

"Your face seems faint against the violet glades..."

by Iain James Robb

Your face seems faint against the violet glades;
The long winds echo once, then fail to start.
Some wounding scent has stripped my hopes apart
That dwelled to scent you. From the cavalcades
The leaves make, bare at times since eve's sting fades
To starkness, empty, should a foolish dart
Eclipse me now, slip of my lingering heart,
It joins us still, across these esplanades-

That hot cross-current of a lingering wraith
Of gale that dies down in the ears of dreams;
Or I feel you see not, to myself it seems
That dreams descend before we hope of faith.
*And the nightjars fling aloft "Coo-coo-ri-coo",
And the wrack on the river casts its arms and wings
And drifts; I'm always coming back to you.
No bird could utter haply what your absence sings.*

It was some burnished word I wish that times could tell
To future children of the star-made ones
I'd found to lose you. Though the shivering suns
Collapse replenished through their speech or spell,
I cannot rise nor die. Though life be well,
Infinity can grant anew their shallows and duns
More light to lantern out the lake that runs
Below me, than my words that fleet and bell-

And falter like ungravid breaths that sink in rest,
Or consciousness that's bounded out in sleep;
I'd often thought, "If shallowness were deep,
It might rise onward as my moment's crest:
For now the nightjars fling aloft "Coo-roo",
And the wrack on the river plumbs below my sense.
Against my other judgement I return to you-
Adrift in lasting longing's soft circumference.

