Grateful acknowledgment is given to the editors of the publications in which some of these pieces have appeared. Most of them have been revised, often drastically, for this collection.

Crossroads: “Notes Toward Beauty”
Michigan Quarterly Review: “The Other’s Other: Against Identity Poetry”
Pleiades: “One State of the Art”
Poets and Writers Magazine: “Shadows and Light Moving on Water”

“One State of the Art” is a much expanded and reworked version of my introduction to The Iowa Anthology of New American Poetries, published by the University of Iowa Press in 2004. It also incorporates portions of my essay “Criteria,” originally published in the Boston Review.

I’d like to thank Jennifer Clarvoe, Christina Davis, Jocelyn Emerson, Mark Granier, Joan Houlihan, Jenny Mueller, Robert Odom, Brad Richard, and especially Robert Philen and Lawrence L. White for their valuable comments and suggestions on several of these essays. I owe special thanks to Marilyn Hacker for her close and careful scrutiny of the entire manuscript. It is much better for her insightful attention.