

Marilyn Peck

Marilyn's Coat

To look less like a gypsy,
the advice has been given to wear
other than lace-up shoes and to ditch the handbag.
Have you brown shoes? A brown handbag to match?

The handbag is chosen for convenience.
The shoes for comfortable walking,
Don't look like a bag lady
was the thought behind the sisterly rebuke.

True, the coat's an artwork; is enormous,
glamorous, creatively patch-worked with tassels,
gilt and random buttons, scattered.

It has been immortalised by its portrait
displayed on the National Gallery's website
in one year of Portia Geech's famous exhibition;
with me as Marilyn-mannequin wearing
fantasised white high-heeled shoes standing
between two potted pink spotted plants.

The artist,
portrait painter Laurie Paul, since deceased,
spent time creating her version of Marilyn's Coat;
and the Marilyn, inside the coat,
had all the features of familial likenesses
inherent in the facial expressions of cousins galore.

I've not given up living up to it; I'm not sure she's me.

I'm trying to be worthy of the coat; by wearing it in
gravitas for the label. It is not, as first suggested, a brown
coat. It is an *Over-the-Top* coat and it floats my boat.

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