

Haute Buttons

by Kenton K. Yee

My mother ran her Singer past midnight.
I learned to tune out whirling.
Who knows why I'm telling you now.
In shadow. In chiaroscuro.
A rectangle's infrequent beeping.
Its text that doesn't say what it means.
We sew between choo-choos.
We sew and wash. We wash and change.
I had just changed to slacks when we were
what? I hope not just some fad
like sideways caps or capri pants.

What we are is not what we want to show,
or see. Some of us tire of the fabric
and others, the colors. Or the buckles.
And changing clothes—like coloring, or not
trimming, or affecting a new voice—is escape.
Whoosh! Bonk. Brown eggs.
Maybe I will be the same. At least I will be different.
Do you miss dancing me on nine threads?
My mother still sewed after retirement.
I'm sure that's what you were going for.
The world teases us.
Old aggressions. New passivities. Sweatshops.
It's all so fast and all too fast.
You wonder why I'm thinking of sewing
but I'm thinking of how we did not change.
You were my marionette. Prices are climbing again.
It was terrible. It's beautiful.
Truth is I don't want to stop sewing.
I can't sew and I can't stop sewing.

