Acknowledgments

This book grew out of one of those trips to the library, when just by happenstance I pulled a copy of Leslie Fiedler’s *Love and Death in the American Novel* from the shelves and found the beginnings of what would become *Raising the Dead*. But happenstance is a small gift for the unaware, and I was not so lucky. The rough seed of this book germinated in the winter of 1988, when my father died from a self-inflicted wound during my first year of graduate school. It was an event that changed the trajectory of my intellectual endeavors; I was no longer on the outside looking in—I was surrounded by death, subjected to its silence and awed by the insights it provided. I reread Morrison’s *Beloved* and saw the potential for a reading of death and the dead in that work and many others. The dead staged a performance for my private viewing, and I began to search for an open door, for critical intervention in the “space of death” in which I suddenly traveled.

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