

# The Beat

By Adam Duerson

WHAT WAS it that **Muhammad Ali** once boasted? That he could float like a butterfly and sing like a bee? Not exactly, but in a new book former *Esquire* art director **George Lois** argues that the Greatest was the first hip-hop artist. *Ali Rap*, which hits stores on Nov. 2, is an illustrated collection of lyrical Ali quotes in chronological order, starting with what Lois presents as his first verse: "This guy is done, I'll beat him in one," a threat the 12-year-old Cassius Clay made before his first fight. On Dec. 9 ESPN will air a special based on the book with readings by **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar** and **Sidney Poitier**, and a performance of an Ali-inspired song by host **Chuck D**. "He communicated in all sorts of ways at once," says Chuck D.