

Professor Eisenstein Ebsworth's poem, "The King's English" launches a protest against "accent bias", the belief that persons with particular regional accents are less clever or knowledgeable than those with more "standard" accents.

The poem's title is a play on words: while the term, "the King's English" can refer to a "royal standard" of the language, in the poem it also refers to the often-maligned New York Brooklyn accent (another name for the New York City borough of Brooklyn is "Kings County").

The King's English
by Miriam Eisenstein Ebsworth, Ph.D.

1

Working class girl in a middle class world

At the job interview
I wear a suit and pearls
They ask intellectual questions
My answers are thoughtful and smart
I think
They don't hear me
What part of Brooklyn are you from?

2

I'm getting to know him
The conversation is political
I'm being analytical
My conversation is intelligent and charming
I think
He can't see me
You sound like Cousin Vinny's* girlfriend
in that movie
Like some kid hanging out on the corner

3

That did it
I could feel that tough girl exterior happening
I'm not afraid
I'll fight if you make me
Why do you think a passionate discussion is an argument?
I'm out of control you say
No way
I haven't thrown anything yet, have I?

4

Working class girl in a middle class world

I speak the King's English
Kings County that is.
Do you have a problem with that?

** My Cousin Vinny is the name of a 1992 movie about a clash of regional subcultures in the U.S.
Its main characters speak with stereotypical Brooklyn accents.*