

# ARTEMIS by Marney K. Makridakis



assemblage, 18" x 17" x 1"

You may look at me and think I carry a heavy load  
and you might be right  
I've picked up lots of matter with these hooks of mine  
matter that matters, and matter that doesn't  
I carry it all.

I carry chain mail as my crown  
made it look pretty with dime-store pearls,  
but it's still chain  
locking in things that cannot change  
once things happen, you can't unhappen them  
so there they are, crust in my brain.

I carry nuts and bolts and bullets  
they crush my shoulders down  
and make my arms long with tired waiting  
keys and broken beads and building blocks that were never built  
at least not yet  
I carry it all.

I carry broken papers and promises  
jagged rocks and realities  
sharp gadgets and glances  
a slow turtle on one knee  
the letter "Y" on another  
for really, why?

That may be what you see on me  
and you might be right  
I do carry it all.  
But look closer if you want  
I'm feeling chatty so I might as well tell.

In my belly I've got a broken vial  
from the day blood dripped from my eyes  
like angry velvet on the floor  
but you know what grows out of it?  
a bouncing red flower  
worn my great great aunt  
who they say was as crazy as me  
and I carry her beauty forever  
making that broken vial holy  
and wholly mine.

My legs are heavy  
(I already told you that)  
But check out my snazzy red shoes  
that I found on sale after a September miracle  
and the M that makes my mark  
with every step I take.  
I carry that, too.

I'm covered in powders that are crazy colorful  
spun like candy and hope  
silver springs that take me forward  
wheels to turn me back

I carry diamonds on my breasts  
rubies on my cheeks  
and check out my left hand --  
that's the whole world, right there.

You may think I carry a heavy load  
and you may be right  
but what I know that you may not  
is that I hunted down all this stuff  
peeking and seeking around  
til I found what was mine  
and grabbed it with my rusty hooks  
vowing polished protection forever  
Yes, I chose it all.

I hunted for the playful powders  
and orange crystal beads  
because they make me sing  
I hunted for a sister friend who would someday die  
because I refused to forget  
I gathered embraces and cuts  
grace and guts  
but one is not more lovely than the other  
and I gathered it all.

I am Hunter for Joy  
and I'll tell you what I know:  
a load like this never gets lighter  
but if you feel it for true  
let the weight ruin you  
dare to feel the pinch  
if you feel it  
and really feel it  
you'll sing so fast, you can run  
dance so loud, you can rhyme  
and close your eyes so light,  
you can fly.