

KIERAN RIDGE

UPHILL

the steep road
winding narrowly up
between groves
of fruitless olive trees
and blond summer grass

dust rising
with every footstep
the hot air
dry
and hard to breathe

occasionally
shade
from a roadside hedge
or the remains
of an old wall
(foretastes of
a distant ridgeline
cool with pine)

but mostly
the measured effort
under a heavy sun