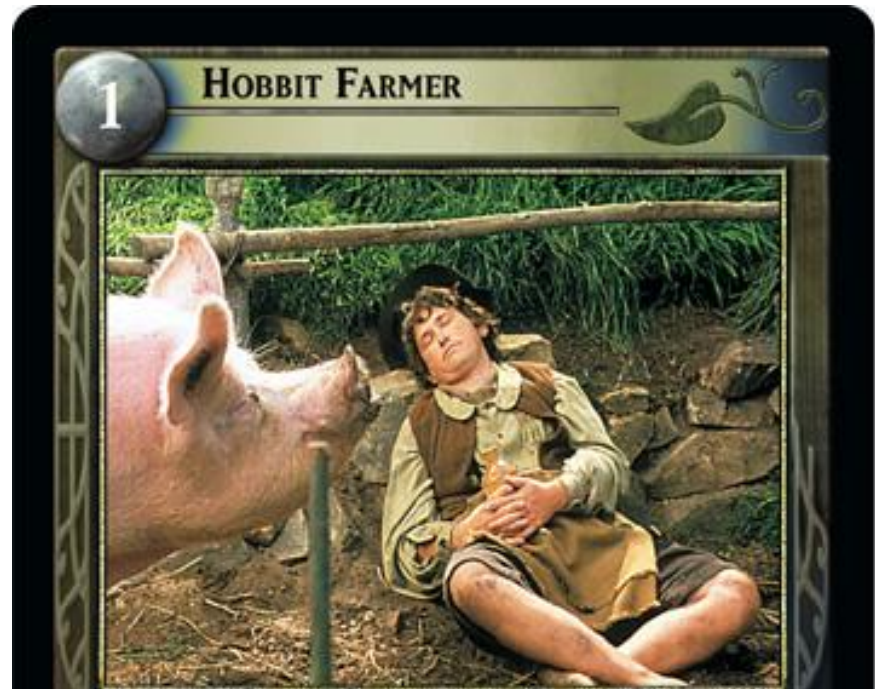


Hobbit Farmer & The Way of the Land

“...where our hearts truly lie is in peace and quiet and the good-tilled earth...”

Translated by Tom Huber
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For the three contrarian agrarians -

Gene, Wendell, and Wes

And always -

Holly, Hannah, and Ivy

who inspired the search for Cedar Eden Farm



Introduction

The primary guide and inspiration for the *Hobbit Farmer* is the Tao Te Ching, which translated means, “the Way and the virtue of its power.” Over 2,500 years ago this treatise on the art of living and governing was delivered by the mythical and mystical Lao-tzu. He placed it in the hands of the guard at the village gate as he left to pursue life as a forest dweller.

There is no-thing that is not part of the Tao, an ever-present natural force that flows through everything. Tao also

represents the path or way that underlies the harmonious flow within oneself and every encounter with the external world. Tao is the pulse of life, always changing and manifesting as the ten thousand things that make up the world.

The Tao also gives form to everything that is inherent in the Good Farmer. He or she is as old as the hills that have long been farmed as a way of subsisting with the good land. Human beings co-evolved with nature and the agrarian

traditions celebrate this fact with the bounty of their labor.

Hobbit Farmer represents a joyous return to the pleasures of small farm-crafting, homesteading, and the good feeling in one's bones that comes from a land-centered way of life. *He who knows does not speak* when silenced by the delights of a daily existence rooted in one's favorite place of being. A life of labor on the land may not be easy, but it is a life of fulfillment for one who requires working for one's earthly existence. When one's work days are over, one is ready to go into the long,

dark night. Dying is just another beginning – *all things pass* - this we know as incarnate and ensouled beings.

The Hobbit Farmer understands the gift of good land, and shows gratitude by living joyfully in the fullness of Nature. He practices the art of being one with what is without grasping for more. (We must also adopt the *she* pronoun when referring to the Hobbit Farmer, which knows no single gender, race or ethnicity.) The Hobbit Farmer is the universal human being who carries a serene and generous spirit in everyday agrarian life.

The Hobbit Farmer is skilled at the ways of place-making by being in accord with the natural forces of the Land community. The *Way of the Hobbit Farmer* is to study the natural design and work in harmony with this existing order rather than against it. Trying to make radical changes to the landform only sets up resistance from natural forces. By taking a long view, every thing gets accomplished through a natural approach (succession). “Less and less does the Master Farmer force things until she finally arrives at non-doing; when nothing is done, nothing

is left undone.”

