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**Poetry and prose.**

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# **POETRY AND PROSE**

Prose is bread. It is the stuff that makes up most of our lives. It is information, reports, history, law, preaching, teaching, Genesis, Deuteronomy, Acts, Romans. It is Greek—it addresses itself to the mind and is designed to make us think and act.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Poetry is honey. It is the stuff of rare moments. It too communicates but its range of expression is much wider. It touches more of our humanness. It is Hebrew—it addresses itself to the heart and is designed to make us feel. It is therefore a more comprehensive form of communication because it asks us to share experience, not merely rationalize it.

“Sing for joy, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, and break forth O mountains, into singing, for the Lord comforts his people.”

Prose is bread, poetry is honey. Bread alone is a meal; but bread with honey is a feast.

It is the business of prose to be literal and direct and precise. Poetry makes no such claim. Poetry is metaphor and metaphor is deliberate ambiguity. Poetry is mystery. It does not attempt to reveal truth explicitly, but playfully tempts us to probe more deeply for its truth by implying and suggesting and hinting. Like a parent confronted by an impossible question from a persistent child, it says one thing but really means another. And in so doing it keeps the dialogue open. The delight of poetry is in what it does not say. Poetry begins with delight and ends with wisdom.

Poetry is a search for syllables to shoot at the barriers of the unknown and the unknowable.

Poetry is the silence and speech between a wet struggling root of a flower and sunlit blossom of that flower.

Poetry is the opening and closing of the door, leaving those who look through to guess about what is seen during a moment.

(Carl Sandburg)

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Wilfred Martens  
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