

One day, one ordinary day, and a very ordinary day it was or so it seemed, Mr. D was walking down his ordinary street as usual, when he noticed (although he rarely notices anything out of the ordinary) something quite out of the ordinary. Straight ahead, where there should have been the ordinary street sign, was still a street sign, but now very much bigger. So big, in fact, that Mr. D almost bumped his head into it. It read:

Gs. clf Gsv. Fxsvkji, yo lxgwjs oyxs, Psbtje Fsbjtj, qjsj psyxf ey vci edce
edji qjsj pjsojmeki lysgck, edcln iyx tjst gxmd. Edji qjsj edj kcve pjypk
j iyx'f jupjme ey wj bltyktjf bl cliedblr vesclrj ys givejsbyxv, wjmcxvj e
dji axve fbfl'e dykf qbed vxmd lylvjlvj.

This puzzled Mr. D hugely. Very, very carefully, he wrote the mysterious message on the back of the piece of paper that he always carries, just in case something out of the ordinary happens. He smiled, because, you see, Mr. D is a puzzler – not someone who is puzzling – but rather someone who delights in the challenge of puzzles. And so, he turned straight around, and started walking back to his house. But just to make sure he had gotten the message right, he glanced at the sign again, and lo and behold, it now read something completely different. Now it was:

Carved symbols in a mountain hollow on the bank of an inlet irritated
an eccentric person

This, he copied down as well. Back home, he immediately woke his daughter, Q, who, like all 10th graders, made every attempt to sleep until noon. Q, you see, was important, because she knew things, things that were mysterious to Mr. D. Things like the internet (that blooming, buzzing chaos) and things like programming. Mr. D was old-school, a paper-and-pen type.

And so, it gives me pleasure to say that father and daughter, with pencil and keyboard, were ultimately no match for the puzzle.

- 1) What is the decrypted text of the original message above?
- 2) Where does it come from?