



# Dear Lover,

*Lori Jenessa Nelson*

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## **Dear Lover,** Lori Jenessa Nelson

Dear Lover, is a poetry collection about hope and heartbreak, about love in its short, long, and temporary forms, about how love can be cloaked in abuse, how love can build us or break us, the hard and soft of it, the good, the bad, and the completely atrocious.

Written in letter format, the poetry includes a couple sonnets, a villanelle, and a pantoum among the formal verse poetry, but a lot of it is an experimentation with prose poetry, though it includes lots of free verse also.

## **Dear Lover, Details**

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Author : Lori Jenessa Nelson

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# From Reader Review Dear Lover, for online ebook

## Audri says

First of all, thank you to author Lori Jenessa Nelson for reaching out to me and sending a review copy.

*Dear Lover* was such a beautiful collection of poems ranging from love and longing. The poetry was intricately woven yet very simple to get into at the same time. There was something very vulnerable and honest about the pieces in the book that made me want to savor each one. The extended metaphors and witty wordplay were pleasantly done.

I am in no way an expert at analyzing nor criticizing poetry. But it is something I enjoy reading thoroughly. Some of them I found quite repetitive therefore I did not read it in one sitting as I expected. Instead, I read snippets here and there and found that it was a great way to enjoy it.

Nevertheless, I really liked it.

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## Stella says

**Dear Lover,  
You will be my souvenir in American summer,  
when all i can think about are Parisian springs.**

I was truly excited to receive a copy of this brilliant collection of poems via a Goodreads giveaway. This was the very first time i got round to reading poetry in English and was glad to find out that it was not another bunch of overly sentimental/corny love story(ies).

Lori Nelson takes us through the world of relationships through her experiences, falling in and out of love, through hurt and pain. Apology, penance and recovery.

Charmingly personal and raw Nelson's poetry managed to tug at my heartstrings.

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## Erin Clements says

**"Loving you was like jumping into the dark side of a pool: all deep thoughts and displaced stomachs and a curious feeling of falling and flying, a distant splash, submersion, the loss of reality, floating, eyes blinking open, everything blurred, ethereal, light glowing, streaks of sun light, legs thrashing, weightless feeling, heavenly, feeling somehow not alive, but much more than dead, an unyielding peace, and finally, I have wings and I am an angel flying gently, soaring, warm, warm, lightheaded, deaf to everything but the sweet timbre of your voice."**

Lori Jenessa Nelson reached out to me and asked me to write a review for *Dear Lover*, but that has no reflection upon my honest feelings about the book, which are reflected honestly in this review. I absolutely loved this book. It's beautiful, relatable, emotional, and sure to conjure memories of loves long forgotten. I can almost guarantee that *Dear Lover*, will inspire, ignite, rekindle, or at the very least, bring back memories of a long-lost love while you read it. It's an all around fantastic novel, and I can't wait to read it again.

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## **Pamela says**

Weaving together images of togetherness and aloneness, Lori Nelson blends prose and poetry to capture moments in the lives of two people. Some of the individual pieces are exuberant, while others have a poignancy and the bittersweet memory of holding on to love lost. The collection is written in almost a diary-like format with each poem addressed to "Dear Lover." Perhaps the lover is one or many, no matter. Nelson's writing captures our first loves, our lost loves, and the ones we cherish.

Dear Lover never descends into sentimental mush, rather the poems are playful, intense, and thoughtful. One of my favorites on page 25 blends a magical spell with wistfulness and the sights and sounds of Christmas while "making wishes on dead stars." There is an honest physicality to the poems, recalling moments of passion while maintaining a connection to the here and now. Nelson revels in sensory elements you can feel, and smell, and taste in the poems: "and love was in my window/and you were in my doorway/knocking, morning glories in hand/button up, dress suit/cuff links/and there was no one but you/lined in velvet/cloaked in silk/dipped in honey/rolled in sugar/offering pockets full/of love."

There are also poems that deal with pain, fear, and shame; a telling of mistakes made when passion is new but unreliable; poems of graphic sex without love. Another memorable one strikes out the words: "I need for you to," and finishes with the unbearably sad: "pretend you love me."

Looking at the complete book, it may be the record of many lovers or perhaps it traces the trajectory of one relationship with all its ups and downs. Intensely personal and at the same time universal, it ends with a retrospective understanding and acceptance of both self and the other. Overall the tone to the book is a joyous celebration of love.

