

Visual Content Warning: drawn body horror & art nudity

Please feel free to listen without looking, or come back in 5 minutes.

# illmarks: Symptom Mapping Art

How body mapping for disability validates our lived experiences,  
and unites us in creating hopeful, transformative futures.

*Artivism from Bedspace / Artivismo desde el Espacio-cama*

nyx mir - [illmarks.com](http://illmarks.com)

# Hi I'm Nyx Mir

*(fae/faer, they/them)*

**Multiply Disabled**

**Health&Care Activism Artist**

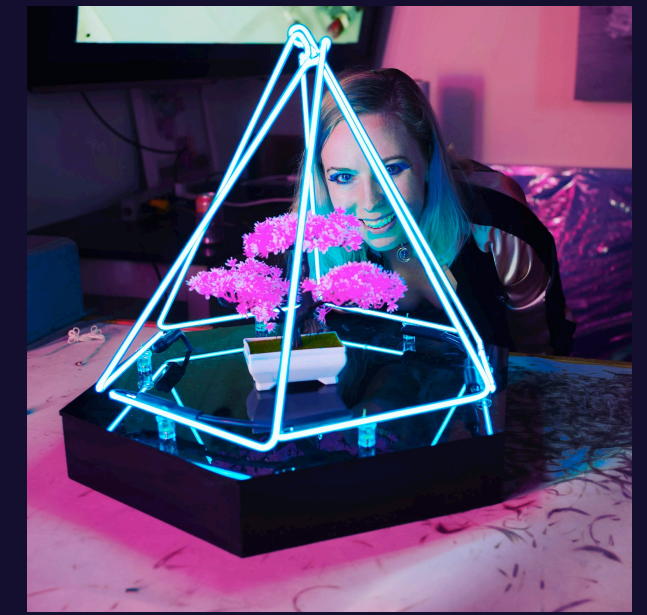
Visualize Long Covid Symptoms

[illmarks.com](http://illmarks.com)

**Pre-Chronic Illness:**

**Creative Director & Multi-Disciplinary Designer**

- Walt Disney Imagineering
- BlizzCon
- Magic Patio



*And Still it Remains:  
A Long COVID Exhibition*

Thank You to Our Sponsors:  
UCHealth  
Erion Family Foundation  
Sally Hartshorn



# Body Mapping's Roots

Please learn more about body mapping art from Women with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin Indigenous Ecofeminists, and Labor Rights Organizers!

“When I see this picture I feel much happier just because when I look at it, I see what I can't see when I look at myself in the mirror. My picture is like an X-ray.”

- Ncedeka (art on right)

*CW child/infant death, HIV/AIDS, medical trauma:*

<https://msfaccess.org/body-maps-art-and-memory>

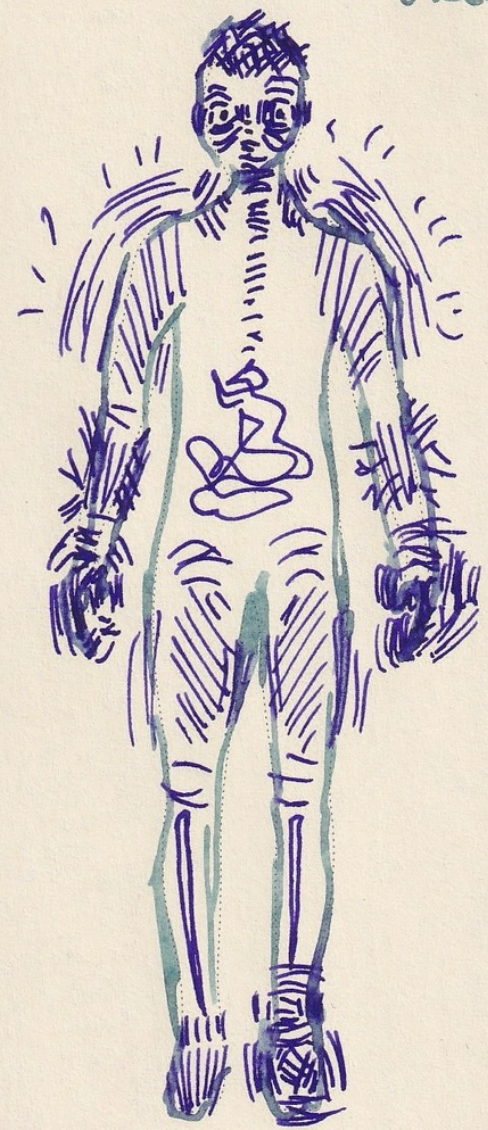


**ABOUT**

illmarks project

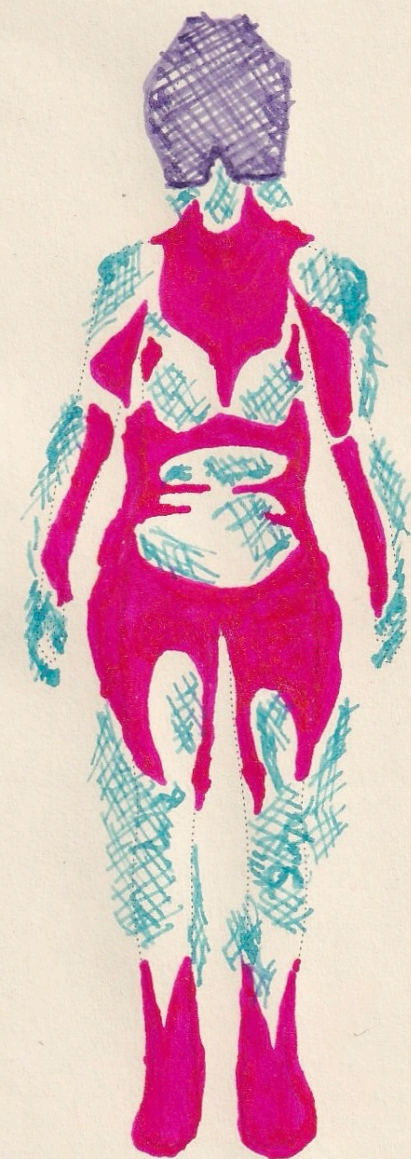
Coordination

MEMO  
2023-1-1  
Tried grocery  
shopping. Overexerted.  
Pain, swelling, itching all  
over.



Coordination

MEMO  
2024-3-2  
Migraine  
Holding Pattern



Coordination

MEMO  
2024-5-2  
I'm not very theistic  
but gods, what did I  
do to deserve this?



# Early Symptom Tracking Art

Coordination

MEMO

2025-6-22

my new medication  
has been recharging,  
but I also have big joint  
pain



Coordination

MEMO

MIGRAINE TRIGGERS

- eating
- sitting or standing
- sleeping



Coordination

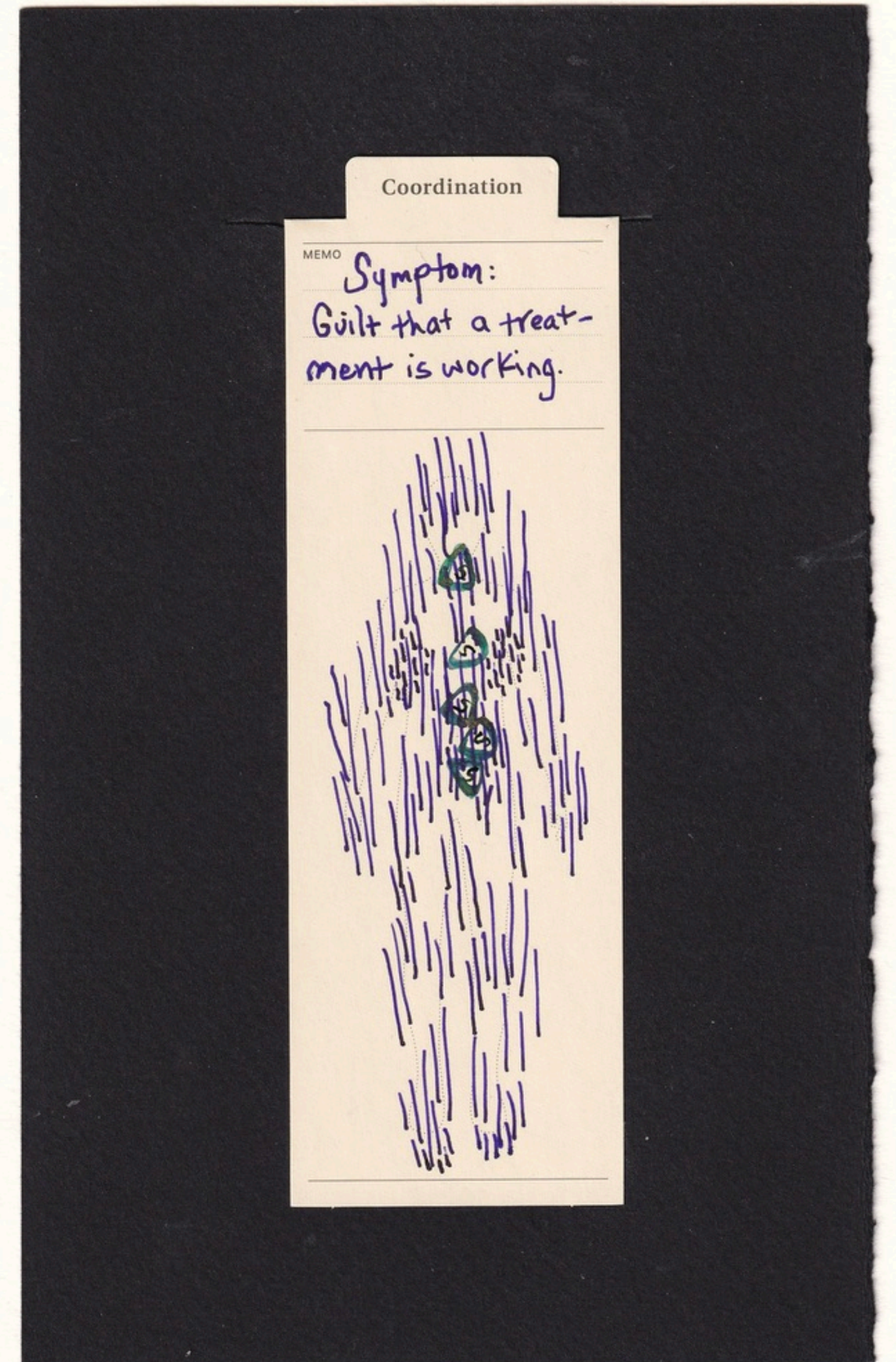
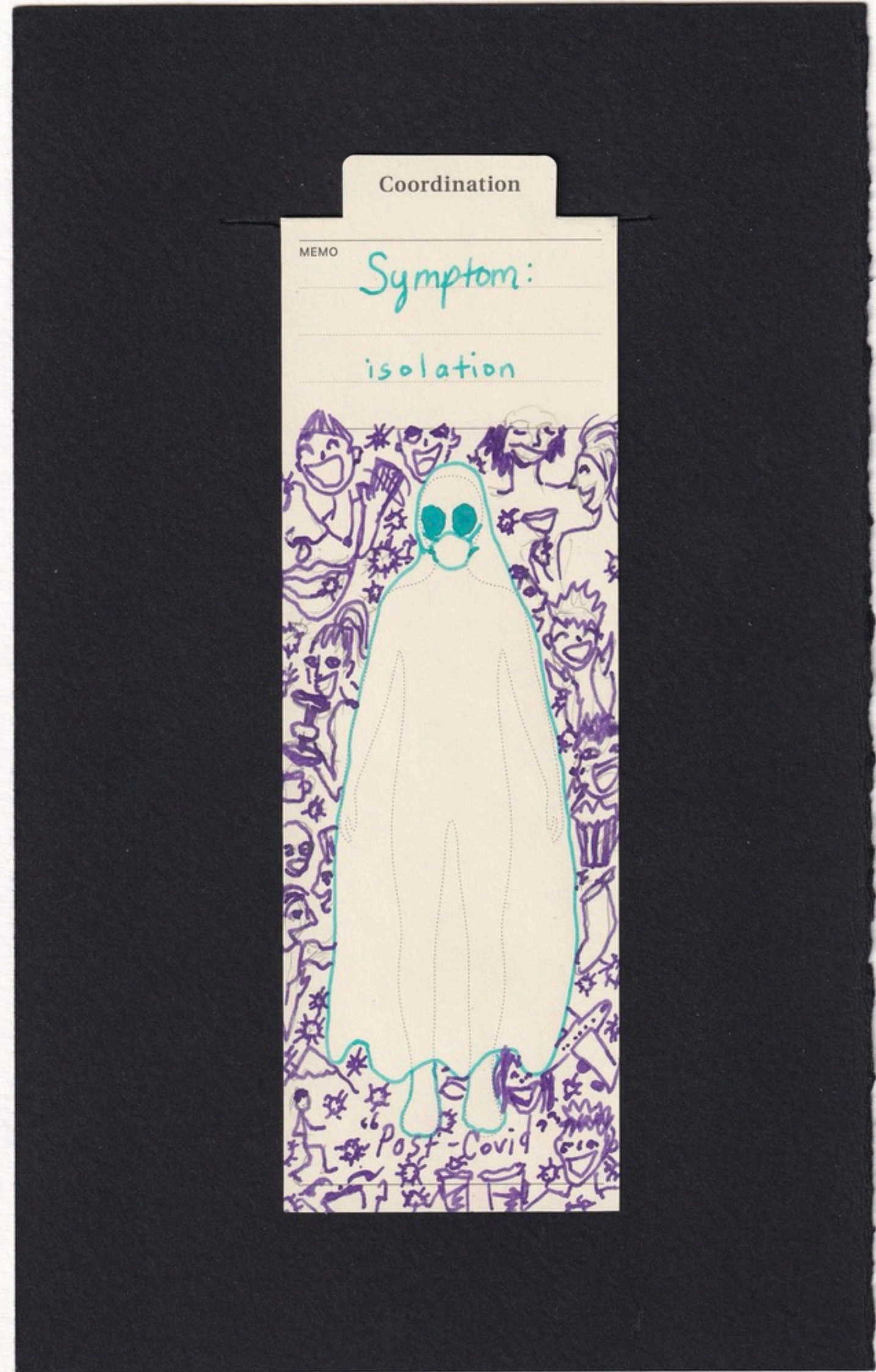
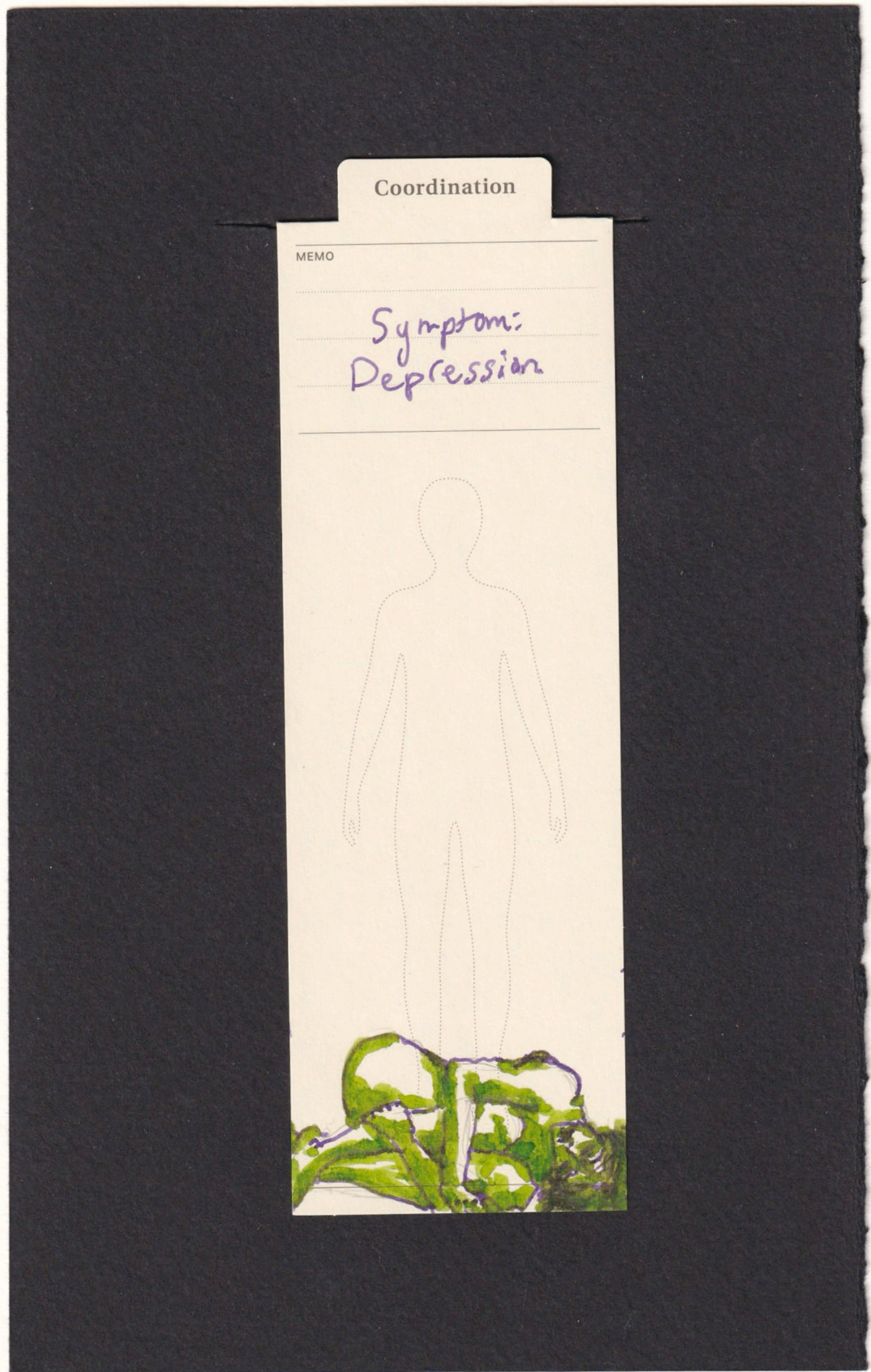
MEMO