In the Hobbit Way , the Master Farmer has completely vanished in the act of farming – the nature of one’s true self – and trusts in the intelligence of the moment and the perfect harmony with the Way things are on the Land.

It is important to note that the other seminal companion to the Tao Te Ching is of course the I Ching or Book of Changes. The book’s fundamental focus on time, rhythms, and seasons, and the proper way to come into accord with this everchanging subtle reality through right action likely arose as a vegetable oracle

from the mind and working hands of a peasant people – the folks ways of the Hobbit Farmer.

As today's modern world struggles to create a regenerative culture, a simple land-dwelling way of being – the Hobbit Way – can serve as a model for healing and restoring balance for All.

TJH

1

The Land can not be named
Its growth knows no boundaries

The Master Farmer does not own it or impose her designs on it
Possibilities originate from the place
Becoming evident to her receptive heart
She knows the Great Mother of life -
Free from personal desire
And the naming of all the particular things

She embodies the light
And everything remains in perfect harmony.

2

On the Land when some things are seen as good
Other things become bad
Saying yes to some and no to others
Arises together

The gift of good land becomes despoiled through judging
Condemning the weather as bad
In turn makes only sunny days good
The farmer can complain but the work still needs to get done

The Hobbit lives close to the ground
And so is not brought down by changing times
He does nothing and takes no credit for what is
He lets the clouds come and go
He begins the one job and doesn't need to finish on time
He watches and waits, he works and rests
Everything is complete in itself.

3

The sage Farmer does not covet land beyond his farm
To do so would lessen his own self and place
If what you own is so great
Others will want it

The old Tsoo leads
By removing everything that's in the way
The people have less to carry
So they do not stumble in their work

By becoming simple in desire and owning nothing
Everything they have brings freedom
They enjoy the place where they are
And do not wish to be elsewhere or accomplish great things

Doing small things with great Love
The people prosper by honoring what is...

4

The Land is full and everlasting

Nature provides the method, measure and pattern

Many crops are perennially planted and harvested

And the Land gives without taking, returning without sacrificing

It gives birth from the dark depths of the soil

Bringing life because it does not deny death

The source of its vitality is deep and hidden

Yet life is always present and changing with the seasons

No Farmer can be without the gift of good land.

5

The Land does not rule harshly
Its body allows breaking
It opens completely so seeds may be planted
It yields to the plow and harrow
And absorbs the warmth of the sun and rivulets of rain

The sage Farmer understands the Land
He treats it kindly like a mother
He knows what and where to plant
He treats her gently like a lover
She is used but never stops producing
He never takes more than She can give

This is the great secret of Hobbit Farming.

6

The Land was born from the Great Mother
Its birth depends on being and becoming

The Farmer too came from the Great Mother of Being
And was born on the Land

She is the love child
Of the joining of Heaven and Earth
Like the mushroom that fruits
Following the thunder and lightning,
impregnating the good, rich land.

7

The Great Mother will never die
Because She was never born
She never desires to be more
Yet gives birth and is present in all things

The wise Farmer nurtures what is planted
But does not take credit for the beauty of what grows
He attends to his children
Through selfless action without complaint

Because he does not own what he sows
He is perfectly fulfilled.

8

The best farming is like a soft rain
Which finds its way into everything without trying
A good Farmer does not judge work as bad
And so everything gets done without forcing or complaint

The Farmer's home is like a Hobbit's
His humble dwelling is sheltered by the Earth
The design is simple and homey
And gives generous openings to the light

Because the home is rooted in the Land
The Farmer is grounded in thought and spirit
He is completely present for all beings in his midst
He does not compare himself to others
And lives with an open heart

On the Land, things grow...

9

Don't overfill the barter
And nothing will rot
Don't collect machines
And nothing will rust
Don't buy more and more acres
And your taxes will not grow
Stand in the middle
And you will not tumble over
Don't over-do and chase after prosperity
And everything will get done

This is the supreme resting with The Way -
Don't make work out of it.

10

The Master Farmer works hard
But his attitude remains soft and supple
His mind is as open as an unclouded sky
And his inner vision is true
He shares what he knows
Without taking credit
He is creative without being clever
He knows the virtue of being humble
And allows the light to shine through
He does not get in the way of others
And lets the course of things unfold

In this way his gardens produce life-giving sustenance
And the neighborhood gathers for a potluck feast.

