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.