



Golden Autumn (1901), Stanislav Joukovski. Oil on canvas, 87.5 cm × 107.5 cm. Museum of Art, Serpukhov, Russia. © Bridgeman Art Library.

ANALYZE VISUALS

What **details** in the painting suggest that the house is in the wilderness?

Spring, when the bears come, is the worst. They have been in **hibernation** through the winter, and they are hungry beyond caution. The meat smell draws them like flies, and we frequently have two or three around the kennel at the same time. Typically they do not bother us much—although my wife had a bear chase her from the garden to the house one morning—but they do bother the dogs.

They are so big and strong that the dogs fear them, and the bears trade on this fear to get their food. It's common to see them scare a dog into his house and take his food. Twice we have had dogs killed by rough bear swats that broke their necks—and the bears took their food.

We have evolved an uneasy peace with them, but there is the problem of familiarity. The first time you see a bear in the kennel it is a **novelty**, but when the same ones are there day after day, you wind up naming some of them (old Notch-Ear, Billy-Jo, etc.). There gets to be a too-relaxed attitude. We started to treat them like pets.

A major mistake.

There was a large male around the kennel for a week or so. He had a white streak across his head, which I guessed was a wound scar from some hunter—bear hunting is allowed here. He wasn't all that bad, so we didn't mind him. He would frighten the dogs and take their hidden stashes now and then, but he didn't harm them, and we became accustomed to him hanging around. We called him Scarhead, and now and again we would joke about him as if he were one of the yard animals. **B**

hibernation

(hī'bər-nā'shən) *n.* the state of being inactive through the winter

novelty (nŏv'əl-tē) *n.* something new and unusual

B AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

Why does Paulsen tell you about the family's nickname for the bear?