Acknowledgements

As far back in time as I can remember, my passion for Ruskin Bond originated with my love for the Himalayas and its foothills’ atmosphere, which is eternized by the author. When Penguin India began publishing the author in forms of organized anthologies, my exposure to Ruskin increased significantly. I was struck by the curious way in which he used metaphors of space and time to negotiate with the repressed anxieties of his childhood trauma and a troubled sense of liminal position. In 1997, when The Statesman newspaper of Calcutta sent me Ruskin’s new book When Darkness Falls and Other Stories for review, I happened to meet the author in his Mussoorie residence and had a long discussion with him. It was a watershed mark in my long career of Ruskin Bond scholarship; not that my reading of his works changed substantially since then. My observation of the man in person, his relationship with the adopted family and the light he threw on the textual history of some of his works contributed to the problematics of the study of the notion of identity in his works.

At CIEFL, as EFLU was formerly known, I found Professor Mahasweta Sengupta similarly disposed towards Ruskin. She encouraged my line of thinking and advised me to pursue a full-fledged study of the author who, both of us agreed, deserved serious attention. Professor Sengupta’s guidance helped me write the first scholarly article, apart from this thesis, on Ruskin. The article was subsequently read and commented upon by Professor Alok Bhalla of CIEFL and my former teacher Professor Supriya Choudhury of the Department of English at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. Two other readers were commissioned to read my essay and suggest improvement before it was printed in The

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My investigations led me to discover among others the influence of the Armenian-American author William Saroyan on Ruskin. I was awarded the Fulbright Doctoral and Professional Fellowship for the session 2007-2008 to pursue research on the concerns of identity shared by the two authors. I worked at the Saroyan archives in California State University, Fresno and the Mugar Memorial Special Collections Library at Boston University (where Ruskin’s letters and personal memorabilia are conserved) in the USA. Dr. Steve Adisasmito-Smith of the Department of English at CSU, Fresno and Dr. Dickran Kouymjian and Dr. Barlow der Mugredechian of the Armenian Studies Program of the same varsity have been my academic mentors through my nine months’ fellowship in the USA. My academic pursuits in the USA, however, would have remained incomplete if I did not come across the popular Fresno-based writer John Walke. Walke, an Anglo-Indian by descent and an American by naturalization, improved my understanding of the Anglo-Indian dilemma in general and exposed me to the diasporic community in the USA. My friendship with Mr Walke has gravitated into a sort of kinship. Without his personal help, I could not have maximized by endeavour abroad.

I am indebted to the authorities of The Statesman, Kolkata, for helping me access their archives. Some of the first publications of Ruskin were in this paper in the 1950s and 60s. I feel grateful to the support and cooperation of my colleagues in the Department of English at Presidency College, Kolkata, without which I would not have been granted
the sabbatical to work in the USA and EFLU in Hyderabad. I acknowledge the help and support of all who have in different ways contributed to the completion of this work. I have no words to thank my wife, Aditi, and 7-year-old daughter, Anwesha, for the support they offered me through encouragement in words and deeds like patient tolerance of my prolonged absence from their immediate company.