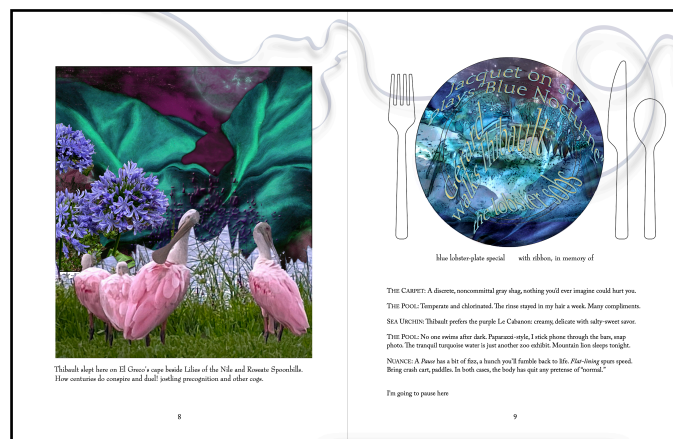
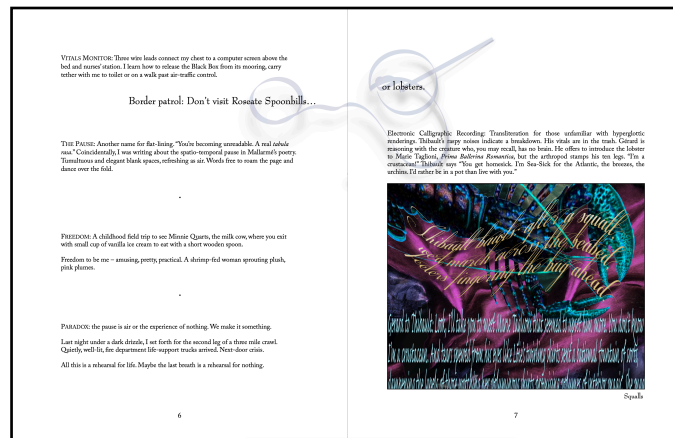
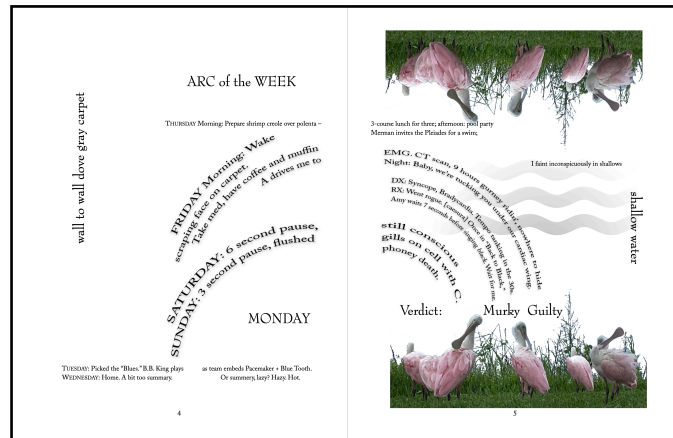




# I'M GOING TO PAUSE HERE

PLEASE VIEW THIS PIECE IN SPREADS. IN THE PDF MENU, SELECT  
VIEW > PAGE DISPLAY > TWO PAGE VIEW.





# I'M GOING TO PAUSE HERE

THE LOBSTER: Lessons from the animal kingdom. Are you a member or not? Destined to be boiled alive at an alfresco eatery on the Atlantic, the lobster is liberated from a fisherman's net. Sadly, he'll soon suffer another kind of captivity.

The Mayor of La Rochelle upbraids the hero-thief Gérard Nerval, 19th century writer encrusted with cockles and sand. Penalty paid, the poet spirits his treasure (*mon trésor*) to Paris. Gérard ignores the creature's lifelong baptism and christens the crustacean Thibault.

Carapace encircled by a blue ribbon, the gifted pet-o-phill promenades the leashed lobster in the Palais-Royal gardens. At first, the excursions are a lark. Curiosity and celebrity accompany the couple through azure air.

.

Lines drift across each other, continents in search of connection, a bridge from me to you. Warhol: each person will have 15 minutes of fame. Me: centurial fame will also last 15 minutes. Litho offset of Jagger. An exemplary mode for 19th-21st centuries. Periods rub shoulders, hips.

THE HOSPITAL: I wrestle with adhesive outlines from leads and governors designed to keep my heart at 60 or more beats per minute. Sticky, dirty marks unresponsive to soap or alcohol unless they peel off outer layer of skin. A reminder, "You were once ours, belonged to our culture."

.

