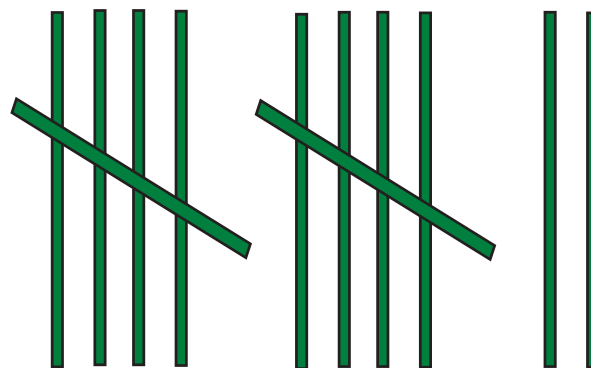
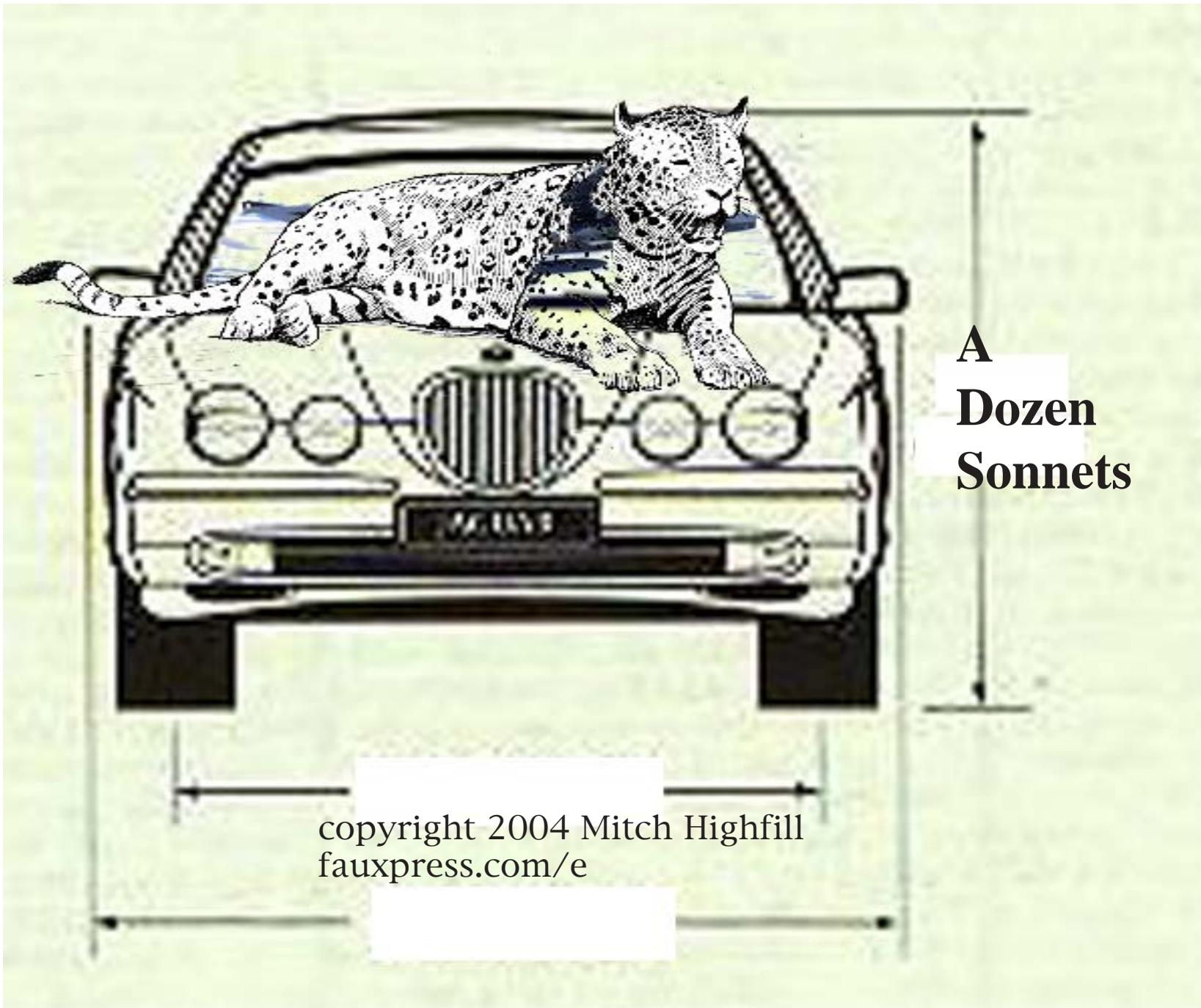


