

The Olive Grove

(After a Painting by Jill Kempson)

Ian Reid

At first glance, almost Arcadian: the last
languorous phase of afternoon has lingered
in this quiet orchard. Yet, lowering above
the backlit trees, clouds thicken. Dark bands reach
across the glimmer of the middle distance.
Not so idyllic, then. What makes it seem
suffused with eeriness? Is it the way
puffed-up foliage mimics those nimbus shrouds
masking the horizon? Something in the fall
of light that brings the stealthy shadows
creeping closer? A hint of gusts, as 'wind
returns again according to its circuits'?
Absence of people? Murkiness drifting near,
choking that last faint sunglow? 'The eye is never
satisfied with seeing,' said The Preacher.
Imagining can spook us. Let's get out of here.

Ian Reid is a Perth-based writer. His poetry appears in various magazines (e.g. *Cordite*, *Meanjin*, *StylusLit*, *Burrow*), has won awards (e.g. the *Antipodes* prize) and has been included in several recent anthologies (e.g. *Ear to Earth* and *Poetry for the Planet*). His latest book is a novel, *The Madwoman's Coat*.