My name is Francis Joseph Cassavant and I have just returned to Frenchtown in Monument and the war is over and I have no face.

Oh, I have eyes because I can see and ear-drums because I can hear but no ears to speak of, just bits of dangling flesh. But that’s fine, like Dr Abrams says, because it’s sight and hearing that count and I was not handsome to begin with. He was joking, of course. He was always trying to make me laugh.

If anything bothers me, it’s my nose. Or, rather, the absence of my nose. My nostrils are like two small caves and they sometimes get blocked and I have to breathe through my mouth. This dries up my throat and makes it hard for me to swallow. I also become hoarse and cough a lot. My teeth are gone but my jaw is intact and my gums are firm so it’s possible for me to wear dentures. In the past few weeks, my gums began to shrink, however, and the dentures have become loose and they click when I talk and slip around inside my mouth.

I have no eyebrows, but eyebrows are minor, really. I do have cheeks. Sort of. I mean, the skin that forms my cheeks was grafted from my thighs and has taken a long time to heal. My thighs sting when my pants rub against them. Dr Abrams says that all my skin will heal in time and my cheeks will someday be as smooth as a baby’s arse. That’s the way he pronounced it: arse. In the meantime, he said, don’t expect anybody to select you for a dance when it’s the Girls’ Choice at the Canteen.

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