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The Novel Map

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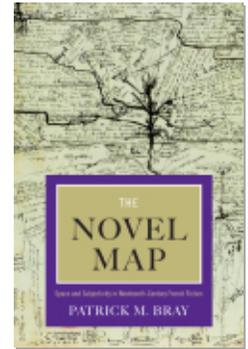
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This book attests to my enduring fascination with spaces and places. While writing this book over the years, I have had the good fortune of hiking above an ocean of fog in Big Sur, sneaking into the catacombs of Paris at night, walking through an inhabited cemetery in Cairo, and contemplating an unending sea of cornfields in Champaign. But a book is made of more than nostalgic atmospheres. Innumerable friends and colleagues have nourished this project with their time and insight. Nearly every sentence bears the trace of a conversation (real or imagined) with a dear friend, to the extent that rereading my text is like traveling across a virtual space of memory. Textual time travel is all the more important when it becomes the only way to communicate with those who have passed away.

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I dedicate this book to my wife Maggie and to my son Sebastian—may we continue to build beautiful things together.

