

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## A Waste of Time

by Stuart Carruthers

People rarely look the way you expect them to,  
even when you've seen pictures  
and in this situation that statement is very true.  
The years haven't been kind.  
He looks like a man who's been eaten from the inside out.  
Look at him desperately hanging onto other people's conversations  
In the hope that they will suddenly forget the past  
And all will be forgiven.

This is the closest I've been to him since  
that Wednesday afternoon when he crossed over the road  
to avoid me.  
I wonder if he even remembers?  
Forty years is a long time.  
I'd forgotten that he was so small.  
His fiery red hair now replaced by a dirty unwashed grey,  
And that suit doesn't sit well on a slender frame.  
Should I have come?  
Out of respect for Aunty Sheila I taught it best.

The bar is quite full so I doubt it he will see me.  
I've got nothing to say to him anyway  
What do you say to your old man after forty years?

There is one thing  
I'm glad I don't look like him.  
I wonder if the woman in the blue dress  
with the bored expression on her face  
is his new partner?  
God help her.

No point in staying any longer  
My curiosity didn't answer any questions that I didn't already know  
And i don't want to speak to him  
This time tomorrow I'll have forgotten what he looks like  
People rarely look the way you expect them to, even when you've seen  
pictures