

Gina Filo Publishes *Shattering the Self in Early Modern English Verse*

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English Department Assistant Professor Gina Filo recently published a book, *Shattering the Self in Early Modern English Verse: Gender, Sex, and Queerness Beyond the Human*, with Northwestern University Press on December 15. The book explores English Renaissance poetry and themes of desire, gender, and the human within it.

“More specifically, it’s about how early modern English poets often leaned into forms of desire and sexual encounter that allowed them to erase boundaries of the individual self, of gender, and of species, courting both self-annihilation and pleasurable recombinations that defy categorization,” Gina notes. “In so doing, they are able to articulate new, generative, forms of selfhood and relationality and revise our understandings of gender, desire, and human status in Renaissance England.”

Gina accidentally started working on the book as a graduate student taking a seminar on metaphysical poetry and enjoying John Donne’s poetry and its refusal to be confined within the gender binary. Her paper for that class grew into her first academic article but the questions it raised continued to intrigue her.

“How did early modern people use desire to negotiate difference? To what extent did they seek out and embrace the breakdown of categories like gender and the human? What might this mean for us today? I realized that these

were the questions I wanted to write my dissertation on, and the dissertation grew into this book,” Gina shares.

The book isn’t just for those who love Renaissance poetry but also for those who are interested in resistance to the dominant ideas of gender, sexuality, and how to live in our bodies. “This is a book in many ways about hope — looking to the past not to see ourselves reflected back but rather to show that there has been and will be an endless expanse of possibility for living our desires, our bodies, and ourselves,” Gina reflects.