Teardrops on the Weser (Excerpts)

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t
the morning after
the day is hungover
the river dull drunk
from so much liquid

languid
immobile and
dead of current

the weser’s inner engine
broken
life sapped

from the water
maiden
soggy from much weeping

already a wretched sop
the night before
as the tired river floated
devoid of current

like a thing dead
belly up
in the dark
lit only by port
lights
from docked boats

the hanseat
das schiff
admiral nelson –

that river restaurant
rollicking and gay in daylight
this boat
docked out
by decked-up folks
and forks

but at night
when the sky shuts heavy brow
upon its lower earthly lid

it is a dark ghostly hulk
and wooden silhouette
made more hoary

by shadowy port lights
dancing
on the greasy oil-like flow

beautiful
nightmare
on brackish tides
the day is shrunken
to a squeezed rag
after yesterday's high

my window
now picture-dull
becomes sober lens

for refracting
and re-framing
the scene

to
minimalist fractions
of larger or smaller

human designs

behind this once postcard façade
of church architecture
opposite

at eye level

oblong frosty windows
ranged regularly
painted on the brown church walls

in a children's picture book

high above them
church tower and gothic spire
sharp triangular
and atop the dizzy zenith
a lone shiny brass weathercock
standing on one leg

etched
against the clouds
crowing in silence

into the four winds
in turn
as it turns eyes  tinsel neck

and glossy head

north-west-north
east-south
west-south-west-east
this hung morning
    the immobile
weser is

sluggish with memories
    of dead water
on the niger river delta
    in nigeria

after shell shat
    shocked oil impurities
in it

till choked full
    of poisoned fish
    and algae

the creek reeks
    of dead things
    and people
    like the ogoni nine

a hung boat nation
    unable to swim
pollution and politics

and thus was
    strung short and
hung from killer nooses

    the vertical nine
were long dead
long before the long drop

by the life-stained hands
of abacha's henchmen hangmen
hitlerites

nine necks cracked
life's spine popped, broken
nine lives shell-ed

the niger delta
shell-shocked
into haunted silence

stifled wailing
along waterways and
amongst mangrove swamp
and fauna

muffled wailing
unlike
the silence on the weser

a portentous silence
the quiet of still graves
sunk real deep
w
german waters
    not unlike
    the niger or benue

which slaked
saro-wiwa’s
    infant thirst ...

did maria rilke
that master poet
    with the most girlish of names

ever from the weser drink?
like another capital poet
    who pines for the ethiope
    singing his thirst

“go water
    go rivering
    where the eyes that look
    becomes a brook…”

the niger and the benue

both
troubled nigerian waters
    flowing together
    as one into the atlantic

like
the fulda and the wera
    into the weser and the rhine
...the fulda and werra
both differently
plumbed
by time

not roughly charted
but deep in different degrees
and not discovered

from far away
by a stranger from england
called mungo park

not waterways
to ferry and ship black bodies
to a europe-poisoned new world

that trafficking of black souls
in rotten ship holds
across the cursed atlantic