

ON VISITING MY AGED FATHER
IN A NURSING HOME

Beloved old warrior,
Only at arms length we meet now.
Silence
between
us.

You withdrawn
Into scooped-out hollows.
Frail,
Sounding voice no more,
From
sunken
jowls.

Veined hands once reached
To warm
Your child's
Nameless fears.

Now,
I have you on my hands,
Old father,
When all I crave to do is
Hold you in my arms.

Elizabeth Robinson Ratcliffe
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