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## **Kevin Eleven says**

With "Dear Lover," Lori Nelson proves to be impactful and as well as polished for a debut author. Her prose is beautifully written as she utilizes the core aesthetics of what it means to be a writer of such caliber while simultaneously breaking conventions along the way. What "Dear Lover," doesn't have in length, Nelson provides it through content and substance. The most interesting part about her book of poetry is its schizophrenic nature in expressing ode poems of love to someone significant. Furthermore, what makes this a compelling read is that Nelson never clarifies upon whether the lover at hand is one specific individual or one in a million as many of the poems are centered around the highs and lows of a lover and her relationship with them. Thusly, "Dear Lover," makes for an outstanding read and a fantastic debut by a new writer. Not only is it well written, its introspection, humor and as well as quirky allusions to food, clothing, life and pop culture definitely gives it a relevant voice in today's "Lover" society.

- Kevin Anglade (Founder & Editor at Flowered Concrete)

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## Gianna says

Lori Nelson elegantly captures snapshots of new beginnings, buttery romance, intimacy, and foreboding endings in "Dear Lover." In my opinion, unanimous anxiety and panic attacks are sometimes the result of anything related to relationships, love, and connecting. Therefore, I must say that I really enjoyed the vulnerability, and sincerity aspects of Lori's poetry. Moreover, she offers the reader waves of relief with speckles of spicy and quirky humor amidst the lover's angst tale. Additionally, I enjoyed the steadily matched shift in the protagonist's voice in each chapter and stage as she gradually begins to arc. "Dear Lover" sculpts a vivid journey from love to loss and from bargaining to a ventilating catharsis of reflection on lessons learned from past relationships. Overall, I felt this book parallels both the roller-coaster pitfalls of love and life. It has something to offer to everyone and I definitely recommend checking it out.

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## Fiona says

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Overall, I felt this book **parallels both the roller-coaster pitfalls of love and life.** It has something to offer to everyone and I definitely recommend checking it out.

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## Veraccolacci Astanei says

It's not the typical way of writing poetry, Lori has a very unique and personal way of showing us some stories. Takes us among the relationships and experiences that she has been through and invites us to live the roller coaster of feelings and lets us explore love in all her ways.

I want to say, she expressed what I have failed to do, in just the right words...

It's a unique format since the notebook cover. It is so logical and at the same time is full of metaphors. Graphical and Subjective. Smart and it's foolish as well.

It's worth a read. And completely a second read too.

Originally posted on: <http://onceuponabookva.blogspot.mx>

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## Dave says

I love 'Dear Lover'!

This work is choc-a-bloc with astute observations – a great foreword, making analogies between the emotions and the textures of various clothing fibres; worn-out, well-used clothes can enhance a lover's allure. Garments can be metaphors for relationships: "We can save this sweater with whipstitches and embroidery floss. There's a tearing in the middle. We can be a cardigan." "Love has unravelled. The apology patches have no fabric to hug any more. The thread of sincerity is sewn into nothing. It is a skin that hangs loose and useless, waiting to shed. It is time for a new sweater. We have worn this one bare."

Later on, she uses the physicality of a bed, the 'blanket fortress' as a metaphor for erotic moves between her and her partner. Lovely idea of equating deep sleep with total trust in one's lover. Later there is food for thought with the erotic connotations of a 'blanket of invisibility'.

There is a strong moralistic element in this collection, witness its category headings of Shame, Promises, Promises, Taking Advantage, Compromise and Comparison, Apology, Penance, Recovery. There is the thrill of the forbidden; a lover can be dark and menacing. In real life, close friends and relatives often wonder what someone sees in someone else's partner. This factor is incorporated into Lori's vision: "I don't know why I love you with sightless eyes when clearly, you are visually unappealing." She is honest about her past role as victim: "and you took advantage of a young, stupid girl." Though she has some feelings of having been a 'whore', she is aware of the sadism of lovers who want to take all and give nothing.

I find this work absolutely riveting; totally all-embracing in its reference, in a cosmic and spiritual context ("you are the axis and I am the moon" "Our reckless plan was to dig a tunnel through the unshed tears of the faceless moon"), embracing the idylls of euphoria and the pain/bitterness of disillusionment and ill-treatment – a work of absolute honesty. Some statements of incredible profundity, such as "We were never two halves waiting to find a match, but two wholes searching for a bond that would be unbreakable".

The chemistry of love is expressed with scientific precision: ". . . foul truths like chemical equations/where poisonous gases could combine/with platinum to create cocktails/my body would crave,/your equation of drug, euthanizing love's rabid dog."

