No One Knows

Marjorie Countryman*
which they gleamed silver gray and dry. A formidable crab ran along by the water’s edge and then, changing his course, sidled up to Pedro’s foot. He let it come quite near, and then when he wiggled his toes, it rushed off, trying to hide under a ridiculously small piece of seaweed.

The children had been gone a long time. It was getting late, for no longer did he hear the distant thud of footsteps as people moved about on the pier above. If he turned his head he could see the shining houses of the summer people set high on the hill behind him. Beyond was his home among the fish shacks. It was getting cold on the damp sand, and he thought of the warmth of the kitchen with its mellow smell of burned fat, mingled with the acrid odor of the scallop rims set by the door.

Pedro shifted his position and listened again, but he could hear no one—only the soft sound of the sea among the piles. Janet’s sash was strong—awfully strong for anything a girl would wear. He strained. A warm drop of blood trickled down the back of his hand where the barnacles had cut it.

The crabs were coming in. Crabs sidling—all along the water’s edge. Pedro knew. Crabs came in with the tide.

Tea time was over. The children played slapjack with Nurse until it was too dark to see the cards. Sleepily they sat on the veranda together, watching the lights on the boards near the pier, and listening to the waves washing far up on the beach at the high tide line.

No One Knows

By Marjorie Countryman

No one knows what I know.
Down inside myself,  
I put away my secrets  
Like dishes on a shelf.

No one knows what I think.  
Up inside my head,  
Thoughts are always forming,  
Thoughts that go unsaid.