2024-12-9

Hung up by my  
(trapezius)  
(find term)



Continued Symptom Tracking Art



Emotional, Systemic & Interpersonal Chronic Illness Art

Coordination

MEMO

2025-8-11  
My migraines  
are triggered by  
drinking water



Coordination

MEMO

2026-1-7  
WORST POTS  
DAY EVER.



Coordination

MEMO

Symptoms  
Mast Cell  
Itching

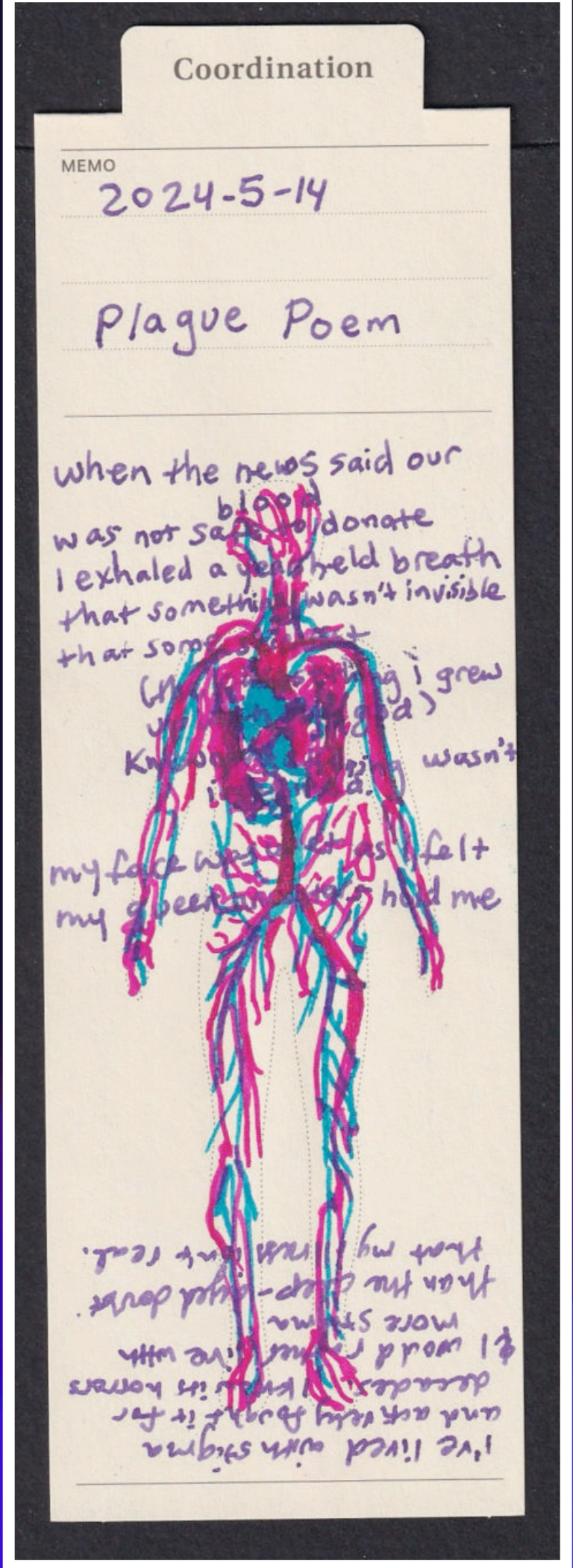


illmarks

# Some different ways to portray symptoms:



Visual  
Depiction



Writing &  
Description



Comparison  
& Metaphor



Abstract  
Shape & Color



Representative  
Shapes

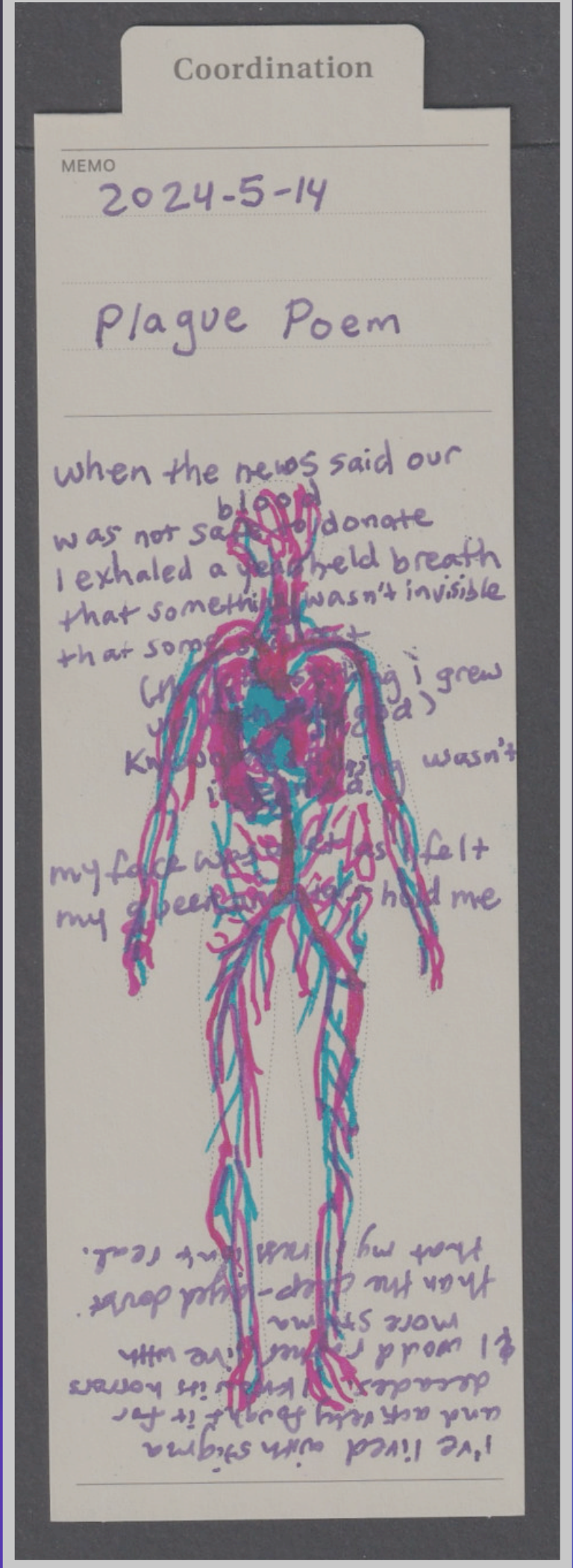


Size &  
Scale

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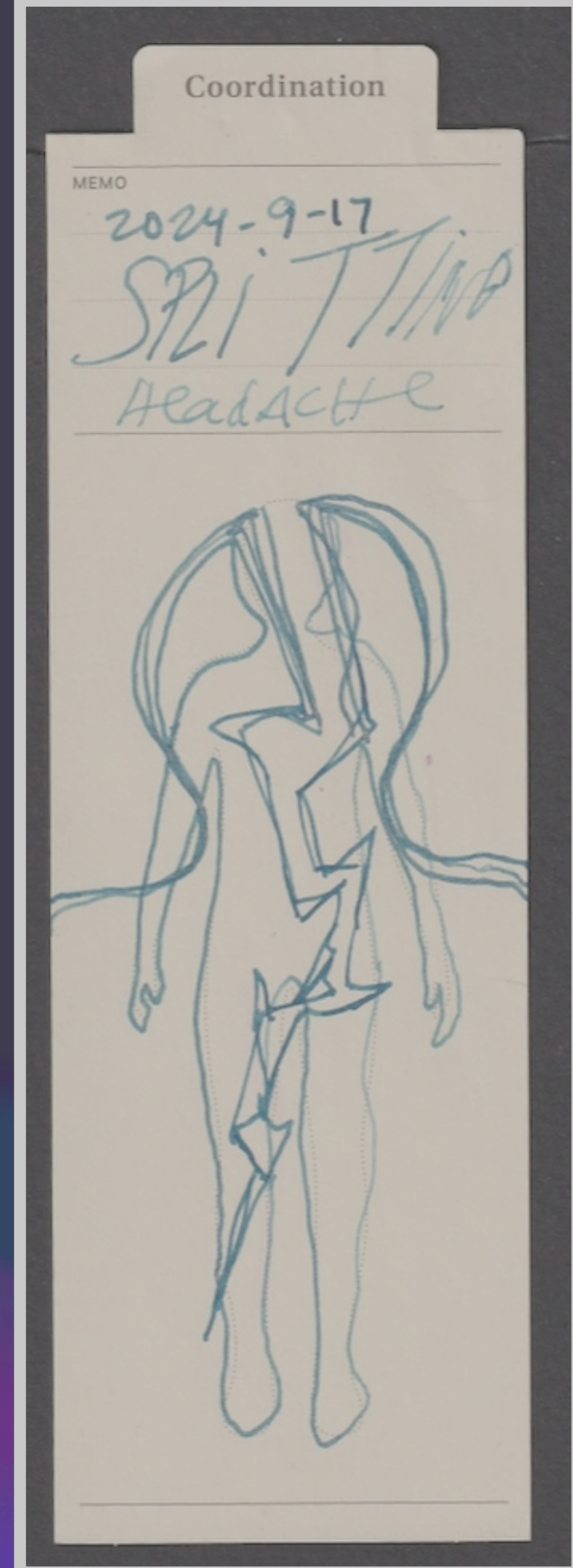
Writing &  
Description



