It's Hard to Be a Saint In the City

Bruce Springsteen & The E Street Band

I had skin like leather and the diamond-hard look of a cobra
I was born blue and weathered but I burst just like a supernova
I could walk like Brando right into the sun, then dance just like a Casanova
With my blackjack and jacket and hair slicked sweet
Silver star studs on my duds, just like a Harley in heat
When I strut down the street, I could feel its heart beat
The sisters fell back and said, "Don't that man look pretty"
The cripple on the corner cried out, "Nickels for your pity"
Then gasoline boys downtown sure talk gritty
It's so hard to be a saint in the cityI was the king of the alley, Mama, I could talk some trash
I was the prince of the paupers, crowned downtown at the beggar's bash
I was the pimp's main prophet, I kept everything cool
Just a backstreet gambler with the luck to lose
And when the heat came down it was left on the ground
The devil appeared like Jesus through the steam in the street
Showin' me a hand I knew even the cops couldn't beat
I felt his hot breath on my neck as I dove into the heat
It's so hard to be a saint when you're just a boy out on the streetAnd the sages of the subway sit just like the living dead
As the tracks clack out the rhythm, their eyes fixed straight ahead
They ride the line of balance and hold on by just a thread
But it's too hot in these tunnels, you can get hit up by the heat
You get up to get out at your next stop, but they push you back in your seat
Your heart starts beatin' faster as you struggle to your feet
Then you're outa that hole and back up on the streetAnd then South Side sisters sure look pretty
The cripple on the corner cries out, "Nickels for your pity"
And then downtown boys, they sure talk gritty
It's so hard to be a saint in the city

Songwriters
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