

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

006. I reviewed all my decisions,  
    Lining them up in the yard,  
        But they would not stand still.

They raced in all directions,  
    Bumping and tripping each other,  
        And many fights broke out.

The drill turned into chaos  
    Marked by desperate screams:  
        “Please make up your mind!”

027. Being a bystander  
    In the accidents of life,  
        I offer testimony.

But no one wants to hear:  
    The judges have retired,  
        The police do not respond.

I see the poor exploited,  
    And the fatherless so lost.  
        They too will not believe me.

042. Minor disappointments  
    Will accumulate  
        Until a tear drips down.

Half-forgotten words  
    Out of a stale debate  
        Haunt the mind's old house.

Like a mosquito bite,  
    Tiny stings of hate  
        Keep us up at night.

050. The smart machines that talk  
Diminish human speech  
To ugly shrieks and grunts.

The streets themselves are snarling  
And curse the avenues.  
They clash at every corner,

While children dumb as fish  
Glide into pure silence  
Where parents cannot go.

063. A man who cannot smile  
(Although he sometimes tries)  
Will never feel at ease.

Memory interferes  
By retrieving mirth  
Out of the buried past.

Polite, considerate  
Of those who have not suffered,  
He thinks of his fallen son.

065. Does life depreciate  
Among the multitudes  
Swarming the crowded streets?

What is a person worth  
When a million others  
Vie to take his place?

Great urban density  
Cheapens the human soul.  
It feels expendable.

069. Decadence of the mouth  
Corrupts the purest soul.  
The palate grows too fine

For ordinary food.  
The lips begin to smirk  
About the middle class.

Soon the curses flow  
From liberated tongues,  
Denying right and wrong.

101. In a land of many rivers  
We worked the fertile soil  
And reaped a hundredfold.

The earth gave precious grain  
And multiplied our flocks;  
Our wives wore chains of gold.

Yet all these gains brought loss:  
Our children did not need us  
Or the birthright that they sold.

104. I found a moderate leopard  
Willing to change his spots,  
But not all of them.

Peace is a gradual process  
But dialogue has started,  
Increasing confidence.

I told the leopard's neighbors  
They'd live in peace someday  
When grasses are his prey.

111. Because you dissect the Word,  
Slicing its letters and sounds,  
You reduce it to thin air.

Because you disassemble  
The palace of good reason,  
You sit on a pile of stones.

Deadly analysis,  
The scalpel that you wield  
Will someday slash your throat.

114. An uncommitted mind  
Flits like a butterfly  
Among the painted flowers.

Dizzy with distraction,  
It flutters to the ground  
Upon exhausted wings.

It has no hive, no honey,  
No solid wax of faith  
To shape into a cause.

123. Who erased the blackboard?  
Some names have disappeared;  
We won't see them again.

When teacher took attendance,  
Not everyone said "Here."  
Where are the absentees?

Some of us have transferred  
To another school,  
And they are doing well.

138. "The media mess us up,  
Walking around like zombies,  
Poisoned through the ears.

The media make their millions  
By fracking through our brains,  
Extracting the black gold.

Don't ask us to fight back.  
We don't have many friends,  
Just Mom, and she's at work."

153. Where branches have been cut  
Knots in the wood remain,  
Dark spots against the grain.

Where skin was cut and opened  
Till the body slowly healed  
Is by a scar revealed.

So we who long have grieved  
Cannot conceal the blemish  
Of suffering relieved.

171. We are playing word games  
That nobody can win,  
Except the words themselves.

They hold us hostage  
In riddles of existence  
Whose answer must be silence.

They have set a ransom  
That nobody can pay,  
Except with our lives.

174. Comfortable victims  
Complain about their parents  
And the troubles of this world.

They search for underdogs  
For whom they can be sorry  
As much as for themselves.

They meet to demonstrate  
Against reality  
And smoke the mellow weed.

213. The shredder frightens me;  
I fear my memories  
Will turn into confetti.

The little blades revolve  
Somewhere in my brain:  
What was your name again?

I stretch out my arms  
But cannot touch the word  
That I am searching for.

231. The "best minds" don't go crazy.  
Sounds good, but still a lie;  
It's the worst minds every time.

Fess up, howling beatnik:  
The booze, the drugs, the queers --  
Could they bestow a vision?

Enough that they made you famous  
For more than fifteen minutes.  
Then they helped you die.

236. Shabbat in Tel-Aviv:  
The motorcycles roar  
And people jog with dogs.  
  
Others just sit and smoke  
And watch me as I walk  
Towards the synagogue.  
  
How long, O Lord, how long  
Will we ignore the Law  
And think we do no wrong?

264. "Check it out," he shouts,  
The hustler with loaded dice,  
Lurking on the corner.  
  
"Here's a guy who won,"  
Pointing to his buddy  
Whose fist is full of cash.  
  
And all of us will play  
The only game in town,  
Global Economy.

294. An old and wrinkled hand  
Lifts up a spoon for me.  
Could such a hand be mine?  
  
I recognize some dots,  
And the pattern of those veins  
I think I've seen before.  
  
I know there's no one here  
To feed me cereal,  
And yet I can't be sure.

