Patrick Meighan

Criminal’s creed

It’s a bad idea to give lip to cops. Nothing good comes of smart-ass ways. Beat-downs are certain. Don’t look to courts for vindication. It isn’t there. It’s nowhere. Hold your peace. Say nothing in answer to smirks from faces with dark-mirrored glasses. Even If you are in the right, it won’t hold water. They’ll snap your mug just like any other.
One true bible

On shelves thick with dust of every police academy you’ll find a dog-eared manual – passages highlighted, scribbled notes misspelled in margins – to enlighten cops in the craft of lying.

How to look suspects coldly in the eye, not blink, and cite with confidence statements made by nonexistent witnesses.

Or refer to evidence real only in forensics labs on TV shows.

Once cops learn this dark craft, confessions will gush.

Persons of Interest will bleed all the information there is to bleed as from an open vein.

You’ll hear only whispers of this manual, if at all; it’s like a book of shadows.

Once a public defender tried conjuring it in court. The D.A.’s objection curtly slammed the door.

The book wasn’t divined by veteran cops or criminal justice professors.
It sprang from the experts: spouses, children, the parish priest. Thus it is infallible, even more so than sacred texts. At least to cops who find it much more useful and cheap.
In Memoriam

Left alone to die in county jail,
His body enslaved to junk,
Ignored by guards despite inmates’ pleas,
Dying in a pool of bloody puke,
His crime – the theft of video games
Worth less than a hundred bucks
Yet more than one young addict –
Kevin M., dead at twenty-four,
No belated inquest nor apology
Nor settlement with grieving parents
Can salve the horror of his death.
May he find peace in the still earth.
The grave at least will value him
Not less or more than any other man.