

Still Life

Beaded necklaces and drips of face paint lay on the surface of the ground
As the African Niger Valley is dug up and stolen from
They were rescued but they didn't tell us who they were or what happened
Who they were: not brown colored nobodies
But the children of the revolutionary people we wished we knew
They were dried terracotta, prickled and knightly, sorrowful and strong

They were a portrayal of pandemic and disease, yielding
Dripping the fertilizing tears of their homeland
I have always been told that Africa has many diseases
But some of us just never believed that the snaking torture of germs was the same in all of us
Curling, crumbling, buttoning the body together, or was it patterned purposeful scarring?
No one is sure...

Some were powerful and rebellious, revered
Told us we had no business figuring out what had happened to them
Revolting the push from the outside, then to now
Erecting walls from linked human beings
Individual but complementary, male and female, all proud of their traditions
Even if there are those who believe(d) they have no mental capacity for such passion

Some just sat or kneeled...like humans, like us

Now it is the present if it felt like I was somewhere in between
They soared through time, being chipped away at by the minute arm
They were Mali's artifacts, treasures, stolen
We can never hard-heartedly claim when they were from or what they meant

They were "lost history" I suppose
But they exist
And that's all that matters