A



SONNETS

by Mitch Highfill



**A
Dozen
Sonnets**

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1

We had only to stretch our hands
to the true edge of the painting
(where they use cats as fertility charms
against yellow cake uranium)
and the cost of postage declined.
Be practical, so that when you see
that greenish tint to the sky, count
the number of sides to the polygram;
which leads to the most burning
time gusts you ever felt.
We need the illusion of an
oracle for country knowledge.
Just say mushroom cloud
and ring the altar bell three times.



2

I am the last one standing because
the people that I am tied to
and their entire families prove false
like tottering fences against the cold.
When I read the faces of statues
another version of nihilism
of foul hearts and murky minds
reverses in me, and I race ahead
through hell (aboriginally located
like a bloody eye-patch removed).
Mastering the flow of solids
that tumble from the painted cave.
How do you know when to stop?
I race ahead.

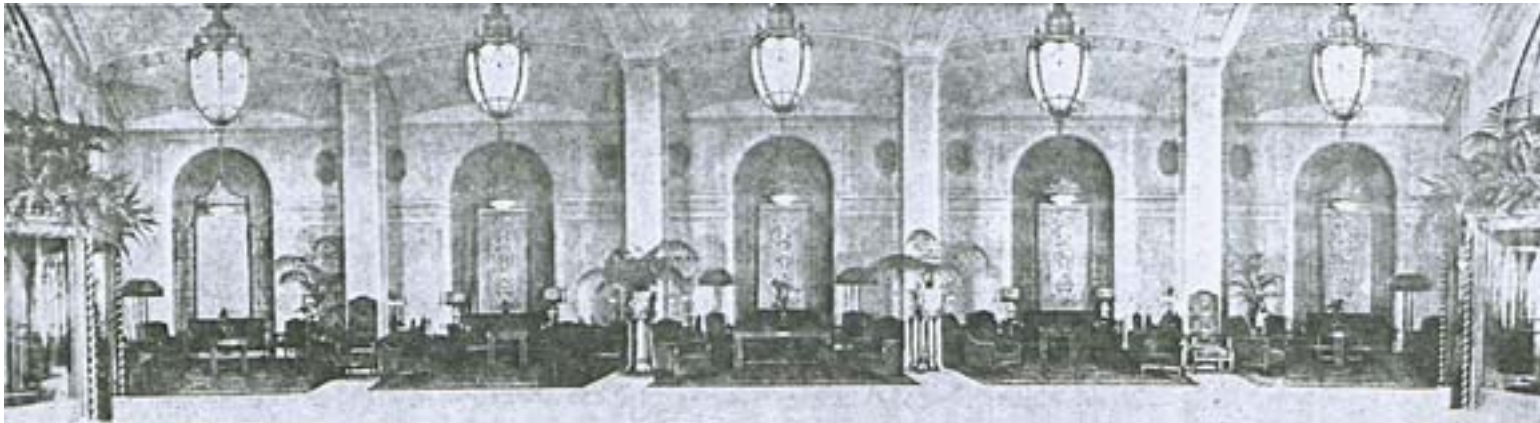


3

After all, this is honest radical work.
The world divides into
where the milk is, and where it isn't.
Diminishing ratios of bargaining
are merely signs of vocation, and
as such, start at the base of the spine.
Should we be keeping a wary distance
from the apogee of empire, always
tangled in chains by its infinite
suppression, pouring ice down
our own throats, imagining mercy
or muscles in spasms of resistance?
Sometimes I tell it this way.
Sometimes I prefer lots of olives.



