

June 2010

## When They'd Gotten the Bear in the Cage

Rob Carney

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

---

### Recommended Citation

Carney, Rob (2010) "When They'd Gotten the Bear in the Cage," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 10: Iss. 1, Article 9.

Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol10/iss1/9>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

## Carney: When They'd Gotten the Bear in the Cage

WHEN THEY'D GOTTEN THE BEAR IN THE CAGE  
Rob Carney

it was punished for their anger,  
for taking up space where they would've preferred potted plants

or a pretty aquarium: a shimmer of fish  
like the room's own rainbow,

and bubbles coming from a deep-sea diver,  
and there on the glass their own faces smiling back.

It was punished whenever a growl escaped.  
Then threatened with worse for its silence.

The next morning, they hammered up signs all around it:  
*No quiet unhappiness allowed.*

They hung banners demanding that it laugh more,  
colored pie charts of all of its problems,

threw sticks in its cage and told it to go fetch,  
which all makes perfect sense

if you twist sense like a corkscrew  
and the only wine you ever open is the bottle of your own desire.