

## LYRIC HUMANITY FROM VIRGIL TO FLAUBERT

From the *Georgics* of Virgil to Flaubert's landscapes of happiness, Ullrich Langer argues that lyric representation holds a particular power to address our humanity. Ranging across a vast chronology, the book investigates how such poetry and prose activate our capacities for empathy, equity, irony, and reasoning, while educating us in pleasure and helping us comprehend death. Each chapter constitutes a fresh encounter with some of the most celebrated texts of European literary history, demonstrating how the lyrical works and what it elicits in us. Through deft rhetorical and philological analysis, the study presents the value of literary studies for both ethical purposes and aesthetic ends.

ULLRICH LANGER is Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor of French at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. He has published extensively on the European early modern period, covering subjects ranging from friendship to pleasure and virtue. He is also the author of the *Cambridge Companion to Montaigne* (2005) and *Lyric in the Renaissance: From Petrarch to Montaigne* (2015).

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ULLRICH LANGER

*University of Wisconsin–Madison*



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*For Anne*

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In memory of William H. Matchett

This book is the fruit of a long engagement with lyric as a verse form and the lyrical in prose. “Engagement” is meant both in the sense of my scholarly work and in the sense of my unmitigated reading pleasure; I hope that the following pages reflect that twofold motivation. It is also the fruit of a considerable period of confinement (as if its close readings were the appropriate response), caused by a pandemic seemingly without its own temporal or spatial confinement. The literature that will be the object of my interpretation constitutes some of the best writing that the European tradition has to offer. I have enjoyed assistance in understanding this writing, its context, the tradition, and the authors, and have benefited greatly from the advice and commentary of several colleagues and friends. I wish to thank William J. Berg, William Fitzgerald, Ernesto Livorni, Laura McClure, Jan Miernowski, and Florence Vatan for their critical and helpful reading of parts of the manuscript – remaining errors and infelicities are entirely my own responsibility. I wish to thank as well Kathryn Banks, Timothy Chesters, Laurent Ferri, Agnès Guiderdoni, Virginia Krause, Hélène Merlin-Kajman, Aline Smeesters, and Karin Westerwelle for giving me opportunities to present parts or versions of the work in progress. I have drawn as well on conversations and exchanges with François Cornilliat, Heather Dubrow, Richard Goodkin, Steven Nadler, William Paulson, Bernd Renner, and Jacob Schmutz. The Department of French and Italian at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation have generously supported research for this book at several stages. Finally, three anonymous readers have provided provocative feedback and helpful advice. Emily Hockley of Cambridge University Press has been a sure-handed guide and source of advice for this publishing project, and my thanks to George Paul Laver and Stephanie Sakson for the preparation of the manuscript.