Quoting Poetry

Why are poetry and prose quoted differently in essays?
The format of poetry quotations informs the reader in a nonverbal way that the quoted passage is from a poem, not a prose piece. Essentially, the two formats differ to improve the clarity and ease of reading an essay.

To quote three lines or less...

⇒ Place a forward slash (/) between each quoted line
The citation will list the line numbers, rather than the page numbers used in prose citation.

⇒ This quotation looks like...

- Dickinson describes the sound as “A Service, like a Drum—/Kept beating—beating—till I thought / My Mind was going numb—” (6-8).

To quote four or more lines...

⇒ Use the same format and line breaks as the original source

⇒ This quotation looks like...

- Dickinson describes her mental anguish during her illness as a metaphorical funeral:
  
  I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,
  And Mourners to and fro
  Kept treading—treading—till it seemed
  That Sense was breaking through—

  And when they all were seated,
  A Service, like a Drum—
  Kept beating—beating—till I thought
  My Mind was going numb— (1-8)

To indicate deleted sections...

⇒ Use an ellipses (…)
If the ellipsis is used to indicate an entire omitted line, the ellipsis should be the same approximate length as the original line in the poem

⇒ This quotation looks like...

- In describing the funeral, Dickinson says
  
  And Mourners…
  Kept treading—treading—till it seemed
  That Sense was breaking through—
  …………………………………
  A Service, like a Drum— (2-4, 6)

To clarify a reference...

⇒ Use brackets within the quotation

⇒ This quotation looks like...

- Dickinson says, “And when they [the mourners] all were seated / A Service, … / Kept beating—beating…” (5-7).