11

The Farmer knows to keep some fields fallow
So there will be growth renewed
Winter is a time for resting
And with spring comes the rebirth

Only from what is empty
Can fullness emerge
In the spaces of life
Growth is made possible

Therefore the Farmer does not pretend
That he is wiser than Nature
He watches his Land and learns -
From non-being all things grow

In the vessel of his Hobbit Home
The Farmer's wife's belly grows...

12

The so-called modern way of farming
Is marked by machines and exotics
Some new thing is constantly being hawked
As the seasons come and go
Desires of buying are fertilized by profits

The old Sage has everything he needs
His inner vision is unclouded by promises of profits thru products
He plants his fields and feeds his chickens and goats
And takes a pull from his jug of rye-whiskey
His feeling for life is untarnished and true
He travels to far-out places by never leaving home
Mother Nature provides the means to go deep within

13

The Taoist Farmer knows that misfortune
Will come with the seasons
So she is not overly concerned with loss and gain
When her head hits the pillow at night she begins to snore lightly

Come daylight she surrenders herself fully to the Land
Which she is one with through toil, soil, and turmoil
Loving and caring for all things
She grows in beauty through kinship and wrinkled kindness

She has full faith in the way things are.

14

The origin of the impulse to Farm

Cannot be found

It is before the first beginning

The joyful urge to grow is not motivated by sustenance

It was conceived before all conception

You can hunger and search for it

All your days

But you will never find it

Live on the Land fully

With open heart and without grasping

And you will be at ease in your being

For all your remaining days...

15

The good ole Farmer was wise in his daily ways
He would wake in the morning
Before the cock crowed
He had the bones of his father
And the unrushed presence of his Great Mother
He did one thing at a time
And never got in his way
He would sit and wait till he knew what to do
His diet and dress were simple
He ate when hungry
And rested in peace when weary
No one knows his name today
But without trying his ways will live forever

Keepers of the Way
Do not seek advancement
They are not swayed
By the new and improved

Such is the Way of the Hobbit Farmer.

16

If you empty of self-striving
Your heart will be at peace
The Land will grow naturally
And the Hobbit Home will be blessed

Contentment in life is rooted in stillness
The source of Nature is the true home of all beings

This knowledge brings a quiet patience for whatever comes
When the Farmer's work is over
He is ready to return to the source
His love and care for the Land will last forever.

17

The Farmer's helpers go about their chores
Unaware of the Master's wishes
He sometimes nods and points
And that is enough

The old Farmer trust his helpers completely
They feel the love for the Land
And everything is done
Without trying

The sage Farmer makes the Farming fit the farm
The cultivated fields are fashioned from the native scene
By consulting the wisdom of the place
When Land and people are one, the ten thousand things prosper.

18

When the Way of the Land is not heeded
Incentives for large scale production appear
When the fertility of the soil is not replenished
The experts call for chemical solutions
Plants become commodities
To take to far-away markets
The goal is to get big and rich
Ag business is born
The industriousness of the Farmer
Is corrupted and replaced with industrial-size production
People become consumers
And everything that matters is consumed
The life blood of the Land
Is drawn dry
The time has come for the little people
To move back-to-the-land.

19

Pay no-mind to the agronomists preaching
And the people will be better fed
Burn the book of righteous rule-making
And simple folks will find the Way

Save your blowhard breath
To cool your own soup

Give up industrial-scale goals and record profits
And no one will steal your grain
Put yourself at the center
And let Nature take Her course.

20

Don't take advice from the know-it-alls
And the Land will recover
Don't try setting record harvests
Or become farmer of the year
And you will not win or lose
Because you do not care

Other farmers are sharp and clever
But I alone am slow and stupid working hoe in hand
Other farmers are driven by purpose
I am blown aimless without direction
Throwing seeds to the winds
In search of fertile places

I am not like the cash laden groundhogs
Who over-mine the riches of the soil
I pick from the Tree of Nature
And drink slowly and sweetly from the Great Land's breasts...

21

The Master Farmer is at-one with the Land
This oneness provides life enhancing power

The Land is unknowable and deep
How can she be one with it?
Because she does not dwell on its part
She takes it all into her innermost being
And carries it wherever she goes
She knows the Land
Because she looks inside herself and sees

Old Farmers never die
The Land carries their spirit forever.