She forges close links between the processes of the imagination and first-hand sensation: "I whispered sonnets to let my heart hold your love while your heart is holding mine." "The clean lines of your form make a muse, so I sketch you whenever you're not looking." The world of the imagination is akin to a climax of love: "so we are real inside our book." There's abundant food for thought in 'a Portuguese translation of unsentiment'. The imagination can sometimes, rightly, take over from real life: "Let my thighs be your guides. You are welcome to read between them." Love can have the permanent power of an antique, authoritarian book. People can become script: "I knew love to be our blinded braille. We were a star scribbled in erasable color pencil." People can also become art materials: "We were a flaming star painted in a brash stroke/heedless of time etching strokes on our backs."

The relationship of addiction to heartache, and creativity, is confronted head-on:

"Being drunk is like a dreamless sleep, and it's the only time that I can escape you and the way you made me feel unlovely. I've been shrinking. I feel my heart is not within me, I exist outside of myself, but my chest burns still, and continuously. I've switched from gin back to vodka to give the nothingness an

impressionistic texture this time.”

The issue of domestic violence is also raised.

The totality of love embraces the polarities of high and low: “Loving you was against physics, a disaster, unpredicted. But I wanted to love you again and again. Loving you was like jumping into the dark side of a pool, and drowning.” Indeed, being absorbed into water and air can mean total self-destruction. It has a close relationship with vulnerability, but it be ‘the baptism of a galaxy’. The reciprocity of love is proclaimed; it is left to the reader’s imagination as to whether this has a durable foundation in experience, or remains an ideal – out of reach, or touched on fleetingly to give an illusion of perfection. “I wanted you seeing you in me while I saw me in you . . . I wanted you broken. I wanted you whole.” For all her celebration of the ideal, Lori does not flinch from the realities of disillusionment and the need to separate: “Being alone is better than being your whore.” One such trashed her wardrobe and her cosmetics to prevent her from being attractive to other men. Once, what might have seemed a perfect lover turned out to be ‘pollution in my garden of sun, a worm in my apple orchard, a cancer on my lung’. In *Casual Happenings* Lori is the outspoken agent of rejection. But some rejections have escape clauses, or implicit threats: “I kept the key to your apartment”.

She faces the dichotomy between lust and love: “Look, my vagina really likes you. As for the rest of me, I cannot speak on the subject.” The *Taking Advantage* section faces the issue of failed contraception. For anyone who has several partners, and experience with one can make one party replay an experience with another partner – perhaps one of greater depth and value. Significant comment towards the end: “I’ve had more intimate sex and deeper conversations with one-night stands.” Indeed, the edited, encapsulated quality of a one-night stand, remaining as a cherished memory, can reach great heights in the direction of perfection.

Promises, promises recognise that impulsive commitment to love can be perilous; a degree of cynicism is sometimes salutary: “I was afraid that they were just words, but oh, now, how I wish they were.”

Indeed the *Shame* section makes no bones about disgust and disillusionment with a pathetic and despicable partner, and the right to an independent identity:

“I informed you briskly at the beginning of this thing, that I, although female, cannot bear the burden of relationships on the breadth of my hips, and that I, even with the support of the most fabulous bra, cannot hold the weight of your heart upon my chest, as I only have room for my own organs.” Relationships can hurt: “I have never known a sword to be as sharp as the interest of a jealous boy or the edges of a broken heart.”

Disillusionment can be profound: “Your disbelief in gravity never made you fly. Your anger with me never darkened the sky. A desperate need of finances never made money appear. Your empty threats no longer fill me with fear. You have been hoping to change me. You have hoped impossibilities.”

*Compromise and Comparison* offers a clear-headed appraisal of gestures directed towards long-term relationships: “Double check the highlighted sections and the fine print/remember, there are no returns or exchanges if hearts are broken.”

One passage in *Sweet Somethings* embraces legend and myth, laced with impassioned hyperbole – “You are Indian elephants and their African cousins . . .”

Lori has definitely succeeded in combining lucidity with complexity. She has succeeded well with the ‘epistolary’ approach to writing – i.e. putting some of the story in letter form. This was the way in which

novels were first written, and it seems to be coming back because of the net; lots of new fiction heavily laced with email and text messages – highly valid for the here and now. Lori shows great originality in sometimes coupling a prose letter coupled with a poem. I think it is good to break down arbitrary barriers between poetry and fiction.