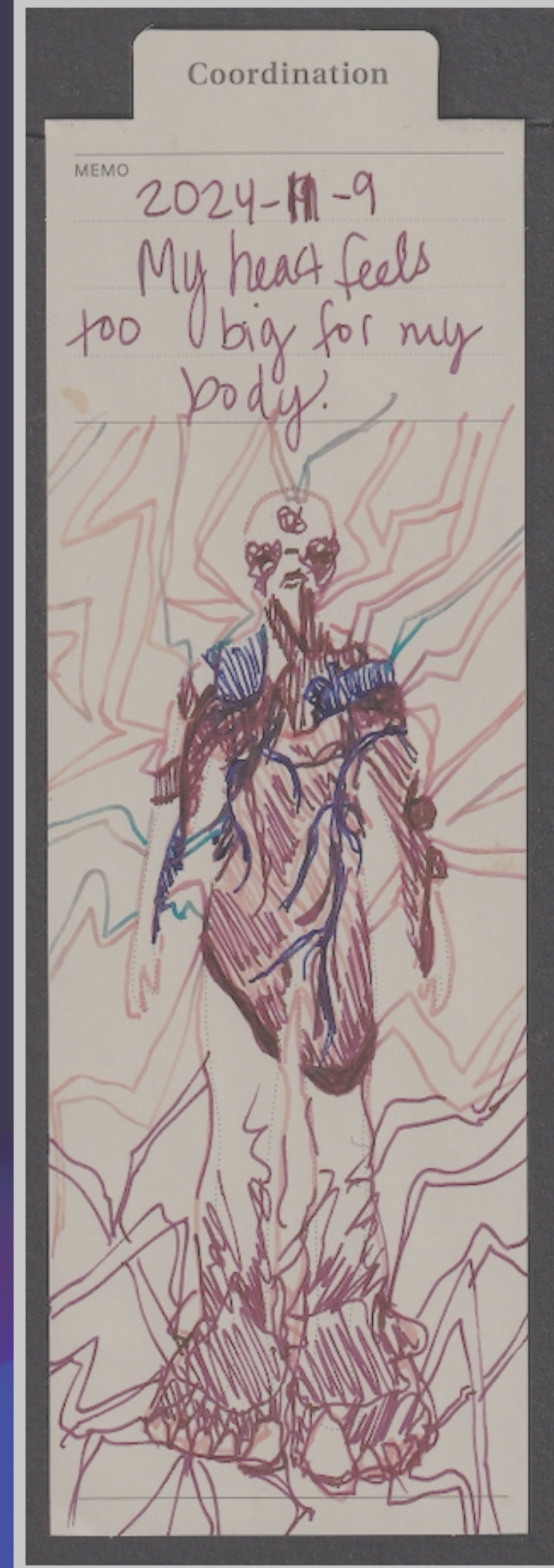
Comparison  
& Metaphor



Abstract  
Shape & Color



Representative  
Shapes



Size &  
Scale

# Some different ways to portray symptoms:

Coordination

MEMO

Symptom:  
Nausea & Reflux



Visual  
Depiction

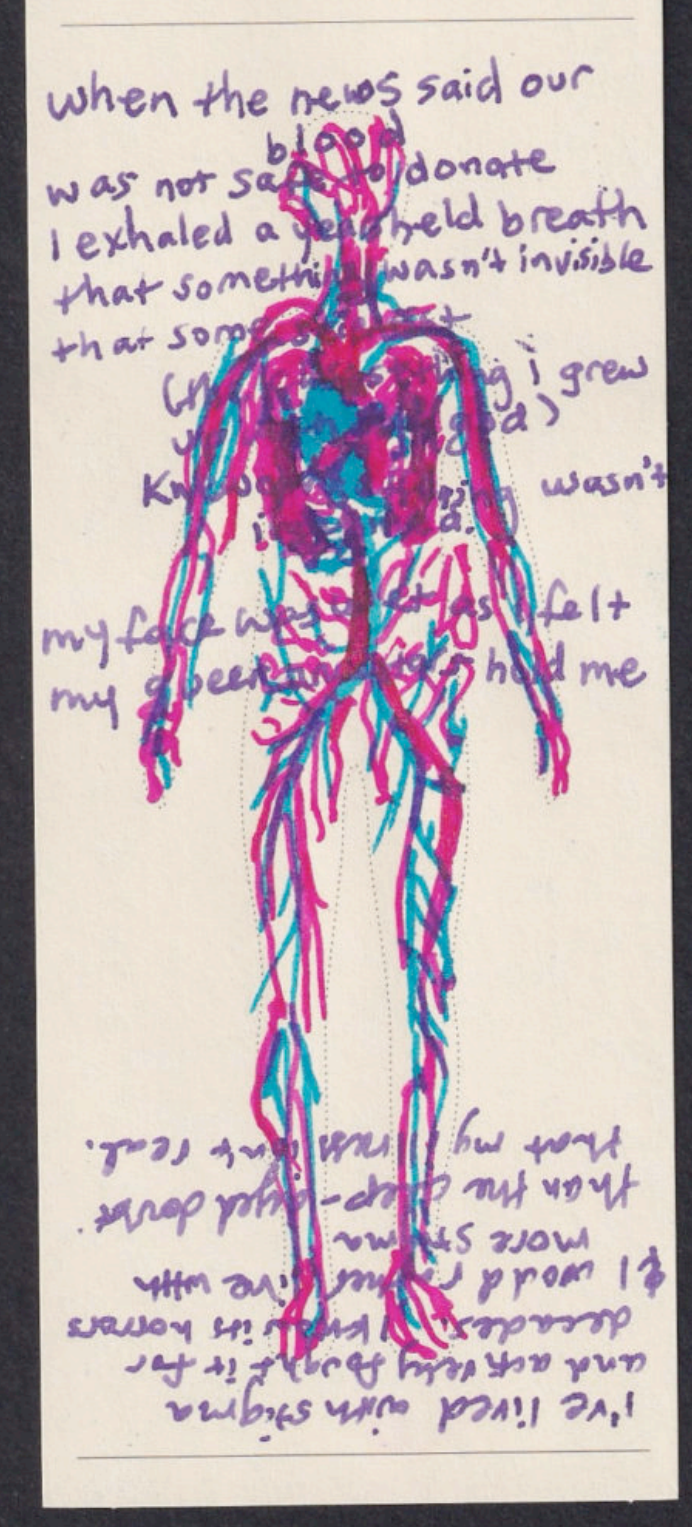
Coordination

MEMO

2024-5-14

Plague Poem

When the news said our  
was not safe to donate  
I exhaled a held breath  
that something wasn't invisible  
that something wasn't  
(my blood i grew  
yours (god)  
Known as wasn't  
my face was  
my g-been  
I've lived with stigma  
and a very funny for  
decades, know its horrors  
I would rather live with  
more stigma  
than the deep-lyd dont  
that my i rest dont read.



Writing &  
Description

Coordination

MEMO

2024-4-17

Can't sleep due  
to the feeling of a  
heavy metal rod in my leg.



Comparison  
& Metaphor

Coordination

MEMO

2024-5-2

I'm not very theistic  
but gods, what did I  
do to deserve this?



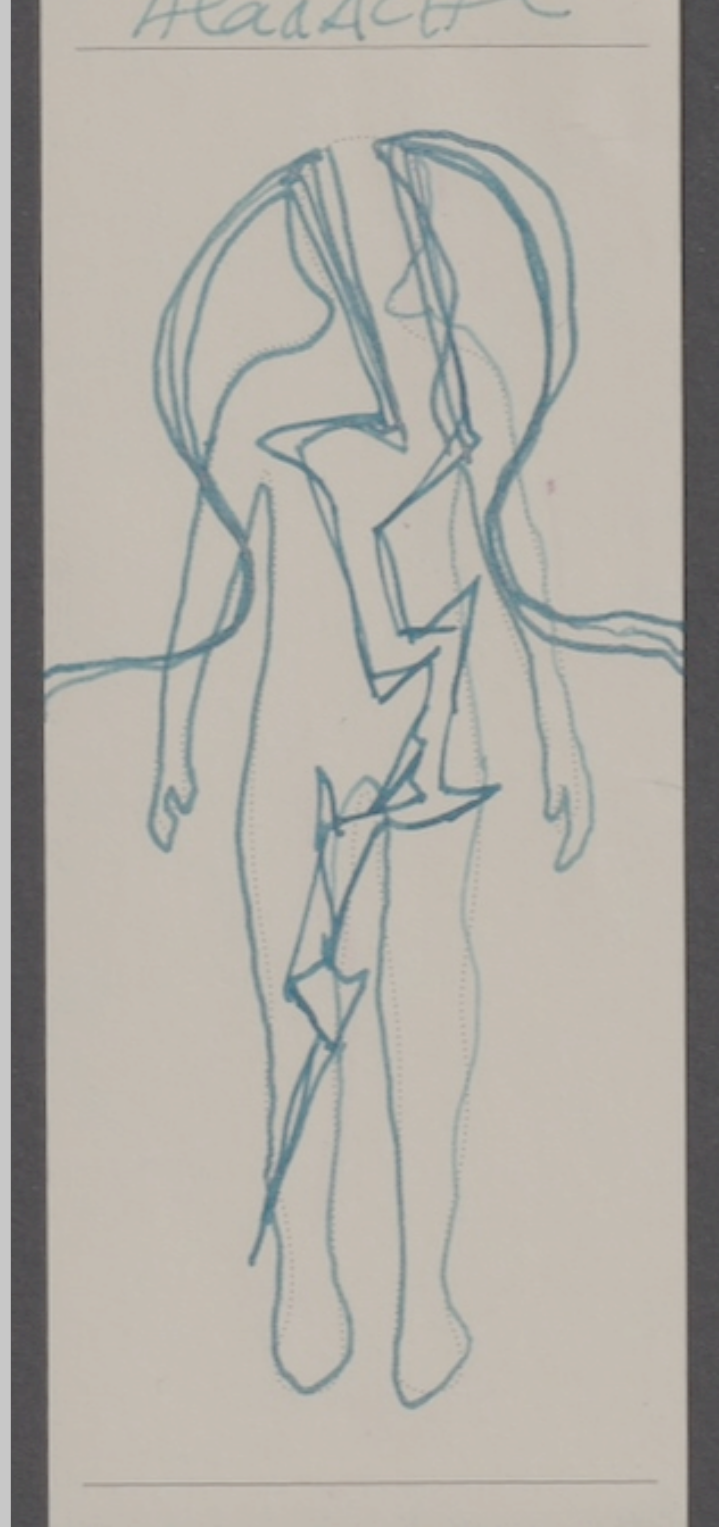
Abstract  
Shape & Color

Coordination

MEMO

2024-9-17

SPLITTING  
Headache



Representative  
Shapes

Coordination

MEMO

2024-11-9

My heart feels  
too big for my  
body.

