List of Illustrations
Acknowledgments

Introduction  •  “Mere Mutilation”:
Becoming Literate in Dialect Poetry  1

Chapter One  •  The Difficulty of Dialect Poetry  18
  Anthologizing Dialect Poetry  26
  Marketing the Mass Poet  32
  Performing Dialect Poetry  36
  Silent Reading and Silent Film  42
  Dialect and the Phonograph  48

Chapter Two  •  Plain and Peculiar Dialects:
  Bret Harte and James Whitcomb Riley  57
  Voicing Harte’s Truthful James and Ah Sin  59
  Riley’s Child Writing  71
  The Spelling Bee Poem  82

Chapter Three  •  Lettered Dialect: Paul Laurence Dunbar I  90
  Dunbar’s Performances  92
  The Epistolary Dialect Poem  99
  Dunbar’s Class in Spelling and Reading  110
  The Spelling Bee Poem Redux  114
### Chapter Four • Cultivated Dialect: Paul Laurence Dunbar

The Ease and Labor of Dialect Poetry
The Commerce of Magazine Verse
Dialect, Advertising, and the *Century*
The Cultivation of Dialect Performance

### Chapter Five • Gendered Dialect: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Maggie Pogue Johnson

Harper’s Aunt Chloe and Her Literacy
Femininity, Fashion, and Dialect
Johnson’s Education and Idleness

### Chapter Six • Annotated Dialect: Claude McKay and Langston Hughes

From Showman to Spokesman: The Unlettered Poet
Hughes’s Typography
Hughes’s Marginal Literacy
McKay’s Dialects and Poetic Diction

### Conclusion

Notes
Bibliography
Index