

Ugly Histories

by Tabatha Stirling

Before the reign of light skinned beauty, before the war of pale and dark

East of the Nigerian Delta & resting low amongst the viscous swampland

A baby born in ochre dust, plum-pudding black, eyes full of coal fire
Unbound by western influence and their disorders of mind and body.
There she reigned from her first sticky steps to a long hunting stride
In the savannah, boiling from red light to dark, husky from the chase
Full from the kill, slick with the sweat of victory and animal shapes
Until a night, drenched by the blood moon, when men crept and stole

Leaving her land deprived, ships packed with a weeping cargo.

