

# ECHOES OF THE DAO: ANALYZING SPONTANEITY, EFFORTLESS ACTION AND COSMIC BALANCE IN RUSKIN BOND'S SELECT SHORT FICTION

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## Abstract

This paper intends to intersect philosophical ideas of Daoism to the short stories of Ruskin Bond. Ruskin Bond's stories do not centre around materialistic and anthropocentric angles but configure on the naturalistic, eco critical and quiet harmony of life. It rejects the blocked, forced, coaxed way of life, giving way to free and liberated way of life. These ideas crosses its path with the philosophical ideas of Dao (the way). Profoundly, in its truest sense, the analysis from the Daoist perspective gives more depth to the short stories and making it holistic in its approach. This study examines how the stories of *The Cherry Tree*, *The Night Train at Deoli* and *The Kitemaker* presents the principles of *Ziran* (the natural spontaneity), *Wu Wei* (the effortless action), and *Yin-Yang* (the cosmic balance). It provides a pathway to understand how the trajectory flows naturally through the events in the stories without any external factors affecting the protagonists in the stories. This allows the readers to interpret life on earth and gives them a framework to lead a peaceful and liberating life, co-existing with the other elements of life.

**Keywords:** Daoism, Ruskin Bond, Ziran, Wu Wei, Yin-Yang

## Introduction

*"A way that can be walked*

*is not The Way*

*A name that can be named*

*is not The Name*

*Tao is both Named and Nameless*

*As Nameless, it is the origin of all things*

*As Named, it is the mother of all things*

*A mind free of thought,*

*merged within itself,*

*beholds the essence of Tao*

*A mind filled with thought,*

*identified with its own perceptions,*

*beholds the mere forms of this world*

*Tao and this world seem different*

*but in truth they are one and the same*

*The only difference is in what we call them*

*How deep and mysterious is this unity*

*How profound, how great!*

*It is the truth beyond the truth,  
the hidden within the hidden*

*It is the path to all wonder,*

*the gate to the essence of everything!" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Jonathan Star) Verse 1*

The above lines quoted from Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Jonathan Star explains the true hidden meaning of Tao and its essence. It reflects on staying away from the world of thoughts and perceptions rather keeping our mind free from the sea of thoughts and underlying effects. Thoughts intrigue our mind to desperately go after more thoughts and search for added meanings in our life. Daoism keeps us away from such consequences of fast life and helps us to seep in the journey of 'slow life' taking us to experience the spontaneous flow of life. This is the biggest truth of life corresponding to no interest in fixtures, breaking the path and being a holder to life. It relates more to accepting life as it comes and not indulge in unnecessary arrangements that block the destiny and natural state of life.

Sometimes, we strain ourselves so much that we tend to lose the essence of living life. We just live to conquer one after another goal in life, increasing our desire to fulfil our needs day by day. We somewhere forget that we are the creation and not the creators. We actually try to take everything in our hands which actually not needed at times. We should believe to go things naturally rather than grasping things for benefit.

*"The best way to live is to be like water*

*For water benefits all things*

*and goes against none of them*

*It provides for all people*

*and even cleanses those places*

*a man is loath to go*

*In this way it is just like Tao*

*Live in accordance with the nature of things:*

*Build your house on solid ground*

*Keep your mind still When giving,*

*be kind When speaking,*

*be truthful When ruling,*

*be just When working,*

*be one-pointed When acting,*

*remember—timing is everything*

*One who lives in accordance with nature*

*does not go against the way of things*

*He moves in harmony with the present moment*

*always knowing the truth of just what to do" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Jonathan Star)  
Verse 8*

Daoism instructs us to be like moving water – undisputed, flowing, moving, continuous. The main purpose of water is, it is a giver, a provider. We should imbibe this quality of being a giver and not expecting anything in return. Nature only gives; it doesn't ask for return and is contented in their own way. The act of giving and not urging to receive anything a broader meaning to our existence. Water also cleanses the places it touches and flows. It gives us an important lesson to make a change in an affirmative way while touching the lives of many by becoming who we are supposed to be and being

an inspiration through our life and teachings.

