Reading the Faces:
Portraiture as a Means to Investigate
Representational Containment
of Native Americans

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Emma B. Freeman.  
*Call of the Wild*, 1914.

“The juxtaposition between photographer Emma B. Freeman’s *Call of the Wild* and Shelley Niro’s *The Rebel* exemplifies the intertextual conversation between older Euro-American portraits and contemporary Native portraits.

Allan J. Ryan thinks Niro’s works are ‘comical studies’ full of ‘playful energy’ and ‘affection.’ They are ‘a welcome corrective to all those humorless depictions of nubile princess, nurturing earth mother, sultry vixen, and servile squaw that have long been fixed into the popular imagination.’”

T.C. Cannon.

*Collector #5*

*or*

*Osage with Van Gogh.*

“Dressed in Oklahoma costume, seated in an Indonesian wicker chair that rests upon a Navajo rug, Osage poses in front of Vincent Van Gogh’s *Wheatfield.* As collector of both Indian and European art, Osage surpasses Ayer.”
Boys. Photograph. Blackmore Collection.

Royal Gorge, Arkansas River, 1959  
by: Daniel Bourne

Another car door slams, another Kodak camera  
stuck right up my nose.

I would tell you about my life  
but I won’t.

But this one white kid  
my age, car  
license plates from Illinois,  
is too scared to walk near me  
to get his picture taken  
“with the little Indian,”

as his sour-puss sister names me  
waving her hand, her hair  
yellow as cornmeal.  
The feathers  
in my hair  
are work clothes.

Stories  
are what create the skin.