

## Poems by *Steven P. Schneider*

### ***Beachside***

The beach bums lounge by the edge of the sea  
Drinking beer and watching the girls go by.  
What do they know of life's infinities?

The Gulf's waves pound the shore relentlessly  
And the breezes blow inland towards the inlet side  
While the beach bums lounge by the edge of the sea.

The gulls circle above, plummet, and arise  
A fish in their mouths -- on the waves gulls glide  
Inscribing in air life's infinities.

They practice the art of thinking themselves free  
Lying in the sun and tanning their hides.  
The beach bums lounge by the edge of the sea.

The ocean is a kind of majesty  
For those who walk and see the world besides  
Themselves to plunder life's infinities.

Is the life of the beach bum for you and me?  
Drinking beers and lolling in the tide?  
The beach bums lounge by the edge of the sea.  
What do they know of life's infinities?

STEVEN P. SCHNEIDER

### ***Tropicalized***

You grow weary of the pastoral elegies to emptiness,  
The way a crab burrows beneath the sand to dig an air hole.

You get up to walk the shoreline  
Of the Gulf of Mexico  
And look out at the horizon  
Where you see Jimenez, Paz, and Vallejo coming towards you -  
The body and soul of the vast poetry of the sea.

You remember the presence of nature  
Is not a long-forgotten dream  
Blown across the Laguna Madre  
By the gulf-side breezes.

You want to take flight on the wings of a sandpiper,  
You want to probe the depths of the seas like a dolphin.

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**Steven P. Schneider**, Chair of the English Department at the University of Texas Pan-American, is a poet and critic. He is the author of five books, including *Prairie Air Show*, a collection of poems; a critical study entitled *A.R. Ammons and the Poetics of Widening Scope* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994); and the editor of the essay collection *Complexities of Motion: New Essays on A.R. Ammon's Long Poems* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999). His poems and articles have appeared in many journals, including *Prairie Schooner*, *The Literary Review*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Tikkun*, and *Critical Quarterly*. He is the recipient of a Merit Fellowship from the Nebraska Arts Council and has lectured widely on American literature at nation and international conferences.