Nurses, addiction specialists, and other health care practitioners can attain a cognitive understanding of addiction. It is vital for practitioners to develop an experiential understanding of addiction that includes emotional and visceral knowing. An experiential understanding can advance practitioners’ knowledge of the layers of addiction and its intense impact. This knowledge can then foster empathetic and caring connections with individuals experiencing addiction. However, it can be problematic to bridge this gap in understanding if health care professionals have not personally experienced addiction. In the current article, the media of art is used as a method of inquiry to bridge this gap in understanding. A poem and drawing were co-constructed to provide a space for others to enter into the emotional, visceral, and cognitive experience of addiction.

ADDICTION
with a tenuous grasp, gripping clenching
Clutching,
with everything I have left, and the ground falters the façade slips,

and I feel my skin itching my blood craving

and I hear, it calling coercing, me to give in—gently take my hand, Rip at my insides.

my depraved appetite, repels but like a magnetic pull draws me near,

I relish it, despise it, down to the Bare bone—

the wound, gapes open, impels me close to the stranger admired

shedding inhibitions I dwindle and surrender to the place known well,
Commentary

coming to the understanding
that reality is misleading,
Catching
me in its faithful-like appearance

and the cognitive misinterpretations deceptively deceiving desecrating all that I thought to be real,

with broken steps I'm dragged, unwillingly, graciously vacating,

disgusted by the unvarnished way I recoil to the Comfortable unfamiliarity

and the skin is near translucent as everything becomes a version of something else and I can't help, but stay

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The authors have disclosed no potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise.

Received: April 23, 2016
Accepted: May 31, 2016

doi:10.3928/02793695-20160725-01