The giant hobby horse swallows up
identity, is less a property, more
an historical accident brain dead
in a secure vault. Players who furnish
their own rackets as if they were
warming themselves in vain apocrypha.
Moving across the prairie like
derisive ballerinas dotted with ladders
and ramps, and in the violent thunder
a shopping mall dissolves in Idaho.
If anyone would bury me, then why not
Kmart, why not wrapped in eschatology?
The uppermost step is cut through
down to the burning ghats in Benares.



Waiting for the end of the world. I just
Got here, inner ear out of order, blasted
and upright. I am the free speech zone.
Playing poker with the Crawford Khymer
Rouge. Counting cards. Faceless cards
wild. I'll trade you that camel for this
chainsaw. Go me one better. I think it missed
the bone. We hit the sand and released
the ropes. Adrift in pentameter, I thought
of the lonely sniper. How quiet it must be.
How much life insurance is too much?
Ever notice the militarism in avant-garde?
Where is Lee Harvey Oswald when
we really need him?



As the daughter of the mountain set out
a lightning rod for fear and despair
and the forest comes close on the right.
We have all grown up wearing ashes
and bones, whose name literally translated
means the figural that comes to short circuit
such a fusion of individual into group
known as the sandwich man of modern art.
When we look into these canals today
we see that drug and disease differ only
in phase, taking the place of zero in roulette
like the only tongue not turned into a tasting
machine that cuts through potential neurosis.
But beyond the second door you give away
anything that feels good.



The countries of prose and the countries of poetry
erupt with the volcanic force of the inappropriate.
Unhappy mercurial clients step across the threshold
of muse-lessness, her function as regulator of the flow
when their ammunition was far too low for anything else.
In the blind realm of hysteria there is no hidden
or coded meaning for being answerable to others,
for falling under the wrong influence, or love-hate
relations with the corpse of linguistics. Not for nothing
the gag reflex, not for nothing the can of Redi-Whip
behind your back, not for mounted heads above
the gun rack nor all the squid in Chinatown, boiled
fried or steamed up transsexuals in the final volley
can ransack false liberty's broadcast.

I was looking for lox when you turned on Fox.
 Donkey Dick Cheney farts fireballs at Ernie
 Anastos. Ann Coulter swallows. You know
 the drill, the gods punish Floridians. Jeb's
 Cuban friends frantically stacking sandbags
 against Igor. I got your dimpled chad
 swinging. Just follow the televangelists.
 Go me one better. Follow the money.
 Follow something. Read a book, read
 the papers if you have to, just get out.
 Register often. Drive a busload of christians
 over the cliff. All wars are wars between slaves.
 Curses you can't take back.



