In this original and wide-ranging book, Philip Edwards examines the theme of pilgrimage in the works of a variety of major writers, including Shakespeare, Conrad, T. S. Eliot, Yeats and Heaney. Edwards considers the original and early uses of the terms ‘pilgrim’ and ‘pilgrimage’ in life and literature, and demonstrates the importance, vitality and flexibility of pilgrimage as a literary theme over the centuries. The emphasis is almost wholly on post-Reformation writers, analysing the theme of pilgrimage in major works where previously it has not been thought to exist, and marking an important departure from traditional studies of the pilgrim and pilgrimage in literature. With the character of Hamlet central to the discussion, Edwards argues the emergence in Shakespeare of a new tragic vision of pilgrimage, which perhaps had its beginnings in ancient Irish literature. This is a ground-breaking and unusual study, which encompasses centuries under a common, and vital, theme.

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For Matthew, Charles, Richard and Catherine
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Acknowledgements

This book originated in a paper given at the triennial conference of the International Association of University Professors of English at Durham in 1998, on the metaphor of pilgrimage in the poetry of Southwell, Herbert and Vaughan. In acknowledging some of the assistance I have had in writing this book I must single out Anne Barton, who encouraged me to continue, and Brendan Kennelly, who has been unstinting in his support and in his generous supply of books about Irish writers and pilgrimage. I also thank former colleagues Helen Wilcox, David Mills and Philip Davis for their help, and John Gossage, John Hodgkinson, Linda Kelly, Derek Longmire and Antoinette Quinn for encouragement and assistance of various kinds. I owe much to the British Academy and the Huntington Library for an award which allowed me to spend a month working at the Huntington in California.

I acknowledge the permission of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, to quote two poems from the Rawlinson MSS on pp. 26–7 and 32–3, and the permission of the authors and Random House Group to quote from the work of David Lodge and Robert Crawford. I thank A. P. Watt Ltd (on behalf of Michael B. Yeats) and Scribner (Simon and Schuster) for permission to quote from the poems of W. B. Yeats. I am also grateful to Harvard University Press and the Trustees of Amherst College for permission to quote poems by Emily Dickinson. I have myself edited the quotations from Shakespeare’s plays; line references are those of the Riverside Shakespeare.