

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.

