Acknowledgments

Early in this book I wrote that climate change interrupts us, throws us off at every turn. It has certainly done so with me: it interrupted my scholarly career, demanding that I suspend my usual engagements to address matters of overwhelming common concern. I thus wish to acknowledge from the start the signal support of Bowdoin College, which not only provided financial support through the Faculty Leave Supplement to enable me to research and write the book but also explicitly encourages faculty to take on the broader mission of enlarging what it calls “the common good.” I truly appreciate the College’s rare support for the public dimension of learning.

I owe a great debt to those scientists who continue to describe the contours of climate change to a resistant and at times hostile public. Their persistence in carrying out this task despite the odds sets a high standard for ethical courage today. I am equally grateful to my forebears in the humanities, especially those in the deconstructive, Lacanian, and leftist traditions who have modelled the ethically courageous capacity to tarry with the negative despite deep-seated resistance of another kind. I hope that this book in some measure makes visible the deep affinities of these two intellectual traditions.

I am grateful to my colleagues in the study of Romanticism and adjacent fields who, through the rigor of their work and their capacity for searching conversation, continue to model the best possibilities of our shared vocation. I especially wish to thank Tilottama Rajan, Thomas Pfau, William Galperin, Frances Ferguson, David Clark, James Engell, Theresa Kelley, Orrin Wang, Rob Mitchell, Jacques Khalip, Nancy Yousef, Vivasvan Soni, Anne-Lise Francois, Tilar Mazzeo, Elizabeth Fay, Scott Juengel, Jennifer Fay, Joan Steigerwald, Rei Terada, Arkady Plotnitsky, Richard Sha, Nick Halmi, Colin Jager, Mark Canuel, Joel Faflak, Tres Pyle, Josh Wilner, Eugene Stelzig, David Baulch, Ron Broglio, Tobias
Menely, Andrew Warren, Alexander Schlutz, George Erving, Andy Burkett, Allison Dushane, Jennifer Horan, Christopher Bundock, and Jacob Risinger. Their responses to my work in recent years have greatly influenced this book, distant as it may be from the language in which we usually speak.

Bowdoin College has provided a lively intellectual community within which this project could take shape. Gen Creedon, who encouraged me to pursue this project, and Thom Cote, who gave me helpful suggestions for revision at a crucial juncture, have been especially important interlocutors. I am grateful to the late Tom Cornell, Susan Wegner, and David Hecht for their concrete suggestions as I researched the book; John Lichter, Phil Camill, Mary Hunter, Collin Roesler, Elizabeth Pritchard, Matt Klingle, Emily Peterman, Casey Meehan, Anne Witty, and Kate Stern for their support for and response to the project; my colleagues in English, Environmental Studies, Gay and Lesbian Studies, and Gender and Women’s Studies, whose sense of ethically engaged scholarship continues to inspire me; and the students in several of my courses in recent years, especially advanced seminars, for the freshness, intensity, and clarity of their thought on the book’s central themes. I give a warm thanks to Celeste Goodridge, Liz Muther, Guy Mark Foster, Louisa Slowiaczek, and Rich Kreiner for the depth and sustaining power of their friendship. I am grateful to those in the broader community of coastal Maine and beyond whose friendship and conversation have often helped lay the foundations for this project or illuminated its contours anew; foremost among them are Lucinda Cole, Robert Markley, Frank Wicks, Sukanya Rahman, and Gerard Dorian.

I am delighted to acknowledge my debt to Claire Colebrook and Tom Cohen, editors of the Critical Climate Change series, for seeing the value of this book and bringing it into a growing body of work from the humanities on climate change, and my gratitude for the exemplary work of the volunteer collective at Open Humanities Press, from Sigi Jöttkandt and David Ottina, co-founders and co-directors of the press, to Marcia LaBrenz, Kelly Witchen, and others at Michigan Publishing, who steered this project through many phases and helped get the contents and the cover of the book into publishable form.
My deepest thanks go to Terri Nickel for the rigor of her response to this project at every stage, her endless patience in reading with fresh attention each new draft, and most of all, her unique talent for tenderness and joy—one that has made the task of articulating even these dark thoughts into an affirmative venture. Without her bedrock support and brilliant responsiveness, my writing this book would never have been possible. Truly in this as in all other endeavors she is my mind’s and my heart’s companion.