

This piece has had an unusual emotional place in my life. I am not sure why. Dave was just an acquaintance. He was someone I may have said hi to once or twice. I liked his art, and loved the cool, haunting expression of the work. But the personal connection was tenuous at best. Maybe it has something to do with the impact death had on my young, naïve, invincible attitude. There were others that left and didn't come back. Don White. John Guenther. Young guys cut down. It was stunning to think that people I actually knew and hung out with had died. I never had considered that teen death was possible.

After connecting with you I understand why I have Dave's work; and why I felt a reason to hang on to it without ever a thought of giving it up with other adolescent "treasures" I outgrew and discarded.

I mentioned in an email to you my view of the importance of friendship. Not the casual kind. I have dozens of them. The important friends are those with really deep bonds. My nickname for them is "bed pan friends". They are the ones who are by your side for you no matter what, and would not think twice to provide even the most basic things needed when you are down. Such friends are extremely rare. Mine are only a handful in number, but I consider it generous for a lifetime.

I am convinced you and Dave would be there for each other had he come home. You have proved your bond with a commitment made to his memory, and deep down you know that had fate been reversed, he would have done the same for you. Your dedication is inspiring to me.

I have been keeping this for you for the last 40 years, John. Obviously, I didn't know it, but I get it now. This belongs to you. It is an important keepsake; a part of Dave's soul and expression; and superior to any photograph. It is a look inside the mind of the Dave you remember; a moment, an inspiration, a mechanical expression of attitude you two shared. He did not have children; it sounds like his immediate family is out of touch for the moment, but you are there. You need to have this, I want you to have it, and I am proud to turn care-taking over to you. It brings me great joy.

Thanks for making contact with me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'B' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.