

Editorial

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Summer is the season when moviegoers flock to theaters to catch the sequel of their favorite blockbuster—Shrek, Spiderman, Harry Potter (okay a third installment of magic and wizardry in Potter’s case). But a sequel to a “special issue” of a journal? Brent said it was because there were simply too many strong pieces submitted in response to the call for papers to fit them all into one issue. But coming to know the readers and writers of the *Janus Head* community as I have, I can’t imagine that this isn’t the case with every volume of the journal that goes to print. So when it came to the topic of addiction, it was with some amusement that I found Brent declaring: “One is not enough!”

When writing and speaking about addiction, we often find ourselves, borrowing the title of Mike James’ beautiful poem, “in the country of grief.” His words delivered me another metaphor for this particular *Janus Head* project. Reading the numerous submissions for our first installment of the addictions issue, I had the image of a crowded church or synagogue during a funeral for a beloved member of the congregation. With hundreds of worshippers sitting in the pews and standing in the aisles and hundreds more waiting outside its doors hoping to get in, who do you turn away? To whom do you say: “We’re sorry we have no more room. You cannot mourn your friend or exalt your God today.”

“Look to the sky,” a father councils his despondent daughter in Luigi Arata’s “Nepenthes and Cannabis in Ancient Greece.” His daughter, the author hypothesizes, has ingested one or both these substances to help her assuage her grief over the death of her child. Lost in her wrecked condition of altered consciousness and mourning, the mother arrives to town in a state of ecstasy with her son’s head in her hands. Arata’s drama is a powerful reminder that it is not only to escape pain that humanity turns to drugs, it is for communion with God. The subjects of mysticism and eroticism are found in the work of Jeremy Biles whose “Insect, or Bataille and the Crush Freaks”

explores the religio-sexual dimensions of addiction. “Divine Amnesia.” “High Off the Page.” The themes of grief and reverie are found throughout *Janus Head’s* addiction part two and form a thread running between this issue and the last. As a therapist charged with shepherding people through the enormity of this area of addiction—this churning cauldron of celebration, grief and recovery—it is a humble reminder that context is everything. As Carl Jung wrote Bill W. (the co-founder of AA) when discussing the role of spirituality in alcoholism and sobriety: “You see ‘alcohol’ in Latin is *spiritus*, and you use the same word for the highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The helpful formula is: *spiritus contra spiritum*” (1985, pp. 167-8).

Not all contributions found herein are sublime. There are sociological and historical pieces such as Jen Royce Severn’s “A Socio-historical View of Addiction and Alcoholism” and Marty Roth’s “The Golden Age of Drinking and the Fall into Addiction.” Eddie Murphy said, “The internet is a crack pipe for smart people.” Murphy’s observation is supported by Mark Griffith’s research, “Sex Addiction on the Internet.” We hope readers find this issue of *Janus Head* equally difficult to put down.

References

Best of the grapevine (1985). New York: Alcoholic Anonymous World Services.