Contents

Preface

I. Origins
   Not “I” 3
   Dirt’s Minion 7
   Teaching Taste, Making Soul 11
   Filthy 17
   Water Rites 22

II. The Sestina
   Sacred and Profane: The Sestina as Rite 35
   Ardor and the Sestina 48
   Destruction and the Blossom: The Sestina in War 57

III. Litany
   All Hail Litany: Three Variations 65

IV. Illustrious Forebears
   Marianne Moore’s Prose: Antithesis as Modus Operandi 75
   Akhmatova: The Leper’s Rattle 86
   W. S. Merwin’s “One Story”: A Tribute 90

V. Poetry as a Way of Witnessing
   The Poetry of Witness: Then, and Now 95
   Peripatetic Witnesses: Karen Swenson and Mary Crow 101
   The Mythic Dimension of Witness: Berdeshevsky 107
   Hacker and Khoury-Gata: Poets in a Time of War 109
   Ingrid Wendt: Nonviolent Woman Warrior 116
VI. Poetry and the Healing Arts

Poetry and the Healing Arts: Collaboration 125
Violence and Dignity 131
Beautiful Trouble 139
Madurai: Temple Beggar 149
We Are So Vast 156
Two Motion Fast Happening God 161
Romola: Renegade in the People’s Republic of China 167