**My Brother**

**By Colin Foulkes**

My brother is a funny man. That isn’t meant as a criticism, but as a warning. He is funny man, a charming man, and a natural story-teller, and when you meet him you are engulfed in his warm bonhomie.

His intelligence, quick wit and wonderful eye for the absurd along with a flair for words and comic timing have made him the centre of attention at family gatherings. His telling - and re-telling - of our common memories, delivered with such comic mastery and mimicry, has been a delight to share.

But this elevation to family raconteur has fuelled his less-desirable traits. Like a shark with swimming, my brother has to talk to live. An hour spent in his company is an hour spent listening. He has lost the ability to listen, or listens only enough to prime the pumps for his next delivery. Pick any topic, he can riff on it for a good half hour.

And his stories, once innocent and joyous, have eroded into harsh spiteful lessons, delivered from an opinionated pulpit. The tenor of his tales following a subtle arc that plots the course of his life: innocence of youth, disappointment of adulthood to harsh cynicism of middle age.