

'Chapel on the Bridge' belongs within a long sequence titled, *Rotherham*, which I wrote while living in the eponymous South Yorkshire town. Rotherham is a bleak de-industrialised hinterland near Sheffield with a rich ancient and industrial history, facing further threats concerning environmental and historic destruction through development and institutional neglect.

Unsettled in this location, I immersed myself in the archives of place to find traces of the past and feel a kinship with this toiled and concreted earth beyond a contemporary sense of dislocation and social fragmentation. The long poem is a poetic archeology, recovering medieval and Iron Age histories buried in this paradigmatic landscape of Northern English industrial decline.

Once a common feature of bridges, Rotherham's Chapel on the Bridge is one of three extant such architectural designs in England. Dating back to 1483, the chantry chapel has had a chequered past as the town gaol, then a tobacconist before it was restored to clerical use in the 1930s. Doors in the crypt were graffitied by prisoners' names and with phallic graffiti. The River Don has since been diverted from running underneath the medieval arches, harnessed for nearby weirs that powered steel forges.

Composing this poem, I wrote three ten-line poems – one in situ about the present state, another about the chapel and the third about the bridge and its construction using archival material – before decomposing and reconstituting the text using collage techniques. The poetic page becomes a place to stage a spatial encounter in which history and landscape can come alive, where the past can jostle with the present in unexpected ways.