

# The writer as pugilist

*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, toke 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.

