Listen! Bears are in the garbage again ---
unworthy of note for a house in the mountains
but worthy of note for a struggling writer.

This time no orange rinds were consumed,
no crusts, no crumbs, no cremated asparagus.
These bears dined on “manuscript marinara:”
Pages full of tomato paste, seasoned with garlic;
the draft of a novel I could not get right.

Three hungry bears found it in our dumpster.
They pawed through my book’s prologue,
munched on the first few chapters,
going on to devour some two hundred pages,
saturated in red sauce, too spicy for us.

I’d found a way to send off my flawed work
--- by throwing it out. And where did it go?
Its takers’ enthused reception was instant:
You might call the reaction a rave review.

How to reward those who destroy shame?
Once I feared bears who can kill with one swipe.
Now I smile when I notice them, even at night.
“Thank you,” I say, “For accepting my novel!”