

# Marshall Law

Kae Tempest

Everywhere is monsters  
Tits out, wet-mouthed, heads back  
Shouting and screaming just to prove they exist

Becky's at the bar with the usual mix  
Of decadent fabrics and desolate lighting  
Everybody here has got a hyphenated second name  
Blowing more breeze  
Than the wind at the weather vane

Industry slimeballs, showbiz big-deals  
The cool new band with the retro feel  
It's the wrap party for their video  
Becky danced in it  
The director, Marshall Law  
Head to toe in yellow velour  
Is holding court about the science of image  
While the sycophants giggle and grimace  
Becky fidgets, tells herself  
'Must stop being so cynical  
Everybody here is a human  
Even these pitiful posturing pop stars and idiots.'  
She tells herself to look again -  
Nothing is hideous

So while Marshall Law is wanking on about his artwork  
She smiles at the guy opposite  
Bright eyes, dark shirt  
He raises his eyebrows in the direction of Marshall  
'My name's Becky,' she says  
'What's yours?'

She was like nothing that he'd seen before  
Strong body, soft edges, with something so raw  
In the core of her iris  
He said his name, 'Harry'  
And never in his life had he felt so happy  
They got talking  
Free bar. Exhausting decorum  
He drank until she was so absorbing  
He blanked out the party  
The floor spun, he stared at her face and felt sure  
Something was happening here

He was kinda nervous  
His eyes kept doing circuits of the room  
He drank as fast as they could serve him  
Then this dude comes over  
Sticks out a thick hand  
And Harry looks at her  
Like he's just found himself in quicksand  
He gives this guy a wrap, they shake hands  
Sweaty cash passed between palms  
No fuss. Bish bash, yes, bosh  
He looked at her guiltily  
She waved it off, smiling  
'You a shotter then, right?'

I don't care.'

'Becky, all I ever wanted was a place of my own.'  
His eyes, wide and trusting  
He's staring at her, desperate for something to click  
He is opening up. This is it  
'A real classy place, the whole bit  
Like a speakeasy, right?  
Chandeliers and lights  
That shine off of the glasses  
No hype, and no arseholes  
Instead of rotting our guts out  
In shitty old boozers  
We can be grown men, listening to music  
Real music. Played with heart by real bands  
Not just posers looking like they're  
Giving blowjobs to mic stands  
And I'll be in a waistcoat, dead grand  
Harry's Place  
Or, at least, that's the plan.'

She was half listening  
Half not listening  
Kept getting distracted by the lights flickering  
He looks like an outline that needs filling in  
He leans in close, starts whispering:

'The thing is, and it's weird  
I never felt so able  
To talk like this to anybody, ever  
Recently Becky, I've been really feeling the pressure  
I can't tell you how good it is  
To get this off my chest.'

Becky's holding tight to her glass  
Good coke, brain fast  
She watches his face as he talks  
Little bump on her fingertips  
Expert. Quick snort  
Sucking on a cigarette, feeling vaguely bored

It's true if you believe it  
The world is the world  
But it's all how you see it  
One man's flash of lightning ripping through the air  
Is another's passing glare, hardly there  
It's true if you believe it  
The world is the world  
But it's all how you see it  
One man's flash of lightning ripping through the air  
Is another's passing glare, hardly there

'If I'm being honest, well it is  
It's like a trap  
I ain't trying to be flash  
I just need to raise the cash for the dream  
I hardly touch it myself  
Look, it ain't that  
But once I set myself a task  
Well, there ain't no going back  
And I am halfway there  
I am, nearly, anyway  
The point is

I kinda had to push all of my friends away  
I can't have nobody  
Knowing what I'm up to  
I keep it very secret but the thing is  
I would love to  
Just for one day  
You know, live like any other guy  
I can't have a girlfriend, you see  
'Cause I don't like to lie  
It's safer all round  
That I just keep my head down  
And, yeah, the business is booming  
Yeah, the business is really booming  
But my family think I work in recruitment  
So, I get up every morning  
And I put a shirt and suit on  
And I get on a train, I go up town  
It's all professional users  
I sell in the boardrooms and not the boozers  
To, like, CEOs and these modern day Scrooges  
Who get their secretaries to bring me coffee  
It's so stupid  
Meant to be hard times, right, a recession?  
But these guys are buying more than ever, I reckon  
And I...

He's got nice eyes  
Shame about his issues, though  
The party pushes on, her cynicism's getting vicious  
Show nothing  
Keep smiling

She catches the eye of her mates  
They're dancing by the bar  
They're in a state  
Nod for 'save me'  
They understand, dance over  
Put their arms around her shoulders -  
'Becky, we're bored, let's go'  
His mouth slows to a stop  
He seems to lose his composure  
She smiles at him  
'Yeah, was nice getting to know ya.'

No, not like that, don't leave  
Please  
Don't make her go, we've just got started

Their teeth are bare, their feet are planted  
Their smirking at him like he's dirt  
And now his heart is  
Damp with the fury of  
Finding and losing  
This miracle girl  
He feels weak with confusion, like  
What had he said?  
How long had he talked?  
He watches them walk to the doors  
His blood roars

In the back of the cab, the girls sit there giggling  
The driver let's them smoke out of the window  
So they're shivering

They pass a bottle of wine back and forth  
Let it clash against their teeth  
The cab moves fast through the streets  
'Who was that guy you was with?'  
Becky shakes her head softly  
'Him? I don't know, probably alright  
But I could tell he was one of them "save me" types  
And I couldn't be dealing with that  
Nah, Not tonight.'