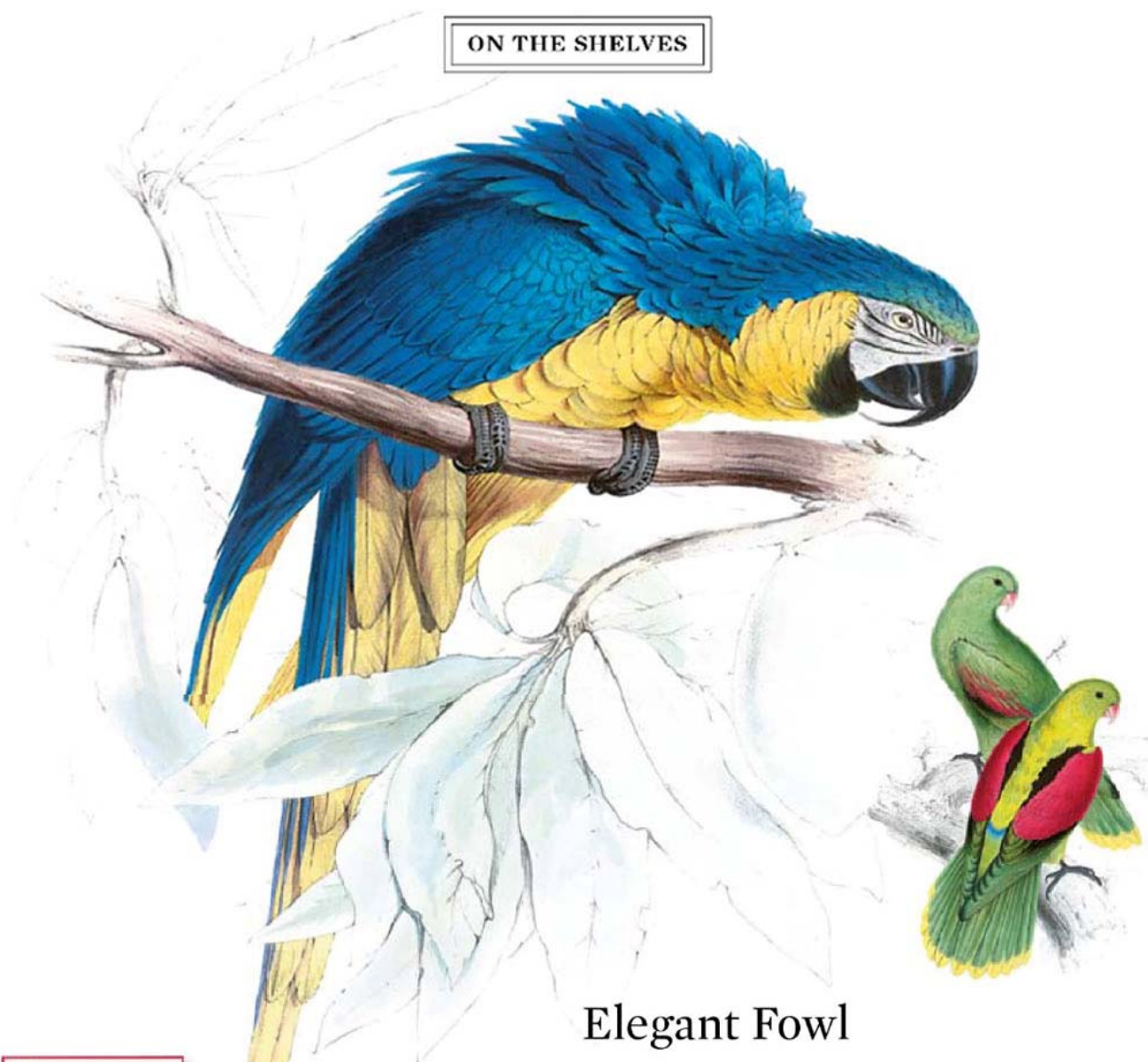


ON THE SHELVES



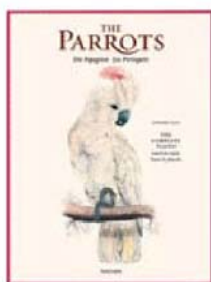
Elegant Fowl

BY TIM STREET-PORTER

When we think of Edward Lear, we think more of *The Owl and the Pussycat* than we do of the parrot. This could soon change with the publication of an edition of *The Parrots*, an exquisite series of lithographs he produced for the National Zoological Society in London at the age of 20. The publisher of many impressive over-scaled books, Taschen has outdone themselves this time. Just as parrots can be raucous, vicious and capable of tantrums as severe as any 3-year-old child—I speak from personal experience—they are also seductive and charismatic. These positive qualities are on display here. Has Taschen ever produced a more beautiful book? As long as you

are well disposed to these unruly birds, the answer will probably be no. May I add also that the book is unbound. Each lithograph can be lifted out and framed—no need to go through the messy inconvenience of attacking the binding. Also, another plus, there are no concerns that the binding will start to unravel by itself over a period of time (occasionally a problem with jumbo-size Taschen books).

Long before he produced his immortal *Book of Nonsense*, Lear was employed by the National Zoological Society. At the age of 13, he was forced to get a job; his stockbroker father had been imprisoned for debt, and his family was destitute. Fortunately, he drew beautifully, and through family connec-

*The Parrots*

BY EDWARD LEAR

EDITED BY ANGELIKA TASCHEN,

TEXT BY PAUL WEBSTER

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