

# INTENSE STUFF

*ALEX SMITH*

Working in the classroom  
is a thicket filled with birds

each little creature shaking  
each a spray of wheat then shaking

a moment        a look  
                 a fallen tick of grain  
intense stuff    I'd say

the lens smeared over  
with Vaseline

intense stuff    I'd say  
We make jokes

and we will wait for talk  
of black and walk of women  
and the talk of sex saunters in

## ELECTRONIC MAIL

Hey Member 756487!

Your membership to 18 & Nasty just expired. If you've already renewed your membership, and have not had problems logging on to our site, then please disregard this e-mail.

If you are having trouble logging into your account, it's because your credit card has been declined, and your membership has expired.

Visit our site, and give us a new card, and we'll let you watch more 18 & Nasty.

If you'd like to renew you membership, slip your card through the sensors in Times Square and wait for the Russian to stumble back into the booth.

If you'd like to renew your membership, look at the floor instead of the eyes.

Talk shit about frozen yogurt, cry openly in bars, and trade in your tight jeans for bicycle shorts.

People still wear bicycle shorts, sadly, but we can't help that. We are 18 & Nasty.

When the blond Russian stumbles into the booth, and raises her eyebrows at your cock—flaccid, hanging over your pants like a possum's tail—tell her that you've swiped your credit card. Do not touch the glass. You will get nothing from touching the glass. Pretend the glass is very hot, or very cold, whichever makes you not want to touch the glass.

If you'd like to renew your membership, keep staying in with Ben & Jerry's. If you'd like to renew your membership, slip yourself into the disk drive.

We are not a religion, so please do not ask us if we are a religion. We are 18 & Nasty.

This email is a robot, Alex. Try not to look so frightened. Place your penis into the disk drive. That is what the disk drive is there for. Don't be afraid. No one is watching you. This e-mail is a robot, and if you want to renew your membership, then renew your membership. No one is laughing at you. Don't be afraid. No one is here.

# YOUNG MANHATTAN HIP-SHOOTING

## I

Leap from the rat's hind weak wings catching air malodorous village of vermin  
below

surreptitious delights to be had from the blood UNDERNEATH a feed-law violated  
a dwelling uninhabitable a selection of string from which we may sup

## II

Fleas live DAYS and FULL days and in the day an absence of space for marginal  
error and lapses of judgment

within the bubbles within the crema are like these air pockets tiny and  
byproducts of the brew

and products on which finally taste is based

## III

Darwin had a mind for this a beard carrying fragments of a brain not fitting  
well into cranium alone

He considered orders of life condescended for he found there no GOD  
only casual spray of shotguns in the dark

## IV

I awake drink the city

crumble bits of darkness in my hands as I drink the morning's coffee

Monitor my heart rate It beats like the risen words on the page

For each thump is a promise of love

Each SPERM a POTENTIALITY

and one of millions swims through the sewers

gives chase to the great wide open

## TEMPLE GUARD

You are an interesting child, lady, and  
you have horsies. You walk the empty path  
and sing the boring art objects

into antiquity. The rasp of your  
voice is of the most brutal cuteness,  
as the chaff of love floats around

you, dancing on the air. Also: mountains and  
rock formations, stuff like that. Fresh skin  
rubbed off, made quaint, polished and set under

glass for others to see. Each piece  
is a keystroke lingering in the dust,  
each finger to type a specimen

placed in an ancient jar. Each fleck  
of matter I create, each liquid,  
is stolen away by the terlet.

The air carries off the easy meaning,  
leaving the echoes of embarrassing honesty-  
carrion out of fashion, out of time.

Faking innocence is an art, much like the prolonged  
sex-stare, the no-skin-talk-tease.  
Each of these you mastered before

the monsters made you eat human flesh.  
Something you couldn't help but like. And that's OK.  
I get it. I'm the dude you can trust to tell.

For your salvation I utter comedic prayers,  
eaten by this deity or that. I can make heaven  
flow from your bored, I'M COOL behavior

that comes from, you know, childhood, for one,  
or not knowing how to skateboard,  
not wearing the jeans that everybody wore.

You name each ritual before  
it is tagged, sent to the mild gates.  
I briefly acknowledge our difference

in age. Rain patters on windowsills  
and ominous butterflies signal  
bad shit on the horizon.

And we know. We know...  
that we are both at our best when asleep.