

CAREY WALLACE *and* KHOA LE

# Psalm of Wander

POEMS  
*from the*  
BOOK *of* SONGS







# Psalm of Wander

For Christine, Juan Carlos, Juani, Mica, and Daniel,  
who fill my heart with song  
—C. W.

POEMS  
*from the*  
BOOK of SONGS

CAREY WALLACE  
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flyaway  
books



# Contents



Introduction 6

## *Songs of Wonder*

- Psalm 19 10
- Psalm 66 12
- Psalm 8 14
- Psalm 24 15

## *Songs of Courage*

- Psalm 27 18
- Psalm 46 21
- Psalm 102 22
- Psalm 121 23
- Psalm 20 24
- Psalm 95 25

## *Songs of Comfort*

- Psalm 23 28
- Psalm 51 31
- Psalm 30 32
- Psalm 40 33



## *Songs of Joy*

- Psalm 33 36
- Psalm 118 38
- Psalm 96 39
- Psalm 147 40
- Psalm 34 42

## *Songs of Protection*

- Psalm 91 46
- Psalm 107 48
- Psalm 57 50
- Psalm 90 51

## *Songs of Love*

- Psalm 36 54
- Psalm 42 55
- Psalm 103 56
- Psalm 84 58
- Psalm 136 60
- Psalm 139 62





# Introduction



A psalm is a song that we sing to God.

The songs in this book were first sung thousands of years ago, by ancient musicians who sang in Hebrew. Today, the Psalms are known in almost every language that humans speak. But something happened as these songs moved around the world: they lost their music. In some places, the Psalms are still sung, but many people today think of Psalms as a book. They may know the words, but not the melodies.

The poems in this book were written to help us remember that the Psalms are songs. They aren't set to music, but they have music in them: rhymes and rhythm that make them easy to recall. But these poems are also faithful to the language of the Psalms themselves, drawing from the Hebrew and respected English translations and taking inspiration from poets who have brought the Psalms into English through the ages. The poems stick close to the original language, so that anyone who hears them can recognize these psalms when they encounter them again, anywhere else in life.

One of the most important things these songs show us is how many different ways there are to talk to God. Sometimes the writers of the Psalms are full of joy. Sometimes they have no hope at all. Sometimes they're angry, at the world or at God. Sometimes they're dazzled by the

beauty of God's world. Sometimes they hurt so much that all they can do is cry. Sometimes they call out to God about all the things they need. Sometimes the thought of God's love overwhelms them. But no matter how the writers of the Psalms feel, or what's happening to them, they bring it all to God: their mess and their trouble, their joy and their pain.

And they go to God together. Some of the psalms describe feelings so deep that when we feel that way, we might try to hide it, even from our friends and families. But the psalms were gathered into a book so that people could sing these songs together. They show us that it is good to tell each other the truth about our lives, and to share each other's joys and burdens.

We might feel like we need to know just what to say or do before we try to talk with God. But the Psalms help us see that we can go to God when we're scared or angry, lonely or confused, when we've done something wrong, when we need help, when we don't know what to do—and when we're full of love or hope.

And the Psalms tell us something else: no matter how we feel or what we're going through, God is always the same. God cares about the big and small things we face every day, from the tears we cry to the songs we sing.

And when we bring everything we have to God, God can turn all of it—our mess and our trouble, our joy and our pain—into beautiful songs that bless the whole world.

A whimsical illustration of a starry night sky. The background is white, filled with numerous small, colorful stars in shades of blue, red, yellow, and green. Several bright, colorful comets and shooting stars streak across the sky, leaving long, multi-colored trails. The comets have various colors like teal, orange, and red, and some have distinct heads with radiating lines. The overall style is soft and dreamlike.

# *Songs of Wander*





## Psalm 19

The skies tell God's glory  
all over the world.  
By day they speak,  
by night they teach,  
without a word.  
But there isn't any place  
their voice isn't heard.

God built a home in heaven  
for the sun,  
who comes out like a groom  
or a hero who loves to run.  
From end to end of the sky,  
it sheds warmth on everyone.  
God's teaching is perfect:  
it brings our souls back to life.  
And we can trust God's word  
to make the simple wise.  
God's ways are fair  
and make our hearts delight.  
God shows us what to do  
and fills our eyes with light.

Awe for God is pure  
and outlasts all time.  
God's justice is true,  
and all God's laws are right.  
They're better than the purest gold  
or honey straight from the comb.  
Sometimes they warn us.  
Sometimes they lead us to great rewards.

But can anybody see  
all their own mistakes?  
Keep me from the hidden ones  
I don't know I make.  
Don't let me choose to break your law.  
Don't let evil rule me.  
Then I will be innocent of great crimes,  
wholehearted and complete.

May these words from my mouth  
and the music that rings through my heart  
please you when you see them, O God,  
who rescues me, my sheltering rock.



## Psalm 66

Shout joy to God, all the earth!  
Sing glory to God's name!  
Tell God, "Your works are wonderful.  
Your enemies tremble at your strength.  
And the whole world bows down, too,  
and sings out your name."

Come see what God has done—  
wonders beyond all mortal power.  
God turned the sea into dry land,  
so we could walk through the water.  
And we rejoice in you,  
our God, who rules forever.

You give our souls life  
and don't let our foot slip,  
even though you tested us  
and caught us in your nets.  
You refined us like silver,  
by water and fire,  
but through them you brought us  
into a rich life.

I'll keep the vows I made to you  
when I was afraid.  
For all my life I'll bring you  
the best things I have to give.

All you who stand in awe of God,  
come hear what God did for me.  
If I saw wrong and kept it in my heart,  
the Lord would not listen to me,  
but when I cried out,  
my God heard me.

I praise you, God, because you didn't  
turn away my prayer  
and because you didn't  
turn away your love and care.





## Psalm 8

Our God, your name is majestic  
over all the earth,  
and when we look up to the sky  
it tells your glory too.  
Even children and babies  
are full of joy in what you make,  
and their joy in you is so strong  
it chases the dark away.

When I look into the heavens  
that you made with your hands,  
and at the moon and stars  
that shine where you set them,  
I can only wonder  
why you love us so much  
and why you would give  
your world to us.

You seat us near the angels  
and give us everything:  
sheep and cows and wild animals,  
birds in the air, fish in the sea—  
all of the creatures who swim  
the paths below the ocean's waves—  
and all of it, everywhere,  
sings out your name.

## Psalm 24

The earth is God's, and everything that is in it!  
The whole world, and everyone who lives on it!  
For God set its foundations on the sea  
and built it firm on the rushing streams.

Who can climb God's mountain  
to God's holy place?  
Those with clean hands and pure hearts  
who won't tell lies or false tales.  
They will carry God's blessing,  
bounty from God who rescues them.  
This generation seeks God  
and hunts for your presence.

Lift up your heads, O gates!  
Rise up, eternal doors,  
and make a way  
for the coming of the Lord.  
Who is the king of glory?  
The Lord, full of power!  
The Lord, who never flinches  
in any battle!

Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And you, eternal doors,  
and make a way  
for the coming of the Lord!  
Who is the king of glory?  
It is the Lord!  
The Lord Almighty,  
who is the king of glory!