

FEATURES SHOWCASE

Tortoiseshell Should Be a Colour



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Sulcata Tortoise 1 CC BY 2.0 by John5199

The dirt is dry and red and cloudy
where she digs, curved claws batting
clumps aside, body lowering as the burrow grows
wider, deeper.
Her arms are stiff and persistent,
are wind carving the rocks smooth, are
lumbering and graceful both.

There are brown rainbows

swirled into her cracked body.

Scaly skin that gathers as

it bends — crinkled cowl, blinking eyes

that see more colours than we do, yet

she may never search the night, watch the

sky tremble with the majesty of the Milky Way

and curl its yellows, purples, pinks

to match the pattern on her shell.

Soon she will be out of sight,

a smudge within a shadow.

Soon the only sign of her will be the

soil she kicks into a pile.

Soon she will lay a clutch of

sixteen eggs, each of which will hatch

in the perfect desert heat; each

of which will learn to live alone.



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