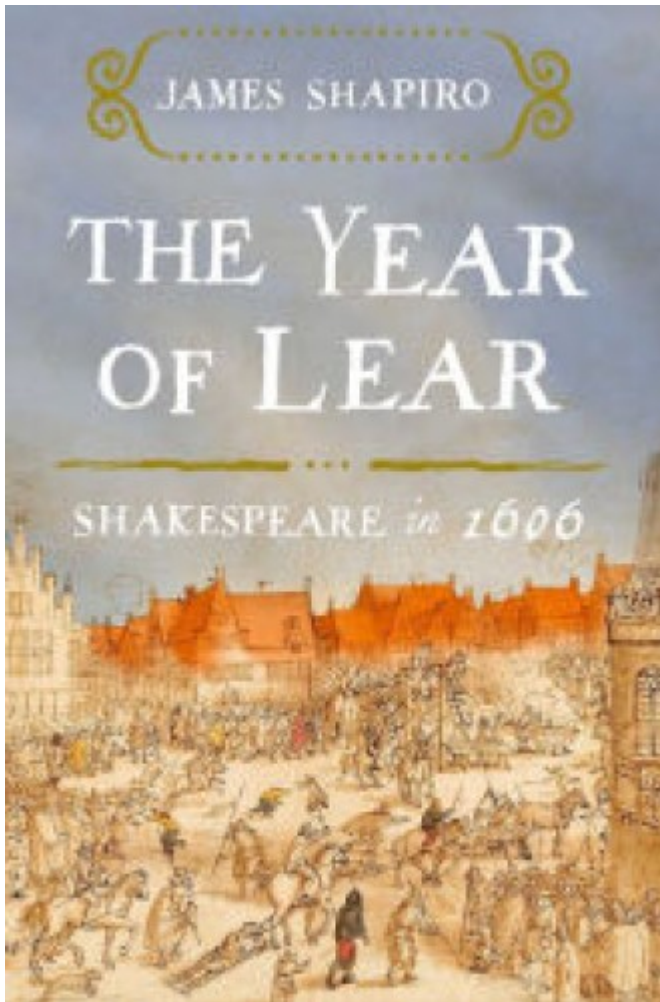


The Year of Lear, by James Shapiro

Books in the [June 8, 2016](#) issue

In Review



The Year of Lear

By James Shapiro
Simon & Schuster

From our 21st-century perch, William Shakespeare seems more reclusive than ever. Although we know little about his personal life and emotions, this book illumines one year up close. James Shapiro shows how the events and turmoil of 1606 in England

(including the attempted assassination of Scottish King James, the return of the plague, and new oppression of Catholics) affected Shakespeare and his family and friends. More profoundly, Shapiro shows how Shakespeare's rumination on the year's events poured into his works "in progress"—*King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*—which became the media event of his time: the play.