

# Polyphonic Triolet

by [Jeffrey Burghauser](#) (March 2023)



*Le Rêve*, Odilon Redon, 1905

### **Polyphonic Triolet**

I've come to bring you rest, [*From heavy pain,*  
*There's no release.*] proximity to Light,  
And holy silences. [*The dusks contain*  
I've come to bring you rest from heavy pain.  
[*No secrets; human fate,*] This cleansing rain  
[*No charity.*] delivers the contrite.  
I've come to bring you rest, [*From heavy pain,*  
*There's no release.*] proximity to Light.

### **On Easter, He Recalls the Jewish Primary School to Which He'd Been Sent**

"I remember dusky wells of stairs,  
Cinderblocks (celeste enamel), wire  
Hexagons embedded into mire—  
Colored glass & iron newel posts  
Capped in squareish domes. A schoolboy shares  
Hallways with assemblies of ghosts.

"I remember red, astringent broth:  
This, an iron radiator's drool.  
I remember massive bathroom towel  
Rollers only offering a slit,  
Soggy, grayish foot of fraying cloth,  
And the Panzer hood securing it.

"I remember being made to tie  
My fresh-laundered *tzitzis*\* in a bow  
Near my navel when the need to go  
To the toilet snared me, so I might

Keep them unbesmirched by sewage. I  
Thus provoked the humorless delight

“Of myopic rabbis as they groped  
All the implications of my keen  
Dad’s hypothesis that keeping clean  
*Tzitzis* as anatomized above  
Might not be as safe as all had hoped.  
It’s the grim complexity they love.

“*Tzitzis* are themselves (and not just string)  
Owing to the quantity of knots.  
Rabbis soon deduced from all the Oughts  
Novel sins that one must not commit:  
Might that extra bow subvert the thing  
To the point of quite un-thing-ing it?

“Though the bow’s longevity is bound  
By the shit-taking’s duration, fit  
Acquiescence to the Holy Writ  
Must, for all those minutes, be foreclosed:  
It’s an interval across the ground  
Of which one is dangerously exposed.”

*Little did the figures in this frieze  
Know that, sealed inside the desert heat  
Of the Past, a lovingly complete,  
Certain sacrifice accorded us  
Freedom that forever renders these  
Burdens totally superfluous.*

\* *Tzitzis* are elaborately knotted ritual tassels, four of which are fastened to a shawl worn by men underneath the shirt. See Numbers 15:37-41 and Deuteronomy 22:12.

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