little late. Not with this kind of weather."

"It's dark," the girl said, and she giggled.
"Yeah," the boy answered, his voice very low.
"Freddie...?"
"Um?"
"You're...you're standing very close to me."
"Um."

There was a long silence. Then the girl said, "Oh," only that single word,
and Andy knew she'd been kissed, and he suddenly hungered for Laura's
mouth. It was then that he wondered if he would ever kiss Laura again. It was
then that he wondered if he was dying.

No, he thought, I can't be dying, not from a little street rumble, not from
just getting cut. Guys get cut all the time in rumbles. I can't be dying. No,
that's stupid. That don't make any sense at all.

"You shouldn't," the girl said.
"Why not?"
"I don't know."
"I love you, Angela," the boy said.
"I love you, too, Freddie," the girl said, and Andy listened and thought:
I love you, Laura. Laura, I think maybe I'm dying. Laura, this is stupid but
I think maybe I'm dying!

He tried to speak. He tried to move. He tried to crawl toward the doorway
where he could see the two figures in embrace. He tried to make a noise, a
sound, and a grunt came from his lips, and then he tried again, and another
grunt came, a low animal grunt of pain.

"What was that?" the girl said, suddenly alarmed, breaking away from
the boy.

"I don't know," he answered.
"Go look, Freddie."
"No. Wait."

Andy moved his lips again. Again the sound came from him.
"Freddie!

"What?"
"I'm scared."
"I'll go see," the boy said.

He stepped into the alley. He walked over to where Andy lay on the
ground. He stood over him, watching him.

"You all right?" he asked.

"What is it?" Angela said from the doorway.
"Somebody's hurt," Freddie said.