The Sun floods my canvas. Too bright to take in, too resonant to lose sight. A benevolent betrayal of the source — unbearable bright reality. And we will go right up to The Sun.

I am John's bare skin. I am John's bruised nerves. I am John's blurred vision — and I am John's whatever else encourages these dipshits to paint me into a Mark Flynn-shaped psuedo-intellectual box.

I am also Johnny's labored breath as it reeks heavy with Blue Velvet.

The clock on the nightstand read 3:33am. There was no excuse to still be awake at this hour, but sleep hadn't come easily as of late. I desired sleep. I expected sleep. I'd even dressed for sleep, that is to say was almost entirely bare.

Instead, I sat on the edge of the bed, staring into the hotel mirror through the haze of perfumed smoke which drifted up from the ashtray, wondering if the distortion was from irritation or the onset of its effects. Mirrors are a powerful tool when conducting magick: mirrors can be tools to see things as they are. It's also advised to not look for too long into mirrors while on psychoactives, lest they hasten the onset of ego death.

Quid pro quo. As above, so below. Ecce homo. Give my regards to Broadway.

In the reflection, I could see two pillows behind me: one was my pillow, the other was her pillow. It had now been over one month she hadn't occupied her pillow. It *did* have an occupant tonight. The occupant simply wasn't her.

In the moonlight which bled in through the patio door, the barrel of my Baretta gleamed.

*Who **are** you?*

Looking at myself in the mirror, I was not sure. This couldn't be me, could it — this bare and waxy figure of cut muscle and scar tissue? When I examined the scabs on my knuckles and the callouses on my palms, could I see the young man who'd walked into this industry four years ago? That discolored skin along my flank: was it from an Xtreme Title match, ARCADIA, or the bullet of a gun? The thin ridge of cicatrix under my jaw and across my throat: what had I done to earn it? The eyes I looked into: how could they glow so green yet be so dull?

*Who **are** you?*

I would find out. I reached back to her side of the bed.

On the nightstand was her Polaroid camera, the one she always brought on trips to new cities. Our refrigerator was covered in photos: the trips we took, the dinners we ate, the

kisses exchanged, the life we lived. It was still there at the apartment when I'd arrived; I don't imagine she cared to chronicle wherever she was.

I sat it in my lap and faced the mirror. I saw a bare man, a bed, a Baretta, and an empty pillow. If she could not chronicle our lives for now, I suppose I'd have to.

I aimed.

I fired.