

## ABSTRACT

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The Days Are Gods: A Life in Place

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“Theorizing voice as a construct in life writing,” Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson write, “has not yet been the focus of sustained critical attention.” They whittle the myriad ways this idea might be approached down to two elemental questions: “How might we understand our attribution of a particular ‘voice’ to life writing?” and “And how do we theorize the relationship of voice to autobiographical acts?” In plainer language, what factors influence an author’s construction of a voice in tone and syntax for a particular piece or oeuvre; and how might we as theorists and readers examine the author’s choices across any given work, from whole book to specific event?

In this work, Stephens includes her dissertation memoir, as well as a critical examination of her use of first-person narration in that body of work.