

These poems partly arose out of a DNA test. A relative asked if I'd be willing to do such a test for his work on the family tree, and it turned out that we're related to Vikings (rather than Flemish weavers, as had been supposed!!) The sequence including these poems thus works through this unexpected heritage, as well as engaging with present concerns such as immigration, and the 'riots' in the summer of 2024 in the UK against asylum seekers. I was struck by the similarities between various wranglings over 'foreigners' in the medieval period, and the current discourse around 'economic' migrants. In 1190, Jews in York were murdered after seeking refuge in the castle tower. But even Richard Malebisse, leader of the York mob, did not declaim 'Come out and we will kill you', as one of the rioters did outside an asylum seekers' hotel in Rotherham in 2024.