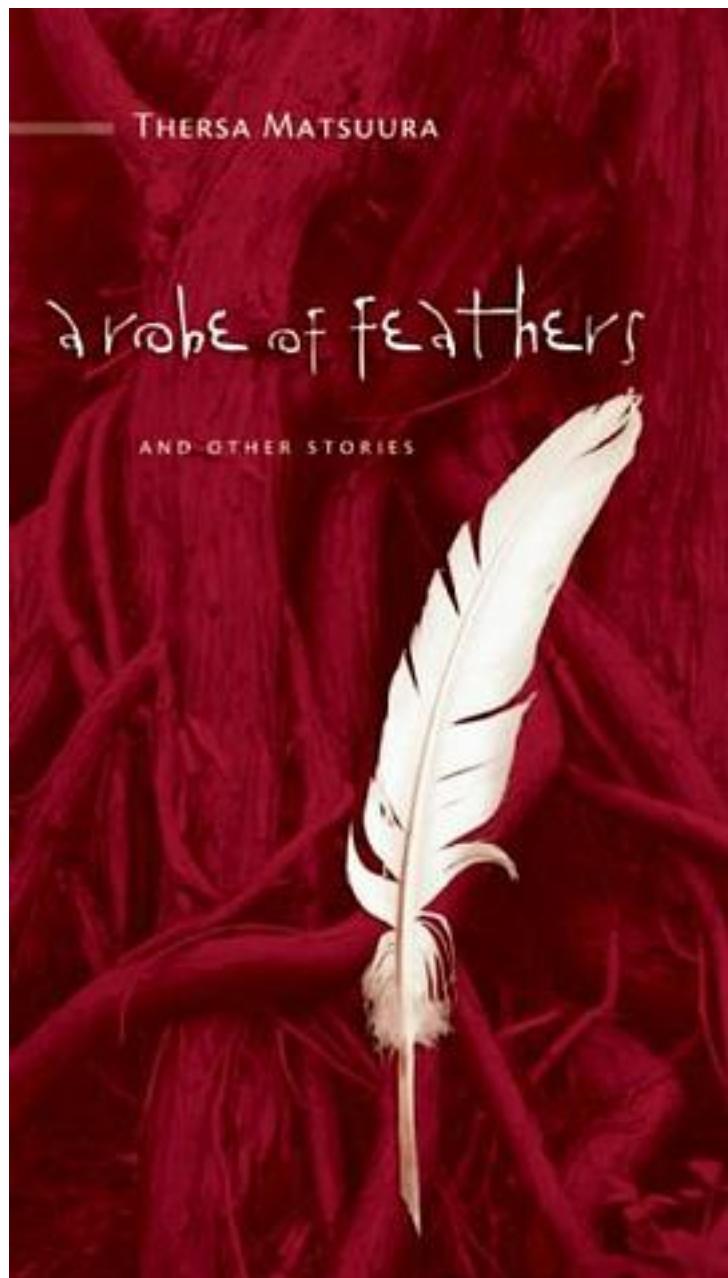


# A Robe of Feathers



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出版者:

出版时间:2009-5

装帧:

isbn:9781582434896

In Japan, the line that divides myth from reality is not merely blurred, it is nonexistent. Superstitions, legends, and folk myths are passed down through generations and pervade daily living.

When a child playing near a river fails to return home, it is whispered that she was swept away by an adzuki arai , or Bean Washer. When a man boarding a ship hears the ringing of an unseen insect, it is announced that a funadama (Boat Spirit) is present and so the auspicious harbinger of smooth seas and abundant catch is celebrated. Even something as innocuous as waking up to find your pillow at the foot of your bed is thought to be the trick of a makura gaeshi , otherwise known as a Pillow Turner. Nothing is as simple as it seems. Your neighbor isn't merely an eccentric old woman she might very well be a shape-shifting, grudge-harboring Water Sprite.

The Japanese examine life and living with the keenest eyes and the most vivid of imaginations. Thersa Matsuura has captured that essence in this darkly insightful collection illuminating the place where reality falters and slips into the strange and fantastical.

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