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TARA BORIN

NUISANCE

Only the thickness of log
and triple-paned glass
between my children and
the open maw
of a bear.
I slip warm chocolate chip
cookies from the pan
to the cooling rack -
their father loads the gun.
He fires a warning shot
from the porch
while the kids lick
the mixing bowl,
unbothered
as the bear.
The conservation officer
brings a culvert trap
baited with
bacon, canned pineapple.
We could put out
a plate of cookies,
like for Santa,
the kids say.
Later, bedtime routine
interrupted
by a metallic bang –
the trap slams shut.
The bear
peers toward the house,
sees the real nuisance.
Conservation officer returns,
we watch from the window
as they hitch trap to truck.
They'll haul it across
two rivers, mountains,
hundreds of kilometers
from our poorly-secured garbage,
our fresh-baked cookies.

Relocated, dozing
in a distant meadow,
the bear dreams
of my children
running through
his forest, eating
his berries,
their faces
swimming under glass
like salmon in
churning water.