

Bear Binge

Every fall outside
Auburn, near

the confluence of
White, Green & Stuck

rivers, dozens of drunk
bears cavort where

a west-bound train
derailed, leaving

400 tons of high
grade corn fermenting

beside the tracks.
Bears sniffed out

the 80 proof—
a fragrant pool —

got roaring drunk
& sat around all night

with their paws
on each other's

shoulders, singing
camp songs,

telling dirty jokes
& swapping lies.

The railroad put up
a fence, dumped dirt

on the mash, but didn't
dig deep enough,

so every year since,
the bears dig up

the steaming brew,
& go at it again

like rival salesmen
or politicians

at a convention.
Come next spring

they'll be back,
sink their muzzles

deep, dance, waddle
& sway—high-fiving

black bears & sentimental
grizzlies, forgetting

their territories &
getting along just fine.