

Preface

The 1996–1997 Special Year at the Institute for Advanced Study was a program in Quantum Field Theory. It was a year of intense activity. There were about four lectures per week, each lecture lasting two hours. In addition, there were weekly problem sessions, as well as supplementary lectures and remedial study meetings at all hours. The students ranged from the obscenely young to those less so.

In these two volumes we share our struggles with a broader audience.

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We warmly thank Dottie Phares for her infinite patience and skill in dealing with a noxious mixture of \TeX flavors. We are indebted to Arthur Greenspoon, who not only proofread the entire manuscript but also prepared the index. The reader will join us in saying: thank you, Arthur. As always, Robbert Dijkgraaf's drawings—enjoy the covers!—liven up the proceedings, and we thank him for his contribution.

Most of all, we thank our teachers. They worked hard to educate us about beautiful ideas in physics, and we hope that they will be rewarded when one day this all becomes a beautiful part of mathematics. We will be pleased if these volumes can aid in that development. Finally, our thanksgiving would be amiss if we did not single out Edward Witten (and so exclude him from the signatories below). He gave generously of his time, energy, and abilities while serving as lecturer, teaching assistant, tutor, grader, organizer, and editor.

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