

Holding myself together,  
done. The species I am bound to  
pause, watching the poor boy  
what happened. Stories once  
of disrespect, terror, and fear of

My religion has been destroyed.  
Prayers go unspoken, my cries  
piercing the silence as my ears  
pay the price. Crosses are carved  
into the faces of gods, tears  
streaming from the eyes of  
statues. I sit on the floor of a  
museum, hands grasped tightly,  
whispering my sorrows and  
leaves me hollow and depressed.  
break down. My head hangs  
written to teach me and others  
a different belief. I sit in class,  
mind, holding back tears, my  
mouth sewn shut to protect  
myself. If I speak my belief,  
who knows what will happen?  
would I be hung, stoned, burned,  
or cut? I hide in fear, praying  
only within the comfort of my  
home. Prayers needed  
throughout the day hover above  
my head, waiting for a place  
where my speech is unguarded.  
My hands ache to move, to be  
held in supplication, to speak to  
the figures above— those who  
hold us to a humane standard  
rather than the good and bad we  
use to classify ourselves. They  
see us as more than labels, but  
people tarnish their names,  
leaving them to wilt. The pieces  
I have left to worship are kept in  
buildings for others to admire as  
art, not as a deity.

apologies for what has been  
My hands tremble as people  
low, knowing I was a part of  
now burn at the stake—a form  
their images burning in my