By John Brehm

Do nothing and everything will be done, 
that’s what Mr. Lao Tzu said, who walked 
around talking 2,500 years ago and

now his books practically grow on trees 
they’re so popular and if he were 
alive today beautiful women would

rush up to him like waves lapping 
at the shores of his wisdom. 
That’s the way it is, I guess: humbling.

But if I could just unclench my fists, 
empty out my eyes, turn my mind into 
a prayer flag for the wind to play with,

we could be brothers, him the older one 
who’s seen and not done it all and me 
still unlearning, both of us slung low

in our hammocks, our hats tipped 
forwards, hands folded neatly, 
like bamboo huts, above our hearts.

Source: Poetry (Poetry Foundation, 2001)