

'Posting? Why not strap it on a mule?
Couldn't you just zap me a PDF?'
'Spooks, like I said. Anything digital,
they're onto it like the flies on proverbial shit.
Snail-mail they can't hack, believe it or not.
They've lost the knack of steaming open letters,
and they can't be bothered with land-lines anymore'.
'Sheesh, mate! What's it about?'

'Just an account
of stuff I've been through recently. Somehow
these humourless types took note and made of me
a person of interest. They're not easily bored'.
'Aw, man, you haven't begun to wear those tinfoil hats—'
'Nah. Still the same old Dave you knew back when'.
'Should I start reading Tom Clancy?'

'Rudolf Steiner,
more like'.

'Anthroposophy? Good grief!
You *have* put on the tin-foil hat, for sure'.
'C'mon. You know your weirdos better than that.
You even wrote up Rudolf in that essay'.
'But from a safe distance'.

'Sympathetically,
it seemed to me'.

'Some bits I found compelling.
And plenty others made me shake my head'.
'Never mind. You don't have to read it.
Just take the manuscript to anyone
who might be willing to give the thing a look'.
'I haven't published anything in years.
I don't know much about the business now'.
'There's nothing you need to know. I'm pretty sure
it'll make its own way, once you give it a push'.
'Dave, this makes no sense. If you're concerned
that this is a matter of interest to certain parties—'
'Just try. That's all I'm asking'.

'Why can't *you*?'
'It's tricky. If I start to correspond
with publishers, they'll notice, and that'll be that.
Besides, I'm gonna be on the move a bit.
An obscure poet like you, on the other hand—'
'—gee, thanks! —'

'—can pester publishers and not
attract too much attention. Or so I hope.

Oh, and another thing’.

‘Why not? What else?’

‘You’ve got to pretend you wrote it’.

‘Get *out* of here!’

‘It can’t be mine. Pretend you made me up.

Add to the text if you like, just leave my bits

more or less the way they are. Once you

turn me into a fictional character,

there’s not much they can do about what I say.

They’re not big fans of literature’. He laughed.

Nuts. Completely. Certifiable.

But a friend is a friend, and despite the evidence

that David had begun to lose the plot,

I humoured him and said I’d do my best.

The cheeky bastard said he’d sent the thing.

Already! Had an inkling I’d come through.

I’d no idea that I was so transparent,

or maybe Dave had acquired super-powers.

But he’d called me right, and when the thing arrived,

I left it on the table for a day,

strangely anxious about what it might hold.

But like the curious cat (or maybe Pandora)

I couldn’t resist the urge to take a peek.

Long-hand manuscript, in David’s minuscule,

influenced by Carolingian,

which he’d fallen in love with in palaeography class.

Calligraphy pen. Legible, at least.

I read the whole of the day and into that night.

And by the time the eastern sky grew pink,

I knew the sun would light a different world

than the one it shone on for me yesterday.

I saw Dave’s point. I did as he had asked

and haven’t heard a word from him since then.

I’ve tipped a few bits in to clarify

obscurities that I could help explain.

David knew I’d get it in the end.

For better or worse, the result sits in your hands.

What you make of it now is up to you.