



Katsushika Hokusai, *Suzume Odori* (1815)

RICARDO PAU-LLOSA

## **SPARROW DANCE**

Video producers have given Hokusai's sketches  
their final resting place in vibrant dance.

The ancient figures caught in leaps and stretches,  
donned wing sleeves and bowl hats

that cover their faces in every squat and pose.  
Later, cheeks beaming, fans in hand,  
they flutter to drumbeats and flutes, but those  
are creatures of theatre—the compassed land

of sprung effect. Ritual ruminates to draw  
the watchers in, for they need not  
hoot and clap to be a part. All  
communal life was dab, step, and note.

No video can take us to that solvent place  
we seek in stage and clip but can't retrace.