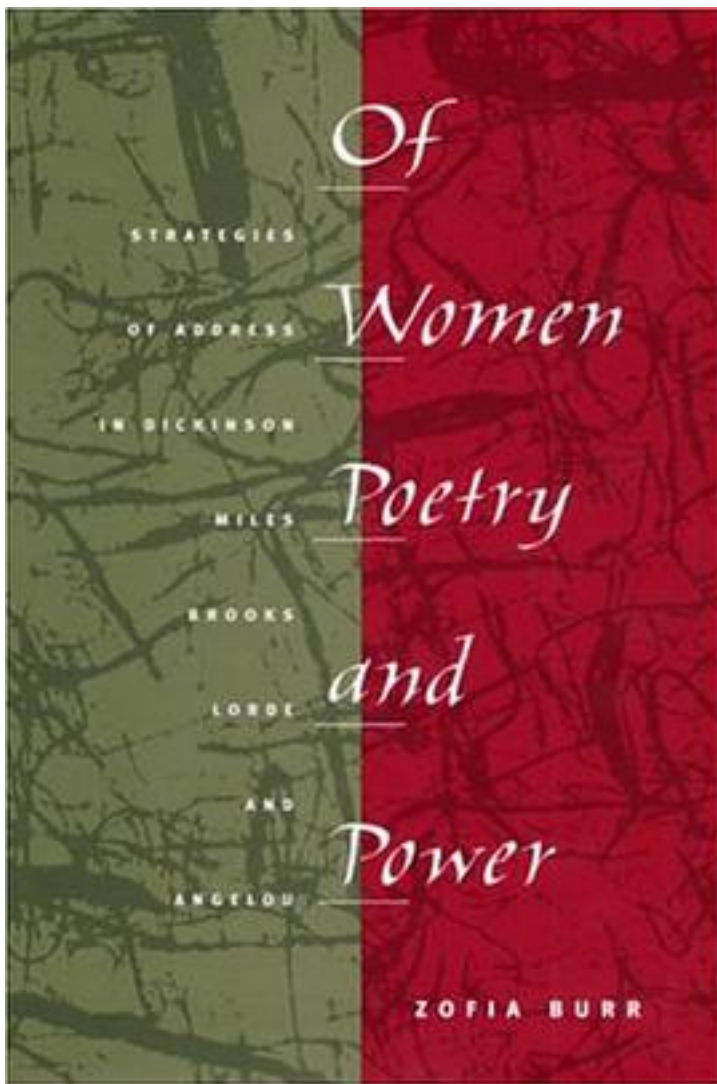


Of Women, Poetry, and Power



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出版者:

出版时间:2002-11

装帧:

isbn:9780252027697

The haunting legacy of Emily Dickinson's life and work have shaped a romantic conception of poetry as private, personal, and expressive that has governed the reception of subsequent American women poets. "Of Women, Poetry, and Power" demonstrates how the canonization of Dickinson has consolidated limiting assumptions about women's poetry in twentieth-century America and models an alternative reading practice that allows for deeper engagement with the political work of modern poetry. Analyzing the reception of poems by Josephine Miles, Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde, and Maya Angelou, Zofia Burr shows the persistence of these critical outlooks and dispels the belief that we have long since moved beyond such limiting gendered expectations. Turning away from an obsessive concern with a poet's biography, Burr's readings of contemporary women's poetry accentuate its engagement and provocation of readers through its forms of address. Burr shows how displacing the limits of dominant reception is possible by approaching poetry as communicative utterance, not just as self-expression.

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目录:

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