

Mali Mother and Child
Chi wara Bamana Headress, Female with Calf

My Mali wood carving of an antelope
and her baby lies in three pieces.
This artifact lived for lifetimes
and here it lies with the baby broken
off its mother's back and the mother's
head broken off her body.
I'm going to leave it as it is.

A critic could call it concept art
as if the severance were the point,
as if the piece speaks to the break
that reveals fresh flesh
from the mother's same veins and grain.
Some say that unicorns
are only antelopes in profile.

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