

David K. Weiser  
Poems, Bright  
from [Ladders](#)

001. Open the gate and enter.  
    Why do you hesitate?  
        A garden lies within.

You say you are not sure.  
    The gateway might be broken,  
        The garden a mirage.

But what do you gain by doubting?  
    And why not doubt your doubt?  
        What will you lose by trying?

002. I drew a ten-foot circle  
    Upon the playground wall,  
        Leaving out an inch

I asked my learned friend,  
    “What figure do you see?”  
        He looked and shook his head.

He could not make the leap:  
    “There is no figure here;  
        Your circle’s incomplete.”

008. Dreams are the vital rain  
    Sent to heal my soul  
        When I am sick of strife.

If I awake refreshed  
    I know that dreams have come,  
        Leaving their gifts behind.

Sometimes a dream remains,  
    Like a stranded whale  
        Caught on the shores of time.

010. The solitary man:  
    A point without a line,  
        A link without a chain.

So few today escape  
    The solitary fate,  
        When crowds themselves are lonely.

Look elsewhere then, and higher;  
    Heavenward aspire,  
        That loneliness may end.

020. Prayer is not a penny  
    Dropped into a slot  
        To release your favorite treat.

It's not an invitation  
    To the palace ball  
        Or the mobbed amusement park.

It is a small white flag  
    Full of bullet holes,  
        Saying "I surrender."

022. I study pots and pans,  
    The pure and the impure,  
        And how they may be cleansed

By fire or by water.  
    But only earthenware  
        Is saved by being shattered.

What then are we all  
    If not earthen vessels,  
        Purified when broken?

133. Under the eucalyptus  
    I pause from sweaty labor,  
        A snapshot black and white.

I have been draining swamps  
Despite malaria,  
Building the old-new land.

I squeeze the accordion  
As we dance every night,  
Applauding new-found strength.

151. The Unknowable

Communicates to us  
As to a special child,

With simple words and signs  
That (if we made an effort)  
We could understand.

He waits, though knowing all,  
To ascertain at last:  
Did we get the message?

155. The dragnet of my prayer

Takes in a range of thoughts,  
Creatures of every kind.

Some are forbidden food,  
Crawlers with swirling legs  
That swarm into my mind.

A fish with silver fins  
And iridescent scales  
Is what I hope to find.

156. Allegory ascends

Out of the soil we tread,  
Out of our bodies' earth.

It brings exalted sense  
To all the sacred texts  
Woven into our days.

Yet modern eyes look down,  
    Dismissing the upward glance.  
    They see no evidence.

172. The tree that seemed so dead  
    Is sending out new shoots;  
    Its boughs are flecked with green.

A miracle occurs  
    Though no one notices;  
    The angel flies unseen.

Just lift your eyes, behold:  
    Such wonders will appear  
    Despite your dull routine.

178. All natural perfection:  
    The frequencies of waves,  
    The symmetries of trees;

All animal abundance  
    With underlying growths  
    Of sustenance from seeds,

Are but the outer shell  
    Of indwelling glory,  
    The cloak that spirit weaves.

187. Which oils may now be used  
    To light the Sabbath lamp,  
    And which ones are forbidden?

I feel the ancient chant  
    Sung on Sabbath eve  
    Illuminate my heart.

A spark of genius  
    Was passed down from our fathers:  
    God is in the details.

200. Music heard in the morning  
Returns to me at night.  
Not all of it, just echoes,
- As if I dropped a glass  
And all its crystal fragments  
Composed one ray of light.
- Or if I closed my eyes  
And saw my memories  
As wild geese taking flight.
235. They cannot comprehend  
The holy day of rest;  
Their labor goes unblessed.
- They cancel the commandments  
As inconvenient  
And idolize dissent.
- We ask the questioners:  
Why have you assumed  
That eternal truth is doomed?
259. You ask me who made these:  
The thick rain and the fine,  
The wet snow and the dry.
- Who gave the crab its claws  
And turned the wild goat's horns?  
Who carved the turtle's shell?
- He who made you made them  
And gave your mind these questions,  
Whose answer you deny.
280. All things now fall apart.  
The flashing screen goes blank;  
The racecar only stands.

Like trees transformed to stone  
Great cities disappear,  
Enshrouded by the sand.

All matter must dissolve  
But spirit will endure,  
If our souls stay pure.

313. The master of Cremona  
Walked into the forest  
And listened to the trees.

The one with the clearest voice  
He cut up into tone-wood  
To carve a masterpiece.

Our Master hears our voices;  
He marks us great and small,  
And the best are first to fall.

328. When the vesper sparrow flies  
And evening's heat subsides,  
We'll meet in the secret grove.

Fruit from trees and vines  
With drops of fragrant dew  
Revive our weary souls.

Together we shall hear  
The all-pervasive Word  
Echoing in our bones.