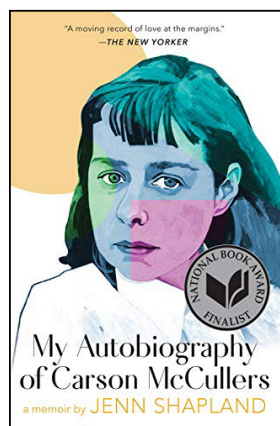


aware of these issues, and I can think of no better text to begin that process than *Library Services and Incarceration*. Austin's writing is powerful in its urgency and its liberatory promise. Their book encourages us to confront biases—both internal and external—and injustices, rather than shaming us for the sins of mass incarceration. As an abolitionist library worker and doctoral student, this book gives me hope for the future of LIS; it also reminds me that there is still so much to do.—Megan Riley, *University of California, Los Angeles*

**Jenn Shapland.** *My Autobiography of Carson McCullers*. New York, NY: Tin House, 2020. 296p. Paper, \$16.95 (ISBN: 978-1-951142-29-2).

In my conversations with students interested in librarianship, I have noted a shared awe regarding archival work and assembly. Archives and archivists' work shimmer with frisson: the tension between the public and the personal, the privilege of accessing someone's most private selves. And it is through the use of archives that hidden lives are made public, celebrated, or obscured. In the hands of a writer or filmmaker (see Todd Haynes's new *The Velvet Underground* or Angelo Madsen Minax's astonishing *North by Current*), there's a collaborative relationship between creator and archivist negotiating with the past to curate and contextualize. There's a call to create, a response, and a responsibility.



Jenn Shapland's *My Autobiography of Carson McCullers* is best described as a piece of braided nonfiction. Brief vignettes about Shapland's life and research are intertwined with descriptions of letters, transcripts, photographs, and novels from the nine archival collections referenced. The narrative traverses time and location, landing the reader in the Ransom Center's reading room and in the bathtub of McCullers's childhood home where Shapland spends a residency soaking, reading, and

writing. The intimacy Shapland forges with the McCullers of the archives is deep, earnest, and compassionate.

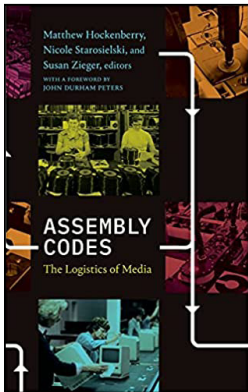
Conversations with librarians are not the focus of Shapland's project, but archives are everywhere, from her own internship at the Ransom Center to her residency at the Carson McCullers Center for Writers and Musicians. The initial connection between Shapland and McCullers is sparked in an archive when Shapland uncovers a transcript of a session between McCullers and her therapist and likely lover, Dr. Mary Mercer. In it, McCullers recounted her boyfriend Reeves asking her at nineteen if she was a lesbian. She denied it, but admitted to intense relationships with women. Recognizing in Carson the queerness that shaped her own identity, Shapland set out to uncover as much as she could about McCullers's love of women. Her McCullers was a lesbian and not, as her biographers have described her, a confused woman in a loving but starcrossed relationship with Reeves, the man she married twice.

Shapland interrogates the erasure of queerness in the archives and in literary biography. Dr. Mercer herself "refused biographers permission to use [McCullers and Mercer's] letters (those that existed). Her censorship was thorough" (40). Shapland recognizes Dr. Mercer's erasure as a love letter to McCullers's privacy, reading between the lines that Mary knew "Carson better than her biographers, better than so many of the people around her" (193). The nature of historical censorship, regardless of intent, is in sharp focus, as are intersecting representations of the writing life, chronic illness, mental health, alcoholism, self-care, and the trauma of being publicly queer when queerness in itself was considered an illness. *My*

*Autobiography of Carson McCullers* is a masterclass in close reading and discovery. Shapland's experience is so interwoven with her reading of the McCullers archive that it is difficult to read this book as anything other than a mending of the fabric of queer literary heritage.

While I found this book revelatory and intimate as a reader, it holds special significance for knowledge workers who connect to the romantic allure of the role: the keeper of secrets and history, preserving and describing that which cannot be digitized. Archivists will find a deep appreciation for Shapland's descriptions of archival work. One highlight: as a Ransom Center intern, Shapland catalogued McCullers's housedresses and intricately embroidered coats. She recounts how intensely she focused on the details of the clothing, lamenting that, "I measured and photographed each piece from several angles, never very satisfied with my ability to recreate the life I saw and felt in the clothes" (100). The descriptions are loving and tender (this book is very much a love letter) and librarians and archivists are likely to appreciate the care with which Shapland consults her sources. Additionally, the book is a reminder to archivists that collecting and preserving artifacts carries a responsibility to be as contextually honest as possible. This book is a must for university collections with an emphasis on Southern literature, literary archives, and queer history. — *Ashley Roach-Freiman, University of Memphis*

*Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media*. Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021. 248p. Paper, \$26.95 (ISBN: 978-1478010760).



"Logistical media" isn't a common term in the world of libraries and archives; a cursory search for it in the database LISTA returns zero results. *Assembly Codes: The Logistics of Media* persuaded me within about three pages, however, that it should be. In the book's coinage, logistical media are media of "orientation": clocks, inventories, spreadsheets, communications satellites, even postage stamps (3). Tools that enable the creation, arrangement, and distribution of goods and services, "[l]ogistical media are processual; they orient, locate, and organize words, things, people, and data" (96). Examples in information professions abound: linked data, thesauri, RFID tags, and integrated library systems, but also book trucks, couriers, shelving, and signage.

This edited volume's essays explore media as a global commodity whose production and dissemination rely on extensive physical and digital logistics—and global logistics as a system that depends equally upon media for execution. If commodification is the what of capitalism and surplus value the why, logistics is the how: the "organization and coordination of resources to manufacture and distribute" product around the world (1). Logistical media, then, are commodities whose end product is optimization and efficiency. The book's overarching argument is that media and logistics are best understood as co-constitutive. Telegraph wires, to cite one example, required the cross-country distribution of timber for poles. Because that distribution proved logistically feasible, the telegraph achieved prominence as a media form (15). At what cost and for what ends are questions at the core of many contributors' arguments.

*Assembly Codes* and its editors, Matthew Hockenberry, Nicole Starosielski, and Susan Zieger, are situated within media studies. However, the volume's topically diverse but thematically cohesive contents are broadly accessible and relevant to library, archives, and information workers. Essays range from philosophical to nuts-and-bolts and span analyses