

# Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

---

Volume 6 | Issue 1

Article 39

---

June 2006

## What Stle Is

Herb Kitson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

---

### Recommended Citation

Kitson, Herb (2006) "What Stle Is," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 6: Iss. 1, Article 39.  
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol6/iss1/39>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

## Kitson: What Stle Is

### WHAT STYLE IS

Herb Kitson

If Butch can't fix it  
nobody can  
you remember the time  
the ice backed up below the attic  
and brought the whole  
bathroom ceiling down  
he crawled in there  
in the dark in February  
in 20 degree weather  
and plugged the hole  
said anybody could do it  
"when you've done enough  
of 'em they're second nature"  
like when I started writing  
I'd read every night  
so the tune'd stay in my head  
all night I read so much  
Salinger and Bukowski  
I couldn't shake 'em  
and everything I said  
sounded like Salinger  
and Bukowski for years and years  
until one day I was in New York City  
and the sky was gray and it was cool  
and it was October and I bought  
a hot dog in Washington Square Park  
and I walked through the park  
and the trees were dull yellow  
and I saw this guy sitting on a blanket  
on the ground he was begging  
for money and he had a little cat  
tied to a string the cat was so skinny

it looked like it was going to die  
and the man had a sign that said  
“my cat’s sick and needs an operation  
or it’ll die”

he looked like he’d done this  
all his life like he and the cat  
were going to do this forever  
and I thought to myself  
“what would Butch do? Salinger?  
Bukowski?” it was then I realized  
what style is.