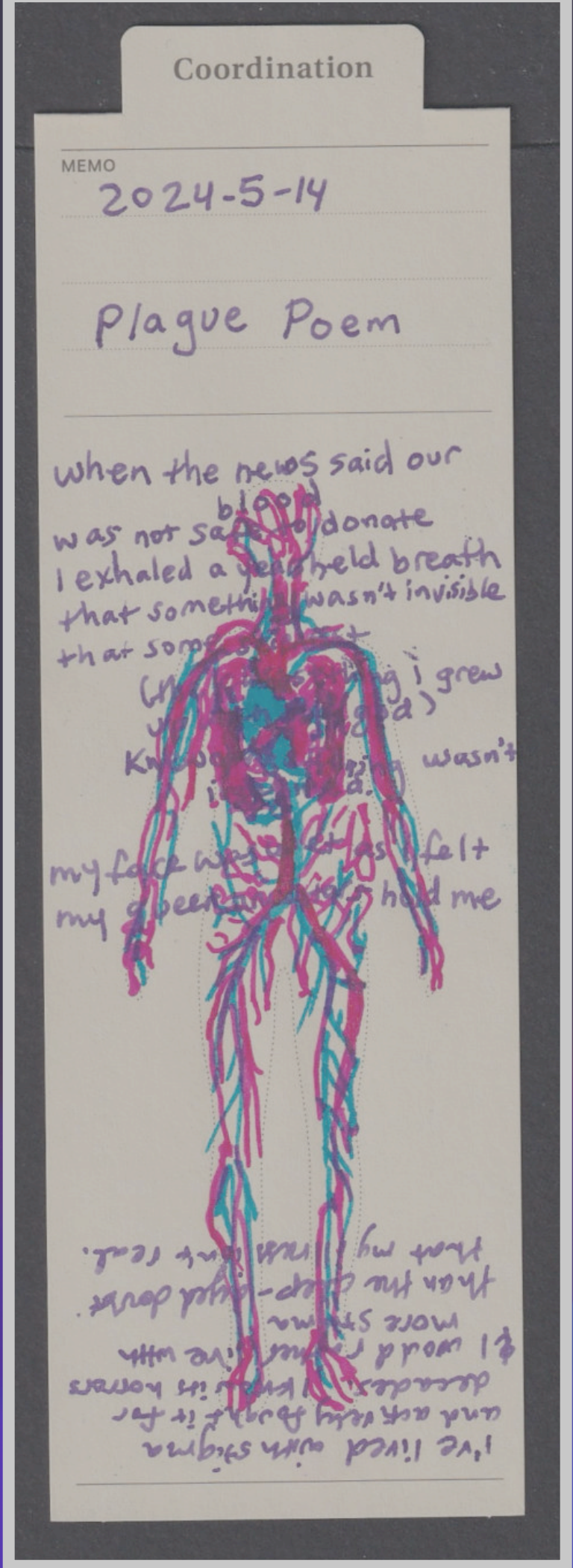


Size &  
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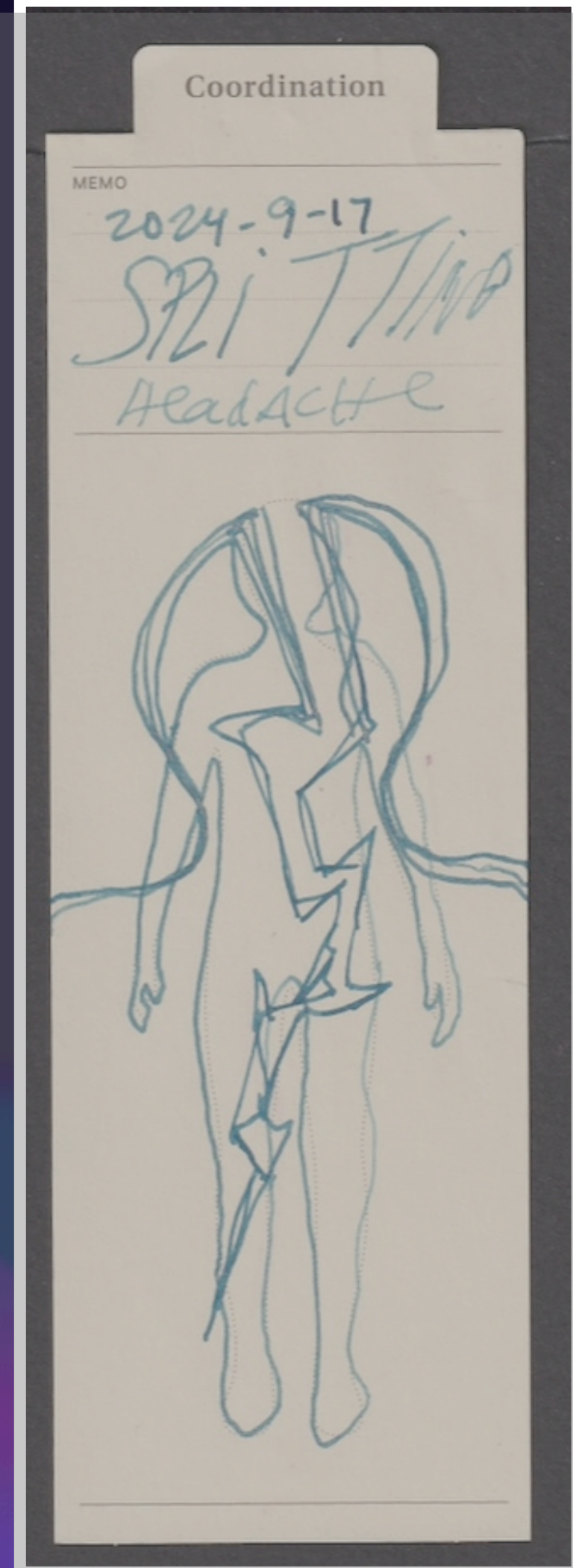
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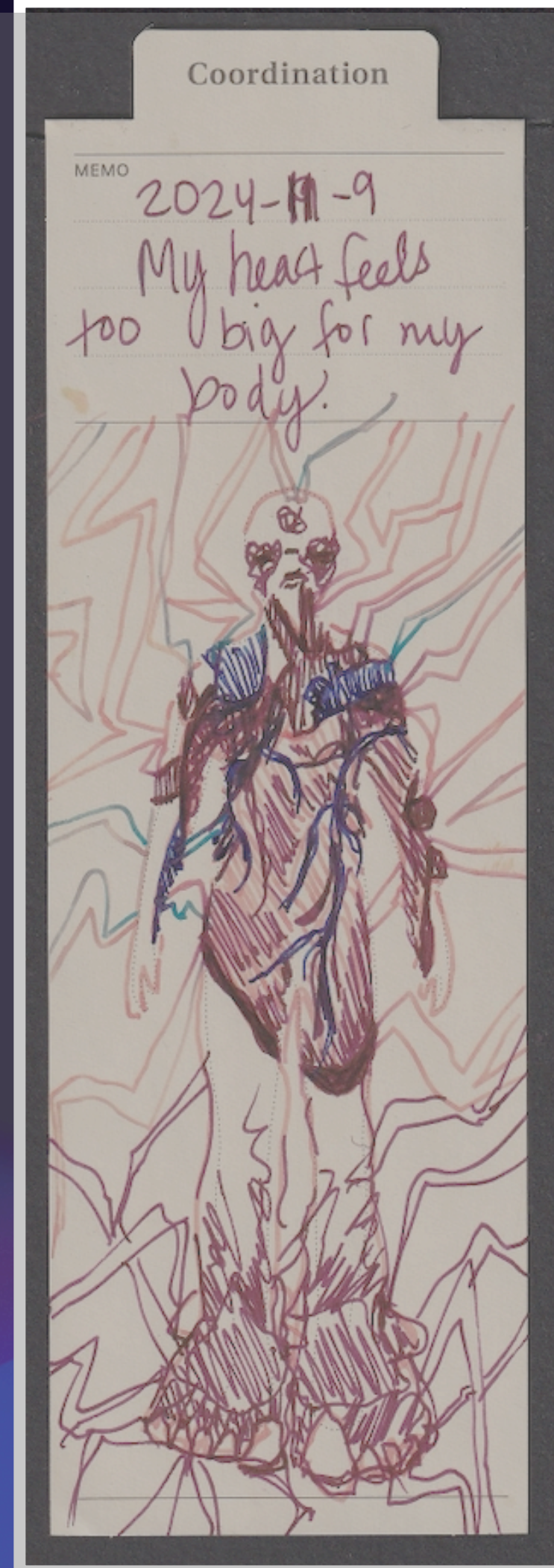
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Abstract  
Shape & Color



Representative  
Shapes



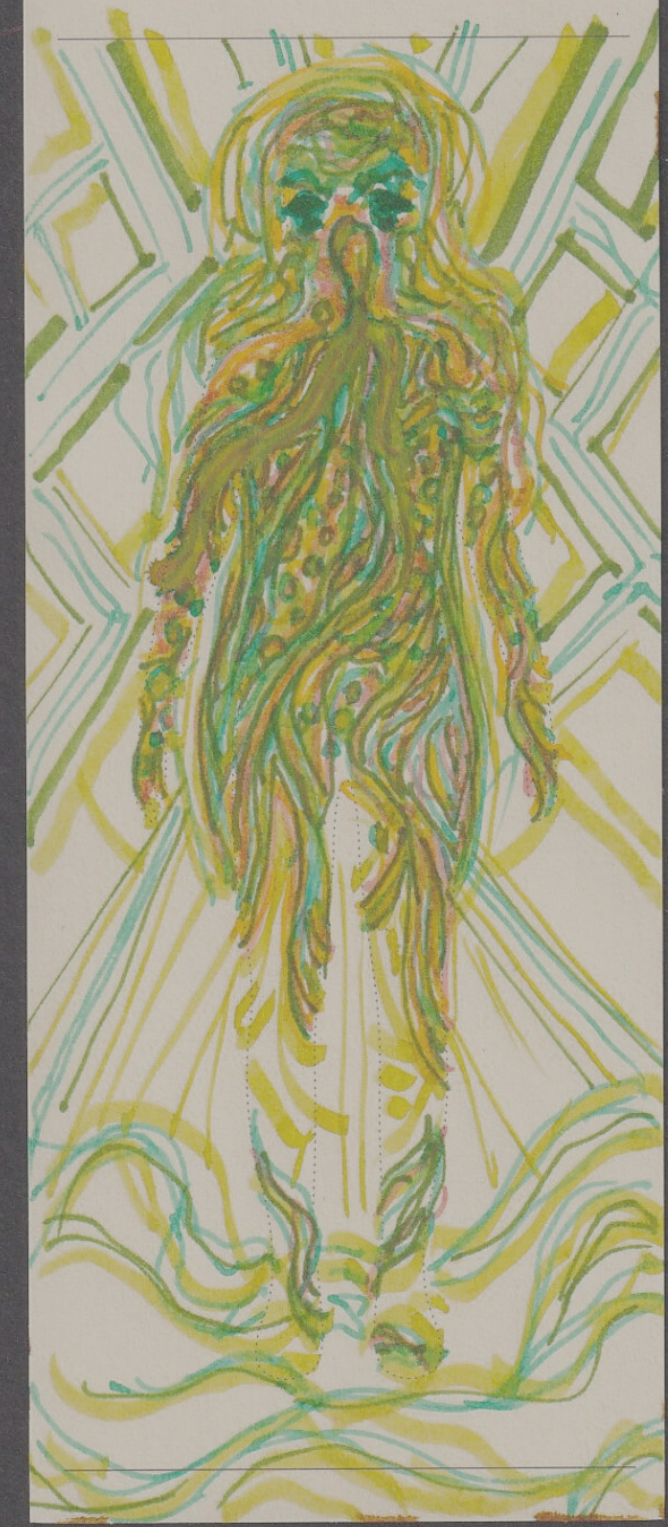
Size &  
Scale

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MEMO

Symptom:  
Nausea & Reflux



Visual  
Depiction

Coordination

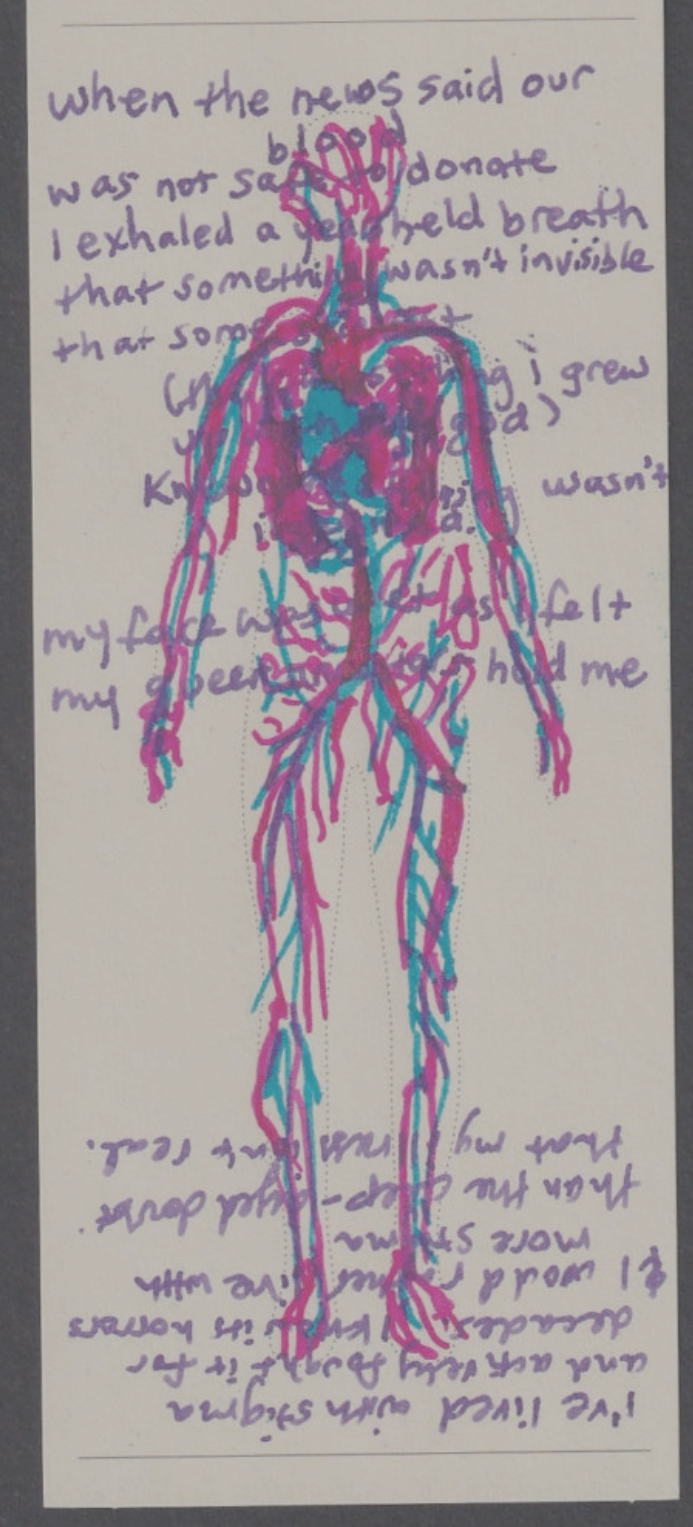
MEMO

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Plague Poem

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I exhaled a held breath  
that something wasn't invisible  
that something wasn't  
(I know I grew  
up in a world  
I know I wasn't  
my face was  
my heartbeat held me

I've lived with stigma  
and anxiety for  
decades. I know it for  
I would rather live with  
more stigma  
than the deep-seated  
that my heart isn't real.



