

## PREFACE

Healers know wounding. This book brings the reader into the lives of a few such people. With their suffering and through their suffering, they are led into personal, exceptional ways of helping others and themselves.

The first story, *Sit Beside Me*, was originally called *Suicide Notes*. It evolved over twenty painful, gratifying years. It is an unconventional tale of the classic wounded healer: a psychiatrist entering his own brokenness while entering the brokenness of a patient, helping them both.

In the second story, *Birthday Present*, a physician and her assailant find healing for themselves and each other during an actual event of wounding. It's erotic, and it is a disturbing story to some people. Originally called *Butterflies*, it emerged over thirty years of multiple re-writings. The story and I have worked on each other, with feedback from other wounded writers. It's a wounded healer of a story.

The third story, *The Embrace*, tells of two wounded psychotherapists tangled in a healing relationship as one of them dies. It was always named *The Embrace*, and an earlier version was published in 1998. The journal that printed it was called *Bottomfish*, which always made me laugh. That journal disappeared and was subsequently reborn as *Red Wheelbarrow*.

Who is the healer? Who is the one healed? I offer this book in the hope that it may reflect, nourish, and honor the real experience of all of us, all people, as helpers.