


ANATOMY OF A PANIC ATTACK

written + illustrated by
Shruti Bhiwandiwala

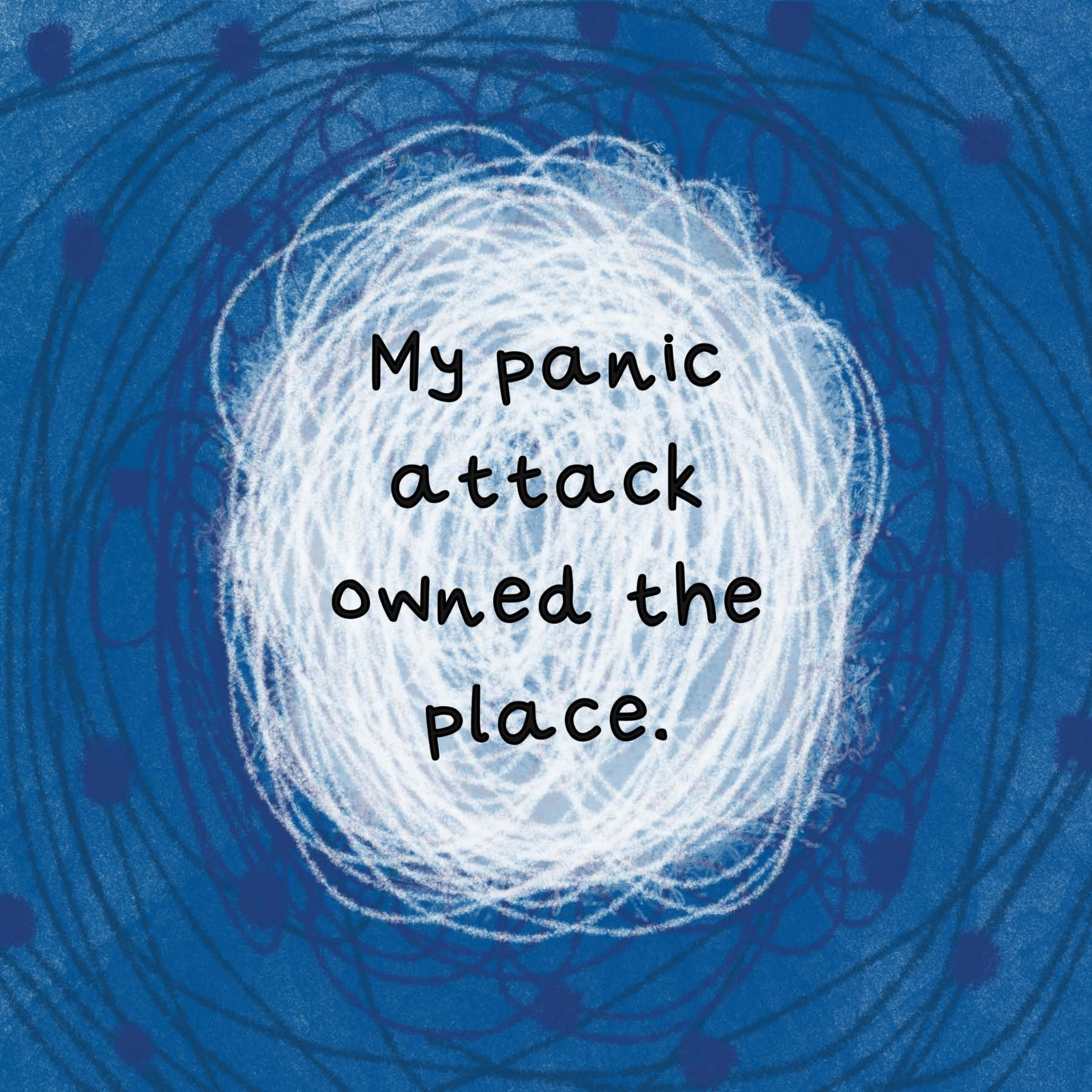


It walked
through
the door
without
knocking

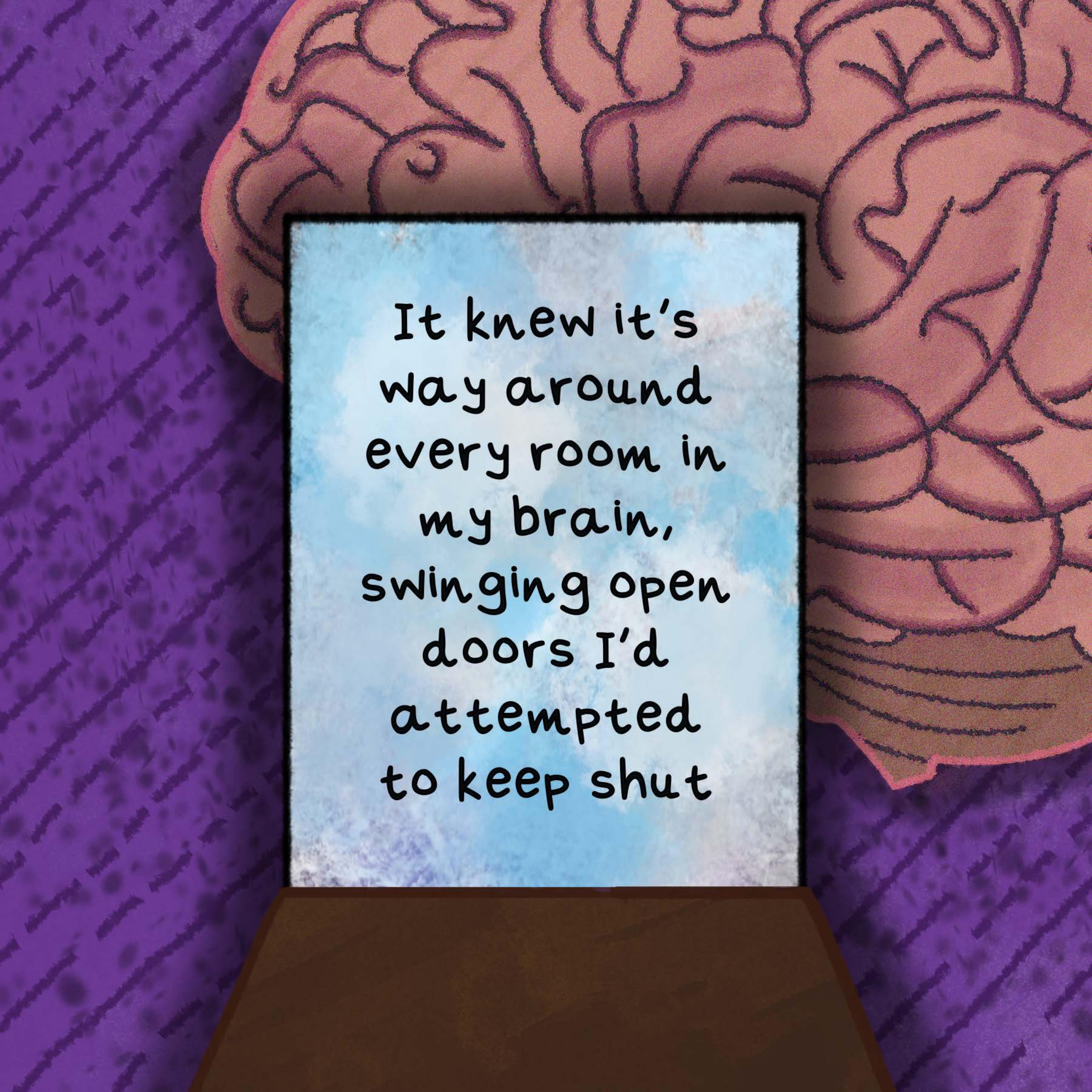
Not caring for an invite or

an exchange of pleasantries.

