In early modern lyric poetry, the male poet or lover often appears not as powerful and masterly but rather as broken, abject, and feminine. Catherine Bates examines the cultural and literary strategies behind this representation and uncovers radically alternative models of masculinity in the lyric tradition of the Renaissance. Focusing on Sidney, Ralegh, Shakespeare, and Donne, she offers astute new readings of a wide range of texts – a sonnet sequence, a blazon, an elegy, a complaint, and an epistle. She shows how existing critical approaches have too much invested in the figure of the authoritative male writer to be able to do justice to the truly radical nature of these alternative masculinities. Taking direction from recent psychoanalytic theories of gender formation, Bates develops critical strategies that make it possible to understand and appreciate what is genuinely revolutionary about these texts and about the English Renaissance lyric tradition at large.

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Abbreviations

C  Criticism
CI  Critical Inquiry
EC  Essays in Criticism
ELH  English Literary History
ELN  English Language Notes
ELR  English Literary Renaissance
JEGP  Journal of English and Germanic Philology
MLN  Modern Language Notes
MLQ  Modern Language Quarterly
MLR  Modern Language Review
MP  Modern Philology
OED  Oxford English Dictionary
PMLA  Publications of the Modern Language Association of America
PQ  Philological Quarterly
RES  Review of English Studies
Rh  Rhetorica
RP  Renaissance Papers
RR  Romanic Review
SAR  South Atlantic Review
SCJ  Sixteenth Century Journal
SCR  South Central Review
SE  The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of
SEL  Studies in English Literature 1500–1900
SP  Studies in Philology
SQ  Shakespeare Quarterly
SS  Spenser Studies
SSEL  Salzburg Studies in English Literature
St  Style
TLS  Times Literary Supplement
TSLL  Texas Studies in Language and Literature