THE POOL: "I'm going under." I swallow chlorinated water. Realize there's too much to drink. A pool party pal notices my face floating in water, she jerks me up. "I was dreaming," I cover. Walk up steps, out the gate. "Gotta go check the faucet A's installing."

.

THE LOBSTER: An arthropod out of water. How long before Thibault will die? Maybe two days. Was the lobster refreshed? Pink sea salt sprinkled in bath water. The "cock" has no voice to say, "My heart's dragging the dirt on these strolls to show off your swell mentality."

.

THE CARPET: Up and at-'em. Out of bed, I slump to the floor and wake speaking an unknown language, rubbing right cheek close to my eye against fibers, trying to revive myself with friction. Rug burn. What kind of yarn is this?

wall to wall dove gray carpet

## ARC of the WEEK

THURSDAY Morning: Prepare shrimp creole over polenta –

FRIDAY Morning: Wake  
scraping face on carpet.  
Take med, have coffee and muffin  
A drives me to

SATURDAY: 6 second pause,  
SUNDAY: 3 second pause, flushed

MONDAY

TUESDAY: Picked the “Blues.” B.B. King plays  
WEDNESDAY: Home. A bit too summary.

as team embeds pacemaker + Blue Tooth.  
Or summery, lazy? Hazy. Hot.



3-course lunch for three; afternoon: pool party  
Merman invites the Pleiades for a swim;

I faint inconspicuously in shallows

shallow water

ER: CT scan, 9 hours gurney ridin', nowhere to hide  
Night: Baby, we're tucking you under our cardiac wing.  
DX: Syncope, Bradycardia. Tempo tanking in the 30s.  
RX: Went rogue. [caesura] Once in "Back to Black,"  
Amy waits 7 seconds before singing black. Wait for me.  
still conscious  
gills on cell with C.  
phoney death.

Verdict: Murky Guilty



VITALS MONITOR: Three wire leads connect my chest to a computer screen above the bed and in nurses' station. I learn how to release the Black Box from its mooring, carry tether with me to toilet or on a walk past air-traffic control.

Border patrol: Don't visit Roseate Spoonbills...

THE PAUSE: Another name for flat-lining. "You're becoming unreadable. A real *tabula rasa*." Coincidentally, I was writing about the spatio-temporal pause in Mallarmé's poetry. Tumultuous and elegant blank spaces, refreshing as air. Words free to roam the page and dance over the fold.

.

FREEDOM: A childhood field trip to see Minnie Quarts, the milk cow, where you exit with small cup of vanilla ice cream to eat with a short wooden spoon.

Freedom to be me – amusing, pretty, practical. A shrimp-fed woman sprouting plush, pink plumes.

.

PARADOX: the pause is air or the experience of nothing. We make it something.

Last night under a dark drizzle, I set forth for the second leg of a three mile crawl. Quietly, well-lit, fire department life-support trucks arrive. Next-door crisis.

All this is a rehearsal for life. Maybe the last breath is a rehearsal for nothing.



or lobsters.

Electronic Calligraphic Recording: Transliteration for those unfamiliar with hyperglottic renderings. Thibault's raspy noises indicate a breakdown. His vitals are in the trash. Gérard is reasoning with the creature who, you may recall, has no brain. He offers to introduce the lobster to Marie Taglioni, *Prima Ballerina Romantica*, but the arthropod stamps his ten legs. "I'm a crustacean!" Thibault says, "You get homesick. I'm seasick for the Atlantic – the breezes, the urchins. I'd rather be in a pot than live with you."



