

**LIGHTWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD**  
**by Daniel B. Johnson**

Same year I asked my dad for boxing gloves,  
Boom Boom Mancini killed a man

with his hands. A Korean boxer in yellow trunks,  
who went down twice in the twelfth and didn't get up.

I got the gloves anyway, ruddy leather mitts  
weighing a pound a piece. Georgie and I

could barely keep them aloft  
as we circled each other in the basement,

an egg timer ticking away on the ping pong table.  
We'd duck, bob, and duck

to boos from the stands and flying beer cups.  
Lazy hooks sailed wide. Jabs died short.

Only once did I stand over Georgie,  
the way I'd imagined. Blood

wormed out of his nose. His eyes fluttered shut.  
I raised my gloves above my head,

then ran from the house.