

“THE BEAR STORY”

by James Whitcomb Riley

W'y, wunst they wuz a little boy went out
In the grea' big woods to shoot a bear, -- an' he'
Wuz goin' along – an' goin' along, you know,
An' purty soon he heered somepin' go “Wooh!”
An' he wuz skeered, he wuz.
An' so he runned an' clumbed a grea' big tree –
A sicka-more tree.
An' nen he heerd it ag'in; an' he looked 'round,
An' 't'uz a grea' big shor—'nuff bear!
No! 'T'uz two bears, it wuz –
But – No, ist one's a grea' big bear.
An' they ist boff went “Wwooh!”
An' nen the little boy
He 'uz skeered worse'n ever, cuz here come
The grea' big bear a-climbin' th' tree to git
The little boy an' eat him up – Oh, no! –
It 'uz the little bear. So here he come
Climbin' the tree – an' climbin' the tree! Nen when
He git wite clos't the little boy he ist pulled up his gun
An' shot the bear an' killed him dead!
An' nen the bear he falled plum down
An' lit wite side o' where big bear's at.

An' nen the big bear's awful mad,
An' so here he come a'climbin' up – an' up the tree, to git
The little boy an' eat him up! An' so the little boy –
He 'uz badder skeered, he wuz, than any time –
He clumbed on higher an' higher, an' higher up the tree –
An' when the old bear 'uz wite clos't to him –
Nen the little boy ist jabbed his gun wite in the old bear's mouf –
An' shot and killed him dead! –
No! I forgot – He didn't shoot the grea' big bear at all –
Cuz they 'uz no load in the gun, you know –
'Cuz when he shot the little bear, w'y nen
No load 'uz any more in the gun!
But th' little boy clumbed higher up, he did –
Till he ist can't climb no higher,

So when th' old bear's reel clos't – the
Little boy ist gives a grea' big jump for 'nother tree –
No! – no, he don't do that! -- I tell y ou what the
Little boy does: -- W'y, nen – w'y, he – Oh, yes! –
The little boy he finds a hole up there – an' climbs
In there an' hides – An' nen th' old bear can't find
The little boy at all! -- But purty soon the old bear finds
The little boy's gun 'at's up there – 'cause the gun
It's too tall to tooked wiv him in the hole.

An' the old bear 'gins to snuff an' sniff around,
An' sniff an' snuff around – so's he kin find
Out where the little boy's hid at.
An' nen – nen – Oh, yes! -- W'y, purty soon the old bear climbs
'Way out on a grea' long limb,
An' takes his ax an' chops the limb off! ... Nen
The old bear falls ker-splunge! Clean to the ground,
An' bust an' kill hisse'f plum dead, he did!
An' nen the little boy he git his gun
An' 'menced a-climbin' down the tree ag'in –
No! – no, he didn't git his gun – 'cuz when
The bear falled, nen the gun falled too, -- An'
Broked it all to pieces, too!
An' the little boy ist cried, an went on climbin'
Down the tree – When he 'uz purt' nigh down, --
W'y, nen, the old bear he jumped up ag'in! – an' he
Ain't dead at all – ist 'tendin' thataway
So he kin git the little boy and eat him up!

An' he ist won't go 'way an' let the little boy
Come down out of the tree. An' the old bear
Ist growls round there, he does, an' goes
"Wooh!" ... "Wooh!" all the time!
He ist tear up the ground an' go "Woo-oo!"
An' – w'y, nen the old bear finds the little boy's
Gun, you know, 'at's on the ground (An' it ain't
Broke at all – I ist said that!!) An' so the old bear think
He'll shoot the little boy –
But bears they don't know much about shootin' guns
An' the old bear got the other end the gun

Ag'in' his shoulder, 'stid o' th' other end –
So when he try to shoot the little boy,
It shot the bear, it did – an' killed him dead!
An' nen the little boy clumb down the tree
An' killed off boff bears ag'in – an' tuk 'em home
An' cooked 'em and et 'em! – An' that's all!