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The poetics of concealment in “Les Douaniers” (small indirect contributions)

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Abstract: Although Rimbaud's « Les Douaniers » reads as a case-study in praise of lecherous customs officers, the reader is invited to align themselves with these Douaniers in order to locate the hidden jokes and inuendo smuggled into the sonnet in a period of censorship. The text was to be included in a collection which Rimbaud knew could only be printed and distributed secretly. And which would be hunted by customs officers. The poem thus explores geopolitical, linguistic and cultural frontiers, internationally and within France.

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