On the Possible Death of Monsieur Smith

Patrick Lawler
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He’s been trying to tell me he’s died. The evidence
came in for years, but I ignored it. He lined
his office walls with burial jars from Egypt.
I examine his memos for clues of his demise:
Requiems for a clavichord he composed in secret,
Passages from a Tibetan book he copied during
Lunch. His habits confirm this: his desk faces
The west; a tile removed from the roof is kept
in a locked drawer. I explore the odds
And the ends, his jump to conclusion, the dum-de-dum
Of ledgers written in red ochre. I speak
To his possible widow about his possible demise. It
Lets him do the things he does so well unnoticed.