

Your words on my mouth.

Your words on my thigh.

Your words on my stomach.

Your words trace the folds of lightened skin that indicate my story.

You say to me:

"Your body is a temple and you should treat it better."

As though my body didn't carry me to you in the first place.

As though your words have power over me as though -

"Your body is a temple" is what you say.

Your body is a temple is the lie you used to dictate what was deemed a good body.

Your body is a temple is the lie you used to decide to enforce your own rules.

Your body is a temple is the lie you told me to force my hand.

Your body is a temple.

Well, what if I don't want my body to be a temple?

My body as a temple allows your religion to make the rules that I am to oblige to.

My body as a temple means that you get to fill the walls with words of your own choosing.

My body struggles against the confines that dictate what is societally acceptable. My body begs to be released from the grasps of the orange that paints the ceiling of my memory. My body begs to be released from the fingertips that you placed at your will.

My body as a temple means that you get to demand my silence as though you own my tongue.

What's wrong? Am I not quiet enough for you now?

My body has no place for your religion. My body has no place for your claim to touch. My body is not yours for the taking. My body is not composed of space for you to decide. My body never asked to be part of the 97%.

My body as a temple means that you own the walls that I have built.

For those reasons I have decided that my body is not a temple.

My body is a garden, full of imperfections that are perfectly perfect to me. My body is the pink tulips that have grown between the cracks of the trauma that you imposed. My body is the thorns on the red roses that sprouted to protect itself. My body is the yellow on the sunflowers that wake up every morning and stretch to reach the rays of the sun with a smile on their face. My body is the green leaves that continue to fill the space between the flowers with an unapologetic desire to dance in the wind. My body is the weeds of uncertainty as one step falls in front of the next knowing that one day I'll arrive. My body is the blue daisies that know that there's sunlight between every shower. My body is the garden that I find refuge in.

My garden is held together by two broken pieces of wood because the blueprints that I have been given are for a different body. My garden has been crafted by the very shards of humanity that leave me standing here.

My body is the vessel that holds my voice. My power. My words.

You will not silence me because my body is not your temple.