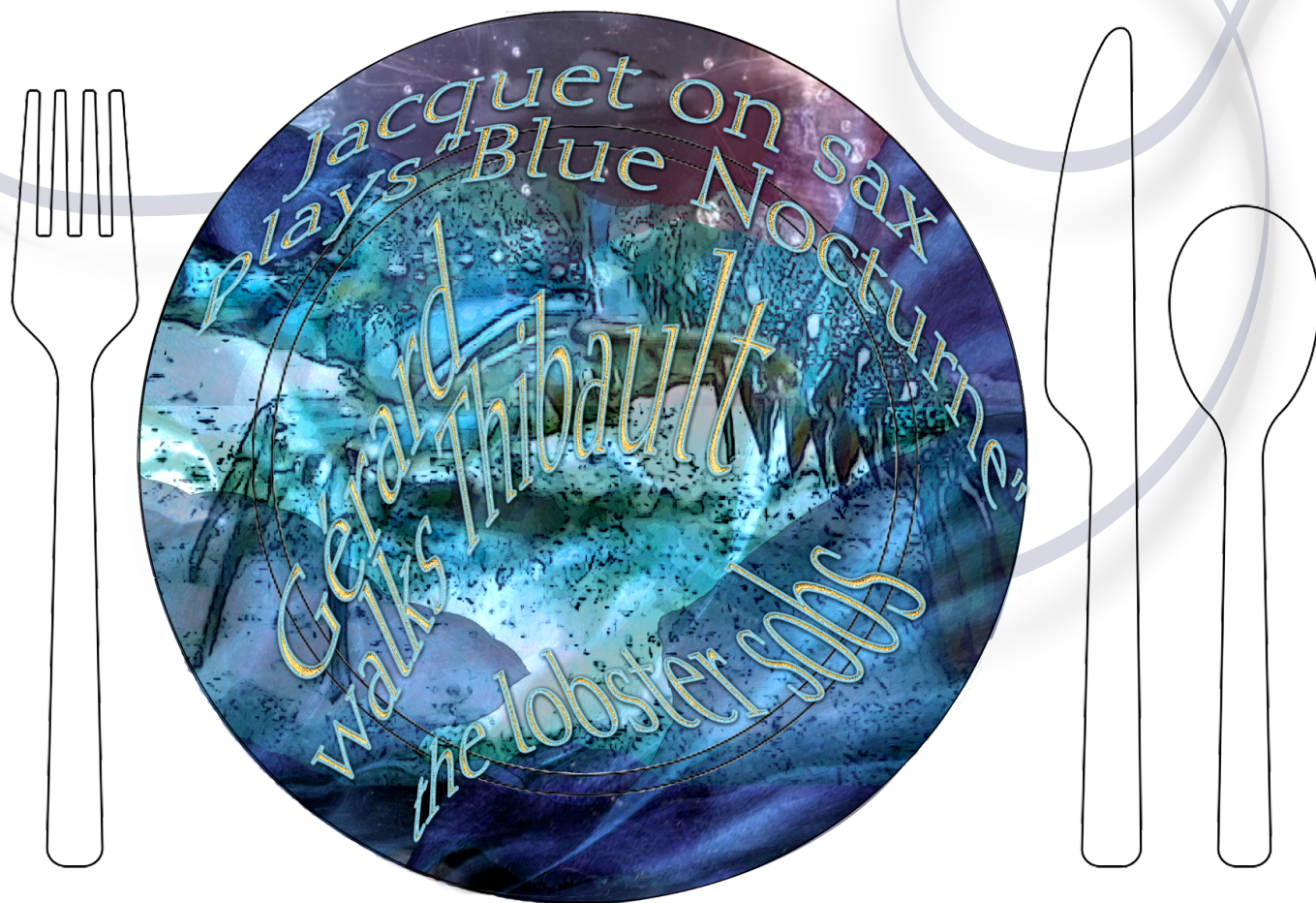
Squalls





Thibault slept here on an El Greco cape beside Lilies of the Nile and Roseate Spoonbills.  
How centuries do conspire and duel! jostling precognition and other cogs.





blue lobster-plate special      with ribbon, in memory of

THE CARPET: A discrete, noncommittal gray shag, nothing you'd ever imagine could hurt you.

THE POOL: Temperate and chlorinated. The rinse stayed in my hair a week. Many compliments.

