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Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- List of Abbreviations -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction. A Clutch of Brothers: Alterity and Autothanatography -- 1. Developments in Character: "The Children's Punishment" and "The Broken Comb" -- 2. Regard for the Other: Embarrassment in the Quatrième promenade -- 3. The Shape before the Mirror: Autobiography and the Dandy in Baudelaire -- 4. Hospitality in Autobiography: Levinas chez De Quincey -- 5. Eating with the Other in Les Paradis artificiels -- 6. Secrets Can Be Murder: How to Write the Secret in De Profundis -- Notes -- Works Cited -- Index
Sommario/riassunto	Although much has been written on autobiography, the same cannot be said of autothanatography, the writing of one's death. This study starts from the deconstructive premise that autobiography is aporetic, not or

not only a matter of a subject strategizing with language to produce an exemplary identity but a matter also of its responding to an exorbitant call to write its death. The I-dominated representations of particular others and of the privileged other to whom a work is addressed, must therefore be set against an alterity plaguing the I from within or shadowing it from without. This alterity makes itself known in writing as the potential of the text to carry messages that remain secret to the confessing subject. Anticipation of the potential for the confessional text to say what Augustine calls "the secret I do not know," the secret of death, engages the autothanatographical subject in a dynamic, inventive, and open-ended process of identification. The subject presented in these texts is not one that has already evolved an interior life that it seeks to reveal to others, but one that speaks to us as still in process. Through its exorbitant response, it gives intimations of an interiority and an ethical existence to come. Baudelaire emerges as a central figure for this understanding of autobiography as autothanatography through his critique of the narcissism of a certain Rousseau, his translation of De Quincey's confessions, with their vertiginously ungrounded subject-in-construction, his artistic practice of self-conscious, thorough-going doubleness, and his service to Wilde as model for an aporetic secrecy. The author discusses the interruption of narrative that must be central to the writing of one's death and addresses the I's dealings with the aporias of such structuring principles as secrecy, Levinasian hospitality, or interiorization as translation. The book makes a strong intervention in the debate over one of the most-read genres of our time.

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