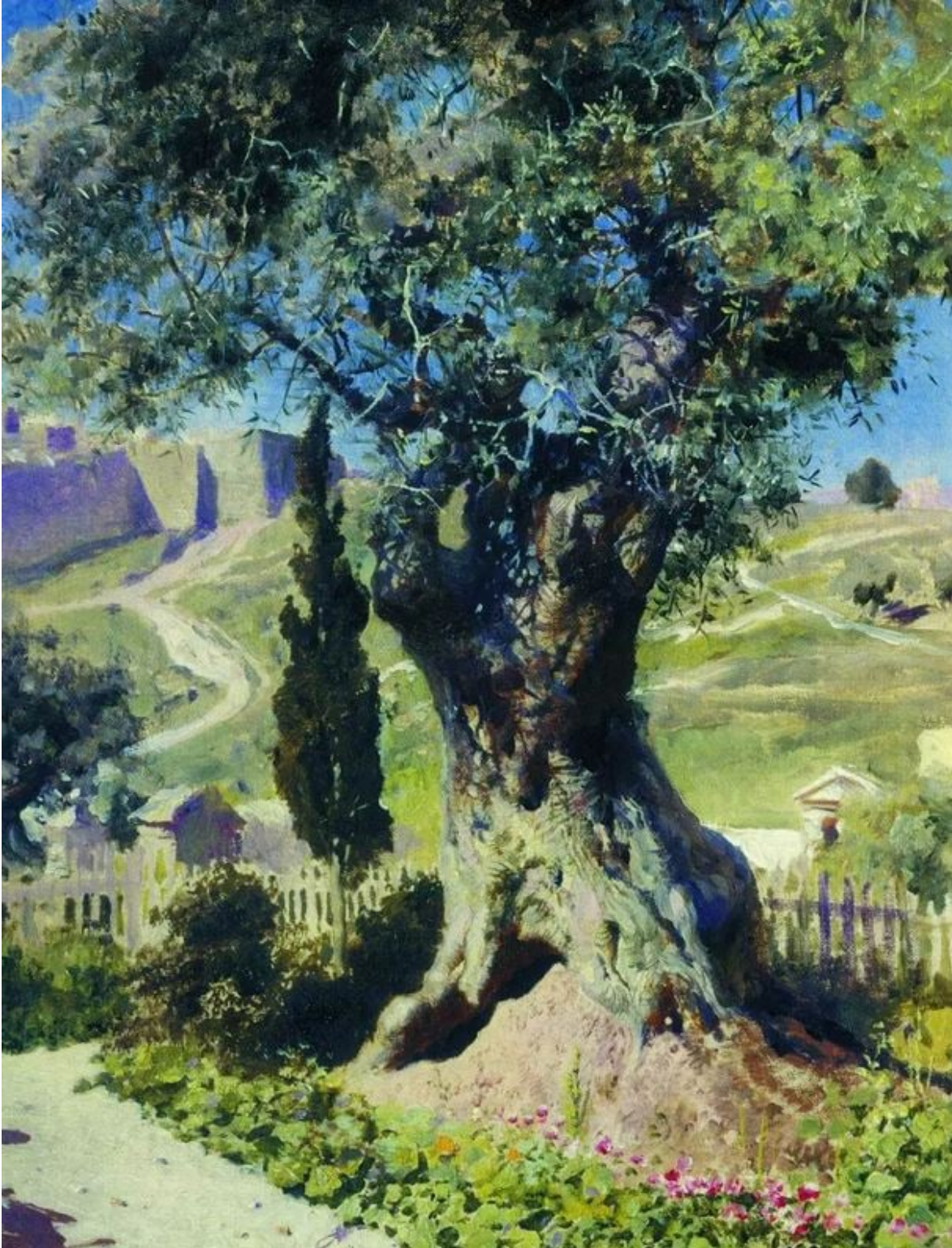


Ode to New Jersey

by [Michael Shindler](#) (March 2024)



The Olive Tree in the Garden of Gethsemane, by Vasily Polenov, 1882

The green signs.
The guardrails along the interstate.
The gates of the Garden State.

When Hercules wafted into Olympus
And his body burnt below,

When the bell rings at the circus
And the elephants mellow,

Then and there

The curving highways
In the swing of dusk
Beckon:

Drive—
Against the dotted line.

Drive—
It is almost time.

The curving highways
And the metal husk
Reckon
Then and there
Is the state of the world,
The sign of the times,
The gates of Gethsemane.

Drive—
Then and there
Is New Jersey.

When Hercules rings the bell from Olympus,
Chris Christie dreams.

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Michael Shindler is a writer living in Washington, DC. His work has appeared in publications including *The American Conservative*, *The American Spectator*, *National Review Online*, *New English Review*, *University Bookman*, and *Providence*. Follow him on Twitter [@MichaelShindler](#).

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