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Lobster Boy

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Lobster Boy

Your eyespots are the inner sanctum
in a nest of Chinese boxes lacquered one within the next,
right-angled against the vector of my gaze.

Like a lobster from an ocean crevasse,
with slow words and fish-chum, I lure you out
to speak to me, claws and tentacles shaking.

Strange shelly thing: I begin
to believe you are a creature from outer space.
I cannot speak that bubbling language.

In the vacuum of the Milky Way
syllables fall weightless, astray from the launch
pad of your mandibles, crisscrossing.

If I should slip my silver knife into
the plexus of your nerves, I would not hear you scream
when in the boiling pot you'd turn

into a cherry red, just ripe for garlic
butter and claw-crackers. I would not venture
to taste your liver, shiny and green—

who knows what atoms alien organs
absorb in their journeys from place to place,
shut in boxes on boxes of imperial red.

— Kirstin Rogers '94