The Bear

Thrown from the boxcar of the train, the bear
rolls over and over. he sits up
rubbing his nose. This must be
some mistake,
there is no audience here.
He shambles off through the woods.

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The forest is veined with trails,
he does not know which to follow.
The wind is rising, maple leaves turn up
their silver undersides in agony, there is a
smell in the air, and the lightning strikes.
He climbs a tree to escape. The rain
pours down, the bear is blue as a gall.

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There is not much to eat
in the forest, only berries,
and some small delicious animals
that live in a mound and bite your nose.

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The bear moves sideways through a broom-straw field.
He sees the hunters from the corner of his eye
and is sure they have come to ake him back.
To welcome them, (though there is no calliope)
he does his somersaults, and juggles
a fallen log, and something
tears though his shoulder,
he shambles away in the forest and cries.
Do they not know who he is?

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After a while, he learns to fish, to find
the deep pool and wait for the silver trout.
He learns to keep his paw up for spiderwebs.
There is only one large animal, with trees
on its head, that he cannot scare.

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At last he is content to be
alone in the forest,
though sometimes he finds a clearing
and solemnly does his tricks,
though no one sees.

David Fisher