

City of Sound

What if Sheffield's five rivers
were rivers of sound?
Sound gritstone-flow flugels!
Sound holly-hagg cornets!
Down, down the River Don,
Loxley, Rivelin, Porter, Sheaf. *

What if our rivers were throats?
Sound steely women's voices!
Sound men's metallic booms!
Hear fluid alloys, all confluences.
Sing all peoples' songs and forge
liquid scales over Moor, across Edge.

What if *this* water cache
was a drum bowl of sound?
Let all children's feet
resound songs up streets,
plumb and mix brooks, waving
the sheaves of Sheffield's seven hills.

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** You can rearrange words in this line to suit a different rhythm if you prefer. Please also feel free to use the last two lines of the first verse as a refrain, if you like that idea.*

Several words in this poem of course refer to things specific to Sheffield & its surrounds: 'gritstone', 'hagg' (a clearing in woods where material including holly for feeding sheep was grown), the names of our rivers, 'steely' (the Steel City Women), 'booms' (the crane park from Doctor Who!), 'alloys' (for metal manufacturing), 'confluences' (for waters coming together, or different people and cultures), the 'Moor' (the shopping street and our moors), 'Edge' as in the rocky cliff formations in and out of town, the 'sheaves' (from Sheffield's coat of arms, which plays on the River Sheaf).

If you would like to hear the rhythm of the text as it goes in the poet's head, please listen to the recording supplied.