For a volume such as this, one that represents the dedication and scholarship of numerous contributors, it is impossible to trace a single path that neatly leads from first conception to final completion. The book began when, after a particularly lively meeting of the Emily Dickinson Society, in a restaurant in Amherst, Massachusetts, in the summer of 2003, we (Eleanor Heginbotham and Paul Crumbley) talked of the need for thoughtful, informed responses to the still-new and already somewhat contentious subject of Dickinson’s fascicles. There and then we decided to co-edit a volume of essays. We agreed that it would be a daunting but timely project, one that would require the best minds in the field, so we immediately assembled a dream list of contributors, sent out invitations, and then asked everyone to be patient. We had to be patient because the work was hard and most of us didn’t know where we would wind up once we got started. We did know that we would have to be flexible and allow the work to take shape over time; even the fastest among us understood that. As a consequence, the people we most want to thank are our contributors, the wonderful scholars who stuck with us over the years and so generously granted each other the time to let their thoughts mature. From the very beginning of our work, influential early scholars of the manuscripts, Sharon Cameron and Susan Howe, also encouraged our project and contributed greatly to it through their significant books and by allowing us to use portions of their groundbreaking work to frame our current collection. We hope all of you will agree that the highest expression of our gratitude to
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The “Coda” contribution from Susan Howe that ends our book is from *My Emily Dickinson*, copyright © 1985 by Susan Howe. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.

A word about what readers will see as misspellings in some of the poems, letters, and scraps of Emily Dickinson: we have not applied the “sic” label to such words as “opon,” “exhilarates,” and “it’s” as a possessive pronoun. Readers unfamiliar with the Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson and other studies of her handwritten texts will note that some essays include her variant, signaled with this sign: +. Along with the dash, it is all part of the challenge and reward of reading her face to face in these poems.