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Acknowledgments

I thought I'd write a book some day, but I had no idea it would be this book. Like many creative projects, this one flickered ambiently in my path for some time, just shimmering with promise but elusively withholding ... until it was right in front of me, illuminated and waiting on me to answer the call. I know. But so, though I labored to write it, it seems to have sort of happened. In the midst of some of the worst years of my life, my love for the creative, critical, and pedagogical film work I'd been doing was honored and valued by my dear friend, colleague, and editor, Cheryl E. Ball. She is a miracle, and I will be forever grateful for her faith in me. Similarly, magically, Mike Palmquist signed on, sharing Cheryl's faith and creating a path. Never once doubting any of it was my most beloved, the best person I know and my own dear husband, Mike Kyburz. How many silly edits did he watch and applaud? How many conference presentation prep cycles did he endure? Impossible to say. He is my spiritual and creative partner, and I will never be able to express how lucky I am that we found each other. He was there with me when I started my Teaching Assistant's gig at the University of South Florida. I was writing about chaos theory while my secret desire to work with film in my writing classes began to grow in the light of the knowledge that Bob Haas (another TA) mostly showed films in his classes. WHAT?! Mike was there when I defended that chaotic dissertation, and my kind and generous committee (Joe Moxley, Phil Sipiora, Silvio Gaggi, & Betsy Hirsch) bestowed my PhD upon me as my father, Gerald Clifton Surfus, sat weeping, prideful and red-faced, barely able to contain himself in the corner of the room. He didn't. Contain himself. He collected himself, requested that the committee stay for a bit longer, and delivered the story of my purple hair and my expulsion from another university, several years in my past. He'd earned that story because of his profoundly loving and deeply forgiving move to send me back to college for another try, and I will never ever be able to say or do enough to warrant his good deed, but this book is nice, and he would hate it because he hates my writing, but so. Mike was there for that. He was there for the afterparty, patiently locking (rolling?) eyes and eating pizza with my mom, Mary Adeline Surfus, while Dad regaled us all with the story we'd just lived in that conference room, "Remember when they asked you this ... and you answered that?!" Mike was there when I shot scenes, when I screened my short films at MLA, CCCC, NCTE, WSRLC, and other conferences. We texted back and forth as I heard eloquent colleagues articulating ideas that seemed to suggest that what I was doing wasn't simply nuts. Doug Hesse, and Kathleen Blake Yancey, both in their CCCC's Chair positions, delivered talks on literacy shifts that emboldened me. Both Doug and Kathy also encouraged me individually. They are champs. Mike and I dined out with Trish Roberts Miller, who was an early figure in my short film status update, and has been indefatigable in her support of my work. Others featured in that film also shared meals with us; Ron Brooks in Las Vegas ("who ARE these rich, beautiful people?!"), Cynthia Haynes and Jan Rune Holmevik in North Carolina, Victor

Vitanza, in LA, Chicago, Memphis, and more. Even earlier, my USF crew gave their support. Todd Taylor once helped me rig sound for a giant ballroom in New York for a CCCC presentation I had the honor of sharing with the brilliantly sublime Geoffrey Sirc, and Anne Frances Wysocki, our very own design goddess who didn't even blink when I accidentally knocked an entire pitcher of ice water over and onto her new MacBook Pro (!) but swiped left on the mess and urged me to proceed. Other USF support evolved in the form of a lovely friendship with a woman who helped me through the loss of my father and some pretty furious compositional activity; Julie Drew is the best magic girl listening and empathizing friend a girl could want. I love you, Julie, and I could not have said "good-bye" to Dad and survived without you. Sid Dobrin, Andrea Greenbaum, Joe Hardin, Raúl Sánchez, ... what to say. I love you idyots!! My new colleagues at Northern Illinois University — especially the brilliant mentor-friend, Michael Day — thank you! The support from my talented, loving, humane, and indulgent friends and colleagues has been everything, and while I would love to here unspool the longest list with all the stories, I've got to wrap this thing. Unspeakably generous, brilliant, creative, and fabulous film-compositionists and others supporting the kinds of work that manifested this book, I invite you to read their stories in these pages. If you don't see your name here, please know that I didn't want to Hilary Swank you, but I do thank you (unbearable attempt at humor). Mike won't need to read this book (though all are welcome!) because he's lived it with me, as we've shared the work and the play with our willing collaborators and ALL THE REASONS, Aoife Bell Frances Coakley, Matilda Mae Coakley, Fiona Rose Coakley, Emily S. Coakley, and Joe Coakley. We came to be with you and you gave us everything that matters. We'll never have enough ways to thank you and express all that you mean to us. In many ways, you've provided one of the most vital "zones of optimism" (thank you, Lauren Berlant!) within which we've been able to compose ourselves, and I, this book. Thank you. Thank you all.