

Hsieh Ling-yun (385-433) “Stone Gate Mountain’s Highest Peak,”

At dawn, staff in hand, I climb the crags, and by dusk settle among the mountains.
Scarcely a peak rises as high as this hut
facing crags and overlooking winding streams.
Forests stretch before the mountain’s open gate
boulder heaped round its very steps.
Mountains crowd around, blocking out roads.
Trails wander into bamboo thickets.
Visitors lose their way on coming up
of forget the paths leading home when they descend.
Raging torrents rush through the dusk,
Monkeys howl throughout the night.
Deep in meditation I hold the inner pattern,
nurturing the Way, never severing from it.
My heart is one with the autumn trees,
My eyes delight in the flowering of spring.
I inhabit the constant and await my end,
Content to dwell in peace, accepting the flux of things.
I only regret that there is no kindred spirit here
to climb this ladder of sky and clouds with me.

眾鳥高飛盡，孤雲獨去閒。相看兩不厭，只有敬亭山。

**The birds have vanished down the sky.
Now the last cloud drains away.
We sit together, the mountain and me,
until only the mountain remains.**

Poem by Tao Yuan Ming

Home Again Among Gardens and Fields

Nothing like the others, even as a child,
rooted in a love for hills and mountains,
I fell into their net of dust, that one
departure a blunder lasting thirteen years.
But a tethered bird longs for its forest,
a pond fish its deep Waters. So now, my
land out on the south edge cleared, I
nurture simplicity among gardens and fields,
home again. I've got nearly two acres here,
and four or five rooms in my thatch hut.
Elms and Willows shade the eaves out back,
and in front, peach and plum spread wide.
Distant-village people lost in distant
haze, kitchen smoke hangs above Wide-open
country. Here, dogs bark deep in back roads,
and roosters crow from mulberry treetops.
No confusion within the gate, no dust,
my empty home harbors idleness to spare.
Back again: after so long in that trap,
I've returned to all that comes of itself.

歸園田居 (其一)

少無適俗韻，性本愛丘山。誤落塵網中，一去三十年。羈鳥戀舊林，池魚思故淵。開荒南野際，守拙歸田園。方宅十餘畝，草屋八九間。榆柳蔭後檐，桃李羅堂前。曖曖遠人村，依依墟里煙。狗吠深巷中，雞鳴桑樹顛。戶庭無塵雜，虛室有餘閒。久在樊籠裡，復得返自然。

(Dao de jing #20)

Between wei and o
What after all is the difference?
Can it be compared to the difference between good and bad?
The saying “what others avoid I too must avoid”
How false and superficial it is?
All men, indeed, are wreathed in smiles,
As though feasting after the Great Sacrifice,
As though going up to the Spring Carnival.
I alone am inert, like a child that has not yet given sign;
Like an infant that has not yet smiled.
I droop and drift, as though I belonged nowhere.
All men have enough and to spare;
I alone seem to have lost everything.
Mine is indeed the mind of a very idiot,
So dull am I.
The world is full of people that shine;
I alone am dark.
They look lively and self-assured;
I alone depressed.
(I seem unsettled as the ocean;
Blown adrift, never brought to a stop.)
All men can be put to some use;
I alone am intractable and boorish.
But wherein I most am different from men
Is that I prize no sustenance that comes not from the Mother's breast.

Lose Their Minds

“People differ in where they lose their minds. Some lose their minds to wealth and profit. Some lose their minds to food and drink. Some lose their minds to fine clothing. Some lose their minds to luxurious houses. Some lose their minds to power and position. Since where each person loses their mind differs, must go back to where he/she lost it to gather it back in. This is being truly human.” Lu Nan (c.1500)

Thoreau

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away. . . .how deep the ruts of tradition and conformity! (Thoreau)

(Tao Te Ching, XLI)

"When people of highest capacities hear of the Way
They do their best to put it into practice.
When people of middling capacities hear of the Way
They are of two minds about it.

When people of low capacity hear of the Way
They laugh loudly at it.
If they did not laugh, it would not be worth the name, Way. . . "
(Tao Te Ching, XLI)

Mencius

When a person's chickens and dogs get loose
he knows he should go look for them,
But when his mind escapes
he doesn't know that he should search for it.