Bert and His Garden

Bert was a curious looking old soul.

His head was a mottled shell, patterned with browns and golds as if the sea had painted him slowly. He had a smooth, sandy coloured tuft of hair and stood firmly on two stout clam shells. Strong and steady. Surprisingly graceful.

Every day, Bert tended a small patch of sea floor.

At first glance, it didn't look like much.

"Nothing grows there", the parrot called to him.
"The sand shifts too much."
"The currents are too strong." it cried.

Bert didn't mind.

He bent down on his wide shell feet, brushed away stray sand, and hummed softly as he worked.
He cleared a little here. Smoothed a place there.
He let the water move as it swished around his hands.

Beneath the sand, fine coral threads stretched outward, slow and patient. They found small places in shells to hold. They settled in.

Bert
Shellfolk No. 3

Day after day, the garden looked much the same.

Bert returned. He tended it, caring for what lay beneath. He waited.

Then one morning, the light slanted just right through the water.

Coral blossoms opened gently, their colours deepening into soft blues, sea greens, warm pinks, and pale golds.

Berts Blue & Yellow Garden
Shellfolk No. 4

Berts Red & Green Garden
Shellfolk No. 5

The sea floor glowed where it had once gone unnoticed.

The parrot circled once above the garden, wings catching the light. It tilted its head, watching the colours shift and spread.

"Well," the parrot said after a moment, "that wasn't there before,".

The water settled again, moving as it always had, and Bert smiled to himself and kept working.

The Parrot
Shellfolk No. 6

5