

Praise for the Marine Biologist

Dedicated to Lara at the launch of the *Field Guide to Offshore Marine Invertebrates of South Africa*, May 2018

I'm a marine biologist.
I tend to smell of fish,
which keeps most folks quite out of
reach.
At least, that's what they wish.

I'm a marine biologist.
I check what's in the sea,
which covers 70% of earth,
so, lots of work for me.....

I'm a marine biologist
and slightly weird they say.
I love the strange and crawly stuff
which keeps most guys at bay.

I'm a marine biologist.
Deep down I feel at home,
where fairy shrimps and manta rays
and spineless sharks do roam.

I like the little crabby things
with lots of creepy legs
and pincers which they use to eat
and clean up nature's dregs.

I also love the shells and snails
(called Molluscs if you're smart) -
each one of them is so complete,
a perfect work of art.

I love the starfish most of all
of every rainbow hue.
Their arms are magical for sure.
If lost, they just grow new.

We have to bow to these creatures low.
They form the base of life,
and on the deep down oceanfloor
they endure without strife.

I live my life and dream my dreams
there where it's deep and wet
and cold and dark and void of air,
and I no e-mails get.

I'm a marine biologist.
I'll never eat my fish.
Please give me chicken, pork or beef
or any other dish.

If ever to a seafood place
or sushi den I roam
I'll hurry off with painful face
and eat my veggie stew at home.

I'm a marine biologist.
A crab has got my name.
An honour that is so profound,
and yes, we're quite the same:
I too prefer to hide away
inside my peacefull shell,
and search no glamour, shy the light,
and get on good and swell.

I'm a marine biologist.
We'll never know enough
of all these creatures down below.
To ID them is tough.
We hardly know that they exist
until we dive real deep,
or send our flashy monkey down
with images to keep.

I'm a marine biologist.
I want this world to stay
long after I have done my dues,
and packed my books away.
I hope there'll still be this bright zoo
cavorting on the floors.

No diamond pumps and dredging nets
with gaping open jaws.

I'm a marine biologist.
It's up to me, I guess,
and all of us who love the seas
to not leave it a mess.
I hope my work will help to save
the treasure chest we hold
and in the pages of this book
the treasure maps unfold.

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Beate@saeon.ac.za