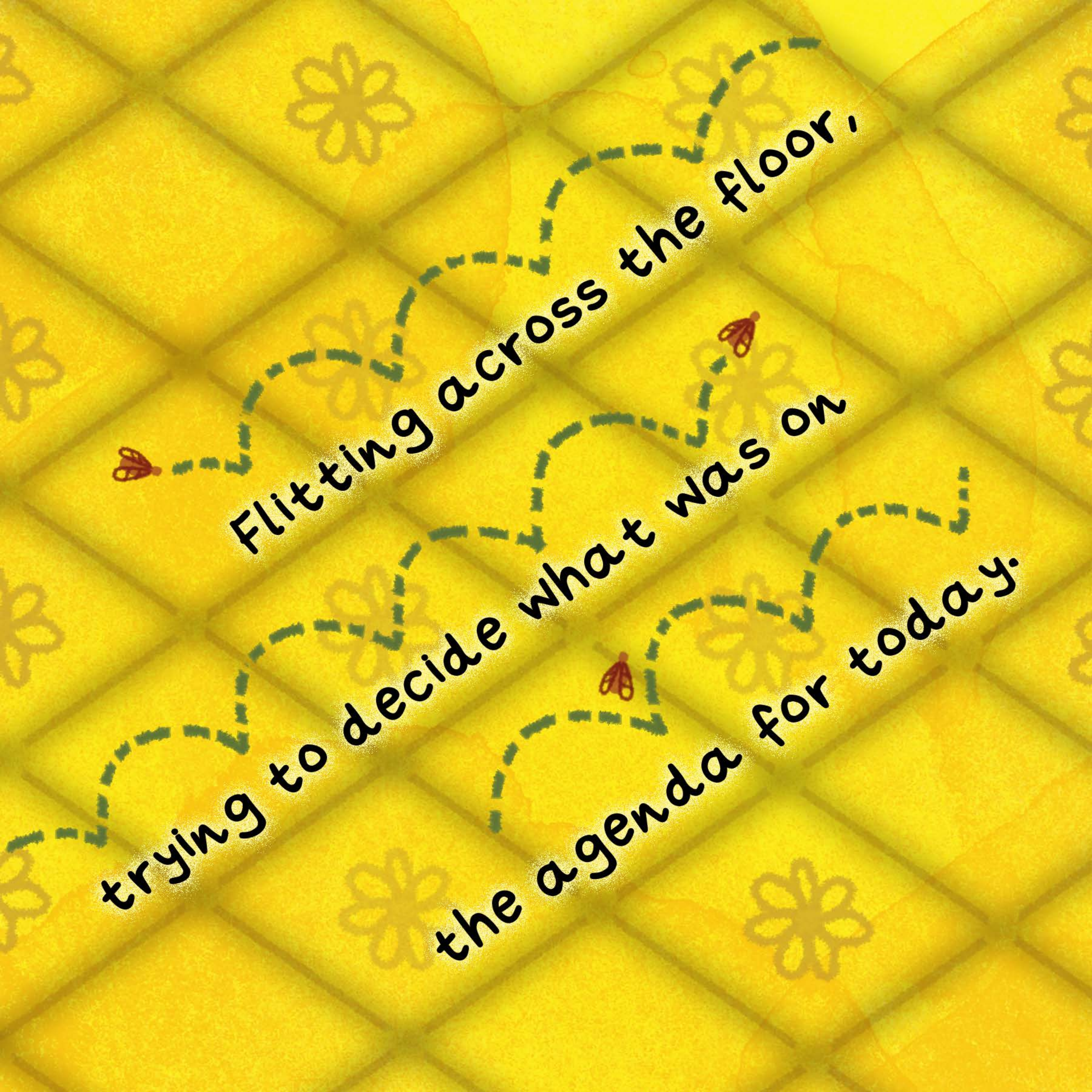




My panic
attack
owned the
place.

The image features a stylized illustration of a brain. The brain is depicted in a reddish-pink color with dark outlines, showing various lobes and sulci. It is set against a background of purple wavy lines. A blue rectangular area is superimposed on