Stephen Robertson

Carapace

Tiny hardness on tiny softness.

Softness crawls over sand and rock
in filtered blue light,
carrying hardness with it.

Sometimes softness shelters inside hardness.

Softness grows, hardness grows too,
spirals round itself, trumpet-like.
Can this go on forever?

Softness grows still, fades away.
Empty spiral hardness rests
on the sea-bed. Forever?

Another, rougher softness,
but with sharp claws and barbs,
fastens itself inside.
Movement is faster, edgier, rougher.

Rough softness grows
but hardness cannot grow.
Rough softness is too big,
leaves for another home.

Another rough softness.
Can this go on forever?

Empty again, in harsher light.
Another softness, giant but gentle.
Soft digits hold softly, lift softly
place softly against another softness
and soft voice says
I can hear the sea.

This poem is reprinted from Slanting Lines, the website of the poems of Stephen Robertson, at https://www.slacktide.site/slanting_lines/