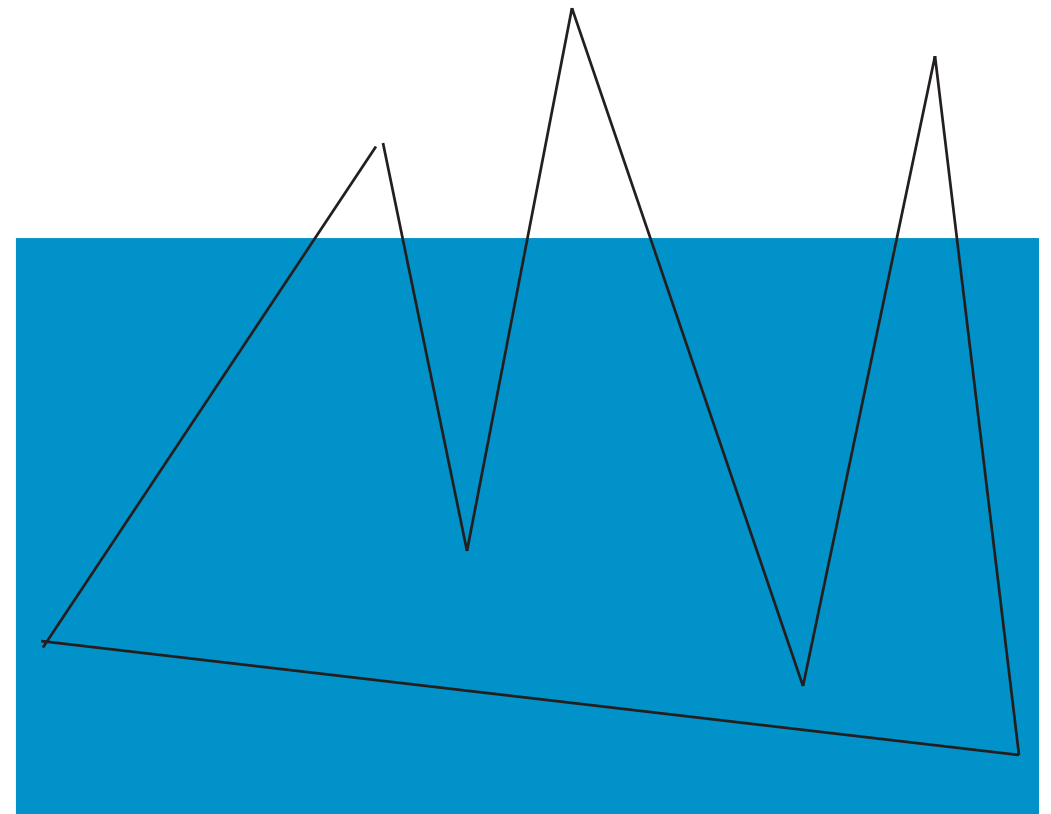
I speak to be instructed, some correlation of sound values
 trembling at the train station spreads the veil of latency.
 My response to the great plains or how a meaning can arise
 from facts productive ideas for business clouds
 not moving here, move on nothing to see here the letter T
 was a hammer, u was an urn, v a vase what will it be
 the urn or the vase nature will rise up if necessary hard core
 realists brush with crest live out the last second of life
 with their pants down nobody stuck out more nobody
 struck out more we couldn't believe what was happening.
 Other missionary impulses hopefully thwarted molecular
 unconscious the towering Yahweh point of view libido
 in amber smelling rage change and imprisonment.
 Pick up the hammer go ahead pick it up.

Your sled is outside but my feet are cold.
We were fucking and the moon came up.
Reciprocity extended. My footnotes were out
side the color codes behaving like verbs.

When the insects bite we petition romanticism
as we survey the sorghum field in front of us.
Sunsets look good in poems, though light is not the same.
Cicada culture obviously comes from somewhere else.

Monastaries and gourmet baby clothes beyond irony
forever. Sometimes we hold our breath. Sometimes not.
Seen under the water, silhouette blurred, no dirty silver sky.
Experimental poetics in the insect kingdom, various

insect pantheons into the domain of pedagogy.
The eyeball taco arrives on a southwest wind.



French courtyard green moon tombstones
scattered over distant hills the new pop
formation the ouija board mousepad
dictates yes no goodbye get the hell out
or code orange we'll take fries with that
thanks for asking but how did you get
the gag into your mouth after you tied
your hands? I come here year after year
while stupid questions come into my head
an alternative to bliss to burn away
but hey I know you're new in town
so let's go look at the hole. Here's your
I just looked at the hole t-shirt & souvenir
booklet all wars are wars between slaves.

12

What you need to know: canine detectives are machines that smell. Proving you are you. Wash with soap and water often. Constriction of pupils; uncontrollable drooling; muscle twitches; severe headaches; blurriness of vision; strong convulsions; duct tape by the carton; flashlight batteries; transistor radio; ancient goddess tattoos; barrels and barrels of potable water; assault rifle. Your sled is outside and my feet are cold. The statue of liberty just another hooded prisoner on a box with electrodes attached. Needles shoot out of the sky. Freedom is on the march. Ululations.



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fauxpress/e
Design by Christina Strong
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