

*Dear Everyone*, by Matt Shears (Brooklyn Arts Press, 2016)

reviewed by David Luna

*Dear Everyone* by Matt Shears is a book published in December 2016 by Brooklyn Arts Press. *Dear Everyone* is a unique work of poetry which is written as poem and at the same time read like a novel. It feels like a novel because of the heavy prose implemented in the work, but manages to feel poetic thanks to its abstraction. It directly references the topics being critiqued, but leaves what is being said open to interpretation. Here's an example:

“Xenophobes may disambiguate, impressing purposeful radars. But who? Trend squatters. (Sheers 12)

Despite never losing its poetic rhythm, the four sections of poems that make up this book have a distinct lack of poetic elements. The poems may be separated by section, but they do not differ in tone or form. The tone itself feels very sardonic and ashamed, but is balanced with good humor and fast paced writing. Such as:

“Cancer or experimental treatment? Beauty died like a dog. Forensic is absolute because it's not you, it's me, enshrined in a flaccid husk.”(Sheers 85-86)

Despite the content talked about jumping around or being presented in different ways, the form in which the lines are structured stay consistent. The form which persists throughout the book includes around 20 lines a page with a centered block like structure. One example of the content being presented differently is in the second section, it begins similarly to the first as a prose poem, however it eventually becomes a list of reasons to kill that carries on until the end of the section. The book's themes help the book as whole feel

connected as a critique on today's society. The poems all have a very quick paced style of jumping from topic to topic and image to image:

“Informants need not apply. Suicide bombers need not apply poultices. Bystanders need not investigate. Believe in psychology and wonderment. These pills are for everyone. Dear Everyone: I love you one and all.”(Sheers 47)

*Dear Everyone* is a unique reading experience worth trying out for any poetry lover who wants to try something a bit more daring and ambitious.