

## **Silence Would be Treason**

*i.m. Ken Saro-Wiwa, executed 1995*

by Helen Fallon

### **1.Elegy for Ogoni**

Poison in the air, poison in the rain,  
poison in the yams, poison in the soil.  
Flamingos, kingfishers, hawks, weaver birds  
shriek *poison* through mango, guava, lemon,  
orange, papaya and whistling palm trees.

Sunlit slicks of swirling oil paint rainbow  
swirls on lakes where people swam, splashed, laughed, washed,  
fished for crab, cockles, sole, shrimp and mussels.  
Rigs, angry beasts, punch wounds in ancient earth.  
Pipelines crack, leak, oil seeps through mangrove creeks,  
blue sky cowers beneath death's smoke black cloak.  
Tiny lungs rattle rasping coughs, rashes stain soft skin.  
We weep for the lives its children might have lived.