

## 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.