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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Preface -- 1 Ex ore infantium: Literacy and Elementary Educational Practices in Late Medieval England -- 2 Singing the New Song: Literacy, Clerical Identity, and the Discourse of Choral Community -- 3 Legere et non intellegere negligere est: The Politics of Understanding -- 4 Extragrammatical Literacies and the Latinity of the Laity -- 5 "Pe lomes þat y labore with": Vernacular Poetics, Clergie, and the Repertoire of Reading and Singing in Piers Plowman -- 6 Reading, Singing, and Publication in The Canterbury Tales -- Notes -- Bibliography -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	In Singing the New Song, Katherine Zieman examines the institutions and practices of the liturgy as central to changes in late medieval English understandings of the written word. Where previous studies have described how writing comes to supplant oral forms of communication or how it objectifies relations of power formerly transacted through ritual and ceremony, Zieman shifts the critical gaze to the ritual performance of written texts in the liturgy-effectively changing the focus from writing to reading. Beginning with a history of the elementary educational institution known to modern scholars as the "song school," Zieman shows the continued centrality of liturgical and devotional texts to the earliest stages of literacy training and spiritual

formation. Originally, these schools were created to provide liturgical training for literate adult performers who had already mastered the grammatical arts. From the late thirteenth century on, however, the attention and resources of both lay and clerical patrons came to be devoted specifically to young boys, centering on their function as choristers. Because choristers needed to be trained before they received instruction in grammar, the liturgical skills of reading and singing took on a different meaning. This shift in priorities, Zieman argues, is paradigmatic of broader cultural changes, in which increased interest in liturgical performance and varying definitions attached to "reading and singing" caused these practices to take on a life of their own, unyoked from their original institutional settings of monastery and cathedral. Unmoored from the context of the choral community, reading and singing developed into discrete, portable skills that could be put to use in a number of contexts, sacred and secular, Latin and vernacular. Ultimately, they would be carried into a wider public sphere, where they would be transformed into public modes of discourse appropriated by vernacular writers such as Geoffrey Chaucer and William Langland.
