

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has many beginnings. One of them dates back to Tuesday, October 29th, 2019, at 4:17 p.m. Mountain/5:17 p.m. Central. That's when Romeo emailed Lauren and Jenn:

Hi Lauren and Jenn,

Hope all is well. Thank you for reading my short piece.

I was thinking about the importance of community listening the other day and began wondering whether an edited collection is in the works already for it. If not, would both or one of you be interested in chatting about such a collection?

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The “short piece” Romeo refers to is “Creating Presence from Absence and Sound from Silence,” which appeared in *Community Writing, Community Listening*, the special issue of *Community Literacy Journal* that Jenn and Lauren co-edited.

The seed for that publication, and thus a seed for this book, was planted more than two years earlier, on April 30th, 2017, when Jenn wrote to Lauren somewhat out of the blue with “a wild hair of an idea.” She was following up on a brief conversation they had that spring during the Community Writing Mentoring Workshop at the Conference on College Composition and Communication annual convention; she was also responding to a call for proposals that Veronica House had circulated. The latter invited colleagues planning to attend the fall 2017 Conference on Community Writing to put forward ideas for a related issue of *Community Literacy Journal*, which House had just begun co-editing with Paul Feigenbaum.

On May 25th of that year, Jenn and Lauren met online to talk and listen. They didn't really know one another at the time and had mainly interacted through a few conference events; however, there was much to discuss, especially when they began brainstorming special issue possibilities. Their wide-ranging conversation spanned longitudinal writing research, their appreciation of the mission and legacy of the Highlander Research and Education Center, and *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*, the book that Highlander founder Myles Horton and Paolo Freire “talked” together about shared aspects of their work. No matter the topic Jenn and Lauren considered, the conversation kept pointing toward community listening: listening as way-of-knowing, as praxis, as community building, and so on. By August

2017, the concept of community listening was in circulation along with the call for what would become *Community Writing, Community Listening*. What started then with six articles has now grown into a veritable carnival: a rich and complex ecosystem of new ideas, new voices, and new work that extends beyond any single example.

We have many other beginnings to acknowledge. Our list includes August 2020, when we three began circulating the call for proposals for this volume. It also includes February 2021, when we emailed the authors we have come to know with invitations to contribute. It was March 2021 when we first approached Heather Falconer, Rich Rice, and Michael Rifenberg about placing this work with the Perspectives on Writing series at the WAC Clearinghouse. So much has happened—so many conversations and revisions have taken place—between then and 2024, when we shared the complete manuscript with Rich and Michael, as well as Qingyang Sun, Jonathan Marine, and Johanna Phelps. As we think about the final stages of our work together, we are grateful foremost to the contributors to this volume and the many people and communities with whom they collaborate. We are also grateful to everyone involved in the WAC Clearinghouse, especially Mike Palmquist. And last, we are grateful to our readers and listeners. We look forward to ongoing conversations with you.

From Romeo: I am grateful to my co-editors, Jenn Fishman and Lauren Rosenberg, whose work on community listening in the *Community Literacy Journal* inspired many invigorating conversations, some of which are now represented in the pages of this collection. Both their eye for detail in the process of writing and thoughtfulness during the feedback stages were truly encouraging for me. Many thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Writing & Rhetoric Studies at the University of Utah, who have always shown me an unwavering amount of support. Lastly, I am deeply grateful to my family for their care, support, and patience with me.

From Lauren: Many thanks to the adult literacy learners who have spoken with me, participated in my research over the years, and taught me to listen differently. They showed me how to pay deep attention to the voices of ordinary people interacting in their communities for self and social change. I am grateful for the many communities that shape me as a listener, including my students and colleagues in Rhetoric and Writing Studies at the University of Texas at El Paso. Thanks especially to Jenn Fishman, who invited me to propose a special issue of *Community Literacy Journal* with her back in 2017, and for the opportunity to work with the authors of that issue on the articles that first defined community listening. Thanks to Romeo García for approaching Jenn and me with the idea for this book. As always, I am most grateful for my daughters Bess and Ella Hepner, wise women and community listeners.

From Jenn: The prospect of acknowledging, let alone thanking, the people who constitute my lineage of listening is a daunting one. How to begin? I think about the interauditors I associate with the end of a coiled harvest gold phone cord, all those handwritten letters, and their digital counterparts. I think of the earliest circles and rows where I learned more formally about the triangulation of community, listening, and literacy, and I think about the most recent sites of my continuing education, including Marquette University. Too, I think of places that are so much more than an address: Cascade Drive, Wonderful Town, the ‘bier, ClearFish Pond and Manor, 315 E. Wisconsin Ave. There is Charlie among all the more-than-human interauditors. And, certainly, I am grateful to Lauren and Romeo as well as all Ada, Alexandra, Angela, April, Bailey, Carol, Carrie, Casey, Hannah, Kaitlyn, Karen, Katie, Kelly, Keri, Kyle, Lauren, Mary P, Mitzi, Patty, Rowie, Sally, Shelley, Tobi, Wendy, Wyn, and Zoe for the listening entailed in and hopefully also conveyed—even inspired—by this book.