

SHELL-SHOCKED LAND

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Birdsong dies in poisoned skies,
blowouts shatter pipelines, etch toxic wounds on soft skin.
Drills punch holes in ancient earth,
extract oil,
deep
deep
down.

Pipelines and pumps crisscross villages.
Protest cries drowned by thump of heavy-booted soldiers.
They stomp on crops, shatter canoes, homes and lives.

In air-conditioned corporate boardrooms,
suited men in swivel chairs sip ice-cubed, filtered water,
study rising oil prices, zig-zag green and orange graphs,
deny their destruction of the Niger Delta.