you?
Even if you're only in the back of
your mind asphyxiating. He looked
out the window— cars dashed by
on Limekiln Pike. What is it, he said,
are you dead or do you think you're Shakespeare?

#421

Huddled in the back of a red
Jetta, I thought we were in a
Springsteen song. But there are
no backstreets in Cheltenham.
It's only the strip-mall to house
and back circuit. Anyone could've
seen us. It wasn't a full consummation—
for want of a graceful phrase, we
were too smart to fuck. There was
no playing hero for me. Nor did I
force you to confess. What could you say?
Cheltenham was soft, and all too infested.

#671

Even as a little girl, she got beat down.
There was something wrong with her brains.
She couldn't relate to people. Cheltenham
guys noticed how adorably doll-like she was
(lookin' real good, like Natalie Wood), but she
wouldn't date anyone. She died a mysterious
social drowning death. She got older and
became a Tennessee Williams heroine-as-Jewess.
I'm telling you this because I nailed her, dude.
I got her to give me a blowjob.

#681

The kids scamper around the pool and jump in. She's having an affair, and watching her kids with the others. What, was her sex life supposed to be over? She was supposed to stop dead at thirty-eight, and forever hold her peace? And is she that much of a back-stabber, considering what she's been put through? The older guys at the pool still do look at her. They've been warned.

#415

There's something sweet and sickly about teenagers fucking. Even laid down by the jagged rocks that bordered Tookany Creek. I think of them there, and know he's getting wasted. What's draining out of him is the will to live. She always gets him off somehow. Then they would walk over to the Little League field and huddle in the dugout. He didn't even wind up graduating from Cheltenham on time. I can't get over thinking who he could've been. Am I the only one?

#416

It's two in the morning— this big empty field is a vacuum sucked into this little girl's mouth. Everything's little, he thinks. At least I'm big enough to get head. The problem is what she wants from me. And what she's bound to get. Just by chance, someone in a passenger seat in a car going by on Church Road sees the outline of the two figures. One is leaning— the blowjob part isn't visible. Wow, he says; this place is strange. He shakes himself, turns up the music, and gets ready for a long ride.