

## John Schneider

### Beneath Neon

A young mother outside an ice cream parlor  
rifles through a corner trash can  
stretching her arm as low as she can reach.  
In the alleyway nearby, her child waits. Hungry.  
The yellow neon above my head  
flashes 100+ flavors.  
How quickly I neglect my promise  
to share her story when I rejoin my children  
and the other families to sing happy birthday,  
worrying more about the soles of my shoes  
as I walk across the floor made sticky by fallen ice cream.

**John Schneider** lives in Berkeley, California where he has studied poetry with Robert Hass. His most recent publications have been in: *Slipstream*,; *Potomac Review*; *Bitter Oleander Press*; *The American Journal of Poetry*; *Chautauqua* and *Lullwater Review*. He is included in: *California Fire and Water: A Climate Crisis Anthology*. He is a Pushcart Prize Nominee.