Writing &  
Description

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Comparison  
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Headache



Representative  
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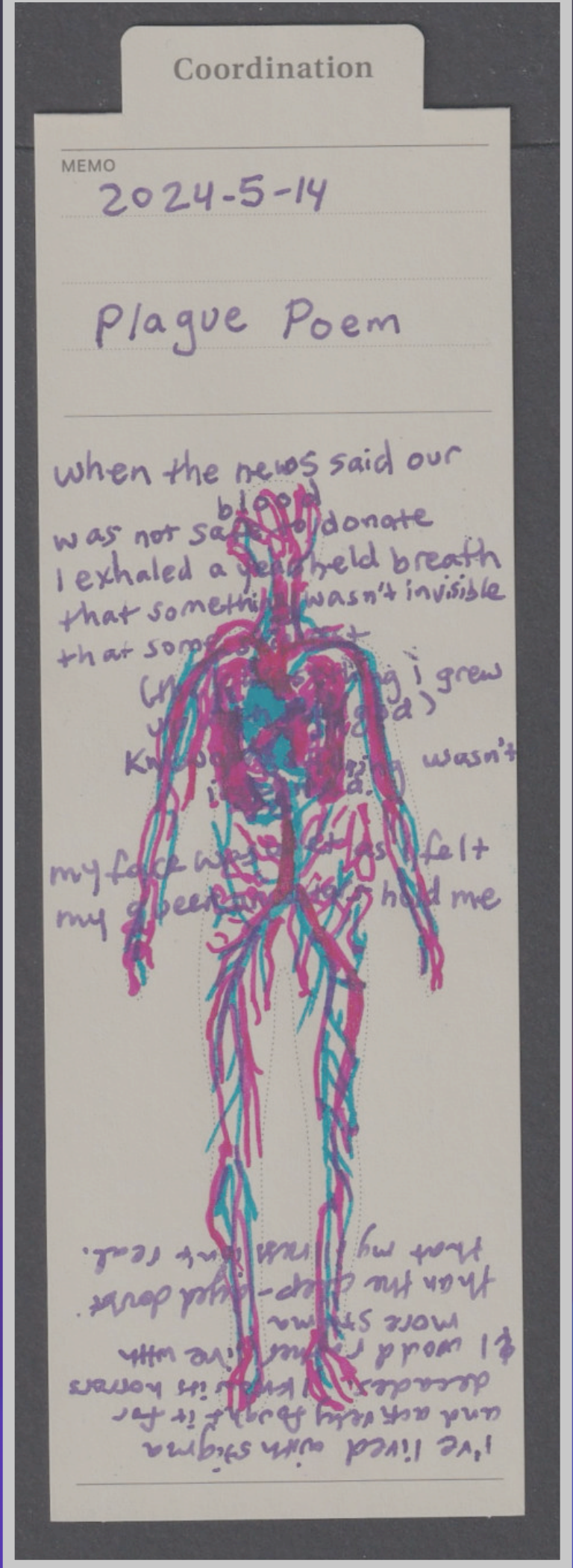


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Comparison  
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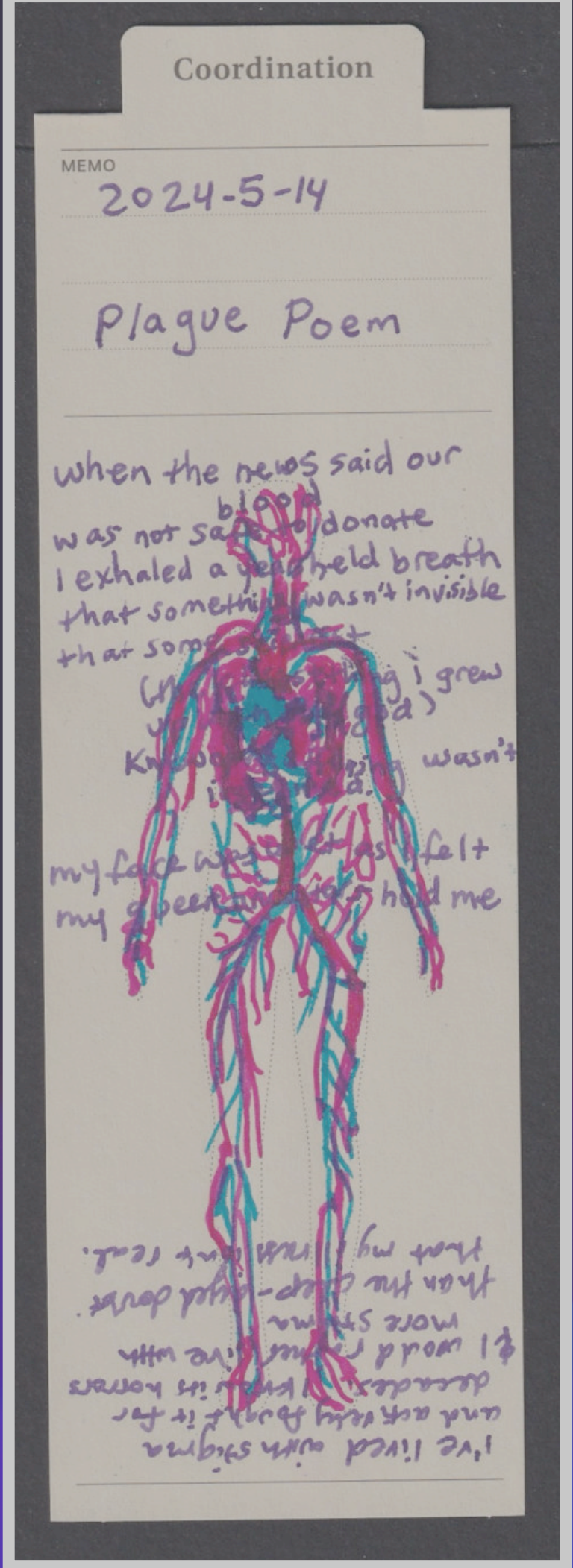


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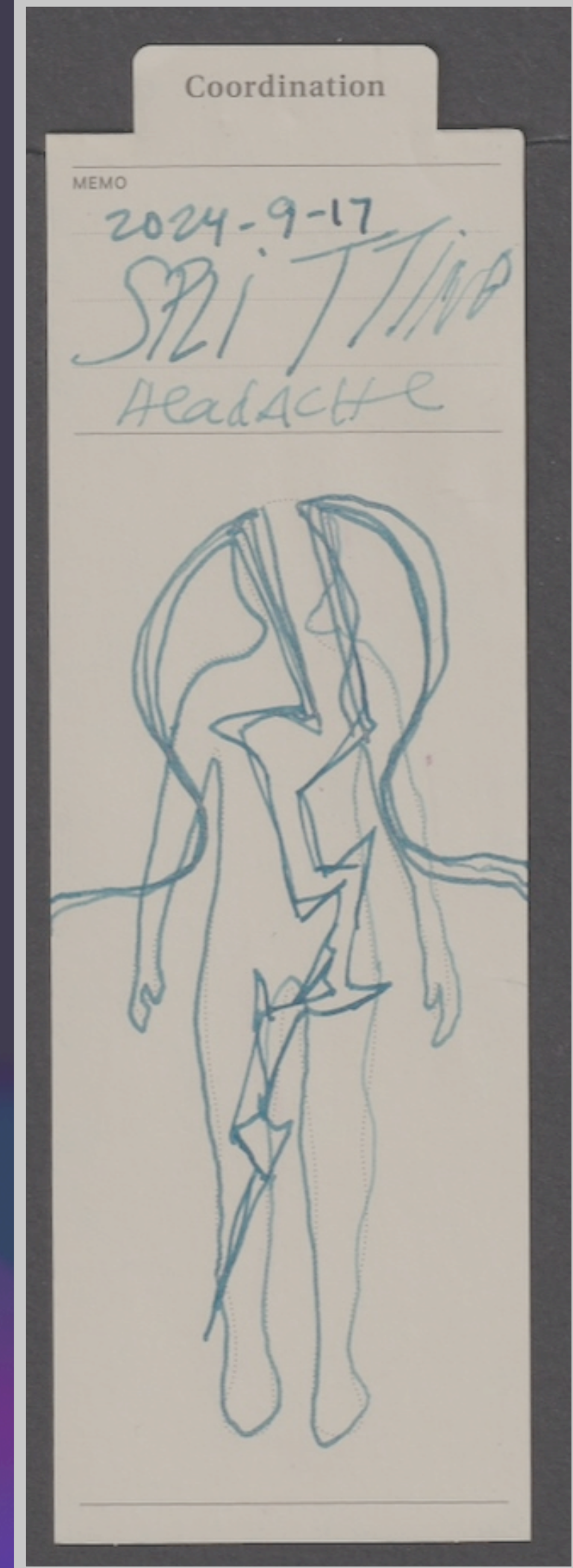
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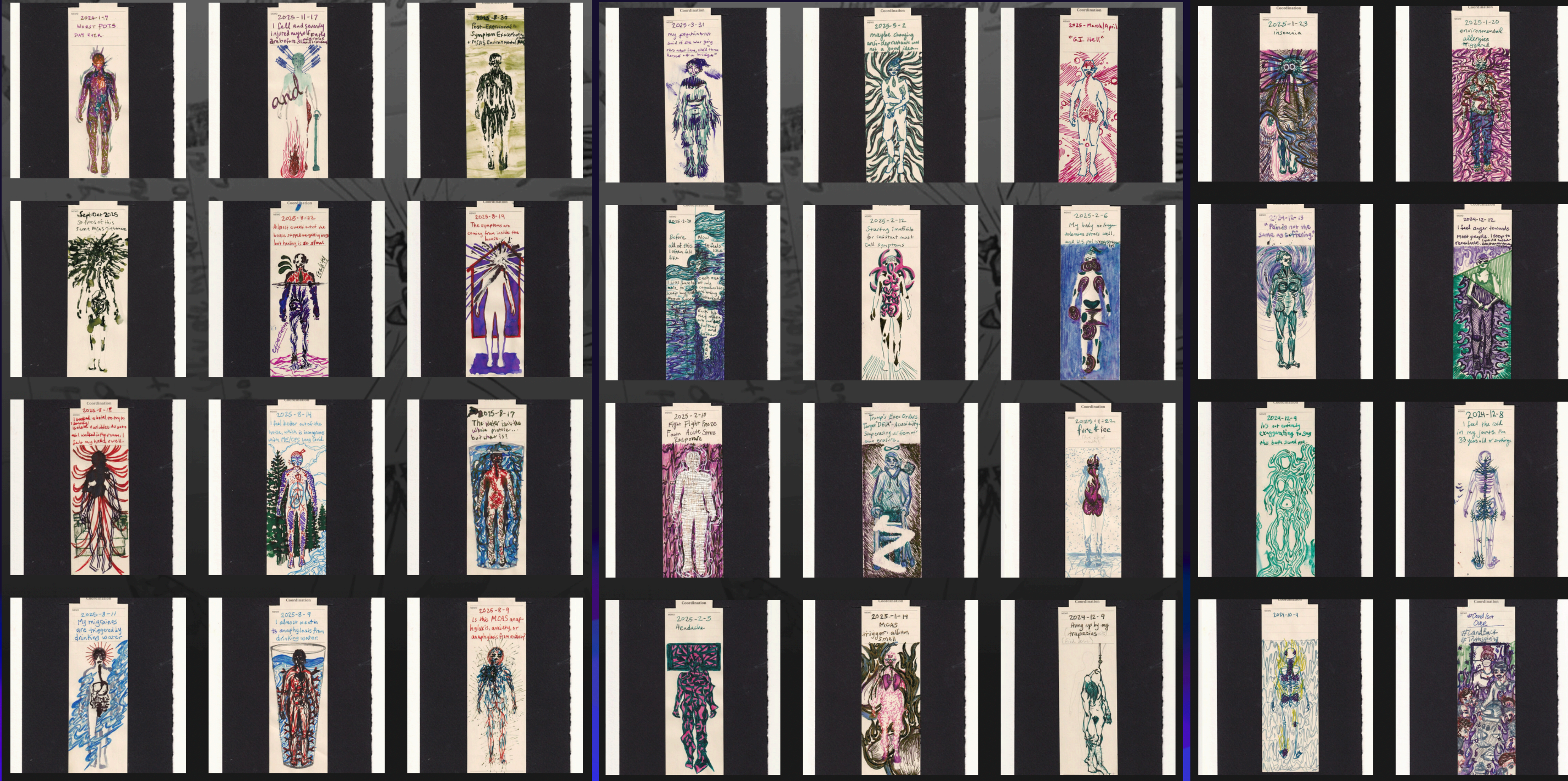
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Representative  
Shapes