David Russell

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## **Xian Xian says**

This was received for an honest review

This is a poetry book that I never knew existed. There's a lot of poetry that goes unrecognized because it wasn't published by a "big four" publisher or a famous small press like Wave Books or something. This is the problem with poetry, it barely exists on mainstream platforms, at least from what I see, and it only succeeds if the author somehow gets their debut to insanity amounts of hype.

I like this, I don't love it to the ultimate max because I'm not that much into romantic poetry, but I think it's great for its genre in general. Much like Decaf by Naveed Khan. This is poetry written for that place in your heart and for those who are always in love and falling in love, people who love the feeling of romance and its grit.

And you can definitely feel the heat in this one and the flow of it is similar to hip-hop ( or slam poetry) and it is molded into the traditional folds of poetic forms such as the pantoum and villanelle. But at the same time it leaks out of the mold and forms a life on its own. It doesn't adhere to the strict rules of those poetry forms.

At first, based on the cover, I thought that it would be catered to the young adult audience, with the composition notebook look. But the inside, completely contradicts this sweet cover. On the inside is a series of letters ranging in happy I-love-yous to exhausted and frustrated I-love-yous. Unlike most romantic poetry, it focuses on the bad and good, it focuses on the awe of relationships to the muttering angry F yous to the lover to the completely breathless leave me alone.

Rating: 4.5/5

Originally posted here: <http://wordsnotesandfiction.blogspot....>

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## **Abi says**

Dear Lover, I love this poetry book! I never knew that love poetry could hold so many metaphors which work perfectly together, or that love poems could be so beautifully simple yet powerful and some so gritty!

I hung on every word and my imagination ran wild with all of the exquisite metaphors and imagery!

Most of these poems I could relate to fully and they each tell a story, but one in which they could all be part of as one.



So beautifully written. I will be re-reading these many times. Stunning!

\*I won this book as a First Reads giveaway and I have given an honest review!\*

So glad I won this, I missed poetry and this was the book I yearned for!

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### **Shana Fuentabella II says**

This is one of my favorite collections of poetry. Excellent poems! You are great in explaining your feels. Depth in simplicity, a rare gift. Lori, your poems continue to impart a wisdom that few people will ever achieve. Today, I discovered the poem, 'Dear Lover', and it literally took my breath away. You are an amazing poet. If I were only have a single book of poems about love, this would be my choice. While I don't typically read poetry, I have fallen in love with Lori Nelson's poetry and I look forward to reading more of her beautiful work.

This book is a must have for anyone who is interested in poetry. Anyone who is interested in love. And anyone who wants to laugh here and there at a general truth of people who are in love. A real good buy!

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### **Alexandra says**

You whispered, 'I hate you, with a smile because we cannot talk about our feelings.

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### **Abbie says**

**Dear Lover,**

**You whispered, "I hate you," with a smile because we cannot talk about our feelings. But, you in me was beautiful, and us, together, was extraordinary. But you hated me, didn't you? For being all that you ever wanted. And I hated you too, and loved you at the same time.**

I have never claimed to be an expert in analysing poems. I just like a poem that doesn't sound like a bunch of words thrown together and called art.

As I read this work of love and heartache I was enveloped in a blanket of emotions ranging from awe to anger, and to hurt. It wasn't a shallow tale of falling in love and losing the guy. There was a deeper, more complex problem that made me wish it was a novel instead of a poetry collection.

I liked the fact that the poems didn't all rhyme and that there was more imagery. But I do think that some phrases made me giggle (and made me hungry).

All in all I liked this collection and I thank the author for allowing me to read her work.

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## **MightyNobody says**

I received Dear Lover, by Lori Jenessa Nelson through a Goodreads giveaway. Being a hopeless romantic and because I've recently rekindled my interest in writing poetry I was really excited to check out this collection. I was pleasantly surprised. Not only did I really enjoy the way Nelson touched on the many facets of falling/being in and out of love but I was quite taken by her use of prose poetry and look forward to trying it out myself.

Nelson takes us on a journey through Love's many incarnations: from the ethereal idealism to the carnal physicality, the elegant beauty to the despicable ugliness and handles them deftly with her artistic use of language and words. I very much look forward to reading it again to find the subtleties that I missed on the initial reading. Thank you Lori for sharing with us. For anyone interested in love in any of its forms or if you enjoy wonderful poetry, devote some time to Dear Lover,. You will not be disappointed.

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