

# Bear Costume

*by* Steven J. Kolbe

He ran over our elderly neighbor Lenard, but not on purpose, or at least not as far as we could tell; there wasn't any yelling, I mean, and he didn't look happy when he got out of the car, though who could really tell through a bear costume. For all we knew, he had left on the bear hat -- that's what it was, a kind of all-inclusive hat -- just long enough to let a victorious smirk melt from his face. Or maybe it really was an accident. A practical joke, even, meant to inspire the neighborhood children to look on in wonder and tell their mothers, "Look, Mama, a bear driving a sedan. Isn't that silly?" And I think we can all relate to that, to the practical joke that went too far and practically killed our best friend, baby sister, elderly neighbor. And then Lenard was breathing again and we stopped wondering all together.

