

UVic Diversity Writing Contest 2012, Poetry First-Place Winner
By Frances Woodcock
Niger Delta Dirge

Dugout canoes slip through
Delta waters
once pristine,
now slick with oil.
Mangrove roots choke
on thick black sludge.

Flares belch fumes.
Acid rain falls,
rusting iron roofs. Snakelike
pipes slither through
foliage erupting from
bloodred dirt.

Bittersweet black crude,
sucked from soil and sea,
spews into tanker bellies
slaking carbon hunger.
Stolen inheritance of
barefoot Delta children.

Lush green coast
raided and robbed again.
The age old trade in human
flesh and palm oil replaced
by petroleum. Empire's new
slave.

Verdant villages disgorge
black masked men
demanding justice and
payment for pillage.
Protectors of land,
branded terrorists.

Delta dwellers display
restraint and courage
in their struggle against
state and corporate violence.
Calling upon allies
to counter annihilation.