
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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This book arose from conversations over dinner tables with strangers who chose to talk about their lives with me. Fatiha Mennis was the first, becoming a friend and champion of this enterprise. During the two years that followed, when I stayed with people throughout France, dozens of people sat down with me and spoke in detail—sometimes in painful detail—about what they had experienced. Many asked me to make sure to include them in my account of these conversations. Since then, more than a few have asked when the book would be published. Later than they imagined, this is finally happening. I hope they feel I've done them justice.

This book, like many others, is the culmination of a process to which many have contributed. It began with Paris Aslanidis, Marcia Inhorn, and the late Pieter Muysken, who expressed enthusiasm and provided guidance, even when I had so little to show for my efforts. As the chapters finally appeared, a num-

ber of other friends pitched in. If the reader finds something of value in this book, it is probably thanks to them and to Carol. David Damrosch was my mentor and most astute critic throughout. Cécile Whiting and Sally Nelson reviewed draft after draft, providing criticisms and suggestions that were always on the mark.

In writing these words, I realize how much I owe to other people. This includes my extraordinary children, Pete and Lydia. Thank you all.