Three Children
Translated by Freda Hodge (2015)

The rain is over
and clouds run away.
The sun startles awake
and gently looks down.
Three little children walk
hand in hand.

One of them says:

Mother told me to come home early
today and go
to the new cemetery.
Each new month
my mother goes there.
She said that
at the head of Father's grave
a small tree grows
as small as I am,
and the gravedigger says
one day red apples
will grow on this tree,
many red apples.
So today I must go to
the new cemetery.
Today it's a year since my father
died and he has already come twice
to Mother in her dreams
and asked if I am behaving.

The clouds run away.
The sky becomes bluer.
The sun sends down
white comfort to the earth.
Three little children walk
hand in hand.
The second child says:

My mother told me
to come home early.
Today they are bringing
Father home from hospital.
Four weeks he’s been there
and still hasn’t come ‘round
because I’m not allowed
to sit by his side
and pass him the bottles
and tell him what I am learning
so my mother says,
and this morning
she sat down on my bed,
laid her head on mine
and shed tears:
"Shmulik, the angel Raphael sings
In your precious eyes."

The sky becomes bluer
and the earth lovelier,
with the sun’s flaming light
In the sky facing Earth,
Three little children walk
hand in hand.

The youngest child says:

My mother told me
To come home early.
In the afternoon
she will play ball with me
a ball with red and blue stripes
and my mother can throw
really high and then catch it!

And my father watches
smiling, and kisses me
and kisses my mother too:
Mother can throw
so high up and catch it!

In golden candlesticks
the sun kindles its lights,
the world becomes bright
as tree beckons to tree.
And street sings out to street:
Joy!

(1920)