Daoism says to let time do its doing. Let we not interfere in the timing but contribute in whatever way we can to make the life of others better. We need be kind in our actions and words, be truthful while ruling, be one pointed while acting and be still while giving. Living in accordance with nature is *Dao*. We need to move in harmony with the present times not leaning back to past and not moving too quickly towards future. We should be consistent with present life and accept the giving of life.

Ruskin Bond muses a lot on life and nature. He always tries to bring nature closer to life and life closer to nature. He is so inspired by nature that he prefers to stay in the quiet realms of Landour in Mussoorie in Uttarakhand, India. The solace he receives in the quietness of life echoes through his writing in the form of stories, poems, essays, novels, articles and memoirs. He is deeply inspired by the way of life that is Dao. He himself portrays it through his own life and teachings. He believes in slow living and inspires others to live in the same way. His simple stories reflect simple acts of gratitude towards life.

His autobiographical article in 'Times of India' - "**Why I Like the Lazy Way to Longevity**", quotes –

*"I was under the influence of Spiritualism, Theosophy, Taoism, Christian Science, and the teachings of Gurdjieff! I suppose the sum of all these things had some effect on me because the landmark ages of forty, fifty, sixty and seventy passed without any urge to put down my great thoughts if, indeed, there were any".*

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study revolves around the Daoist principles of Ziran, Wu Wei and Yin-Yang analysing the short stories of Ruskin Bond. The stories – The Cherry Tree, The Night Train at Deoli and The Kitemaker are viewed from the Daoist perspective. The framework brings the blend of Daoism and the ideas of life by Ruskin Bond. In fact, it is a union of the ideas of Lao Tzu writer of Tao Te Ching and Ruskin Bond. This union blurs the lines of Culture and topography integrating high enriched philosophical principles.

The following figure demonstrates the conceptual framework used in the study:

### Trinity of Dao



Fig 1

### Ziran

*"Become totally empty*

*Quiet the restlessness of the mind*

*Only then will you witness*

*everything unfolding from emptiness*

*See all things flourish and dance*

*in endless variation*

*And once again merge back*

*into perfect emptiness—*

*Their true repose*

*Their true nature Emerging, flourishing, dissolving back again*

*This is the eternal process of return*

*To know this process brings enlightenment*

*To miss this process brings disaster*

*Be still*

*Stillness reveals the secrets of eternity*

*Eternity embraces the all-possible*

*The all-possible leads to a vision of oneness*

*A vision of oneness brings about universal love*

*Universal love supports the great truth of Nature*

*The great truth of Nature is Tao*

*Whoever knows this truth lives forever*

*The body may perish, deeds may be forgotten*

*But he who has Tao has all eternity" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star), Verse 16*

Ziran which reflects natural flow of state and relates to spontaneity. It is revealed in Verse 16 of Tao Te Ching that our mind should be totally empty. We don't need to fill any outside matter affecting the spontaneous flow of nature. Be it as it is. The spontaneity when left untouched reciprocates with giving life a dimension which is complete, fulfilling and flourishing. We are bound to receive this flourishing return if we follow the rule of spontaneity. Any disruption may block the way of receiving. Once, we come in alliance with this, we decode the way to enlighten and nourish ourselves. Our stillness of not being aggressive to our needs and wants provides us the universal truth of life and brings love in our lives. This universal love accomplishes us to bring forth peace and eternity in our lives.

*"Those who look down upon this world*

*will surely take hold and try to change things*

*But this is a plan I've always seen fail*

*The world is Tao's own vessel*

*It is perfection manifest It cannot be changed*

*It cannot be improved*

*For those who go on tampering, it's ruined*

*For those who try to grasp, it's gone*

*Allow your life to unfold naturally*

*Know that it too is a vessel of perfection*

*Just as you breathe in and breathe out*

*Sometimes you're ahead and other times behind*

*Sometimes you're strong and other times weak*

*Sometimes you're with people and other times alone*

*To the Sage all of life is a movement toward perfection*

*So, what need has he for the excessive, the extravagant, or the extreme?" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star), Verse 29*

Ziran helps us to decode the life free from excessive, extravagant and extremity in life. Sometimes, we consider things not going our way. So, we try to change and temper with the events in our life. We try to change its possibilities ruining its present without understanding the conflict. We should allow our life to unfold naturally. There will be times when we will be ahead in our lives, we will be behind in our lives, we will be strong in our lives and we will be weak in our lives, we will have people, we will not have people. We need to accept all the possibilities in life and move forward.