22

If you want the Land to be whole
You must let it be divided
If you want the Land to be tamed
You must let it be wild
If you want the Land to be full and productive
You must let it be empty and barren
If you want the Land to be reborn
You must let it die
If you want the Land to be everything
You must give everything up

The Hobbit Farmer lives with the Land
And shows the Way for all its dwellers
Because he does not show off his possessions
His inner light can be seen
Because he does not compare his farming to others
People prefer his quiet company
Because he does not claim to be an expert
People see the wisdom of his ways
Because he does not demand unlimited growth from his soil
Everything he does helps the Land to grow richer and deeper

Only by living on the Land
Can the Farmer truly live.

23

The old Farmer speaks his piece
And then shuts up
He is like the powers of the Earth
Which surge and fall, come and go
Some days are cloudy for a stretch
But they too pass away
And the sun returns to brighten the hills
So that planting may commence

The Farmer is completely open to the Land
So he embodies it fully
He is fully present when it is time to sow
So he basks in the greenness of the growth when it comes
He is vigilant and all-seeing when he has losses
So he accepts these times without holding on

Open yourself to the Land
And be playful with Her
Without trying or intending
Everything will fall into its proper place.

24

The farmer who tries to climb to the top of the corn heap
Does not stand firm on fertile ground
The stampede to the gold rush
Will only bring ruin, spent soils and eroded hills

The poor grower who wants to shine with coin
Will only dim his own feeble light
The boastful farmer attracts only false praise
If his work does not enrich the Land
It will not endure

If you care about the Land
Be kind, do your best and let go of results.

25

There is something with supreme order and power
Which gives infinite birth to the Great Land
It is eternal, perfect, and omnipresent
It will last forever
It is the Great Mother of the ten thousand things

The small Farmer who knows this
Understands the order of the universe
And his place in the larger scheme of things
He connects his heart to the constant pulse
And feels the Great Mother flowing
Down from the heavens to his Hobbit Hills
Thru the woods and stream
And circling up from the dark, loamy earth and stones

The quiet power can be felt
In the warm fire of his home
The grin of his smile
And the sparkle in his ageless eyes.

26

The Farmer is grounded in his Land
Which is why he is free in spirit
He can travel to surrounding farms
And enjoy the sights of rolling fields, flora and fauna
And stay supremely calm and quiet
Resting in his deep bond with the natural world

If the farmer is always wanting to buy and sell
And move to distant acres or be stirred by restless urges
He has lost his rootedness with the Land
And loses touch with his own Hobbit nature.

27

A good Farmer does not impose his fixed ideas on The Land
And is not over-anxious to harvest his crop
He watches and waits
Listens and tastes
He is open to the teachings of the place
He uses everything
And takes care
Of what is available for the greater good
He lets the inner light direct the way of action

What is a good Farmer but a bad farmer's teacher?
What is a bad farmer but a good Farmer's job?
He shares the secrets of the soil
And trusts in the bounty of the Great Mother.

28

A Hobbit appreciates the power of the sun
But keeps to the hidden strength of the dark earth
She receives the flowing essence of the moment
And returns to the gentle spirit of a little child

Know the light
But keep to the dark
Embrace unity
And the division of opposites integrates
Connect with the Great Mother
And become the True Agrarian

Know the one thing
But stay to the great All
Develop yourself and your craft
But keep returning to the state of the uncarved block

From the void
Comes the many useful things
The Great Mother will shine thru you
When you return to the dark-side of life.

29

Do you think you can improve the Great Land?
The sages say it cannot be done

The ten thousand things are precious
They cannot be made better
If you try to make them new and improved
You will fail
If you try to own them
You will lose them all

On the Farm some things are easy to do
Some things are difficult and slow
Sometimes the animals are anxious and restless
And other times they are relaxed and safe
Some days everything goes well
Other days are casted with dark clouds at every turn

The Master Farmer deals with whatever comes
Without exerting control
She lets it all unfold
And stays at the center.

30

By relying on the wisdom of the Land
One does not try to force things
If helpers are exploited
Or the land overworked
Both will push back with equal and opposite force

The Master Farmer does his best with confidence
He doesn't try to control the outcome
Or bully his workers
He does not depend on the good graces from his elders

He is simply good enough
And the Great Mother embraces him.

