

# House Party

—Mark Kowarsky

*Tick tock clickity clack ding!*

Some days you're just so tired, that even the mechanical ticks and tocks of life – like brushing your teeth, getting dressed, ignoring the dinging of a peak-hour tram – bubble and boil in the cauldron of your broken mind and spin filigrees of pure golden sunshine. In your haze of exhaustion, what would normally be threatening becomes harmless, even amusing. And for the rest of the day you simply *know* that you are invincible. While others see the mundane world, your weary mind witnesses a grand menagerie of roaring lions, ooking orangutans, fearsome clowns and giant bears awkwardly riding unicycles. However, not even in your wildest delusions could you have imagined the giant white bear in a pink lab coat currently blocking the front of your tram, or the heavily smashed up bicycle crumpled next to it, which coincidentally rather resembles a unicycle.

Worried for the life of this poor creature, you slowly weave through the bewildered crowd surrounding the bear. The cadmium yellow Yarra tram posters informing you that each tram bears the full fury of 30 rhinocerotes do little to assuage your fears. Now, pushed up against the bear's warm, quivering, pink-lab-coat-clad body, you almost pass out from the sudden and unbearable stench of rum, tinged with fruity piquancy.

You notice a small folder tucked under the bear's paw. Gently pulling it out from the unresisting grasp of unconscious claws, you read the handwritten sticker "BIG BLUE HOUSE PARTY: PHOTO ALBUM". You open it...