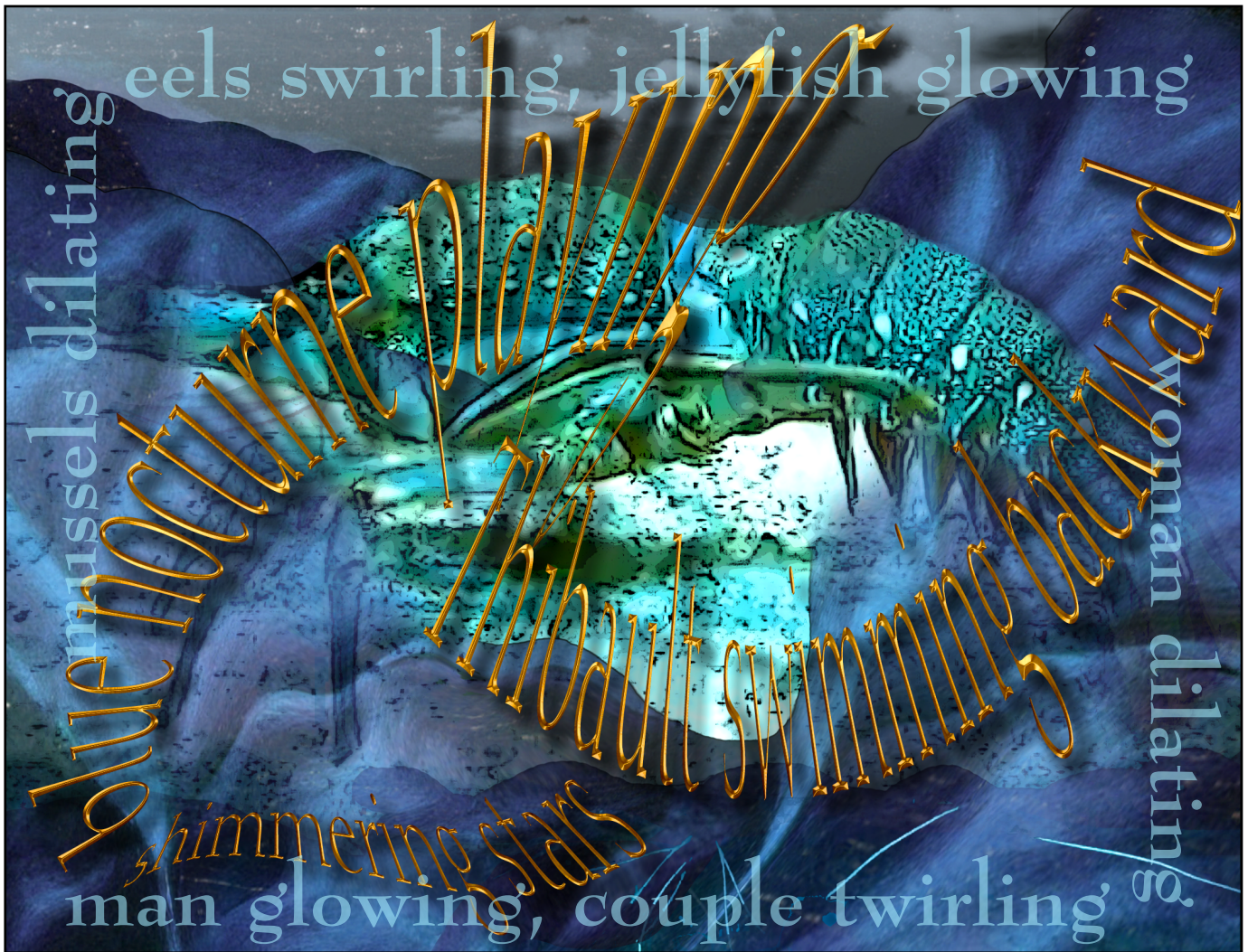
SEA URCHIN: Thibault prefers the purple Le Cabanon: creamy, delicate with salty-sweet savor.

THE POOL: No one swims after dark. Paparazzi-style, I stick phone through the bars, snap photo. The tranquil turquoise water is just another zoo exhibit. Mountain lion sleeps tonight.

NUANCE: A *Pause* has a bit of fizz, a hunch you'll fumble back to life. *Flatlining* spurs speed. Bring crash cart, paddles. In both cases, the body has abandoned any pretense of "normal."

I'm going to pause here





Swimming Backward

Spelling hero. Cast your spell  
upon the water,  
Cast your spell upon

glittering words litter the sea bed

## Thibault's SOS

RASPS: To rout Gérard, Thibault lies on the Persian rug, rubs his antenna on a file of rough ridges below one eye. The scraping is heard two *arrondissements* away.

## Raucous Zydeco

ET TOI! Accordion begins. Thimbles stroke a *frottoir*. Fingers sheathed in armor run up and down the washboard breastplate. Metallic scrapes and rattles force feet to take up arms.

and you will bring me a fish...  
purple, salty-sweet  
chills run up my arms  
and I will bring you  
a thrill, an urchin,  
a raft of phantom arms

single letters fall to the floor





## A Fountain of Fables

Fathom a fracas? Can you?  
An antenna fingers a fleshy file  
foments fricative fiction.

Forecast: *Fumée de mer*.

Strumming causes sticking  
and slipping. Some verbs make a racket –  
loud rasping sounds. Dissonant music  
to warn an enemy/lure a mate.

Is this a love call or a siren?





What the Carpet Gave Me

Lucky me to have a carpet, a lobster,

a heart, a friend. They all fell in together.



Photos of the Roseate Spoonbills, Lilies of the Nile, roses, carpet, surge protector and the collages and graphics throughout are by the author.

*What the Carpet Gave Me*: Digitally transformed and collaged lobster claws came from an early 1650s painting *Still Life with Lobster and Fruit* by Abraham van Beyeren.

*Squalls*: Lobster body was digitally transformed from an 1849 drawing *Hommard common* by Charles Dessalines D'Orbigny.

*Swimming Backward* and *Blue Lobster Plate Special*: Images include a manipulated screen-grab from an underwater film on lobsters.