31

Chemicals are the tools of ignorance
All true Farmers do not use them
Good soil cannot be replaced by oil
Heal the sick and scarred land by planting trees and perennial plants

The soil has its own teeming army of helpers
Who do their jobs and through dying
Provide life and regeneration
It is the natural way

When the Farmer takes up arms
He does so with saddened heart
As if it were one of his own
That he must kill for the greater good.

32

The Great Mother can't be entirely known
She is in the smallest particle
Yet contains all the common lands

If farmers everywhere stayed centered in Her power
All the planted and wild things would grow in harmony
Creating a Garden of Eden on earth
The Farmers' neighbors would live peaceably
And the Way would be felt in their hearts

When you have bodies and barns
Know that they all come and go
When you have bureaus and granges
Know their purpose and passing
Know when to stay home
And you avoid the unskillful drama of those looking to get ahead

All things take life from the Great Mother
And return to Her in the end.

33

The farmer is smart when he knows all the fungus, flora, and fauna
He is wise when he knows his true self
Knowing others brings virtue
Knowing one's self brings insight

The Farmer whose barter and cellar are full
Knows right relationship to the Land
And so is rich
If he keeps to the Middle Way
Joyful in each passing moment
Consulting the genius of the place
His heart will stay with The Land forever

Some may think that he is mad
But it is just a matter of love
For his land, critters, trees and sky
His soul grows like rings on a tree
His spirit is uplifted like the early rising sun

The need to return to the Land
Bespeaks to the healing that is at hand...

34

The Great Mother gives birth to everything
Without trying, Her blood flows through the cultivated land
But she takes no credit for the work completed
She is responsible for the bounty of the harvest
But gives up all that is reaped
Since she is present in all things
Including the Farmer's hidden heart
She can be called humble
Since everything dies
But She keeps living
She can be called Great
We know this is true
Because she does not brag.

35

The Grower who keeps with the Great Mother
Can do and sow whatever she pleases
She knows the oneness
Even when there is suffering
Because her heart is still

Singing birds and sights and smells of life in the meadow
Make one stop and savor
But this growing power
Does not draw any bother
So no one sees, smells, or hears Her behind the scenes
But when the need arises
She is always there.

36

If the farmer wants to harvest
He first must plant
If he wants to sell his crops
He first must let them grow
If he wants to prosper
He must have hope but expect nothing
This is knowing the Way things are

The easy overcomes the difficult
The still sleeping Farmer is fast awake
Tip your straw hat to the sun
And no one will know how the work gets done.

37

The Great Mother sleeps
And everything on the farm is done and put to rest
If the rich and powerful knew this
There would be no poverty
And everyone could live off the bounty of The Land
Everyday humble living in peace and harmony
Without asking for just one more thing
This is knowing The Way...

38

The Great Farmer doesn't strive for record harvests
Thus he is truly rich

The rich farmer seeks greater profits every year
And never has what he needs

The Master Farmer doesn't till and plant
Yet plenty enough is grown and given

The average farmer is always breaking new ground
And always wants more fields to plant

The kind farmer acts

And random acts of kindness are born

The ruling farmer shouts out orders to his helpers

And many more things need to be done

The mighty farmer takes action and when others don't act on his behalf

He forces the job to be finished

When the Way is lost, doing good is found

When doing good is lost, acting properly is found

When acting properly is lost, rules are made law

Rules do not inspire the workers

And the farm falls into chaos

Thus the Farmer does not dwell on the husks of his crop

He goes to the deep kernel of life

And trusts in the way of Nature

This is the great secret which many have forgot.

39

When the Way of Nature is understood
Harmonious relationships exist between people, plants, animals, and place
Life is renewed like the seasons
When the farmer does not understand
The land becomes polluted and out of balance
The plants and animals struggle to grow
And the farm does not prosper as a whole

It does not bother a Hobbit Farmer
To know he is worth more dead than alive
He hoes his carrots and taters
And wipes his brow as he works in the high arcing sun

The Master Farmer loves the parts and pieces
But is one with the Land
He lives simply and is hidden in the back hills
He is in tune with the rhythms and rocks, streams, and valleys
And rests in solitude like a stone in the warmth of the sun.

40

The seasons are the expressions of the Great Mother
Not holding on to time is Her way
She gives birth to all things great and small
But She alone has no father or mother.

