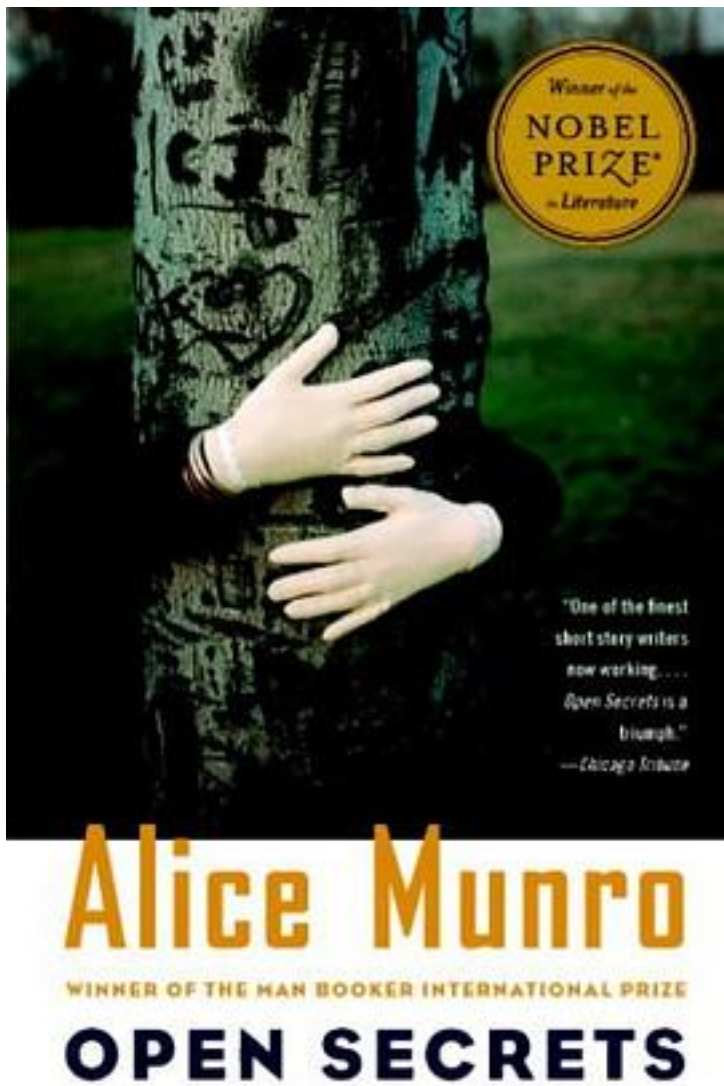


Open Secrets



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"Open Secrets" identifies an ethos of affirmative reticence and recessive action in Mme de Lafayette's "La Princesse de Cleves" (1678), Jane Austen's "Mansfield Park" (1814), and poems by William Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson, and Thomas Hardy. The author argues that these works locate fulfillment not in narrative fruition, but in grace understood both as a simplicity of formal means and a freedom from work, in particular that of self-concealment and self-presentation. Declining the twin pressures of self-actualization and self-denial defining modernity's call to make good on one's talents, the subjects of the "literature of uncounted experience" do nothing so heroic as renounce ambitions of self-expression; they simply set aside the fantasy of the all-responsible subject. The originality of "Open Secrets" is thus to imagine the non-instrumental without casting it as a heavy ethical burden. Non-appropriation emerges not as what is difficult to do but as the path of least resistance. The book offers a valuable counterpoint to recent anti-Enlightenment revaluations of passivity that have made non-mastery and non-appropriation the fundamental task of the ethical subject.

作者介绍:

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