Life which is too large and extravagant requires a lot of shifts in plans and decisions taken in life. It may require a shift from moral and spiritual intent leading to falsehood and fraudulent activities. Applying it in today's world and context, people are busy in portraying false lives on Instagram and social media, proving to destroy the image of truth and honesty expected to portray in Daoism. Living a dual life disrupts the natural way of life leading to dualism and fakeness in so called life. It is nothing closer to truth of nature and persisting love for nature.

**Wu Wei**

*"Tao does not act*

*yet it is the root of all action*

*Tao does not move*

*yet it is the source of all creation*

*If princes and kings could hold it*

*everyone under them would naturally turn within*

*Should a doubt or old desire rise up*

*The Nameless Simplicity would push it down*

*The Nameless Simplicity frees the heart of desire*

*and reveals its inner silence*

*When there is silence one finds peace*

*When there is silence one finds the anchor of the universe within himself" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star), Verse 37*

Daoism doesn't enforce forced actions. It doesn't act putting forced efforts. When we are surrounded by a doubt or old desire, our hearts jump up towards leading those desires but Dao teaches us to embrace simplicity. Simplicity in our thoughts and actions pushes down these unwanted and extravagant desires and reveals its inner silence. Silence basically is not being orally silent but putting the cloak of patience and calmness to diminish the inner struggle of desire and wants. Many a times, we forget to be patient and inclusive and we indulge in too much hurry and excessive about things we are not sure of. Silence puts a strong barrier to unwanted break ups of thoughts and ideas.

Silence enlightens our minds to move away from perfection in life. We want our lives to be designed in a certain way, to be going in a certain way, which proves fatal on relying too much on human mind. We need to break this chain of dependency for happiness and allow ourselves to be guilt free and sin free. Letting the things go on their way makes our life easy and comforting.

*"Nothing in this world is as soft and yielding as water*

*Yet for attacking the hard and strong*

*none can triumph so easily*

*It is weak, yet none can equal it*

*It is soft, yet none can damage it  
It is yielding, yet none can wear it away  
Everyone knows that the soft overcomes the hard  
and the yielding triumphs over the rigid  
Why then so little faith?  
Why can no one practice it?  
So the Sages say, fulfill even the lowest position  
love even the weakest creature  
Then you will be called "Lord of every offering"*

*"King of all below Heaven" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star), Verse 78*

No one tries to be as soft and producing as water. Everyone is after large and strong life. All are refusing to love and care small and weak creatures. Everyone is busy trying to be like the great ones. We should all mimic the way of water. All compassing and all yielding. Involving all great and meek. Nobody is reduced to ashes with this attitude. All are given the love and respect one deserves to live. Ego and pride walk with people who boast about their own doings and actions.

This eternal truth when understood becomes enough to triumph alone in life. Forgetting to master the world, forgetting to conquer each and every life it touches. Lowest position should be fulfilled. Our desire for only high positions in life brings lot of temptations in life. We will be called the king of all below heaven when we practice being at the lowest possible position with humility and compassion for others.

#### **Yin- Yang**

*"Everyone recognizes beauty  
only because of ugliness  
Everyone recognizes virtue  
only because of sin  
Life and death are born together  
Difficult and easy  
Long and short  
High and low — all these exist together  
Sound and silence blend as one  
Before and after arrive as one  
The Sage acts without action  
and teaches without talking  
All things flourish around him  
and he does not refuse  
any one of them  
He gives but not to receive  
He works but not for reward  
He completes but not for results  
He does nothing for himself in this passing world  
so nothing he does ever passes" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 2*

Yin-Yang provides the cosmic balance in life. There is a said balance to be followed on this earth. Life and death be one of it. The acceptance in the balance of life and death makes our life fulfilling and holistic. Some things need to be just put on life and death rather asking it to alter for immortality and eternity which is not possible. Our desire to live forever and inhibit the elements on it showcasing evil mindedness and wandering in search of peace and tranquillity.

