

THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 4 | 1995

The Portrait
Russell Edson

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Russell Edson

THE PORTRAIT

Someone with a mirror advertises himself as a portrait painter.

Could you do me in oil?

Boil you in oil? Vegetable, of course, healthier than animal fat. Or would you prefer flyspecks on a cracker to go with that thing around your neck? Incidentally, what is that thing, a hangman's noose?

Oh that, that's my collar and leash, my handler waits for me in heaven.

It looks more like a bandage. Was your head part of the French Revolution, and then sewn back?

No no, an umbilical cord which my mother helped me tie into a nice knot.

In the last moments of this particular writing, the portrait, which has taken years to complete, is finally finished with the speed of light...