the brain, containing the text. The text is written in a black, handwritten-style font. The overall composition is artistic and symbolic, likely representing the concept of the mind or memory.

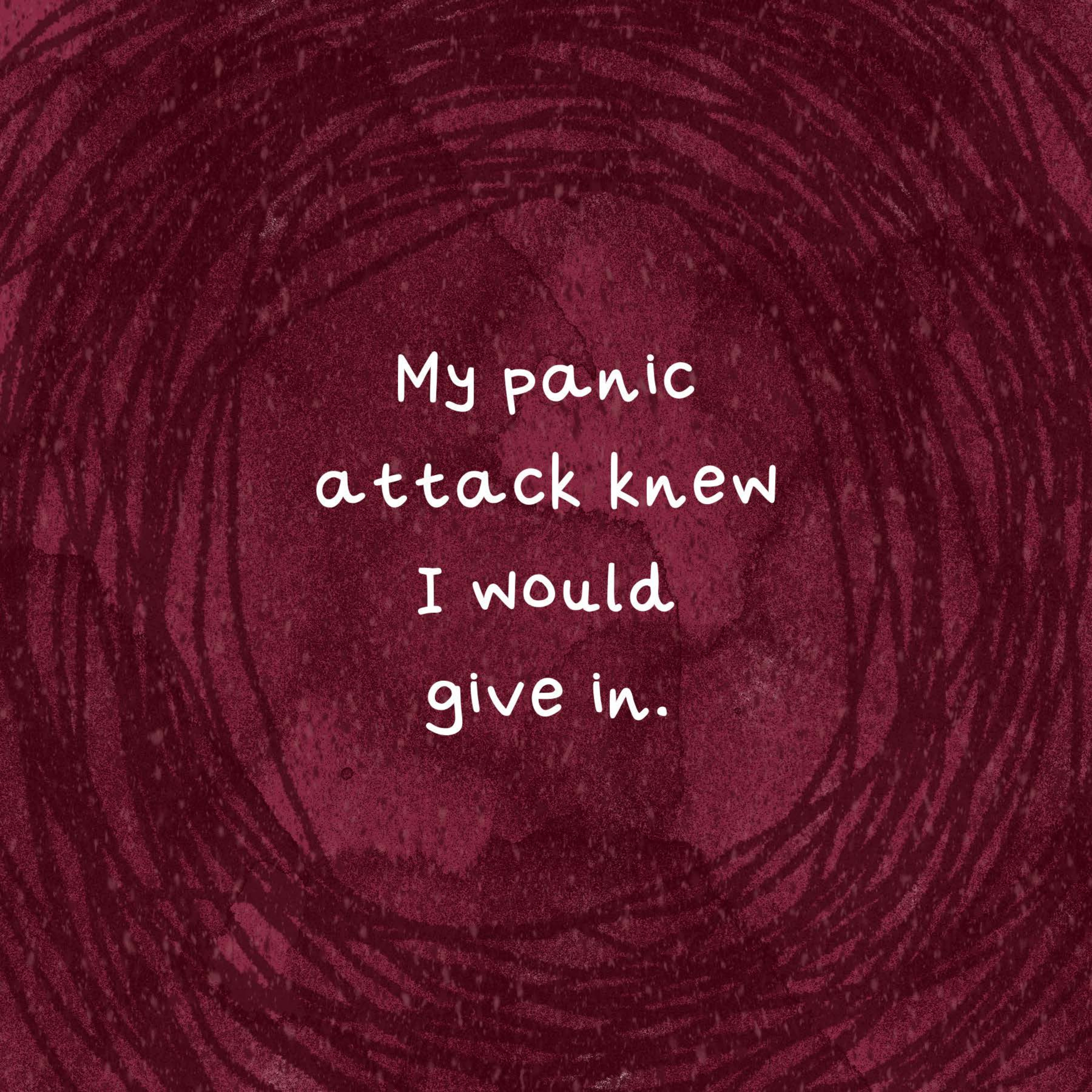
It knew it's
way around
every room in
my brain,
swinging open
doors I'd
attempted
to keep shut



