**Rock Pooling**

The tide had just turned and I sit on a rock and watch the sea fill, with unnerving speed, the pool at my feet. Now normally, if there are waves, the sea advances like the children’s game of Grandma’s footsteps, rushing forward, retreating a bit and then rushing a little further forward again but today as it is flat calm you can see the water inexorably rising like an optimist’s glass that had become so full, that before one’s very eyes, it overflows. I stand up and call to the children nearby to tell them to keep an eye out for the incoming tide and then I jump across the widening gap between where I was sat and onto what is, albeit temporarily, the mainland. Today, and it is rare, I am content within my skin. I like this Tim, the sun tanned, agile one in shorts and a T shirt bounding from rock to rock, he seems to belong here on this beach in a way that he doesn’t when he has a tie around his neck and is marooned inside a classroom. I look at one of the trays that a particularly adventurous group of girls have collected and it is full of marine life, including shrimps, gobies, a hermit crab and even an anemone on a rock. They have done well and it saddens me that being outdoors like this is no longer a feature of education anymore. Days like today, although good enough to have set Darwin on his tracks, are not seen as being useful now unless they can be dressed up as a way of encouraging the pupils involved to become ‘self managers’. As if becoming a willing cog in the corporate machine is of superior value to an appreciation of the complexity of life and its struggle to live, breed, breathe and feed that is happening now as I write within each of these rocky pools.