THE GOOD OLD DAYS: POUNDING A BEAT

You remember that shootout
down on Delaware Ave: when was
that, ten, twelve years ago?
I was still pounding a beat then.
That guy had an arsenal
in there. After an hour
of bang, bang shoot 'em up
there was so much smoke
down there you could hardly breathe.
That was one hell of a way
to spend a Monday afternoon.
Those were the good old days
before the APD Special Qualifications
training. Half the force,
thinking they were safe,
were hiding behind the gas
pumps of the Shell station
across the street. Not likely
you're ever going to see anything
like that again.

THE STREETS OF BOSTON

"Do you know what the streets
of Boston are like?"
"Yes, they were installed
in 1793 and they haven't done
any work on them since."
"I can tell you from experience
there is nothing quite like
a high speed ride through Boston.
We were doing a help job
up there. We had this heavy
duty Mafioso ironed in the back
seat and a full police escort.
I mean flashing lights,
motorcycles in front, squad cars
on both sides, motorcycles in back
and more squad cars. I mean,
they wanted this guy secure
and he was secure with a Capital S.
It was really wild doing sixty
miles an hour through the city,
I mean nobody does sixty miles
an hour in the city, never."
"Not on cobblestones."
"I'm glad I don't have to pay
for the suspension work all
those cars are going to need."
"Maybe if you work it right the Mafioso will take care of it."
"That idea would get a lot of laughs downtown. I mean, it was serious craziness like a high speed parade only everyone was afraid to open their mouth: teeth would do a lot of damage to a tongue rattling around like that. The worst of it was, I was hungover. That was one headache I thought would never go away."

-- Alan Catlin

Schenectady NY

WINNING

I just got an advertisement in the mail today, How to be a winner. I don't even have to read, just listen to these cassettes. How did they find me out? Do they know how badly I am doing? Do they keep computer records of how many losing lottery tickets I buy, how the good life is passing me by? What did they do to find me out? Am I part of a random sampling, end result of a statistical analysis? Here's a loser, send him all the junk on how to be a winner, are there that many losers? Am all I am an ink mark on the page an electrical impulse held in suspended animation a speck of blank type caught between the pages of the deeds of trust, a birth certificate, a death certificate? I no longer have any life. My history is available to anyone who has $18 and access to a computer. I've been guilty since grade school of not trying hard enough to win. I don't care if I win. Yet they come after me. Promises of winning fill my mail. Look for meaningful work. Be a winner every day every way. Be productive, win, win, win Luther and Calvin knock at my door They are angry. Their anger burns through me like a laser beam