Tegan Bennett Daylight has two previous novels to her name. For some reason, though, *Safety*, her third, seems like a first novel, with its coming of age theme and autobiographical feel.

Elizabeth has two older sisters, more sexually and socially confident, and her first teenage relationship is an unpleasant failure, ending in violence and embarrassment. After many false starts and one-night stands, she finally meets Ross.

Ross has his own bad memories of violence and it takes some time for the two of them to work each other out. In the process, Bennett Daylight takes us through many incidents and vignettes, not all of which resonate or seem to illustrate anything significant. For a good part of the novel it is difficult to summon much interest in or sympathy for Elizabeth, although her passivity and sexual timidity is convincing enough. However, when she and Ross travel to Spain with their baby daughter to visit his dying father, the pace and emotional intensity pick up. A bullfight becomes a central image, crystallising their ideas as they strive to make sense of a past and present where brutality is accepted as part of life.