

Girl without a Mother to Her Big Brother

Sandra Skouson

I never saw so many frogs;
neither did you. We walked
the tracks, sometimes stepping
from tie to tie, sometimes
walking the rail—holding
our hands out as if
for balance. It was all show.
Our balance was never
in question. Besides, the danger
ran in the other direction,
along the bridge. We
could look down, almost dizzy,
and see the river. But even there,
we didn't need our hands—
only our feet
and our knowing the way.

They were in the hole
under the beet dump,
flooded with spring sub water,
little frogs, noisy and so many
we ran home, using the road,
using big steps and racing
so we could bring back
a shoebox. We filled that thing
with frogs and took them home,
taking turns carrying.
We knew what we needed,
but we had no plan. Only later
we discovered big sisters
do not understand a throbbing
shoebox Monday morning
under the clothesline.