

## Prose vs. Poetry

### Exodus 14v21-23, 26-28

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided,<sup>22</sup> and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.<sup>23</sup> The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea.

...

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen."<sup>27</sup> Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing towards it, and the LORD swept them into the sea.<sup>28</sup> The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen – the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

### Exodus 15v8-12

By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up.

The surging waters stood firm like a wall;  
the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea.

<sup>9</sup> "The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them.  
I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them.

I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.'

<sup>10</sup> But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them.

They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

"Who among the gods is like you, O LORD?

Who is like you – majestic in holiness,  
awesome in glory, working wonders?

<sup>12</sup> You stretched out your right hand  
and the earth swallowed them.

# Hebrew Poetry

## Familiar Poetry (Greek/Latin→English)

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.

His purposes will ripen **fast**,  
Unfolding every **hour**;  
The bud may have a bitter **taste**,  
But sweet will be the **flower**.

*William Cowper*

regular meter (i.e. same number of syllables per line); regular pattern of stressed/unstressed syllables; ***rhyme***, equal length 'stanzas' (poetic verses) etc.

## Hebrew Poetry (Psalm 6v1-5)

O LORD, rebuke me not in your anger,  
*nor discipline me in your wrath.*  
<sup>2</sup> Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am languishing;  
*heal me, O LORD, for my bones are troubled.*  
<sup>3</sup> My soul also is greatly troubled.  
But you, O LORD – how long?  
<sup>4</sup> Turn, O LORD, deliver my life;  
*save me for the sake of your steadfast love.*  
<sup>5</sup> For in death there is no remembrance of you;  
*in Sheol who will give you praise? ...*

No rigid meter / syllable-stress / stanzas;  
Short, roughly equal-length phrases,  
often grouped in pairs (or threes), with the *second phrase* 'answering' the first.