



Lifewriting Annual

DeBoer-Langworthy, C. 2022.  
Introduction to Volume 5. *Lifewriting Annual*, 5(1): pp. 1-4. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/la.9575>



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## Introduction to Volume 5

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This document introduces Volume 5, the first publication of *Lifewriting Annual* in a new open-access format through the Open Library of Humanities. More articles will be added as the year 2022 unwinds—all to be considered part of Volume 5 (2022). We are delighted to offer scholarly work in the field of lifewriting in this manner.

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So here is Volume 5 of *Lifewriting Annual: Biographical and Autobiographical Studies* in its new electronic form after years of print publication. We are delighted to introduce some well-marinated pre-pandemic work that has benefitted from contagion-era refinement and revision, even while this inaugural “issue” itself is still growing. What you are reading now is an initial unveiling of a volume that will conclude on 31 December 2022 and represent all content available as of that date.

Thereafter, everything we publish within a given year will be—even while appearing the moment it is ready on a rolling basis—part of that year’s volume. Subsequent volumes will comprise material for their calendar years. Thus, work on Volume 6 opens on 1 January 2023.

As we become more proficient in the sophisticated software operating in the background of this screen, we may collate writings for Special Collections on related topics across the years and from various volumes. One such ongoing topic is “Lifewriting and Islam.” As we wrote in a Call for Papers in 2014, we seek work that investigates lifewriting as it intersects with Islam across time and the world. We invite submissions that engage with representations of Islam and Islamic culture with lives in/through biography, autobiography, essays, historical narrative, memoirs, journals, diaries, and letters. Please consult our Authors’ Guide for specifications on format.

In fact, our two opening articles here result from that pre-pandemic call. Valerie Kennedy’s “Mixing Genres to Overcome the East/West Divide” offers a way of reading together Egyptian novelist Ahdaf Soueif’s fictional *The Map of Love* and her mentor Edward Said’s *After the Last Sky* and *Out of Place: A Memoir* as texts in conversation about mental and physical displacement. Kennedy, a longtime professor of English at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, thus exploits Margareta Jolly’s definition of lifewriting as a generous form that implies “openness and inclusiveness across genres, and ... encompasses the writing of another’s life” (2001, ix).<sup>1</sup> Kennedy’s use of Soueif’s work perhaps echoes the current rise in “biofiction” that justifies the use of fiction as a method/form of biography. Soueif’s work and existence will be referenced again in our forthcoming reprint of the late poet Meena Alexander’s “Journey to Jerusalem.”

We also present Sanna Dhahir’s “What Life is Like for Creative Women in Saudi Arabia.” This piece stems from Prof. Dhahir’s innovative senior seminar in research methodology at Effat University, a new private university for women in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Dhahir’s research on contemporary literature by Saudi women writers prompted her to invite living authors (or in one case, an actor) to visit her class and talk about their lives. Each guest made a presentation and answered students’ questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Jolly, Margareta. 2001. *Encyclopedia of Life Writing. Autobiographical and Biographical Forms*. New York: Routledge.

The speakers illustrated different positions and beliefs, ranging, as Prof. Dhahir writes, “from outright opposition to moderate or total acceptance of traditional social values.” Her current research focuses on Saudi literature written by such female authors as Raja Alem and Badriyya Al-Bishr.

We also are delighted to share access to the four volumes previously published by AMS Press of New York. Authors of those works now hold copyright to their published efforts via the CC BY 4.0 (Creative Commons) license.

Our staff comprises Jason Li, Graphics Editor; Sylvia (“Lexi”) Rolloff, Associate Editor; Rob Ward, Book Reviews Editor, and Thomas R. Smith, Consulting Editor; with me as Editor-in-Chief. (Yes, this is the same Tom Smith who edited this publication for many years; we value his counsel in perpetuating quality editing.) This volume was aided by the close copyediting of Cleo Abramian, who has since moved on after graduate school. That function is being filled by two undergraduate students expanding their copyediting skills in a Group Independent Study Project (GISP) at Brown University. We welcome Dana Toneva, and Lily Lustig to our ranks.

All that said, we have an opening for an Assistant Editor, otherwise known as chief copy editor. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in digital humanities, editing, and/or publishing and want to learn by doing.

We are honored to be hosted by the innovative Open Library of Humanities (OLH) at Birkbeck, University of London. We also have been and continue to be grateful for the support of the Dean of the Faculty and the Nonfiction Writing Program in the Department of English at Brown University, Providence, RI, USA.

Lifewriting, in its myriad forms, is a global phenomenon documenting not only the condition of humans on the planet, but the life of the planet itself. We invite people to suggest topics worth considering, including those for Special Collections that you might guest-edit.

We are thrilled to be back in the stream of publishing and look forward to your responses.

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### **Competing Interests**

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

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