

Over the Hills and Far Away

Out my way
when you go for a hike
you climb the hills
of the BLM lands
about a block away.
You can probably follow
hundreds of miles
of trails and fireroads
through the undeveloped high desert.
As you climb up,
you think you can see
the summit,
but it's just an illusion,
a less steep part of the trail,
but still an incline nevertheless.
As you get closer,
you realize there is still more,
and this happens
multiple times.

Sometimes there will be
a short decline
before the climb begins anew.
Sometimes the decline
is such that it seems
you have crossed the summit
and begun climbing
a different hill.
If looked at the right way
it is all one hill:
you certainly have not declined
to the low from the start
and you are climbing up again.
If you look at a Bactrian,
you might see two humps,
or you could see the humps
as part of a larger structure,
the camel's back,

awaiting the fatal straw
(which is probably the drinking
variety and probably plastic
and bendable).

Eventually, you must cross
a summit of sorts
at the very least
you must turn to go back
the way you came.
Sometimes you don't realize
you're headed down
until you feel it
in your spine, in your knees,
and then you realize
that going down is just
as difficult as going up
and you weren't ready
for this – it is surprising
the slow decline is so painful.
But down you must go,
and while you can see
where you are headed
you are not there yet
although you must get there
eventually.

– Jeffery Greb