Flitting across the floor,

trying to decide what was on

the agenda for today.

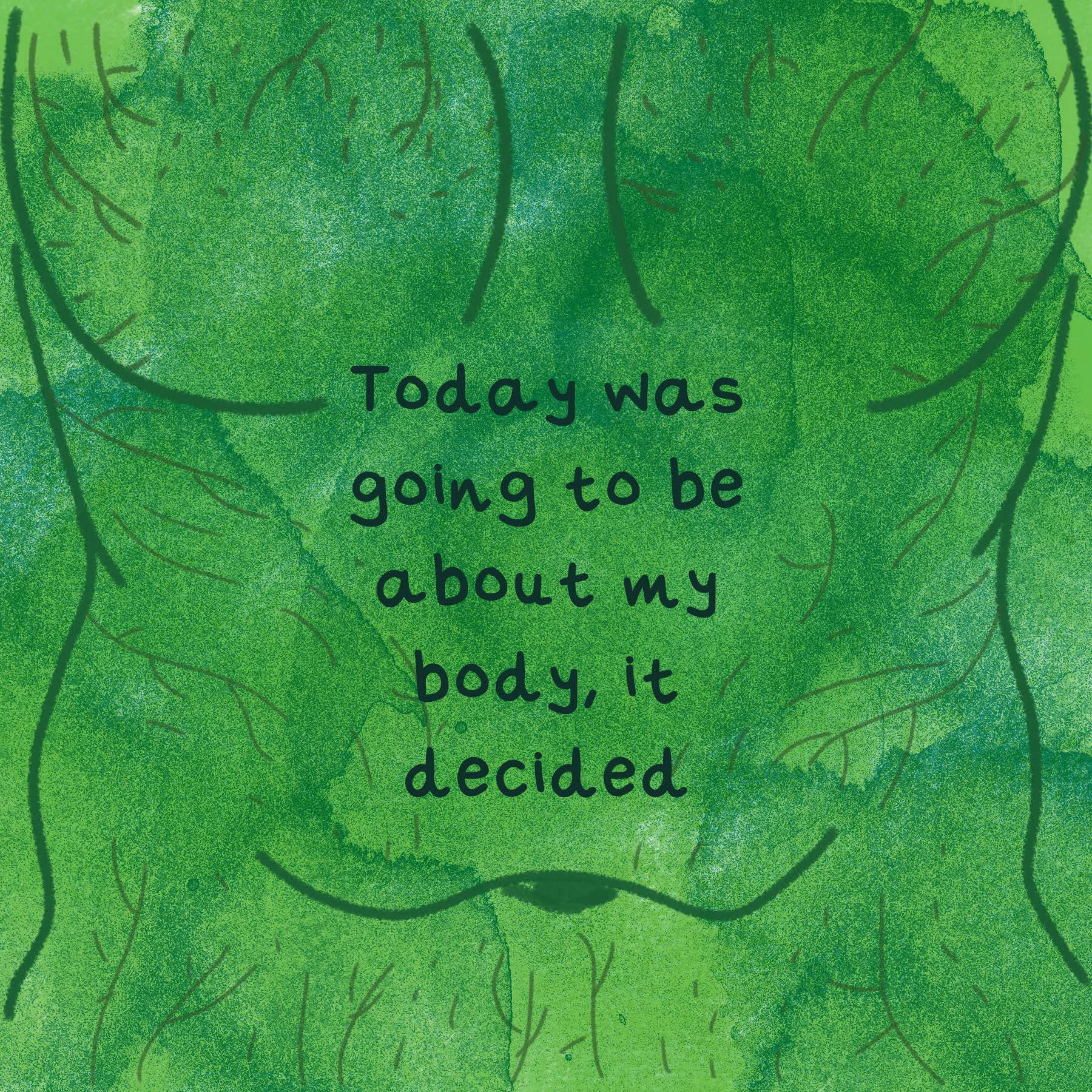


My panic
attack knew
I would
give in.

