

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.