

WINTER

On the streets, which have gutters,
in the shadows of doorways, at
bus stops, at this moment
and yesterday, before the bars, their breath
excluded in great
clouds, turning from the wind
to spit
and laugh horribly

at the life standing up inside them
with such pain as
loneliness permits, and the weather,
turning to each other
with jokes and lies, with the baggage
and garbage of their humanness as if one
they held it toward would
take it and thank them

is us, all of us, all dragged by the legs upstream
like poor stooges sunk to drowning
for a living.
On Clinton St. the bars explode
with the salt smell of us like the sea, and the tide
of rock and roll music, live
humans floating on it
out over the crimes of the night. How

unlike such outwardness the clenching back
of a man into himself is,
several of us are our own fists
There! emphasizing on the tabletop.