

**I wake at night knowing that my life is
turtles all the way down,
after a line by Michael Gushue.
by Cortney Bledsoe**

There's beauty in kindness because of its
scarcity, a deeper hue than any stone.

Whole mountains are strip-mined
for the rare-earth of your efficacy, but you

give it freely. There's bravery in your lack
of consideration of self. Many run from

the screams, the smoke-smell; few run
to. Fewer still stop for bandages, blankets,

directions where to send the survivors
for snacks. You are so much stronger than I

could ever be. No one ever told me the turtle's
shell bears weight. All you've got to do

is ignore the sea-sick slant. No one ever told me
it takes more than a lever to shift that shell;

one also needs a place to stand.