

*Ji-fu, Court Robe, (China) 464#*

MAJA TROCHIMCZYK

*An Embroidery Lesson*

Tonight we'll count the clouds  
The blue splendor of courtier robes  
Awaits them

We'll take a long silk thread  
And wrap it with a filament of gold  
Until it shines like ocean sunrise

We'll catch the bright flames  
Of red-eyed dragons that dance and snarl  
On the hem

Their talons stretch towards a mandala  
Of perfect balance resting above  
Cobalt swirls of midnight rain

*This, an unspoken secret  
The serpent eats its tail  
The end is the beginning*

Look it moves across the sky, chasing  
the flock of gold-rimmed clouds  
Let's count them

MARI WERNER

*Immortal Stitchery*

How many hands,  
how many needles,  
how many hours  
spun those golden dragons  
over midnight blue silk?  
Did you know  
your creation would be  
immortal, echoing your own  
immortality centuries after  
your name was forgotten?

How did yours become  
the honored one, while  
the work of your sisters  
was burned in war,  
lost in flood  
or buried in rubble?

Who were you,  
patient lady, laboring  
those thousand hours  
nurturing the perfection  
of beauty



*Illustration by Maja Trochimczyk*