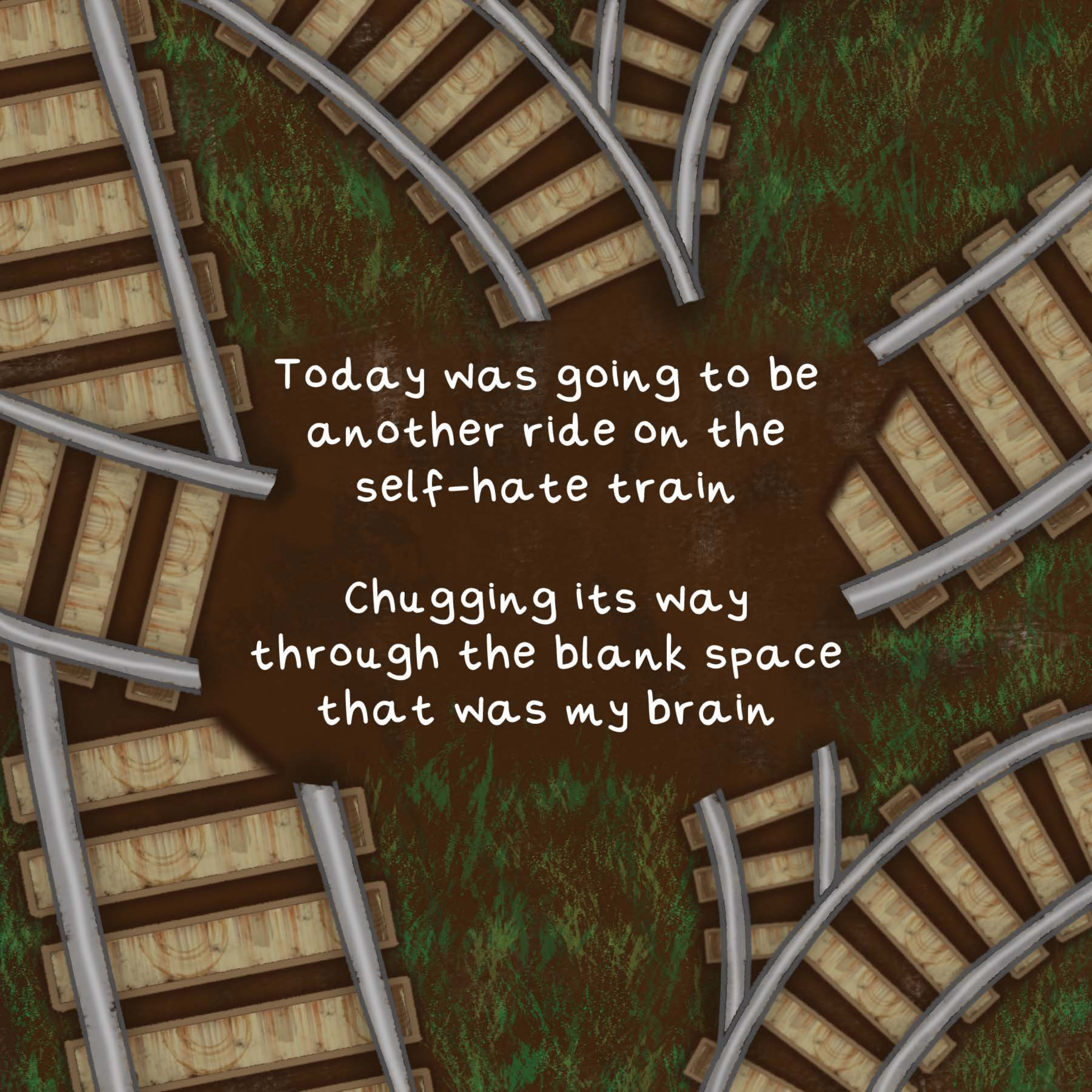


It knew exactly when
to jump on to the
spiralling current

Bringing along