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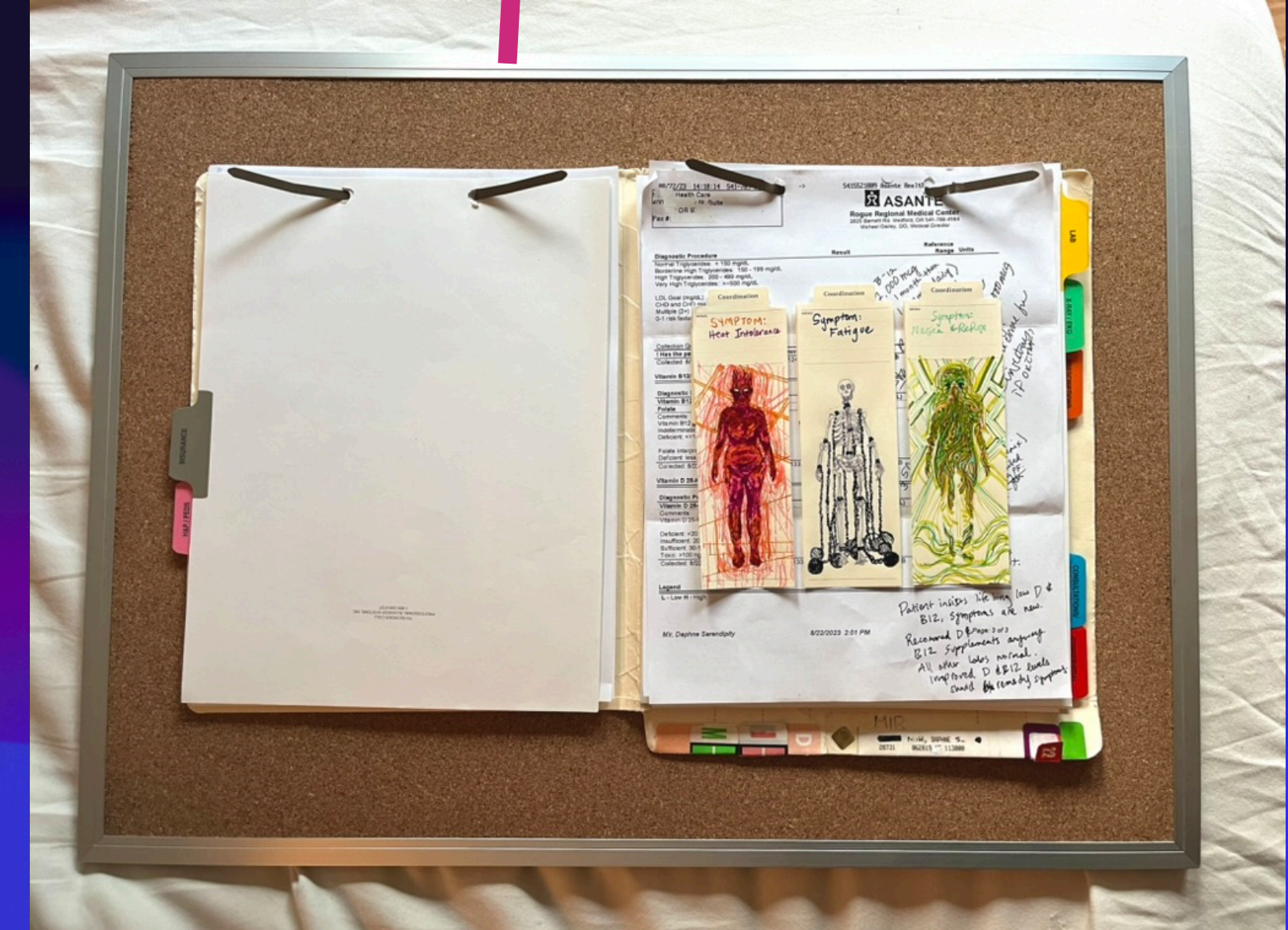
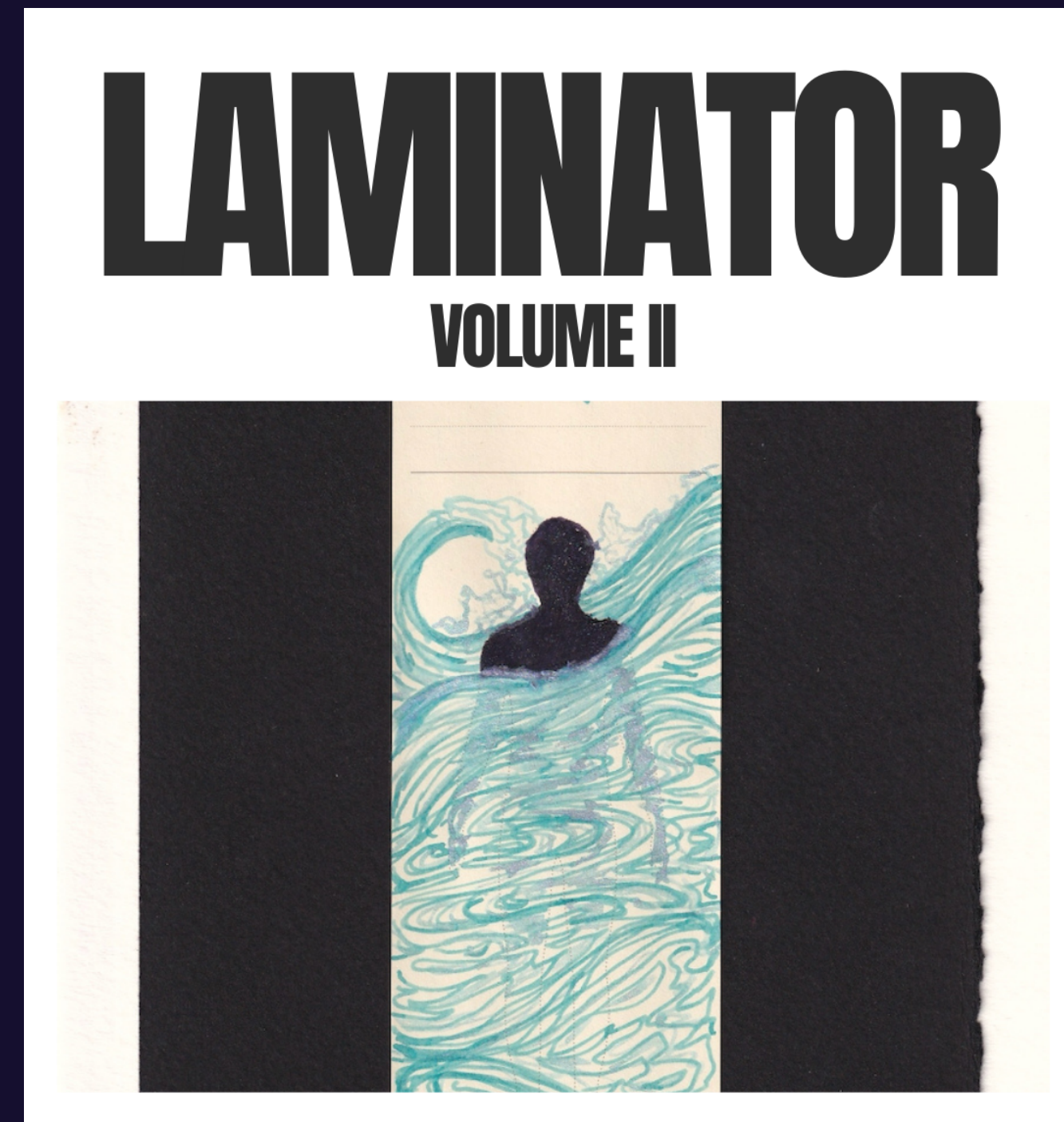
illmarks



# illmarks activism!

## Selected Impacts:

- Homiens Art Prize Summer 2024: “Symptom: grief”
- HERALBONY Art Prize Finalist 2025: interactive “medical chArt”
- 3 IRL Exhibits & 2 Virtual Exhibits
- 5 Publications
- 2 Workshops

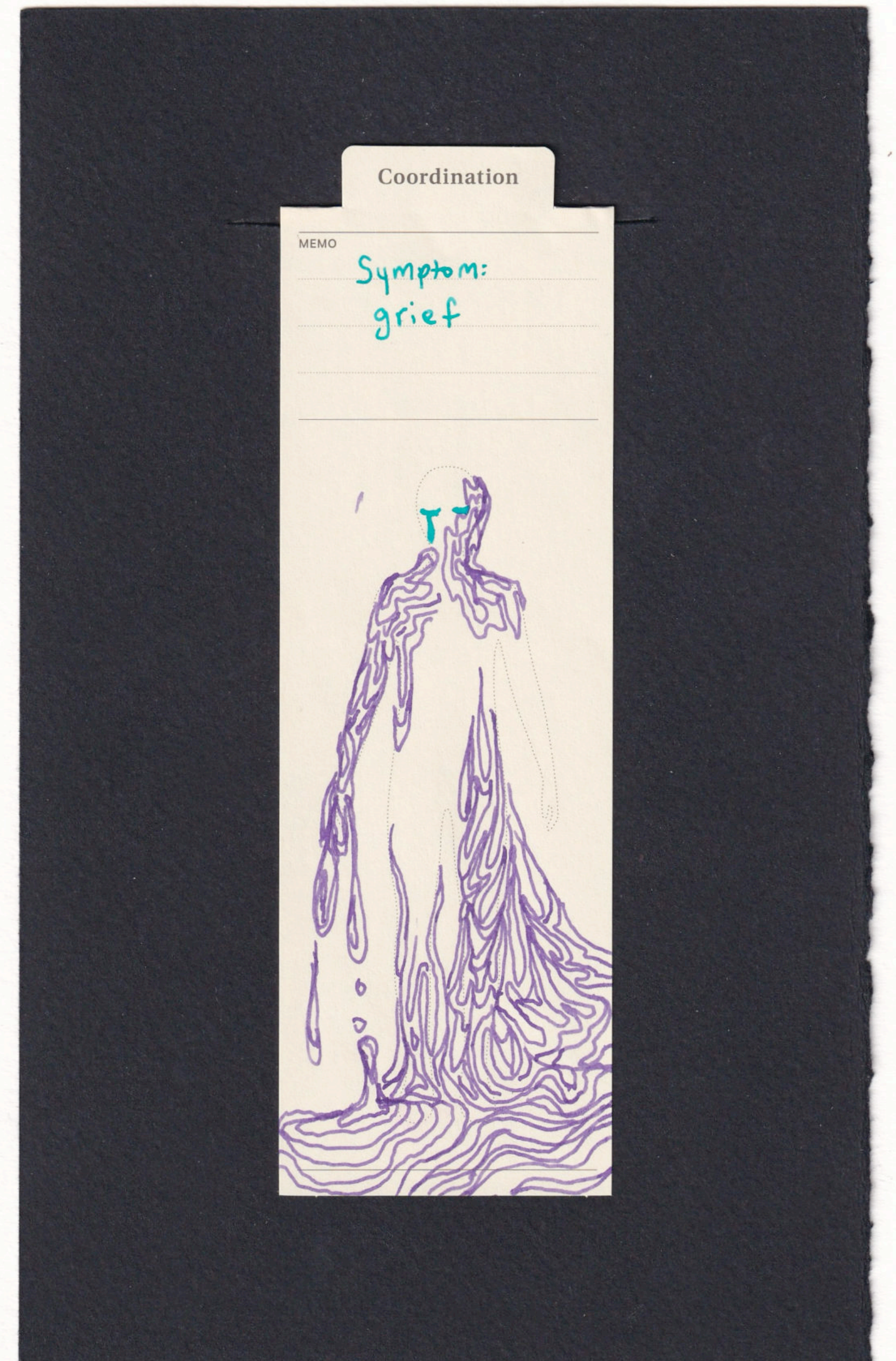


Want to host a workshop? [illmarks@nyxm.com](mailto:illmarks@nyxm.com)

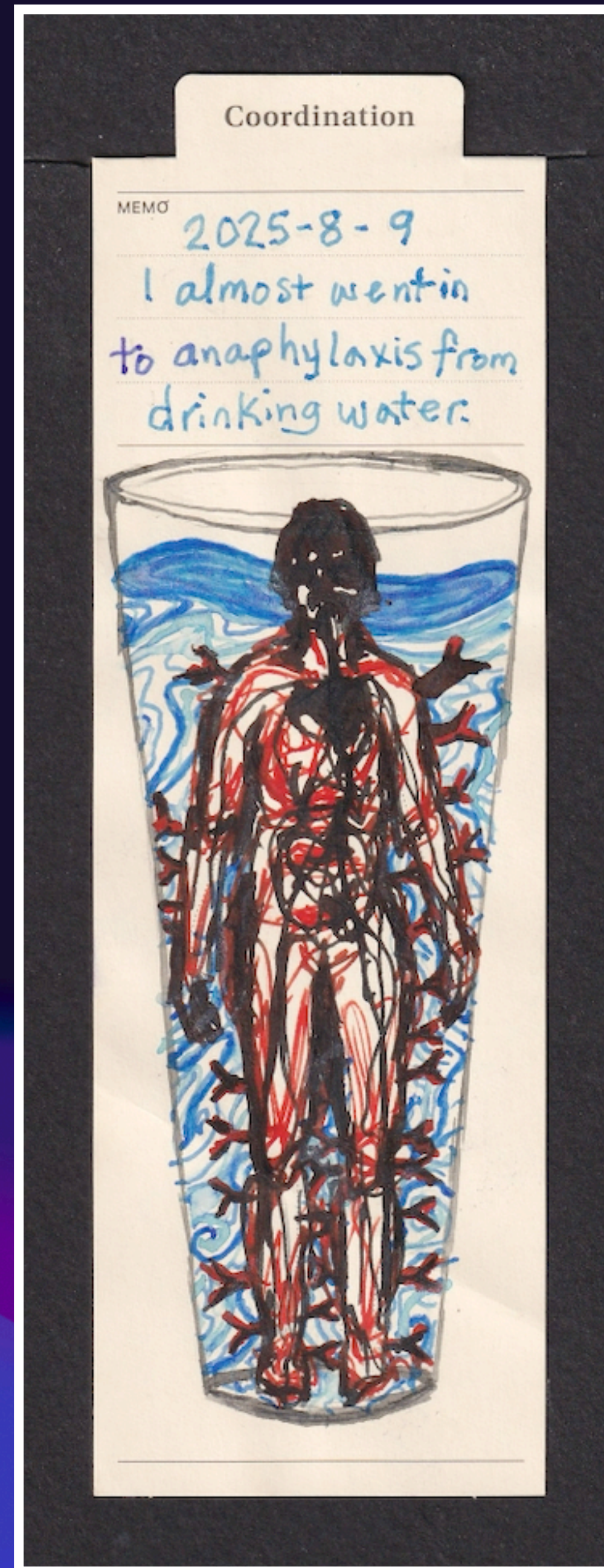
## FINDING

# Key Learnings from illmarks

“Symptom: Grief” winner of the  
Homies Art Prize, Summer 2024



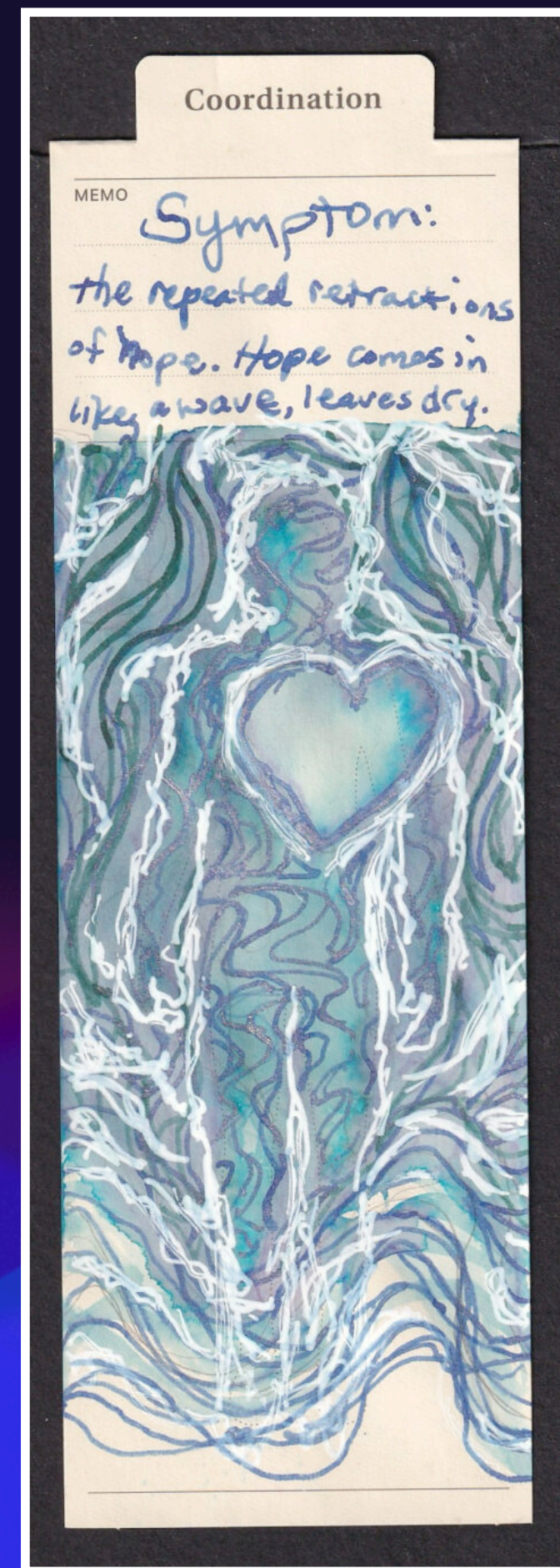
We know our bodies better than anyone else.