There is a cosmic balance between beauty and ugliness, virtue and sin, life and death, difficult and easy, high and low, long and short, before and after. If there is one there has to be the prevalence of another. making it indispensable to understand one cannot be identified without the prevalence of another. The fact that if there is life there has to be death that follows the generation. Any cheating in this produces the cycle of lamentation and loss. Maintaining and believing in the cosmic balance prevails the life on earth.

## The Cherry Tree and Ziran

The cherry Tree by Ruskin Bond perfectly imitates the principle of Ziran that is spontaneity. In the story, there is a boy called Rakesh. He stays with his grandfather. Once, he plants a cherry seed in his garden. He covers the seed with pebbles and waters the seed daily to see results. But sadly, the seed doesn't grow even if it was cared for. Rakesh forgets about the seed. After few months, he sees a sprout in the seed growing on its own. Once, a goat chews off its leaves leaving Rakesh disheartened. The other day a woman chops the tree in half with her scythe, again leaving Rakesh very sad. Still, the tree regains itself by rejuvenating its sap inside the tree. It was more than a miracle for Rakesh and his grandfather. And after all that, the cherry tree proved to be fruitful not only to Rakesh and his grandfather but also to many insects and birds that came over the tree.

Ziran flows through the entire story of relevance in letting the things go their way naturally without disturbing the spontaneity. There is this concept of decentering the humans and letting go off of their power. Humans also have a limit to their will power. Rakesh tried initially to water and protect the tree with all his might. But it didn't go that way. Of course, it followed its own natural way of growth and development that lead to bringing a big macrocosm of all-inclusive humans, insects and birds enjoying the fruits of nature.

*"Tao gives all things life*

*Te gives them fulfilment*

*Nature is what shapes them*

*Living is what brings them to completion*

*Every creature honour Tao*

*and worships Te*

*not by force but through its own living and breathing*

*Though Tao gives life to all things*

*Te is what cultivates them*

*Te is that magic power that raises and rears them*

*completes and prepares them*

*comforts and protects them*

*To create without owning*

*To give without expecting*

*To fill without claiming*

*This is the profound action of Tao*

*The highest expression of Te" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 51*

Daoism is embraced by all creatures in nature including trees. Humans are not the owner of nature,

not the creator of nature. We should nurture nature without expecting. Tress gives and provides without expecting. Humans should refrain from claiming and owning things. Nothing on this earth is permanent. Everything is bound to decay.

*"Endlessly creating*

*Endlessly pulsating*

*The Spirit of the Valley never dies*

*She is called the Hidden Creator*

*Although She becomes the whole universe*

*Her immaculate purity is never lost*

*Although She assumes countless forms*

*Her true identity remains intact*

*Whatever we see or don't see*

*Whatever exists or doesn't exist*

*Is nothing but the creation of this Supreme Power*

*Tao is limitless, unborn, eternal—*

*It can only be reached through the Hidden Creator*

*She is the very face of the Absolute*

*The gate to the source of all things eternal*

*Listen to Her voice*

*Hear it echo through creation*

*Without fail, she reveals her presence*

*Without fail, she brings us to our own perfection" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 6*

## The Night Train at Deoli and Wu Wei

The night train at Deoli houses the principle of Wu Wei by blending the principle of effortless action and providing a natural way of being and existing. The narrator once happens to get a little surprised at the station at Deoli when going to his college. There was nobody who got down and nobody who came in the train at the station of Deoli. It intrigued him a lot. He once while travelling again on the same train encountered a girl selling baskets. He got fascinated by her honest appearance and eyes specifically. He bought one basket from her. Every time, he would pass through Deoli station he would wait for that girl and that girl would come happily.

Once he wanted to take that girl to his place as he feared her life. So, he took the same train and searched for the girl. Sadly, to know that the girl wasn't there. He enquired the station master and the tea stall owner to find about the whereabouts of the girl, getting to know nothing about her but the fact that she existed. Now, he had to make this decision of following and searching the girl in the dense and eerie jungle behind the station. He finally made his decision of not going in the jungle and meeting the destiny as it was without disturbing the flow of nature.

Wu Wei is all about this. It is about welcoming the given way rather than the forced actions and paths. The narrator profoundly had understood the real meaning of life.

