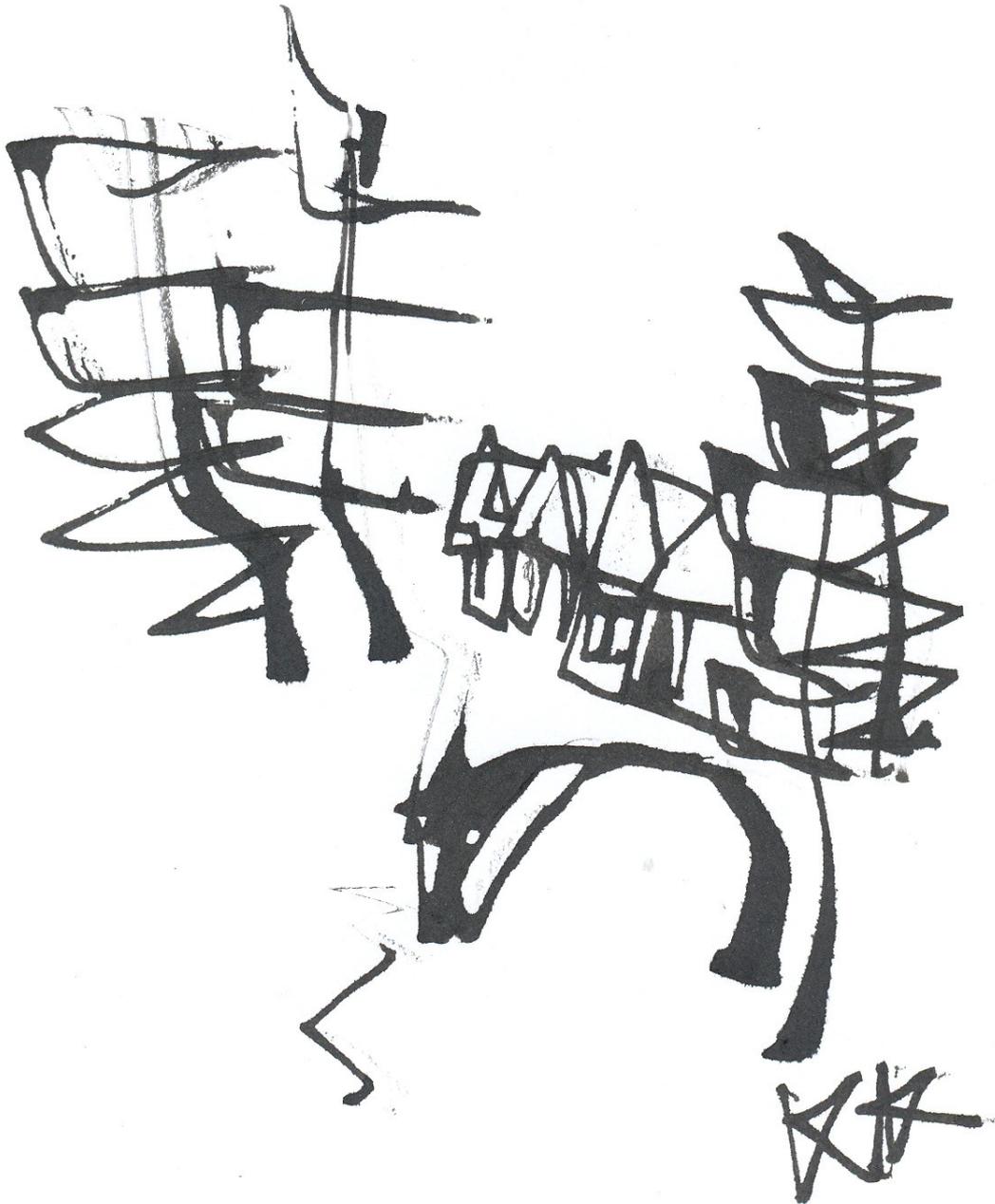


Playing with the Dao de Jing

poems and pictures by
Christopher Kelen



just a little *dao* will do

1

we haven't worked out
which way to go
but with a little luck
you know
we'll work it out
on the way

4

now you see it
no, you didn't

an empty vessel now
of course – when
everything's from there

how could a thing
be left behind?

11

spokes at the hub
and nothing to go on

unclutter the mind
and then thought is useful

only from nothing
find the way on



22

what lightning strikes
is never a target

best words the emptiest
how the heart fills

43

teach a wordless track
through the forest of verbiage

behind this door
a world lies locked



49
the sage has the people
by heart
down pat

76
hard and soft
the one organ
the voice by turns



78

than water
what more yielding?
what more persisting?
what can replace it?

breaks down what is hard
scours away the soft edges

all this
just flowing
not thinking

everyone knows it
but who makes use of it?

so the sage says
take on misfortunes
they make you a king

on Laozi

why all of these characters
for a way that can't be written
for names that won't be known?

because they stopped you at the border
and you'd run out of jokes to tell

and if you'd not dipped brush in ink
then your cover would have been blown