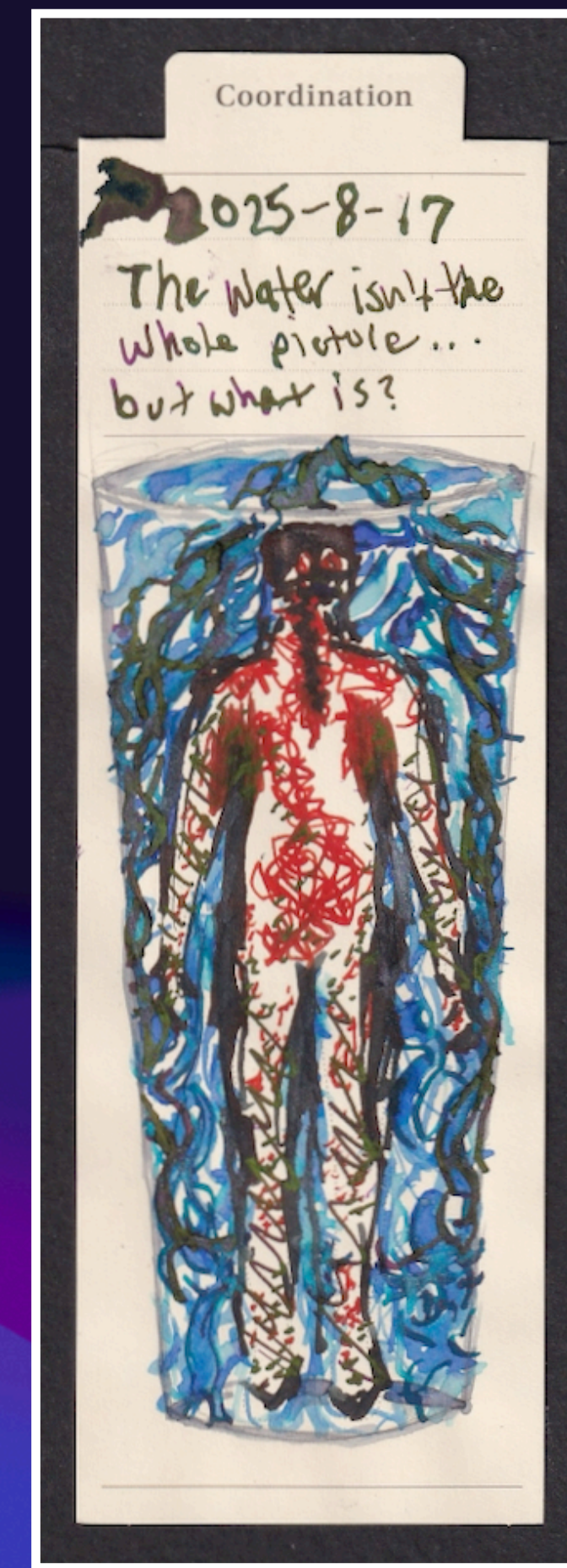
# By Externalizing our Internal Experiences we are able to:



make them tangible  
/ physically real



process them



witness how they change  
& how we change



communicate them  
to others

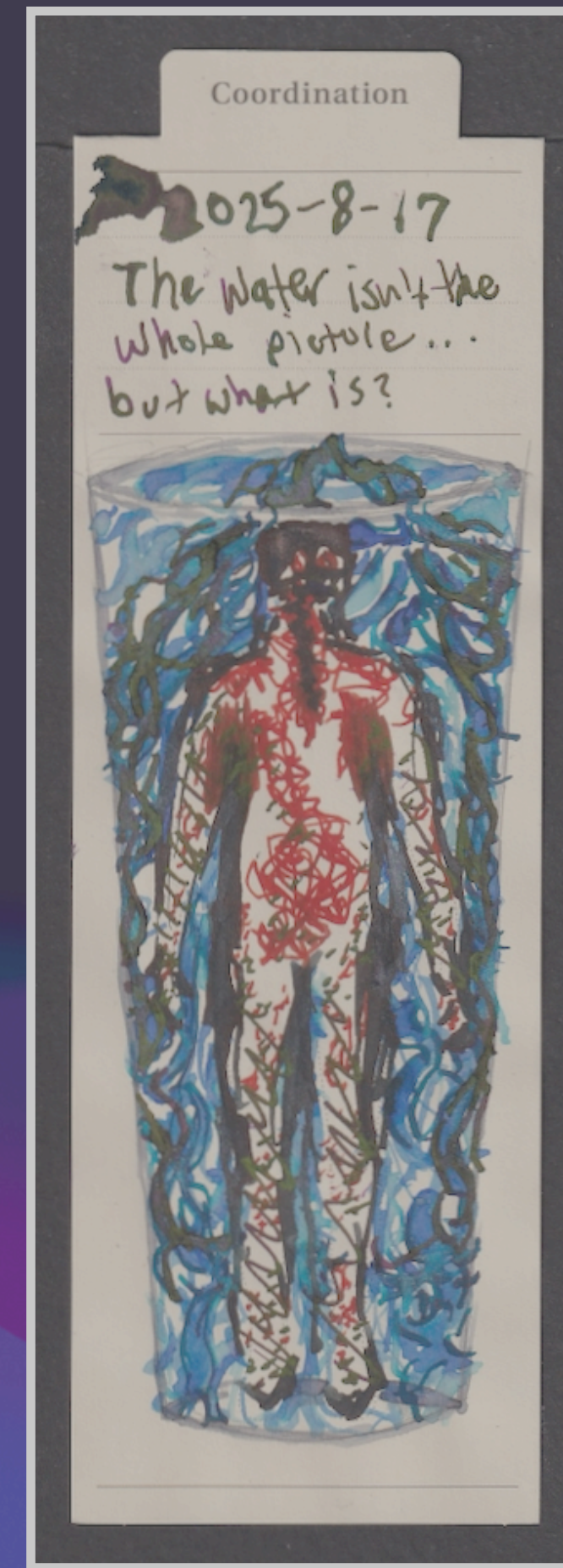
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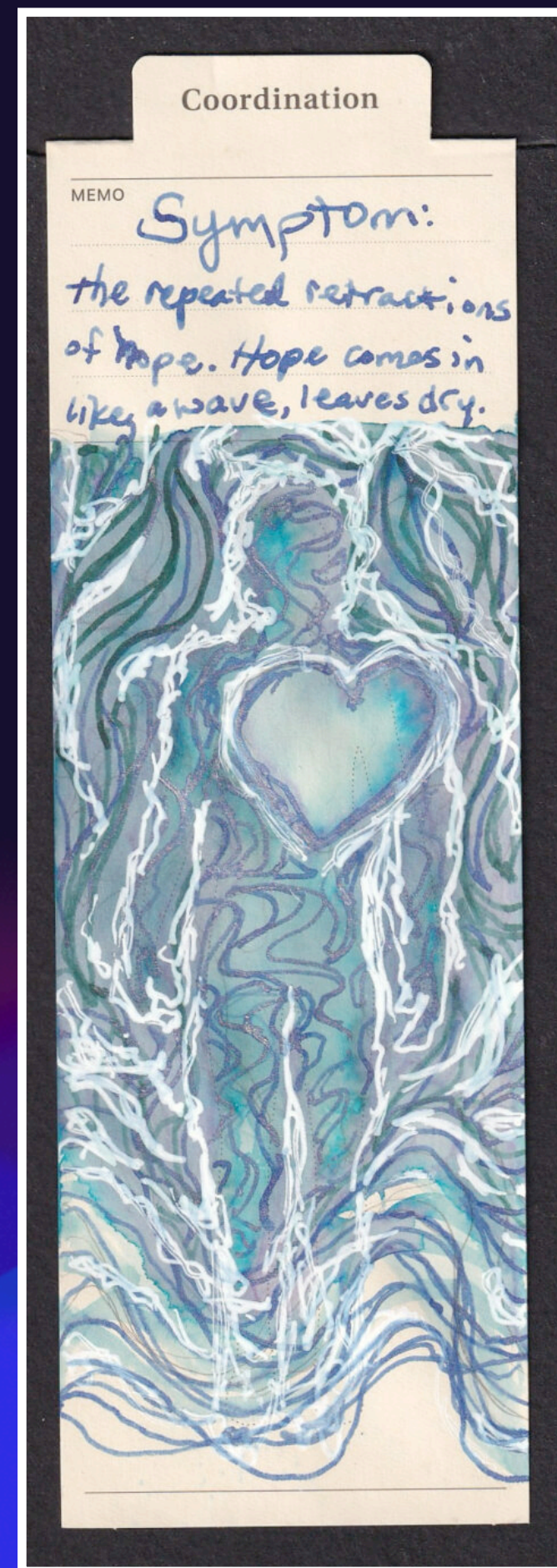