*"Surrender brings perfection"*

*The crooked become straight*

*The empty becomes full*

*The worn become new*



*Have little and gain much  
Have much and be confused  
So the Sage embraces the One  
and becomes a model for the world  
Without showing himself,  
he shines forth  
Without promoting himself,  
he is distinguished  
Without claiming reward,  
he gains endless merit  
Without seeking glory,  
his glory endures  
The Sage knows how to follow  
so he comes to command  
He does not compete  
so no one under Heaven can compete with him  
The ancient saying, "Surrender brings perfection," is not just empty words Truly,  
surrender brings perfection  
and perfection brings the whole universe" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star)  
Verse 22*

Dao says to surrender our life to nature that will lead to perfection. If we do that then crooked will become straight, worn will become new, empty will be filled, low will become high and that's what surrendering does in our life. Too much of everything spoils the broth of life. Let there be simplicity in the doing and surrendering in the actions.

*"That which creates the universe  
is the Mother of the world  
By knowing the Mother one knows her children  
By knowing her children one comes to know her  
Such is their unity that one does not exist without the other  
Fully embrace your life and you will share in the glory of creation  
The Mother herself will be your guardian  
And all her creation will be your guide  
Stay with the Mother,  
shut the mouth,  
close the gates  
and you are never in trouble  
Abandon the Mother,  
open the mouth,  
be busy with others*

*and you are beyond all hope of rescue*

*Seeing your own smallness is called insight*

*Honouring your own tenderness is called strength*

*The sun in all its glory reveals*

*but a passing world Only the inner light illumines eternity*

*Only that light can guide us back home*

*Have faith Follow your own shining" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 52*

## The Kitemaker and Yin-Yang

The Kitemaker progresses to encompass the cyclical nature of Yin-Yang relating to life and death in the cycle. Yin represents youth and life and Yang represents old age and death in the story. Old Mehmood in the story was skilled in making kites. At that time, kitemaking was done by many in the neighbourhood but Mehmood's kites were very popular. As he became old, he realized that nobody cared for this craft of kitemaking. It didn't interest people anymore. His life was slowly declining like the craft he loved the most. His grandson also loved flying kites but was not that perfect. After sometime, old Mehmood died and with him died his art of kitemaking. When he departed this earth, the torn kite of his grandson which stuck in the stones also flew away giving a message of regeneration and continuity.

That's exactly what Yin-Yang explains. The cosmic balance of life and death is universal. No one can alter that. We can just accept the idea and move on to become better people.

*"Hold your male side with your female side*

*Hold your bright side with your dull side*

*Hold your high side with your low side*

*Then you will be able to hold the whole world*

*When the opposing forces unite within*

*there comes a power abundant in its giving*

*and unerring in its effect Flowing through everything*

*It returns one to the First Breath Guiding*

*everything It returns one to No Limits Embracing everything*

*It returns one to the Uncarved Block*

*When the Block is divided it becomes something useful*

*and leaders rule with a few pieces of it*

*But the Sage holds the Block complete*

*Holding all things within himself he preserves the Great Unity*

*which cannot be ruled or divided" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 28*

Yin-Yang teaches to accept the unity of two opposite ideas or things. Male side with female side, high side with low side, bright side with dull side and of course life with death that prevails. When opposite ideas unite, there comes an abundance of power that is useful to life after it. Mehmood accepted the idea of ageing and found strength in his weakness allowing him to become peaceful and receiving on his deathbed.

*"Bold action against others leads to death*

*Bold action in harmony with Tao leads to life*

*Good fortune, bad fortune*

*One seems to bring benefit the other to cause harm*

*But Heaven rejects them both Both,*

*in the end, tether men to this world Who can know the reasons of Heaven?*

*Who can know its endless ways?*

*Not even the Sage has an answer to this one*

*Heaven's way does not strive yet it always overcomes*

*It does not speak, yet it responds*

*It is not summoned, yet it appears*

*It does not hurry, yet it completes*

*everything on time*

*The net of Heaven spans the universe yet not the slightest thing ever slips by" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 73*

