

# A Great Northern River

## The Unthanks

the big ships sail up, the big ships sail down  
a great northern river  
funnels of red, funnels of black  
banded with yellow and silver  
bringing in cargos of oil and wood  
taking home girders of steel and pick ironoh, coloured faces, flaxom old places  
high from the sternposts are flyingdown on the docks, down on the wharves  
lofty grain standing  
stevedores working and rivermen shouting  
crews making ready for London  
ropes black and tarry  
chains rusty and red  
lay among timber and bollards and packing  
seagulls wheel over wild river cats  
down on the jetties are watchingnights by the docks, pack'd smoky pubs  
plenty of shouting and swearing  
heavy brown ale, thick muddy stout,  
and nobody's caring  
a lass starts to warble a popular song  
they're throwing her pennies and pieces of silver  
closing time called, silence then falls  
on a great northern river

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