



DRINKING GLOBAL TEA HUT

Experiences of our readers around the world

Waiting on a Friend

Timo Einpaul, Estonia

I sit on the pier, watching the reflection of the tall trees on the other side of the shore, steam rising from a bowl in front of me. It is as if the Leaf is softly whispering in your ear a long forgotten truth. And then suddenly it is perfectly clear. It all comes back to you, whatever ‘it’ might be—you cannot define it in the ordinary sense as such stories are not told in words. The untold legends of the past and those that belong to the future. As James Norwood Pratt so beautifully put it: “Water and Leaves: a microcosm of infinitive charm and possibility, a hologram of the Dharma, the merest adjunct of Zen but in itself containing the Teaching Entire.” In that moment, I feel the whole story within a single sip: From the beginning to the end. If there was a beginning, if there was an end...

This morning, like many others, I wake up while it is still dark outside. I prepare a light meal, mop the floor and clean the tea space. I light a candle and sit down. I am waiting for my friend. I don’t really know what impulse drives us to meet in these early mornings. I can think of many, but I feel none of them would do our meetings any justice. My friend would call it a

return to the mundane... to return home, to the daily ongoings and find the sweetness of life; to gird up your loins and feel the home in every movement and every touch—there is a kind of beauty there that sends you with every step that you take, he would say. He is a poetic guy, and I love him for that—and might be right. But as for me, I just feel the texture of the tea pot in my hands, wondering how it can be that a piece of clay can have so much life and wisdom in it. Tea teaches me to see life in the smallest thing and appreciate it in a single sip. In fact, She would teach me about anything, as long as I’d be willing to ask and to listen. Often I tend to foolishly cover my ears, but I can rely on Her persistency. Eventually when I’m done with my petty games and I am ready to listen, She will be there, willing to repeat Her lesson again. I am grateful for both the sweet and the bitter notes. Often I might not understand the lengths of Her intentions and I don’t necessarily need to, as I know I can trust the soothing melody of the kettle coming to a boil, steam swirling towards the sky...

