

# Bubble Muzzle

Kae Tempest

Here's a poem  
It goes like this

You're off to work again  
You need to make a wage  
Although you kind of feel like it's a waste of days  
Measuring the hours of your life and the paper made  
And now your pleasure is devoured, right?  
It's getting tedious to take the pace

I mean you're sick of staying late  
And rising early with a day to face  
You know, punching them numbers in that database  
And pretending that you care about the day-to-day  
Of these office politics  
Man they're enough to make your faith decay

And so this morning you were staring in the mirror with your razor blade  
And you noticed with a shiver that your face was grey  
Because you realised  
You're actually, genuinely pissed off  
Every single time your train's delayed  
And you got this weird feeling  
Like you're beginning to fade away

But it's cool though  
Because you've got this girlfriend that you've been seeing for a while now  
And you love her but you don't really feel the same when she smiles now  
I mean you only ever make love with the lights out  
She don't really seem as on it as she used to  
But it's fine, right?  
It's fine

Because now's the time for settling down  
The time for making do  
So you go home  
You turn your brain off  
And you rent a film off pay-per-view  
Sometimes you wonder what your younger self would make of you  
You're happy, in a way  
You're really happy, right?  
Like any of your mates from school  
And it's true the cooler ones all fucked off and got them arts jobs  
In Shoreditch  
And now you meet 'em in the bar as you watch 'em carry on like heart-throbs  
And it always ends up messy no matter how chilled out it starts off  
All of a sudden you've gone and got yourself involved in a danceoff

You're like, "mate this is great, I mean I am rushing my arse off"  
Stood there feeling like you're on some sort of ride you can't stop  
Next thing you're in the chippy rowing with some prick who's got a fast gob  
Just another night to wake up from and laugh off

And so life goes on the bubble  
It's tunnel vision all week, right?  
And our weekends, well they're for seeing double  
So how we ever going to see that we're in trouble?

We're like a dog wagging its tail expecting a treat  
Cause it's learned how to put on its own filthy, stinking muzzle

And so life goes on in the bubble  
It's tunnel vision all week  
And our weekends, well they're for seeing double  
So how we ever going to see that we're in trouble?  
We're like a dog baring its teeth, protecting its own muzzle

Meanwhile, you're walking through the city with your shoulders squared  
You're like "man, I'm from the End, you lot don't know the load I bear"  
You're looking at the people that you pass with a ferocious glare  
These suits and ties going on like they don't know you're there  
You're sick of feeling insignificant  
Your ambition's as brilliant as anybody else's  
But your temperament is militant  
Cause every other day brings the death of an innocent  
This inner city living is seeing more wakes than Finnegan  
And all around you is suspicion, power games and fast living  
Everybody's trying to get paid  
You can't even rave without someone getting stabbed over something  
It's a crying shame  
Because you're like, "Fuck the higher plane, I want a fast car and a diamond chain"

It feels like everybody's out here trying to find their fame  
They want their names to ring out like the alarms before the sirens came  
They wanna leave the people shaking like a lion's mane  
Cause they've been denied for so long  
They're so sure they have a prize to claim

So tell me, is it time for grief  
Or is it time for blame  
I'll stand right here and tell you lot it's time for neither, mate  
It's a time for change  
Cause where I'm from young boys are given sentences before they've even learned to sign their name  
And all you're trying to do is find your way through the lies and pain

Although that said  
You have got you heart set on some new kicks  
You want them fresh black Nikes with the blue stitch, right?  
So you been putting in the hours  
Moved a few bits  
You're like "what's the point in aiming any higher? It seems useless"

And so it's small victories and our city's full of rubbish  
Where our children are either overfed or undernourished  
Where our talent is suffocated before it can be encouraged  
And our true selves are completely ignored

So tell me  
What's the point in hoping for more  
When there are soldiers at war  
And they are dying without knowing what for  
And all you want to do is think nothing, sit and smoke up a drawer  
Mate, we're going nowhere  
Like a boat on the shore oblivious to the whole ocean  
We're a token of a broken, divorced generation whose folks don't know the rapport  
Don't get me wrong  
Just like everybody else here I have my rent to pay  
All I'm trying to say is it feels to me like we're so caught up in the every

day  
We've given all our strength away

So  
Life goes on in the bubble  
It's tunnel vision all week  
And our weekends, back off, Tempest, cause they're for seeing double, right?  
Well how we ever going to see that we're in trouble?  
We're like a dog wagging its tail running off to fetch its own muzzle

And so life goes on in the bubble  
It's tunnel vision all week  
And all weekends, well they're for seeing double  
So how we ever going to see that we're in trouble?  
Unless we look each other in the eye and say,  
"Do you know what? There's a lot more to my life than the every day struggle  
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