This book, the third in the series on transracial adoption, follows the publication of *In Their Own Voices: Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories* (2000) and *In Their Parents’ Voices: Reflections on Raising Transracial Adoptees* (2007). The first two books in the series continue to be extremely well received, especially among adoptees and adoptive parents; researchers; students; adoption agencies and support groups; the media; and those interested in social work, adoption, and race relations in the United States. One of the greatest joys I have gained from the publication of these volumes is that teenagers, adult adoptees of color, and adoptive parents living in the United States and in other countries have been able to identify with those interviewed in those first two books. Since the books were published, numerous students completing their master’s theses or doctoral dissertations on transracial adoption have expressed that the two books, particularly *In Their Own Voices*, were useful resources in their research. It was also gratifying to learn that the students’ own curiosity about transracial adoption was piqued by reading these books. *In Their Own Voices* and *In Their Parents’ Voices* are included in social work, English, and ethnic studies curricula in higher education and in adoption and cultural competency training courses. Both volumes remain relevant to families, scholars, and practitioners in today’s society.

This current volume, *In Their Siblings’ Voices: White Non-Adopted Siblings Talk about Their Experiences Being Raised with Black and Biracial Brothers and Sisters*, examines the experiences of the white non-adopted siblings living in the original families that appeared in the first two volumes and elicits their views on transracial adoption. This third volume should add substantially to the adoption literature and further open the doors of understanding and dialogue about this vital subject.

For the first volume we interviewed black and biracial adopted men and women who were raised in white homes beginning in the late 1960s and early
to mid-1970s, and who had long been the subject of controversy over whether transracial adoption was viable for children and families over the long term. In the first phase of our research, we focused on locating black and biracial transracial adoptees essentially through word of mouth, placing an ad in a magazine on multicultural issues, and soliciting well-known personalities. Some individuals who learned about our project through friends, teachers, and colleagues contacted us personally because of their interest in participating in the project.

Our objective in the first volume of the series was to explore how the transracial adoptees integrated themselves into their adoptive families, and how they developed their own self-identities and self-esteem in the process. We also wanted to know how they fit in with their peers throughout their child/adolescent and early adulthood years, and to understand the inner journey the participants took to reconcile who they were in relation to how their adoptive families and society perceived them. The questions posed to the participants in the first volume were therefore designed to address some of the most sensitive issues inherent in transracial adoption—race, identity, adoption, family, and society—issues that remain at the heart of the discussion on transracial adoption.

In the second volume we interviewed the adoptive parents of the men and women who participated in volume 1, *In Their Own Voices*. Our goal was to learn how these parents viewed transracial adoption thirty years later, after they had raised their children to adulthood and were establishing relationships with them as black men and women. Would their experiences be similar to those cited in the traditional body of research? Equally intriguing was to hear their responses in view of the fact that many of these parents had read the powerful and intimate accounts by their sons and daughters and other black and biracial transracial adoptees featured in *In Their Own Voices*.

As students of transracial adoption, my co-author, Rita Simon, and I felt compelled to include volume 2 in the series centering on the adoptive parents in order to provide a platform to hear their voices collectively and in continuum with *In Their Own Voices*. At the same time our goal was to offer readers insight into this complex issue from the perspective of parents who made the life-changing decision to adopt transracially. In most cases the parents who participated had limited resources to assist them in their parenting; they had to rely on their own skills, modeled for them by their parents, and they depended on the support of family members and friends, some of whom were taking similar paths. For these parents, transracial adoption was uncharted territory and did not come with a compass to guide them. In the course of interviewing the parents for volume 2, our hope was to elucidate the barriers
these families broke through and to reveal the work that remains to ensure that transracial adoption can be successful for every family member.

Without question, the lessons learned by the transracial adoptive parents who participated (and others like them) are directly relevant for parents who are planning to adopt transracially or have already chosen this option as a way to build their families. Yet, on a broader scale, particularly as this nation continues to grapple with finding permanent and stable homes for many thousands of children in our foster care system, the parents of *In Their Parents’ Voices*, with their journeys through transracial adoption and willingness to come forth, can educate families, practitioners, and policy makers on how to invest in our children (foster, adopted, birth) for the long term no matter how different or similar they are to us.

In the third volume of the series, *In Their Siblings’ Voices*, we interviewed the white non-adopted siblings in the same families. This third volume argues that we must not overlook the urgency to study this important demographic group, especially in light of what we do know about transracial adoption. The white non-adopted siblings, though not the primary decision makers, are still significantly affected by transracial adoption, and there are unanswered questions concerning them: In what ways have their views of themselves and their families been influenced by having an adopted sibling of color? What do they believe are the underlying consequences of transracial adoption, and what must change to make this experience supportive for every family member, including the non-adopted sibling? *In Their Siblings’ Voices* attempts to answer these critical questions.

The structure of this third volume on transracial adoption is similar to the previous two. We asked the siblings questions regarding their experiences growing up in a blended family and the choices they made in their adulthood years in creating their own families, careers, and relationships. We also wanted to know, of course, the siblings’ relationships with their adopted siblings of color. These individuals’ candid stories, it turned out, revealed more than first met the eye. The script was not one I had anticipated. As an African American transracial adoptee, I knew my own journey: the many blessings and challenges that came with discovering myself living in a family that did not look like me or often identify with the culture or rhythm of my ethnic community. Yet as I worked on this third volume, I was changed. I saw transracial adoption differently, this time not through my experiences but through the voices of those who had been silent for far too long, the white non-adopted siblings.

All three volumes in this series were created from a need to understand more about the long-term consequences of transracial adoption. All three phases of the study were qualitative by design, intended to bring together
both the academic and human interest dimensions to this subject. Here it is appropriate to underscore that the first volume in the series looks primarily at the experiences of domestic black and biracial adoptees who grew up in white homes in the United States rather than transracial adoptees from other racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Native American, Hispanic) in this country or transnational adoptees (e.g., Korean, Chinese, Guatemalan, Ethiopian) born in different countries and raised in white American homes. Although the three volumes in the Simon-Roorda series cannot, of course, make universal claims about the experiences of all adoptees of color and nationalities raised in white homes in this country and abroad, we believe these volumes are relevant and meaningful to adoptees and families embarking on transracial adoption generally as well as those who want to learn more about this subject. That much more discussion and research is needed on transracial adoption cannot be stressed enough. Our volumes symbolize the value, commitment, and priority we and the participants in these volumes have to achieving that purpose.

A question often asked is this: “Why did you [Rhonda Roorda] decide to be interviewed for volume 1, *In Their Own Voices*?” That is a fair question. Early on in this process I made the hard decision, and Rita Simon agreed, to participate in that volume *because* of the sensitivity of the subject and our expectation that participants would talk openly and honestly about their personal experiences related to transracial adoption. In many cases, it was the first time participants had publicly shared intimate details of their experiences; indeed, some experiences that were described were not even known by family members until they read the volumes. I could not ask any of the participants to share their stories without also consenting to do the same, given the similar path I was on. I believe that my presence in the first volume helped to establish a sense of trust between the adoptees and their family members, which I believe added to the value of these volumes.

The Simon-Roorda study unites the only twenty-year longitudinal research, conducted by Rita Simon, on transracial adoption with the voices of veteran families at the forefront of the controversy over the subject. It unites empirical data with human anthology, and brings together a pioneer/renowned scholar of transracial adoption and an African American adult transracial adoptee living out this journey. It is our hope that these three volumes will change the way transracial adoption is viewed and discussed.

Rhonda M. Roorda