

## POETRY SELECTED BY ALISON BRACKENBURY

### Nature Morte

1.  
Blue bowl. Tangerines. One white rose.  
The makings of a still life.  
The candle snuffles out smell  
of sulphur lingers.  
Black soot from the flame  
marks the ceiling.  
I wait for daylight  
to begin.

2.  
I wait for daylight to begin.  
The sharp smell of newly ironed sheets.  
Starch. Blue bag.  
The hiss of steam.  
Water dawdled through  
old lead pipes.  
How come we're not  
all idiots?

3.  
How come we're not all idiots  
brought down by Alzheimer's?  
Strong men — and women  
in these equal days —  
leopard skins slung across  
weightlifters' shoulders  
legs skinny and white  
as red-tipped matchsticks.

4.  
Red tipped matchsticks.  
The sulphur smell lurks.  
I dream dark dreams.  
The soot of chimney stacks.  
A bunch/bouquet of roses  
stained red by Snow  
White's pouting lips.  
A tangerine. A blue bowl.

**Daphne Milne**