

Tower Hill

we climb the Philistine concrete path towards the dead volcanic crest . . .
swatting orbiting flies . . . stopping for breath . . . rising through layers of heat . . .
up between sheoaks heavy with cones . . . black ironbarks . . .
ghost white eucalypts . . .
the ground beneath the trees thick with tinder dry drifts of fallen sticks . . .
gnarled shillelagh branches . . . skeletal twigs . . . leaf litter . . .

koalas watch us from the sky . . . motionless in high branches against the sun . . .
emus arrive . . . man high . . . gigantic feather boas on chorus girl legs . . .
dancing around us . . . beaks armour plated . . . red eyes like discs of blood . . .
moving closer . . . ever closer . . . searching for food . . .
necks stretching towards us . . . we do as Rod told us . . .
hold up our arms in Nazi salutes . . . hands clenched like emu beaks . . .
they back away . . . disappear into yellow flowered wattle scrub . . .

higher still and the caldera appears . . . a vast amphitheatre encircling us . . .
a curving moat of reflected sky . . . wool white cloud . . . arc welded sun . . .
and at the summit . . . a view across flat lands to the distant sea . . .
surf white and turquoise against the limestone edge of land