

At the End of a School Day

It is the end of a school day
and down the long drive
come bag-swinging, shouting children.
Deafened, the sky winces.
The sun gapes in surprise.

Suddenly the runners skid to a stop,
stand still and stare
at a small hedgehog
curled-up on the tarmac
like an old, frayed cricket ball.

A girl dumps her bag, tiptoes forward
and gingerly, so gingerly
carries the creature
to the safety of a shady hedge.
Then steps back, watching.

Girl, children, sky and sun
hold their breath.
There is a silence,
a moment to remember
on this warm afternoon in June.

Wes Magee