**Winner Features**

**Eanna O'Cosgora, Coláiste Iognáid, Galway**

**DAD**

The sun was shining.

I was walking home from school, when suddenly I saw my brother coming towards shaking with fear with a tear in his eye.

Dark clouds formed.

My Dad had been ill with cancer for six months, and was struggling to win the fight against cancer.

As I trudged slowly back to my house knowing that I was about to witness the death of my father at the age of fifteen, my heart began to pound more and more heavily.

Every beat was a stab.

Heartbroken.

The tears started to flow. Incessantly.

I was speechless, with no words to say.

It was a life changing moment that I’ll never forget.

We all stood there in shock. Me, my five siblings and my Mother seeing the lasts breaths of a man that would do anything to make us happy, along with his five sisters.

The end came so fast. The previous morning he had eaten well and taken two meals that day.

False hope, I suppose.

The previous months had their difficulties too.

My Dad couldn’t say one sentence without grasping for air.

A son who had to swallow down all the pain that life had given him and have the strength to carry on.

How can a son live without their father?

What were we to think?

That he was just gone like that?

Or to keep positive and have faith one day in the future, that our spirits will meet again and that he’ll always be with us somehow.

Life goes on.

We thank him for the good and bad memories that make us who we are today.

My Dad wasn’t perfect, but I loved him.

I’ll never forget his laugh that could be heard at the end of the street as he was watching Father Ted. The passion he had for sport. The emotion shown whenever Ireland scored a goal or a try in rugby was incredible.

Never take for granted what you have, because one day it will be gone.

It is all the little things I miss about my Dad - just hearing his voice, seeing his face.

It kills me inside, just thinking that I’ll never see him again, except in my head.

In my mind's eye.

As we laid him to rest and said our last goodbyes, I realised that my life will never be the same again.

And that he’ll always be looking down with immense pride along with his niece Aoife who tragically lost her life after a long eight year battle with a brain tumor at the age of thirty-eight.

They will both always be in my thoughts and prayers.

***Judges’ Citation***

*My editor who was a previous judge on the NNI Press Pass competition said, “Ciara, one entry will stand out from the rest”. From the moment I read the winner of our feature category, that is exactly what it did, and the rest of the judges agreed. Another brave piece, this feature takes an unconventional tone in its writing-short, snappy, effective sentences reflecting the sudden and intense thoughts that the author experiences during the death of his Dad. A myriad of thoughts....*

*Heartbroken.*

*How can a son live without their father?*

*The end came so fast.*

*Eanna Cosgrove’s piece ‘Dad’ is extremely raw and honest, a piece that would be a challenge for any writer to present so eloquently. The fact that the author is a teenager is even more admirable. A worthy winner in a category with very strong entries.*