

With Gratitude

The uncharacteristically brave notion of writing a novel would not have occurred to me without the presence of loving partnership in my life. Since typing the first sentence of *Sky* in a free-write 27 years ago, my wife Robin and I have taken many turns together down the unknown path, raised two wonderful children, and continue to open chapter after chapter, hand in loving hand.

My gratitude extends to friends and family who gave feedback and encouragement as *Sky* matured: Caron Klopping, Jan Setchko, Penny and Ed Setchko, Steve Bush, Meredith Kaplan, Karen Thompson, Tammy Takahashi, Tim Fox, Kendra Stufflebeam, Peter Stickney, and my mother, Joy, who was the first to read it through, and without whom I would have neither life nor love... so forget about writing a book.

The cover art was painted on canvas by my daughter Ellen, yet after reading *Sky* one might think it was painted by a particular character in the book. My son Michael created the 3-D grayscale maps which bring life to the section foldout stereograms. I am touched and honored by these contributions to what has become a multifaceted work of art.

North Bay Letterpress Arts in Sebastopol, California opened their doors and hearts to me for assistance while building the early reader copies by hand. Their love of hand-made works and my love of this project mixed to form an uplifting whirlwind of excitement.

I am indebted to Kim Stufflebeam for his inspired notion that this work could be something more than simply print-on-paper, and for his love of open collaboration that has extended the concept of connection and community into the publishing process. Although Kim is no longer with us, his lingering essence is a powerful motivation as *Sky* becomes available to the public.

Finally, I thank you, readers, for trusting enough to test these waters. May the reading bring something sweet to the surface... so we all might feel just a little less like strangers.

John Palmerlee