

## POETRY SELECTED BY ALISON BRACKENBURY

### **Primroses in Sarajevo**

They grow everywhere  
Between the grey blocks of crumbling concrete  
Competing with the litter by the roadside  
Around the shell of the old barracks, and along the river  
They defy ugliness, decay, despair.  
And I think of that first time in Sarajevo  
Picking my way around the craters in the road,  
among the ruined buildings  
Insect skeletons of cars and buses rusting in the street  
Flower shapes on walls where shells had hit  
Shrapnel tracks like petals of daisies  
Sheets of plastic covering the blind eyes of empty windows  
As people, weary and pale, began the task of clearing up  
Hoping the worst was over  
And primroses surprised the banks of the Miljacka.

### **Pat Allen**