

# DEAR CANADA

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### A SEA OF SORROWS

**The Typhus Epidemic Diary of Johanna Leary**  
by **Norah McClintock**

1. The failure of the potato crop in Ireland in the 1840s and the famine that followed led to many deaths. Famine still occurs in some parts of the world. How has the response to these disasters changed? Do people still die from famine?
2. Johanna suffered many losses in her life — her homeland, her parents, her baby brother. How did she make it through these terrible losses?
3. The Irish famine immigrants were often viewed with suspicion and disdain. Why do you think this was so? Can you think of any other examples from Canada's history when immigrants were viewed in this way? Does this still happen today?
4. Did you or anyone you know come to Canada as an immigrant? How hard or easy was it? What was the hardest part? What was the easiest part?
5. Imagine that you had to suddenly move to another country. Who would help you? How would you cope? Do you think you would get more help than Johanna did? What kind of help would you want the most?
6. Johanna had to work hard and didn't have much spare time. How did she spend what little spare time she had? How does this compare with how you live today?
7. If you had to change places with Johanna, what would you least like about her life. What part of her life would you find most interesting?