thoughts hidden
behind my closed doors



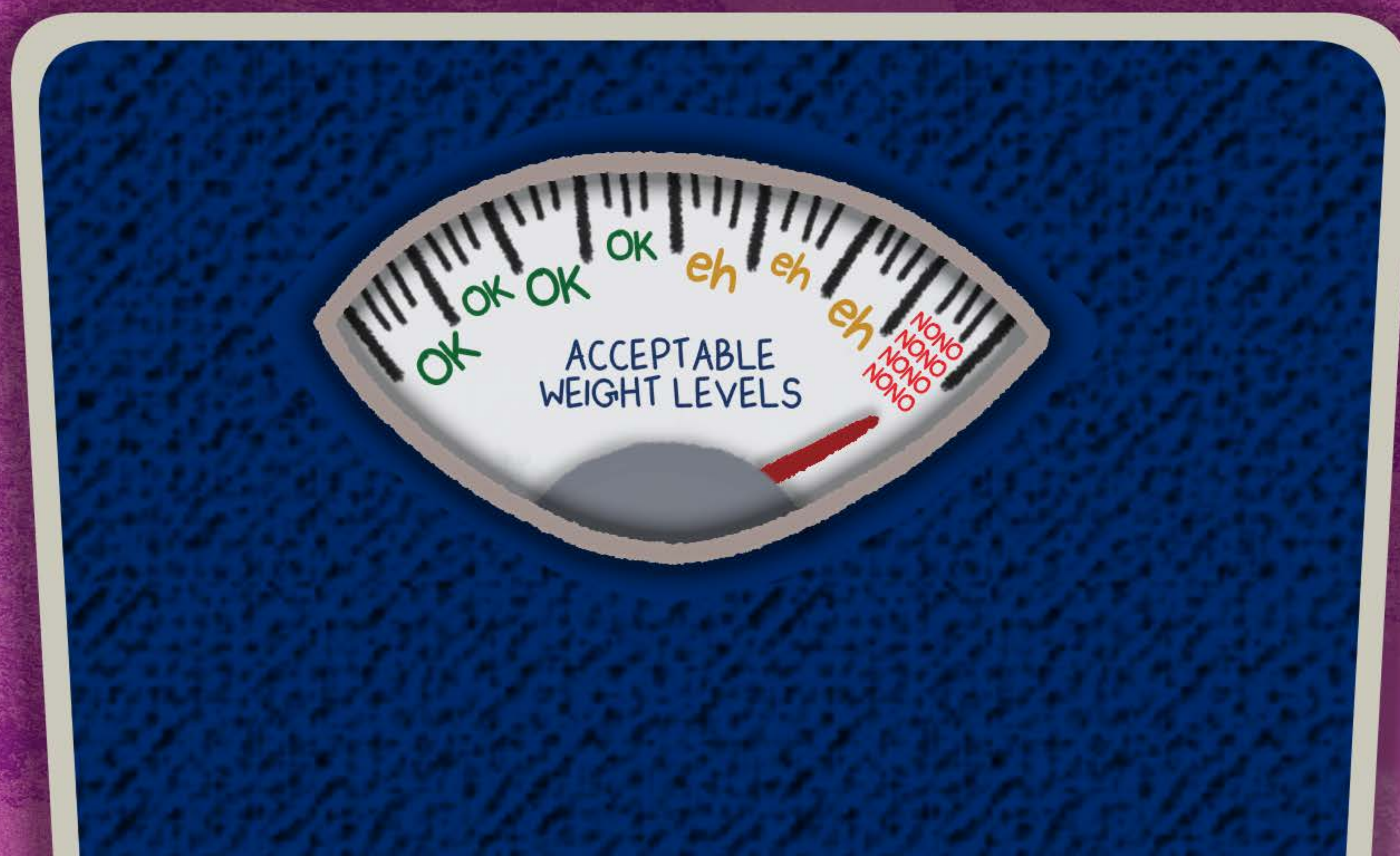
Today was
going to be
about my
body, it
decided

