

Rowena Torrevillas

WHOSE SLEEVES

Recalling a print of the old painting,
Whose sleeves? The kimono, layer
on layer of slashed silk, extravagant
in its careful emptiness, color rendering
memory; the warrior's helmet
fallen to one side, the samurai
sword glinting dully, unhefted.
Negations fill this frame:
Not objects that keep their shape,
only the words to lift them by
[whose] [sleeves]

See where the wind lifts
the edges of the fabric. . .
is the absent hand asleep,
or stroking the sun-dappled
water in a wayside stream?
Will the unseen shoulders ever rise,
splendid, dripping gold in the light?
The colors shift with
[presences] absences
Where's the warrior gone?
Whose sleeves are these now