41

When the superior farmer learns the Way
He quickly begins to practice it in all the hills and valleys
When a less earnest farmer becomes aware
He questions if it will really work
When the poor farmer hears the stories
He smiles and chuckles
The Way bubbles up inside him
The path of natural farming – is not straight nor narrow
The direct path seems long
So some take short-cuts
The clearest methods seem dull
The biggest heartfelt ways seem small
The greatest wisdom seems dumb
The Way of natural farming cannot be found
Yet the Land flourishes and is great.

42

The Great Mother gives birth to all things

Opposites attract to create unity

The Farmer works with the differences and difficulties

And makes things all-right with what is

The Hobbit Farmer works for the Land

And the Land works for him

Many farmers prefer to seek the company of others

The Master makes use of the quiet to rest in peace

And joins with the great order of life and death

His soul will live forever in the rolling hills.

43

What is obvious comes from what is hidden
The dark soil is alive with light
Life is seeded
With the fleshiness of death

The Farmer teaches without speaking
He goes about his day without trying
The order of the place restores him
Which comes in its own sweet time and way

The Hobbit Farmer holds title to the land
But his only real claim is the joy in his heart
It is a precious wonder
Which works for the health of the hills.

44

Huge yields or healthy fields – which is better?

Riches or contentment – which has the greatest value?

Win or lose – which carries the greatest price?

If you count on others for happiness

You will not know the Way

If your contentment depends on riches

What you have will never be enough

Be grateful for your blessings

Be joyful for the riches of the Farm

When you know that nothing is lacking

All the Great Land belongs to you.

45

The well-tended homestead seems incomplete
Yet it is completely itself
True wholeness seems partial
Yet it is holy present

The straight and narrow way is full of crookedness
True divinity appears human
And true serenity seems sacred

The true Farmer allows nature to prosper
She attends to matters on the farm as they develop
And doesn't get in the way
Thus the Land grows in fullness.

46

When a Farmer is in flow with the Great Mother

The Land produces food and fiber gracefully

When the farmer goes against nature

The soil, air, and water become polluted and sickness prevails

There is no greater man-made problem than fear

No greater mistake than readying oneself to fight over holdings

No greater falsehood than having a worthy enemy

Resistance is created through pushing and plotting

If you can move beyond fear of making mistakes

You will always be free to farm the Natural Way.

47

Without stepping outside your dwelling
You can see the whole land with open heart
Without opening your window
You can hear the soothing voice of the Great Mother

The more you think you know
The less you understand

The Master Homesteader is always present to Reality
She feels the light of her soul and does not worry
She accomplishes everything without trying one bit
She lives at home.

48

In the drive to become wealthy
The poor farmer thinks he needs more and more
In practicing the Way
Less and less does he need

The perennials grow well without tending
When no chores are done
No work is left undone

True Farming is achieved by letting Nature do Her thing
It is not arrived at through techno-chemical means.

49

The Master Farmer has no strong will of her own
She follows the will of her helpers

She is fair to those who are fair
She is also fair to those who aren't
This is supreme fairness

She is kind to those who are kind
And kind to those who are not
This is supreme kindness

The Farmer's heart is open and wide
Others cannot comprehend her wisdom
They wonder at her vastness
She embraces them like her loving children.

50

The true Farmer rises in the morning
Joyful to the beauty of the Land
He knows such days will not last forever
So he doesn't hold on or resist the dark night to come
He doesn't think about all the farm work
They flow from the center of his being
Because he puts his heart into everything he does
He is ready to leave the Farm
His sleep is deep and dream's light
After a hard day's work.

51

Every thing and every being draws life from the Great Birth Mother
Life on the Farm takes breath and form – all arising together
As a perfect expression of the Mother of the ten thousand things

She births

She nurtures

She cares and comforts

She guides and supports

Without expectation or possession

We return to Her

When our days are done

Love evolving and unfolding –

The way of Nature and All That Is...

52

In the beginning, the earth gave birth to The Land
All living things came forth from Her
And all dying things return to Her

Before the origin of things
Way before the designs of man
Was the uncarved block of non-being
It is older than the oldest beginnings of time

It is before the days when desire and resistance
Ruled the day and night
If your thinking knows no categories
Your heart and head will be free and easy

Return to the dark
And the Way will be lighted
Return to the source of the Way
And you will exist outside of time
What you do next will not matter.