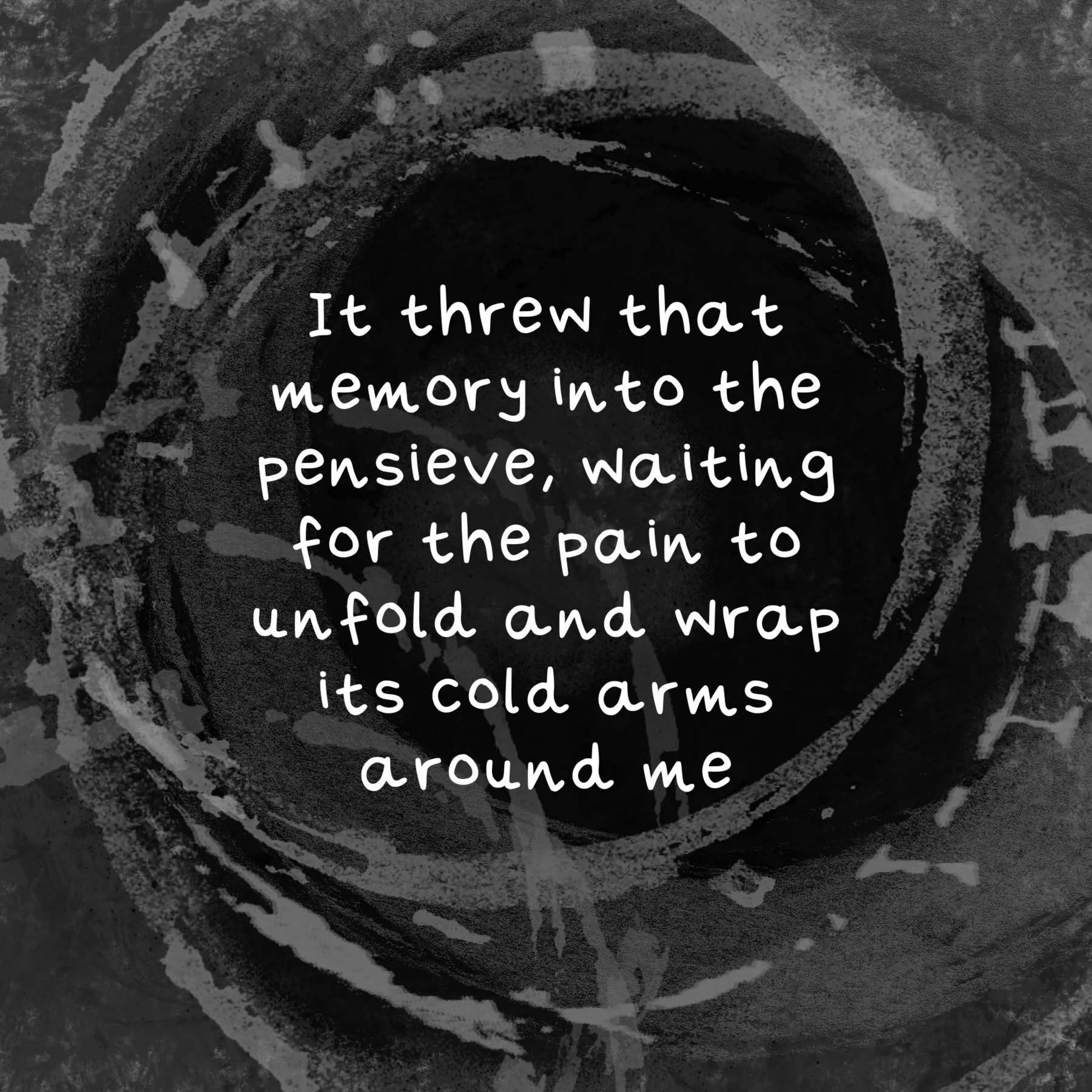


Today was going to be
another ride on the
self-hate train

Chugging its way
through the blank space
that was my brain

My panic attack
reminded me of the time
when I cried about having
to be weighed at age 8





It threw that
memory into the
pensieve, waiting
for the pain to
unfold and wrap
its cold arms
around me



My panic attack
then jumped across
the room to my
unfortunate
teenage years



Rifling through
sections such as
"terrible taste in
boys" and
"unfortunate
fashion decisions"...

