

# The writer as pugilist - one more time

*by* James Lloyd Davis

We all compete. We do.

Hemingway competed with Tolstoi, Tolstoi competed with God.

Thing is, God farmed out his work to ghost writers, Moses maybe being the most prolific, Saul/Paul being the most ambitious.

Me?

I don't compete with nobody except the ghost of Richard Brautigan that haunted my last IBM Selectric, which I sold in a yard sale during a fleeting disembrace of materialism during the 80s. Long story. Never mind.

I have a literary trick.

Wear hats.

Different hats for different venues.

Wearing my pugilistic Popeye Doyle hat right now.

Makes me clip sentences, drop pronouns, crave donuts.

You know, late 1950s New York City, short brim curved up all the way around, flat top, austere, pugilistic, like the hat your bookie wore when he came to collect, no nonsense, garlic-breathed hat with attitude.

So this, then, is a riff, not a story.

Like feather stick jazz and a full-blown alto sax for the take-off.

Yes, alto sax. What of it?

I'm cool. You're not. Attitude is everything in life.

If it begs a reference, there is none, Jack, do without. It's self-referential, down and dirty American literature.

It is it's own genre, Professor Whitebread, take it or walk. I could care less. It's like James Joyce making the scholars dance to his chants, laughing while they hire Mick Priests to explain away the metaphors.

Gotcha!

Get it?

No?

How very unhip.

