

Continued..... **What's New "Babes of the Smokies Series"**

by Paul Murray May 18,2018

Like Paul this story may keep you up at night.

Well like clock work its around that time, and my stomach is telling me its hungry It is saying he thinks he's a starving, he's a tellin' me he don't think he's going to make it. Well like usual I toss and turn, rolling and tumbling. **Three thirty in the morning and my stomach never get along.** Mr. stomach demands attention. He just keeps on a talking to me. He'll say, "That's right, I'm talking to ya. I think I'm a withering away here. So, you best get out of that hay stack, you call a bed and tell them feet down there to take us to the ice box, and no stubbing a toe on the way and hoping around for 10 minutes. Don't waste any more of my time. This is serious business man. Let's get to it!" So down the stairs we go and Mr. Stomach he's a telling me on the way "a big old bowl of Jed Clampet corn flakes will do just fine and get me some of those strawberries and maybe a banana. Come on man snap to it and stop a looking at those stupid paintings on the wall and take care of me!" In the end that stomach of mine always winds up getting its way.

On this particular night as I sat in the straight back, slopping and slurping, head half in the bowl, I heard an uncomfortable noise coming from the garbage cans behind the back-kitchen door. My mind's saying, "best get up and go see", but Mr. stomach interrupts and says "sit here and feed me, it's probably nothing but a big ol' bear rearranging the garbage cans. Sure, enough he was right, a Momma bear and her two cubs were out back kindly reorganizing the trash for the garbage men that were to come later that morning.

Well folks I've been living in this old mountain home for 15 years and until now I've never seen a bear on my property. What a thrill, Momma and her one cub were busy helping themselves to what I would call a very messy kind of bear smorgasbord, while the other cub just stood there on its hind legs, peering through the screen door at me. He just had this kind of angelic stare, like the deer in the headlights look. His head slightly moving from side to side, his nose was working on the smells of the cabin life indoors. He was a curious little guy wearing a white tuxedo neck tie. Two years have gone by and I have never seen him since that night. Although someone is still coming around and helping with the garbage disposable. I often wonder if it's him.

Recently I have done some drawings and a few oil sketches of him. As the art world knows, I am not a wildlife painter, I just felt I needed to try to capture his spirit. I guess this gives me a bit of comfort, maybe hoping one night, he'll come back and pay me a 3:30 am visit.

P.S. Now back to Mr. stomach, let me give you the BEAR facts, if Mr. stomach would pack a big sack of vittles and take him a 2 year hike, I don't think I would BEAR-LY miss him. And guess what. if he was gone the ice box wouldn't always as be so darn BEAR. -Paul Murray-

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