

## Wilderness House Literary Review 11/2

James B. Nicola  
**Coil**

A snake coils into half a double-helix  
like half a molecule of DNA  
or half a pair of lovers. Either way

the single snake comprises only half  
of the creative thing it wants to be:  
a tabernacle of fertility.

And *helix*, after all, does rhyme with *felix*,  
the Latin not for *snakelike*, but *happy*.  
When someone with a graduate degree

goes on about Kipling, they make me laugh;  
as do analyses of Genesis,  
whose author wisely kept anonymous

well knowing, even then, snakes did not talk.  
So, much as I love Kipling's mongoose, and  
can emphasize with Eve and Adam, banned

from Eden for all time, I will not walk  
in their shoes, or bare feet, but rather slither—  
in quest of Paradise, lest I wither.