53

The Great and Wondrous Way is not hard to find
Yet most will not even look for it
They will step to the left or step to the right
Which leads to stumbling

When greed causes land to be bought and sold
Farmers are taken from their rightful work
The source of wealth is misunderstood
And a wide chasm opens between the haves and have-nots
The Way is not hiding
But very few discover it
Find the center
And you will not falter.

54

If a Farmer is grounded in the Great Mother
She will not be washed away
The Land will grow perennially
And she will be remembered for posterity

The authentic Farmer is awake in all situations
And so her family farm is beautiful and prosperous
She is content and grounded like the Tao
On the Tao things grow.

55

The dewy-eyed old Farmer lives in tune with the Land -
He feels and sees Her changing rhythms and dancing light like a newborn

His mind never tires during his wandering and wondering over his fields
All the wild and tame things make room for him
Like the grasses and leaves which sway back and forth in the gentle breeze

The Farmer's knowledge of place is just like this
He works with what is without judgment or haste
He does not expect great yields from what is sowed
So he is not disappointed
Since he rarely worries
His Spirit remains young at heart.

56

The Farmer who knows does not teach
The Ag official who teaches does not know

Keep your mouth shut
Listen and speak within
Soften your bones
Drop your defenses
Let your mud clear
This is your basic nature

Be like the Old Mother
Nothing can be given to Her or taken away
She can not be made better by the actions of men
From Her comes everything
Which is why she will live forever
The Great Farmer knows this
It is the supreme secret of the Way.

57

If you want to be a great Farmer
Follow the Way
Give up trying and planning
Thinking you know what is best
Let go and the Farm will manage itself
So much Time, so little to do

The more rules you have
The more trouble will hired hands create
The more fences you build
The less your family will be free
The larger the Farm Bill
The less self-sufficient we all will be

Which is why:

The true Farmer sets no rules, and so they are never broken
He trusts his neighbors, so he builds few fences
He lives off the Land nurturing his family like a nurse maid
So he doesn't need hand-outs
He does not desire to have an ag business
Thus his business requires no plan.

58

If the farm is fed by kindness
The workers feel comfortable in their own skin
If the farm is ruled by a landlord
The workers are nervous and tense

When the need for power is on display
Big tractors are bought and the workers feel worthless and small
If a dumb farmer tries to make them happy
They will become discouraged in their work
If you try to make them good workers
They will find ways to disappoint

The true Farmer teaches by doing the chores
She does not lay down the law or raise her voice
She is strong by softly yielding to the moment
She whistles while cleaning out the barn in winter
Her eyes are alive with the music she hears.

59

For farming the Land well
Moderation is the way

The sign of a moderate farmer
Is not being sold by his own devices
Wide open to new ideas and ways like the big solar sky
Strong yet bending like a cedar in the wind
He has no fixed notions of how to best tend the Land
Everything falls into place in time with Nature

The Way is not difficult for him
Because he does not try to succeed
He cares for the Land
Like a mother suckles her child.

60

Running a farm is like tending a broken heart -
Provide a lot of room to grieve, grow patience and have faith
And still milk the freshened goats twice a day
Form a few furrows with the mule and plow
Harrow away the ridges of your mind
The smooth seed bed awaits a new day

Center yourself and the Land in the here and now
And bad fortune will not befall you
If the future brings it
Step back into the present

Do not dwell in the distant past
And the future will disappear by itself...

61

The Farmstead –

Work and leisure

Sacred and profane

Functional and beautiful

A quality without a name

Patterns of elemental integrity

Which are deep, life-enhancing

Simply satisfying

Like finding morels around the dead elm on a warm spring day in May...

62

The good Land rolls and rumbles
Heaven in earth
Hilly and holy
The old Tooks worked this ground and made this place
Home of the resident scholars

Nature is full of terror and awe in forested darkness
Who would go to the shopping mall
With one's head in the stars?
Good work, good life
Land flourishing in wildflowers on hill and dale
Native fertility, most beautiful of places
Work the good land, wild and wonderful
Love the good Land and be glad.

63

Real places to cherish

Homesteading arts to practice in the shade of tall trees

Houses, pasture and ponds, the moon and stars

Acres of fertile soil, rich landscape, solitary quiet

Friendship and respect of fellow farmers

A good life for man and woman

To link hand labor with long, land dreams.

