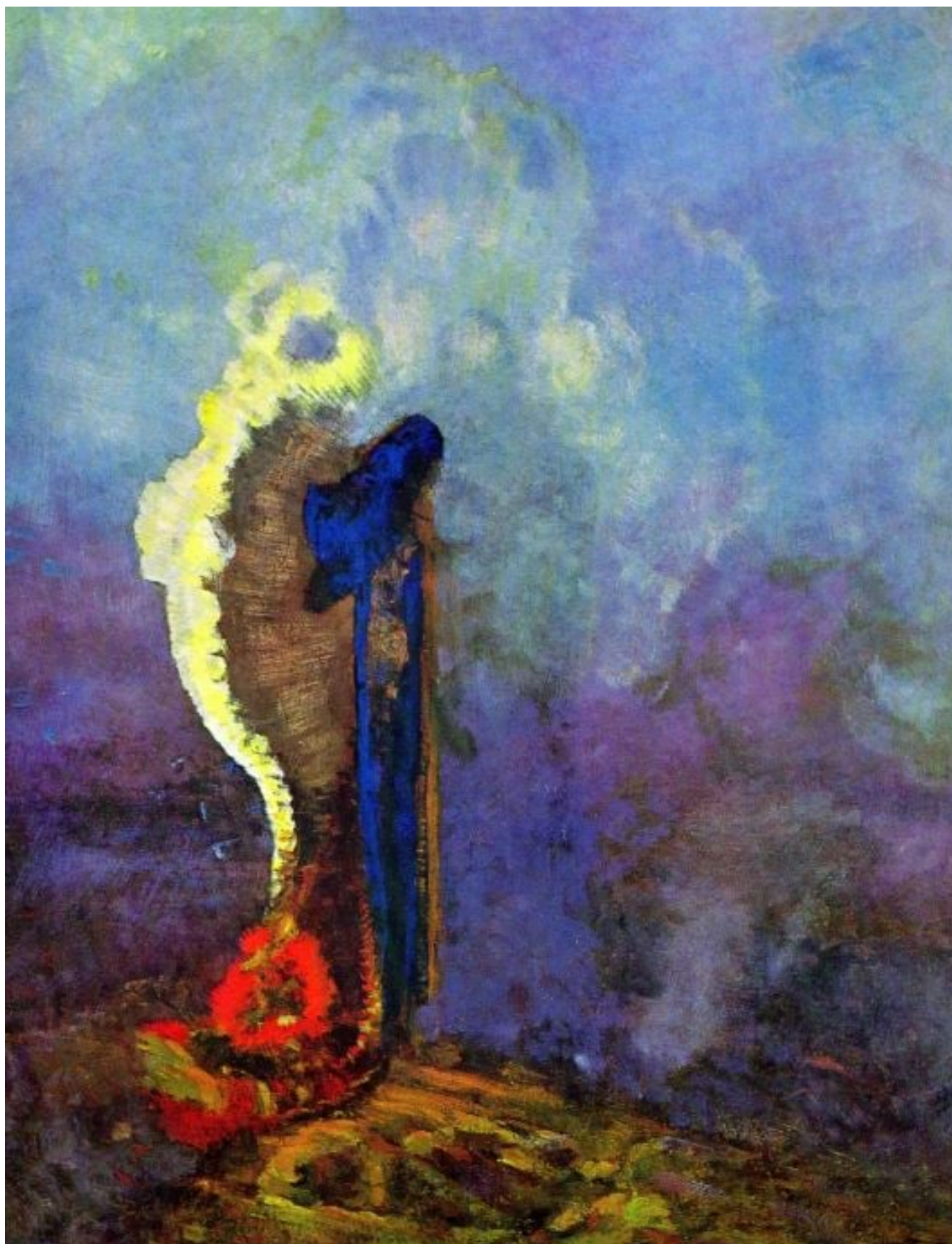


Polyphonic Triolet

by [Jeffrey Burghauer](#) (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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Jeffrey Burghauser is a teacher in Columbus, OH. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are forthcoming) in *Appalachian Journal*, *Fearsome Critters*, *Iceview*, *Lehrhaus*, and *New English Review*. Jeffrey's book-length collections are available on [Amazon](#), and his website is www.jeffreyburghauser.com.

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