

# T.S. Eliot On His Deathbed

*by* Jerry Ratch

I guess at the end you're only  
looking forward. Or upward actually,  
since you can only lie there on your back  
looking upward, straight ahead toward infinity,  
your mouth in a grimace, with the ghostly  
pink lips peeled back from the teeth.

And loose skin hanging in folds  
at the bottom of the face, with one large ear  
still listening. The stubble of beard on a bony chin  
and red creases deep in the forehead.

A bony nose, and the neck too thin  
to support the great weight of the head  
as it continues in its effort to perceive  
whatever is left to perceive.