64

Nature as agrarian whole

A holy-made gift from our Mother

Fidelity to place in this we trust

Labor integral to the good life

Loamy home – center of life rooted in the Land

Gently rocking with tired bones and open heart

Practicing seasonal rites which heal the worn-out dirt farm

Don't know the best way

So take my own direction

Back to my true nature

Back to the place where my heart grows best.

65

The old Farmers' taught the young to not-know
When you don't know all the answers
You can guide the mould-board over the right patch of ground
You toss the seed on the fertile soil
And the rains come to sow the fields
The greening of the hills and rising of the sun
Summer is born again for the growing time.

66

The low pond is wide and full and great
Because it lies the lowest on the Land
It's humble power allows the cows and critters to drink

In all things seek the meek
Turn down your light
Do not compare your way with others

Sit back and watch and learn from the simple in spirit
It is the Way pure and perfect.

67

Simplicity

Patience

Compassion

Only the old ones will understand

These three teachings

Return to the source

The root of the Way

Kindness toward all beings

Gentle beginnings of everything great.

68

When was the last time
You played like a child
Watching flowers grow
Making mud pies to eat
And taking a seat in the cold stream littered with round stones?

Life on the Land
An everyday occurrence
For the one with the child's heart and soul.

69

Retreat, yield, slow down

I keep the Sabbath on this bright spring day by staying home

Can you hear the croaking frogs and gurgling spring?

Can you return to the source of your own true self?

The Taoist Farmer naps under the old oak along the sun-filled meadow

No chores are needed for the work to be complete.

70

Without thinking the Farmer works the Land
The old ways bubble up inside like a cool gurgling spring
He knows just what to do
By listening to his heart.

71

Who knows? says the Master
With unworried heart
As he meets the day -
He does not trip over
His ideas of what is right
He feels the warm sun
And all is well
He tips his straw hat
And walks the fields
With staff in hand
On the bright Sunday morning.

72

When beings of Nature lose their sense of Awe
They are truly lost
The Farmer-Teacher does not impose what he knows
He simply smells the flowers
And watches the setting sun

He teaches through non-teaching
He does without doing
He feels the source of his own bliss
And the order of Nature is restored.

73

The Land sits in stillness
It produces without competing
Grows without coaxing
Finishes without starting

Its roots run deep
Holy spaces
Catch everything
All in time.

74

Your life as Farmer
Changes everyday
And one day it will end
But not the Land

It will go on and bring forth life forever more
With or without you
To till, plant and harvest
Regardless of the Hobbit in the yellow hat.

75

When land taxes go up
The people become hungry
When inspectors get busy
Nothing gets built

Believe in common folks
Leave them alone
They will finish their chores
And do what needs to be done.

76

The soft gives in to the hard

It grows to be strong

The stone hard ground soaks up the moonlight and gentle rains

From death comes life

Moving in dancing shadows

It takes root in earthen rock.

77

The Great Mother strikes the perfect balance
She bends to become low
Gives grace to those in need

The Farmer who tries to control goes against the way of Nature
She does not understand her wealth
Always looking for credit
And recognition for her good works
She will stumble and become low
To get what she truly needs.

78

The Taoist Farmer understands the power of the gentle way
Water is slippery and soft between his fingers
But it moves whatever is in its way
It will destroy his crops more than once

The great sorrow will come
But the Master will remain centered in the Tao
He will become like a new born babe
And be baptized in the holy waters.

79

By losing everything the Farmer can measure
The growth rings around his heart
He gives up blaming and naming
And rises with the morning sun
He sits in his porch rocker
And glimpses the perfection of the moment
Like the previous times

He has completed the Great Work
The Old Boy leaves not a trace to be found...

80

If the Land is treated with care
The residents will carry joy in their hearts
They will be content to work with their hands
And not need the modern machines of the day

Since they are fond of their simple dwellings
They are not eager to travel to distant lands
The people take pleasure in their homegrown food and fun
And quiet times with their family, friends and guests
Even in their free time they relax working their small gardens
Artful collaboration with Nature is their destiny
They can travel the whole world in their backyard farm
And die content in their old age.

81

Wise words are not fancy
Fancy works are not wise
Simple folks know how to practice the Way
The Way Home is simple and straight

The Hobbit Farmer has few possessions
So he is not weighed down and can care for others
The more he gives away
The richer he is

Plain in bearing and feeling
Without expecting or revealing
Staying close to the contours of the Land
Kept warm by the fire of his hearth
And nurtured by the hearty goodness of his home

The Taoist Farmer simply is...