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MILTON AND MATERNAL MORTALITY

All too often, childbirth in early modern England was associated with fear, suffering, and death, and this melancholy preoccupation weighed heavily on the seventeenth-century mind. This landmark study examines John Milton's life and work, uncovering evidence of the poet's engagement with maternal mortality and the dilemmas it presented. Drawing on both literary scholarship and up-to-date historical research, Louis Schwartz provides an important new reading of Milton's poetry, including *Paradise Lost*, as well as a wide-ranging survey of the medical practices and religious beliefs that surrounded the perils of childbirth. The reader is granted a richer understanding of how seventeenth-century society struggled to come to terms with its fears, and how one of its most important poets gave voice to that struggle.

Louis Schwartz is Associate Professor of English at the University of Richmond, Virginia.

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LOUIS SCHWARTZ

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This book is dedicated to the memory of my grandfathers,

Louis Schwartz (1903–1959)

and

Moe Ash (1912–1971).

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Abbreviations

- CP* *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953–1982)
- DNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn. (Oxford University Press, 2008), www.oxforddnb.com
- KJV* The Bible: Authorized King James version, eds. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (Oxford University Press, 1997)
- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edn. (Oxford University Press, 2000), www.oed.com
- Parker William R. Parker, *Milton: A Biography*, 2nd edn., rev. and ed. Gordon Campbell, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)

Citations to Milton's poetry employ standard abbreviations and are taken from *The Complete English Poetry of John Milton*, ed. John T. Shawcross (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1963). These citations appear parenthetically in the body of the text. Notes will be used for other references, with each chapter's initial citation of any given work provided in full.