# Excerpts from Genesis in Poetry

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## LIFE IN THE ARK

(whimsical)

Noah's surviving family
Had to sacrifice their rest;
Feeding all the animals
And cleaning up their mess.
Around the clock they labored
Without an hour's sleep,
As each and every animal
Had its routine to keep.

The lions called for their food at dawn,
The giraffes dined at seven;
The tigers and the cockatoo,
Ate at eleven.
The partridge and the pheasant
Ate salad with the mousse,
At eight every morning
They were joined by the goose.

The goats and the lambs—
Used to snacking at noon—
Resented their place
Next to the baboon.

Early in the afternoon
The elephants would arrive,
Trumpeting their choice of food:
Vine branches dipped in chive.

The two lazy crocodiles
Would arrive around three,
Expecting their favorite eating spot
Always to be free.

Twelve pails of water
Noah dragged in around four,
To be downed by the camels
Before they ate their straw.

Between the hours of five and six
The asses trotted by,
Savoring their barley soufflé

And sweet apple pie.

Seven in the evening,
When the sun had gone down,
The grizzly bears would arrive,
Invariably with a frown;
For they were sorely missing the hunt,
The chase and the kill,
And the juicy flesh of their victims—
Ah, they could taste it still!

Noah was now beginning to feel
More than six hundred years old;
This mission was more demanding than
The one for which he'd been enrolled!

But God had kept his family alive,
Promising them
That they'd all thrive;
That the animals would have
Their allotted space,
In a world renewed
By heaven's grace.

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**TESTING THE WATERS**
(Gen. 7:17 - 9:17)

Meanwhile, outside the Ark
God's words all came true:
All manner of fish and animals
Perished in the brew.

One hundred and fifty days elapsed,
And the waters began to subside;
When the tops of the mountains came into view,
Noah's family cried.

A further forty days they sat
Inside the Ark, entombed,
Till Noah released a raven
When he thought dry land
Had loomed.

The raven flew back and forth,
But found no stick or grain
With which to build a cozy nest

And lay its eggs again.

A further seven days ensued,
And Noah dispatched a dove,
But finding no place for the sole of its foot,
It returned in a huff.
Seven days on, and Noah called,
‘‘Out you go again!’’
So, the dove flew off, and, behold,
It found subsiding rain.

With a chirp and a whoop,
And a graceful swoop,
It plucked an olive leaf,
And took it back to the Ark
To the family’s great relief.

Seven days on,
It was again dispatched,
And, discovering dry ground,
It freed itself from the Ark—
To the future wholly bound.

God called out to Noah,
One clear and sun-drenched morn:
‘‘*You’ve kept my charge,*
*Preserving life,*
*As to the manner born.*

‘‘*You and your wife I will bless*
*With everything you wish;*
*Shem, Ham and Japhet*
*Will multiply like fish.*
*When you dandle on your knees*
*Their newborn girls and boys,*
*None shall compare to you,*
*In the abundance of your joys.*

‘‘*The longed-for day has now come*
*To bid farewell to the Ark;*
*To the foot of Mount Ararat,*
*Let it slowly drift and park.*

‘‘*Now, when you see a rainbow,*
*Following the rain,*
*Let that be my special sign*
*That, in future I’ll refrain*
*From sending a fearful flood*
*To inundate the earth,*
*And I’ll forgive man his shortcomings,*

*And recognize his worth.*''

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**NOAH'S LAST DAYS**
(9:18 – 27)

Noah lived the good life,
Planting many vines,
Doing lots of gardening
And downing his fine wines.

So very drunk he became one day,
That he lay naked in his tent;
When his grandson, Canaan, peeped in
He immediately sent
A message to his father, Ham,
Saying, ''grandpa's got no shame,
So how can you describe him as
A man of great fame?''

Ham went to Noah's tent,
To check his son's account;
Seeing his father's nakedness,
He immediately ran out
And told his brothers that their dad
Deserved respect no more,
For, since the days of Adam and Eve,
Nakedness was against the law!

The brothers, Shem and Japhet,
Deploring their father's plight,
Walked in backwards with a blanket
So as not to see that sight;
They covered up their sleeping dad,
Who, oblivious, just snored,
And planted a kiss on his cheek—
His dignity restored.

In a dream, God told Noah
What Ham and Canaan had done;
And Noah solemnly announced
That their blessing would be undone.

''Ham shall ever remain
To his brothers a lowly slave,
And Canaan, throughout the world,
Shall be accounted a knave.

‘‘What he did to his grandpa
A byword shall become
For those who take advantage—
On purpose or for fun—
Of those who cannot help themselves,
And, instead of helping,
Run!’’

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