

Dark Zen
by Bob Fergeson
~ *An excerpt from the book*

"What do you really want?" OD spoke the words as he leveled his gaze on Bobby. The room had gone strangely quiet. After a minute or two that seemed an eternity, Bobby cleared his throat and looked out at the rain soaked Louisiana lowlands.

"I want to be at peace with myself. I don't want this constant internal war to continue, there has to be a solution." The silence was slowly becoming so thick, Bobby felt he couldn't move. Even his mind had become quiet, and amazingly clear. He felt he knew the answer, but could he speak?

Several minutes passed as the two men sat on the humid porch, the light fading slowing into the wet woods. OD broke the silence, though the feeling remained.

"I was once in the same state. Couldn't get a handle on the inner contradictions, but couldn't keep them unconscious either. The facts of my life, and the stories in my head, they just didn't line up. But thanks in part to a kind soul, who kicked my skinny rear end to hell and back, I became." OD looked at Bobby, and Bobby almost dropped his cup. He had the fleeting but strong impression that there was a huge lion sitting there in OD's space, looking at him with eyes of fire. Again, he heard words coming out of his own mouth, but had to concentrate to understand them.

"Become? Become what? How can a herd of questions and contradictions ever become anything?" He found he was gripping the cup tighter than ever, thought he might squeeze it out and up into the air. The image of the flying cup somehow made him smile, and he felt his mind settle.

"You become one. Where there was a herd of competing angels and devils, all claiming to be "I", there remains, as you, only what IS. Don't kid yourself, it's not easy. Do you want real being? How bad? Would you give up your life for it?" OD asked, as he stood up slowly, like his skinny old legs didn't want to follow his mind, and took the coffee pot back into the kitchen. Bobby slowly followed. He had longed for a moment like this since he was a kid, a moment when someone understood his inner mind, who knew the truth and would share it. He wasn't going to let it walk away into another room. It might not come back.

"How did you do it?" Bobby stood watching OD refill the metal pan with water and add fresh coffee to the top of the skinny pot.

"I made myself into a force, a direction. I didn't allow anything, whether outer human or inner desire, to deter me. It was somewhat suicidal and dangerous, but it worked. I died, and came back without the herd of oppositions as my meaning. They were still there according to circumstance, but weren't me anymore, just thoughts and programs, no big

deal." He lit the propane burner and stood watching the flame. "We only have so much gas in our tank, when it's gone, we go out. If you use it for pleasure, and thus incur its opposite, pain, you have nothing left for self-discovery. The inner country is huge and wild. We can't find our way home if we let the distractions of both the inner and outer worlds keep us asleep, but yet burning away. We need to use what gas we have to light our way home, not burn it up uselessly in keeping ourselves distracted and entertained."



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What readers are saying...

This book does a lot to address the core issues of a spiritual seeker: that one must begin to get straight with themselves, find one's core values and inner compass, and eventually engage a true spiritual group and teacher. It's written in a style that eases the mind and more freely lets in the seeds of experience the author has sprinkled throughout an enjoyable read. ~ JS

Ever wondered about the connection between Zen and self-knowledge? If you have even a glimmer of interest in these matters, this book can open a new dimension for you. This much prized knowledge is delivered via the friendship that develops between a lost young man and a Zen master.

Bob Fergeson couches Zen lessons and a methodology for spiritual development into a simple story that allows the teachings to shine through. This book has something to offer the complete beginner and the more seasoned seeker—simple explanations of profound truths. ~ TH