

The
Nearest
Thing to
Life

JAMES WOOD

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY PRESS
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Brandeis University Press

An imprint of University Press of New England

www.upne.com

© 2015 James Wood

All rights reserved

Manufactured in the United States of America

Designed by Eric M. Brooks

Typeset in Albertina Pro by Passumpsic Publishing

For permission to reproduce any of the material in this book,
contact Permissions, University Press of New England, One Court
Street, Suite 250, Lebanon NH 03766; or visit www.upne.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wood, James, 1965–

The nearest thing to life / James Wood.

pages cm. — (Mandel Center for the Humanities lectures)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-61168-741-5 (cloth: alk. paper)—

ISBN 978-1-61168-742-2 (pbk.: alk. paper)—

ISBN 978-1-61168-743-9 (ebook)

1. Wood, James, 1965– 2. Critics— Great Britain— Biography.

I. Title.

PR55.W55A3 2015

801'.95092—dc23 2014035115

5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

1	Why?	1
2	Serious Noticing	31
3	Using Everything	65
4	Secular Homelessness	93
	Acknowledgments	125
	Notes	127