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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

SHELLA SMITH

Nottingham. Images like swarming bees
Or Trent Bridge crowds for cricket or football
Come at the word's call: Slab Square a-wash
With pigeons, taxis at the crawl;
Brick-pink railway station nodding at The Park
Where Ruskin's Gothic looms above bijou,
But the Castle's king foursquare upon its rock
And on the Player's packet too.
Raleigh's factory, barrack-faced,
Keeps streets alive with pin-heeled girls,
Liquorice-black youths revving reluctant bikes,
Bird-faced women, heads in sausage-curls.
Foaming azaleas brave the Boulevard,
Jewel colours by a fuming flood of lead;
Stiff-necked, the University's white tower
Rears on high its ivory head.

What's in a name? How many angels
Could find wing-hold upon St Peter's steeple?
"Snotengaham" before the Normans came,
Meaning: "the homestead of Snot's people".