Turtles are a kind of bird with the governor turned low.
They’re personable beasts

They see the same colors we do and they seem to see just as well, as one discovers in trying to sneak up on them.
Snakes, by contrast, are dryly silent and priapic.

They are smooth movers, legalistic, unblinking and they afford the humor which the humorless do.
Alligators are sticklers too.

They’re like war horses, or German shepherds, and with their bar-shaped, vertical pupils adding emphasis, they have the *idée fixe* of eating, eating, even when they choose to refuse all food and stubbornly die.
Turtles cough, burp, whistle, grunt and hiss and produce social judgments.
They can stretch out their necks like a giraffe, or loom underwater like an apocryphal hippo.
They browse on lettuce thrown on the water like a cow moose which is partly submerged.
They have a penguin’s alertness, combined with a build like a brontosaurus when they rise up on tiptoe.
Then they hunch and ponderously lunge like a grizzly going forward.
They’re as decorative as pansy petals
But they’re also self-directed building blocks.
If one gets a bit arrogant he will push the others off the rock and afterwards climb down into the water and cling to the back of one of those he has bullied, tickling him with his hind feet until he bucks like a bronco.
On the other hand, when this same milder-mannered fellow isn’t exerting himself, he will stare right into the face of the sun for hours. What could be more lionlike?
And he’s at home in or out of the water and does lots of metaphysical tilting. He sinks and rises, with an infinity of levels to choose from; or, elongating himself, he climbs out on the land again to perambulate, sits boxed in his box, and finally slides back in the water, submerging into dreams.