*"When life begins*

*we are tender and weak*

*When life ends we are stiff and rigid*

*All things, including the grass and trees,*

*are soft and pliable in life dry and brittle in death*

*So the soft and supple are the companions of life*

*While the stiff and unyielding are the companions of death*

*An army that cannot yield will be defeated*

*A tree that cannot bend will crack in the wind*

*Thus by Nature's own decree the hard and strong are defeated*

*while the soft and gentle are triumphant" (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 76*

## CONCLUSION

Concluding this beautiful amalgamation of Daoism and Ruskin Bond's stories, it is rightly to say that it turned out to be a holistic and self encompassing trajectory of renewal, stillness and acceptance in life. Life is a very complicated phenomenon for all those people who constantly strive and keeps on striving for gaining more and more in life. Life becomes easy and stress free when we accept the true nature of life and events without giving it an aggressive turn rather pushing it away. Too much dependency or manifestation may lead to slipping away of the required needs and wants. We must believe in the power of nature rather than focusing the centre on human will.

In 'The Cherry Tree', Ziran flows through the growth of the cherry tree without the human anxiety of fulfilment. It nurtures and nourishes in its own way of regeneration and production depending only on nature for its growth.

In 'The Night Train at Deoli', Wu Wei flows through the effortless actions of the narrator of not visiting the jungle and following his guts of staying in his boundaries perceive naturally for he was drawn towards her and did not want to mingle with the destiny's way to him. He waited every single time he stationed at Deoli.

In 'The Kitemaker', Yin-Yang flows through the acceptance of Mehmood to ageing and his craft, gave him a peaceful farewell when leaving this earth. Also, it provided a hope in his grandson of his inclination towards kitemaking and that the craft might live with and through him. Metaphorically,

symbolizing by the torn kite flying in the sky after the demise of Mehmood which portrays the continuity of life after death. This the only truth. Tao is life and Te helps to guide the life.

*"Let every state be simple like a small village*

*with few people*

*There may be tools to speed things*

*up ten or a hundred times*

*yet no one will care to use them*

*There may be boats and carriages*

*yet they will remain without riders*

*There may be armor and weaponry*

*yet they will sit collecting dust*

*The people must take death seriously*

*and not waste their lives in distant lands*

*Let them return to the knotting of cord*

*Let them enjoy their food and care for their clothing*

*Let them be content in their homes and joyful in the way they live*

*Neighbouring villages are within sight of each other*

*Roosters and dogs can be heard in the distance*

*Should a man grow old and die without ever leaving his village*

*let him feel as though there was nothing he missed"* (Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu translated by Joanathan Star) Verse 80

*A Good Philosophy Makes Life Worthwhile – Ruskin Bond (March 26,2018), Times of India published in The Speaking Tree*

*The other day, when I was with a group of students, a bright young thing asked me, 'Sir, what is your philosophy of life?'*

*She had me stumped. There I was, a seventy-five-year-old, still writing, and still functioning physically and mentally (or so I believed), but quite helpless when it came to defining my purpose or philosophy. I had never given it much thought. I just lived it.*

*But since then, I have been trying to figure out what has kept me going all these years, happy and relatively uncomplaining. And I think it comes down to a few basic principles that I have gathered along the way, mostly from observation and a bit from reading.*

*First, I have always believed in living life at my own pace. The world is always in a tearing hurry, but I refuse to run with the crowd. If you are always running, you miss the scenery. I reserve my afternoons for doing nothing. 'Silence and non-action are the root of all things,' says Tao. Especially on a drowsy summer afternoon in the hills.*

*We are all a mass of imperfections, and to be able to recognise and live with our imperfections—and those of others—is a good starting point for a philosophy of life. It saves us from a lot of bitterness and disappointment.*

*Then, there is the importance of not grasping too hard. As the old Chinese sages used to say, if you clench your fist tightly, you hold nothing but air; but if you open your hand, the whole world can pass through it. Don't grasp too hard, or the world will slip away!*

*Live simply, enjoy the little things—a good book, a hot cup of tea, the rain on the windowpane—and let the world go its own way. You don't have to conquer the world to enjoy it.*

*Notes on the Hills by Ruskin Bond*

*"Be like water, taught Lao-tzu, philosopher and founder of Taoism. Soft and limpid, it finds its way through, over or under any obstacle, sometimes travelling underground for great distances before emerging into the open. It does not quarrel; it simply moves on."*

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