Writing a book, I’ve found, is a good counter to the romance of the solitary author. I won’t ever be able to express adequate gratitude for the generousities I’ve received, though it’s my great pleasure to make an attempt here.

Over many years, this book developed with support from the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation, as well as with timely grant and leave support from Loyola University Chicago. Loyola has given me a community of scholars and students without whom this book would never have been possible. Steve Jones has been my mentor, inspiration, and friend—the best senior colleague, I’m convinced, in all academia. Joyce Wexler has given me countless hours of sage advice, and I owe almost as much to every other member of the department.

My readers, Adam Potkay and Dan White, brought heroic sharpness of thought and welcome critique to the manuscript. They saw clearly what I only glimpsed, saving this book from many blunders, and revealing many new paths. The book and I would have been immeasurably poorer without the suggestions and conversation of Lori Branch, John Bugg,
Fred Burwick, Mark Canuel, Billy Galperin, Marilyn Gaull, Susan Green, Colin Jager, Scott Krawczyk, Ron Levao, Larry Lipking, Fred Lock, Peter Manning, Jon Mee, Jeanne Moskal, Dahlia Porter, Bob Ryan, Starry Schor, Stuart Sherman, Jerry Singerman, Gene Stelzig, Helen Thompson, Tim Whelan, Caroline Winschel, and Sarah Zimmerman. Most of all, I’d like to thank Sandy Crooms, Eugene O’Connor, Kristen Ebert-Wagner, and the entire editorial staff at The Ohio State University Press, who have expertly shepherded this book.

For invitations to take my arguments on the road, I’m grateful to Tom Kaminski and the Johnsonian Society, Tavia Nyong’o and the Center for the Study of Sexuality and Gender, New York University, and Richard Gibson and the Department of English, Wheaton College, as well as colleagues at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism and the Association of Literary Scholars and Critics. Earlier versions of Chapters Three and Six appeared in the *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68.4 (2005) and *Romantic Autobiography in England*, ed. Eugene Stelzig (Ashgate, 2009). I’m grateful to the publishers for permission to rethink some of this material here.

Years ago, Henry Abelove gave me his “Methodism,” before I knew it was possible to know any other. I’ve only since learned it’s not possible to know any better. For this, and for years of kind guidance and good friendship, I thank him.

My greatest debts, and my deepest thanks, are to Susan Wolfson. She has given me so much, and for so long, that no indexing could possibly be sufficient. She has read, at every stage of its development, every inch of this book, with indefatigable genius and astonishing generosity. This has been more than I deserve: and yet more than this, Susan has taught me to read, write, teach, and think. I owe to her my professional self.

To my wife, I dedicate this book—small recompense for years of boundless love.