

Tao **poetry** is a fragile and beautiful thing. It is also richly compressed, with most lines being no more than five or seven syllables. Taoist poetry in the original usually rhymed, with the rhyme falling on the first, second and fourth lines. Here are examples, translated by John Blofed.

Dismounting from my horse  
Dusk falling on the wild  
I hear amidst the silence  
The splash of a mountain rill (run)  
Birds sing and petals fall,  
Of men there is not a trace.  
The window of my hut  
Is curtained with a white cloud.

Cool as ice  
His Taoist heart  
No vain strife (discord)  
Toward the goal  
The Tao arises  
Of itself  
So still his mind  
A shining moon-disc  
Glistening, immaculate.

Under the cliff lives an ancient recluse  
Pine and bamboo encompass his dwelling  
Birds sing at dawn, and at evening is heard  
The companionable roar of a cliff dwelling tiger.