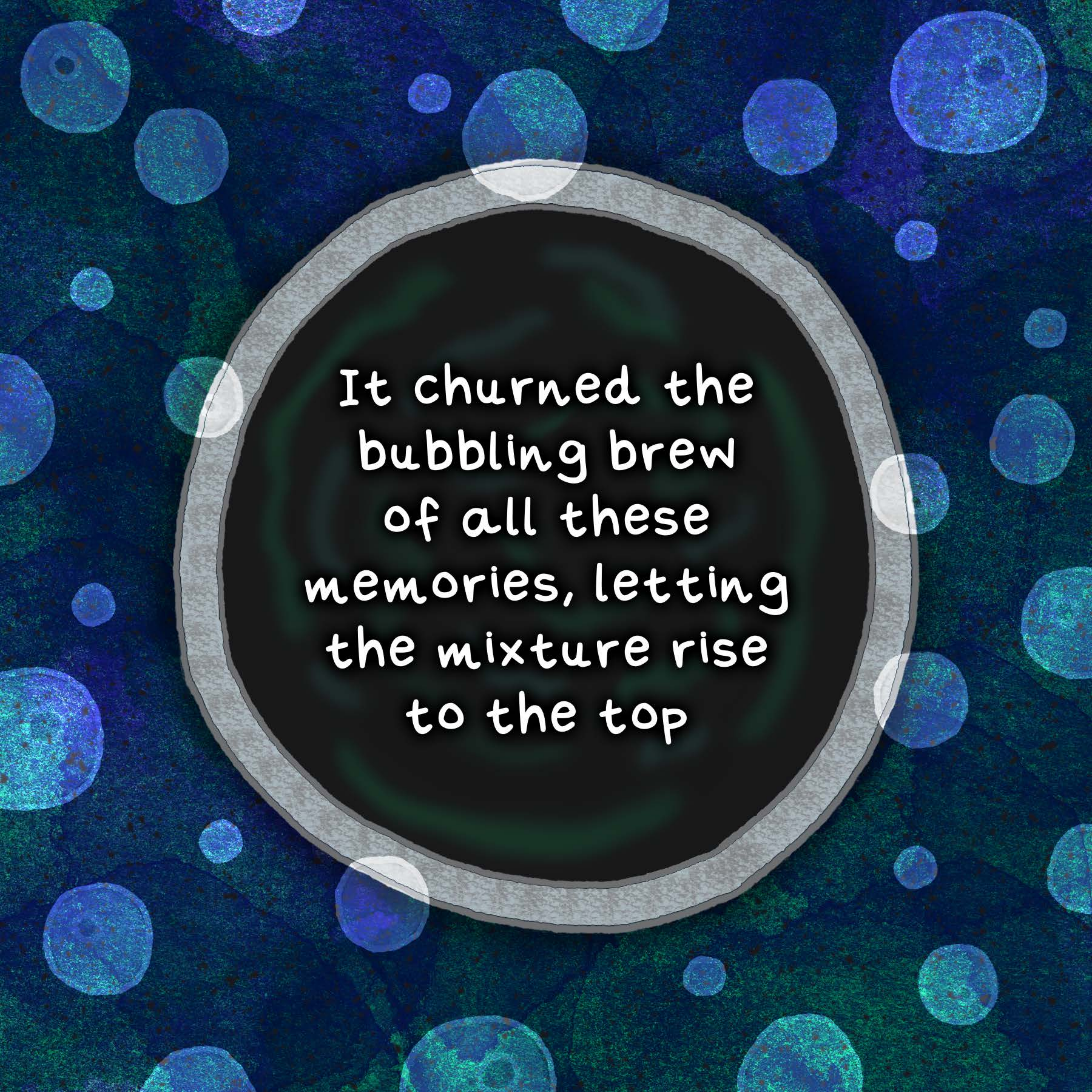


...before landing
on "bullying and
body shaming
through the years"

It let that reel
play through,
stopping to hit
rewind and
playback every
time someone
picked on me for
not being a
"normal" size

My panic attack
then decided to
bring on the
barrage of
comments through
my 20s

Everything from
"she'd be so pretty
if she lost weight"
to "I'd date her if
she was thinner"



It churned the
bubbling brew
of all these
memories, letting
the mixture rise
to the top

My panic attack is a
conductor

It knows the right notes
to hit when I'm down

Play the right keys and
silence logic to let
emotion take the lead

THE PANIC SONG

My panic attack
has the chord
sheets memorised

Flipping through
pages, a
crescendo of pain
and hate and
harm and pain
again

It pauses for effect,
giving me a chance
to consider other
ways to deal with the
pain

It whispers ideas loud
enough for me to
weigh my options
before returning for
the final chorus

My panic
attack knows
how weak I am,
and loves it



It thrives on
energy I can no
longer exude

And builds back
the walls that I
break down

Once it has played
the outro, it takes
a bow, awaiting
applause in the
form of a pinch
here or a cut there



I'm learning to sneak out
of the performance
before the curtain call

Learning that silence is
louder than applause

I'm learning
that my panic
attack will be
back soon





GONE FISHING!
(for compliments)

u look
stunning!



But next time, I
might ask it to
wait outside the
door a while.

Anatomy of a Panic Attack is a poem written and illustrated by Shruti Bhiwandiwalla, narrating the journey her panic attack takes through her brain, and the trauma and memories this journey brings up. The poem attempts to illustrate the bright and dark sides of a panic attack as it goes through the motions. When not being crippled by the pain it causes, Shruti likes to call her panic attack Herman, in an attempt to make light of a serious situation. A tactic she uses for all aspects of her life, including herself.

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