



FALSE HOPE

A beach, a Sunday in winter,
4 pm.
Bundled in our coats, we walk its length without much in the way of chat
between us.
We don't touch.
Bits of rope and shell and stone litter our path.
You stop and reach for a stick and you set to work writing our names in the
sand.
“There”, you say. “That’s us”.
I smile weakly, certain of my false hope.
Certain of nothing at all.

— *Siobhán Ryan.*
Kilcash N.S.



YESTERDAY

sent runny sour goodness sopping through the pages.
And you said Hope is a hammer,
but what is left
when it falls and smashes
into smithereens? What
is left green
when grey looms
with needle, and heavy
Memory clings to the spoon
used to fill fallow mouths?

— *Jennifer McGrath.*
Hansfield Educate Together Secondary School.



3rd
PRIZEWINNER

HOW LONG IT TAKES

The bay mirrors wavering houses, trees,
ducks sleep on clumps of seaweed or swim
in furious circles, heads dipping, an engine coughs,
a car passes, sunlight dazzles a child's blue scooter.
How long it takes to know what leaving really means.

Two swans slide past, white shadows rippling
before them. And was it worth it? A plover,
smokey grey, picks its way among pebbles
its arctic peal piercing the glassy air.

Five boat masts, the only straight lines.
A gull rises, claws hanging, climbs above
its own reflection, winging high.

— *Ger Duffy.*
St. Paul's B.N.S.