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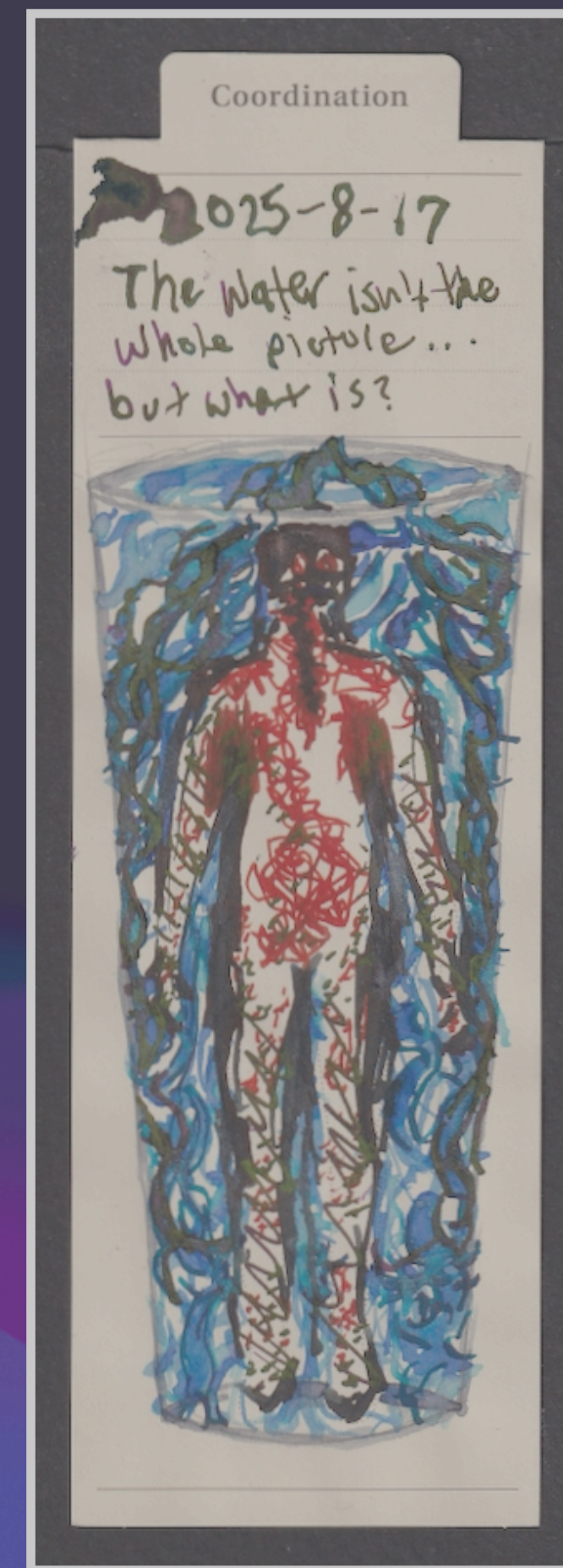
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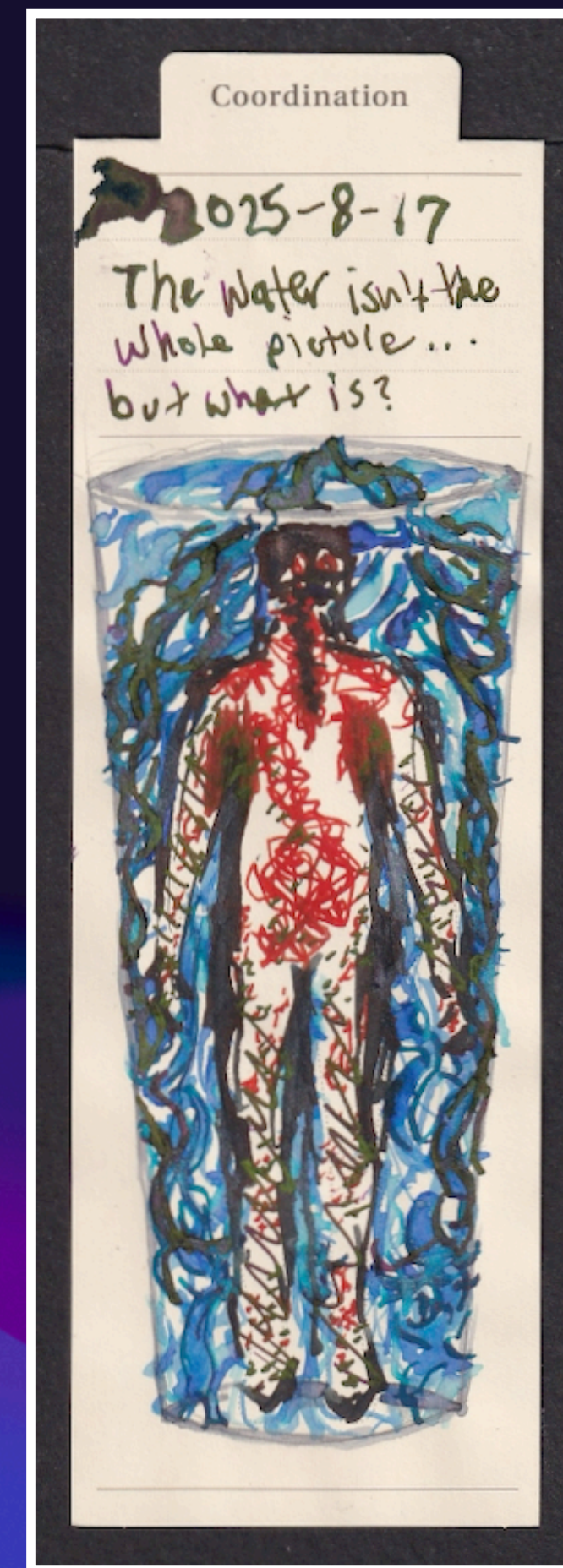
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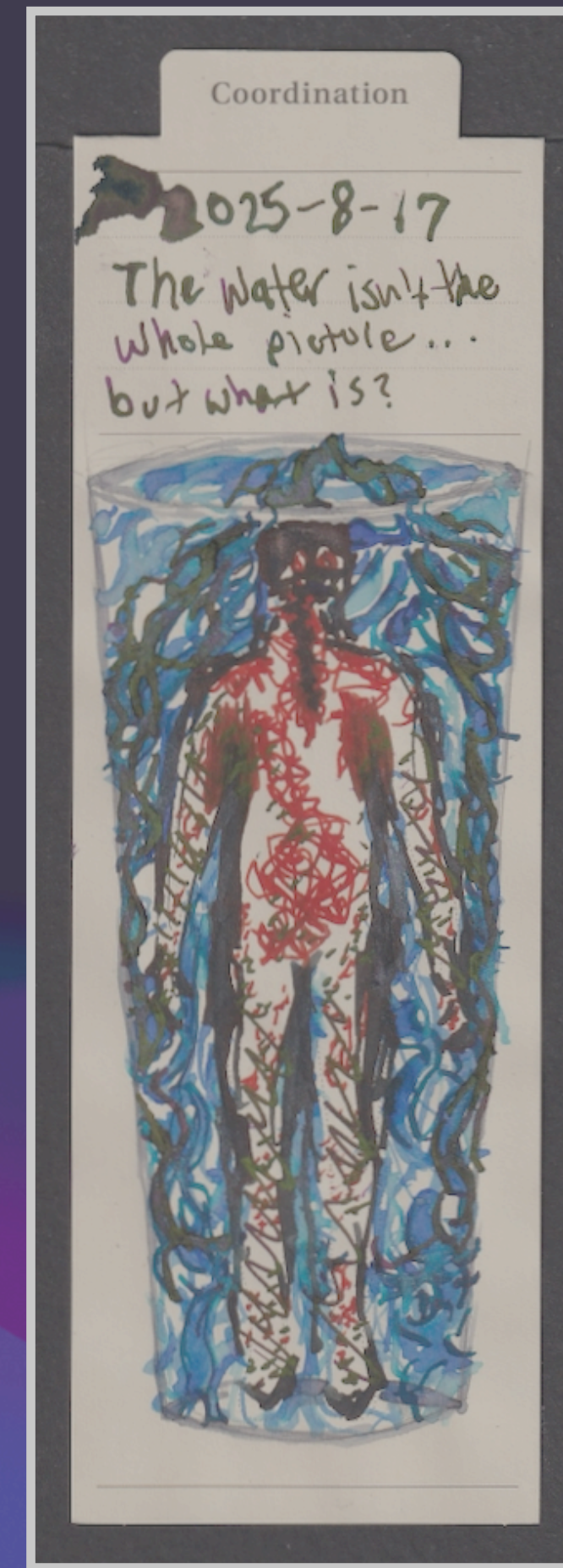
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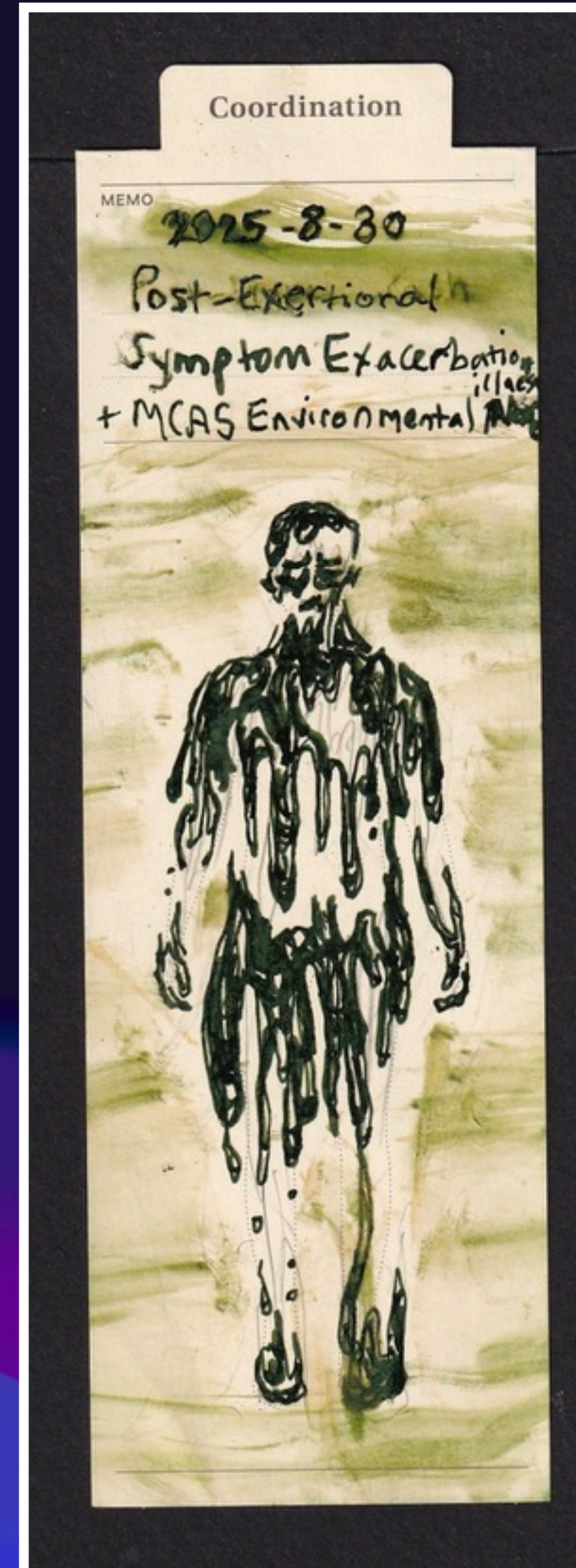


witness how they change  
& how we change



communicate them  
to others

We validate our & each others' bodily experiences, internal knowledge, and subjective truths.



Coordination

MEMO

2025-6-27

Birthday Party Invite

TO: YOU WHEN: TMRW

DRESS CODE: ~N95



WHERE: #SaltingTheVibes

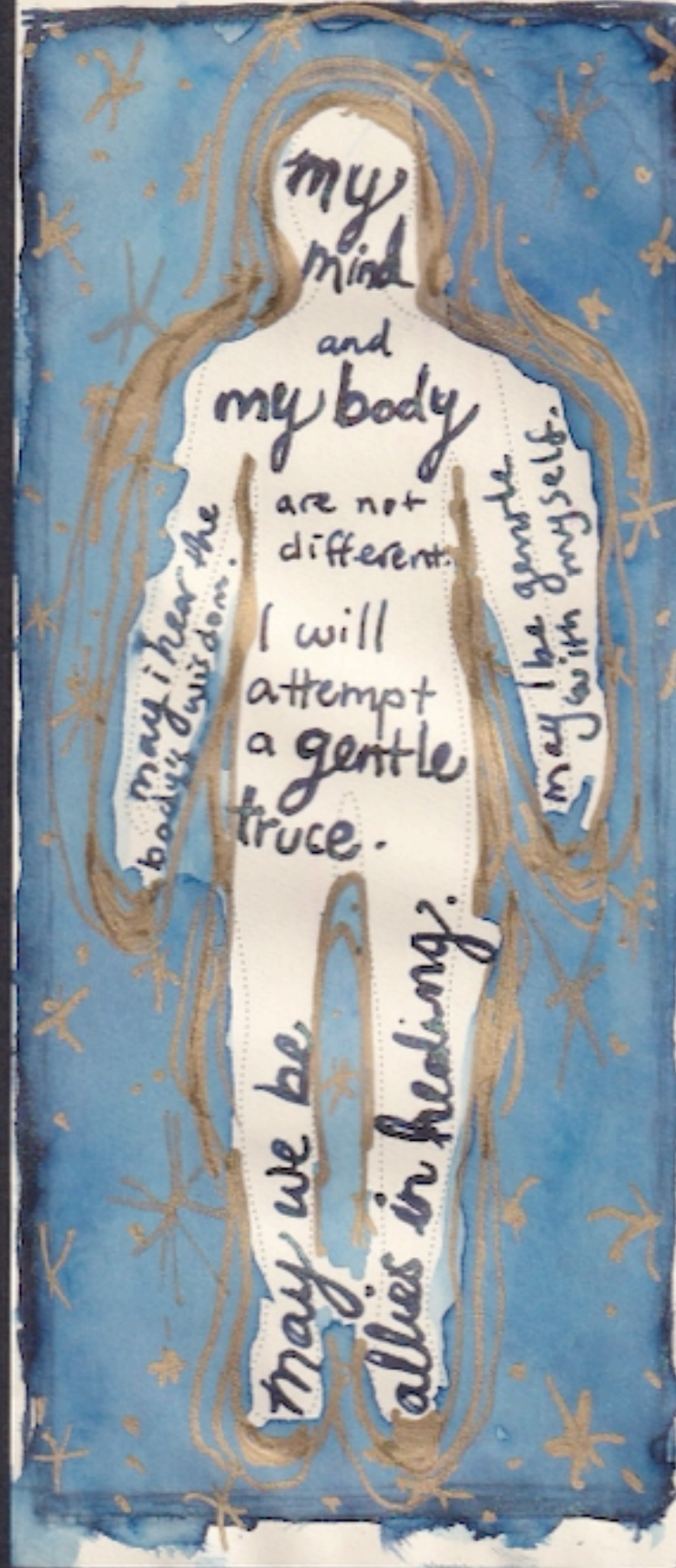
Coordination

MEMO

2024-9-21

Treatment:

Meditation Retreat  
(zen Sesshin)



my  
mind  
and  
my body

are not  
different.

I will  
attempt  
a gentle  
truce.

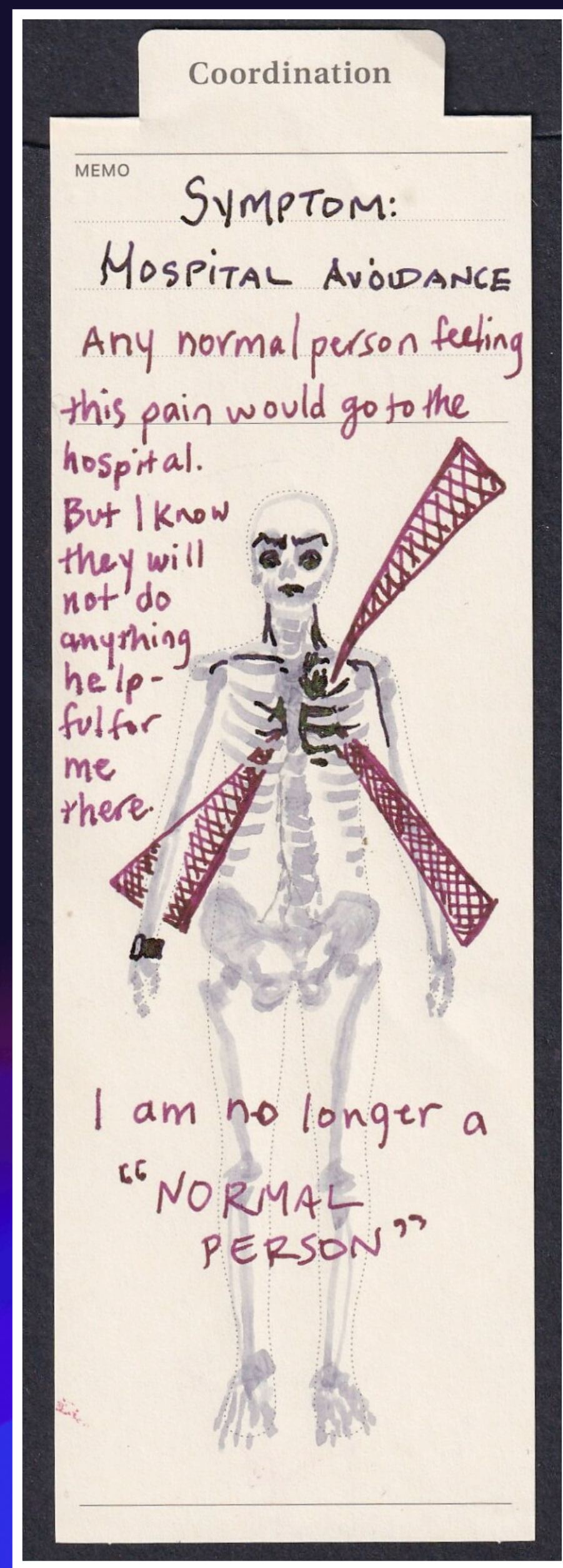
may we be  
allies in healing.

may i hear the  
body's wisdom.

may i be gentle  
with myself.

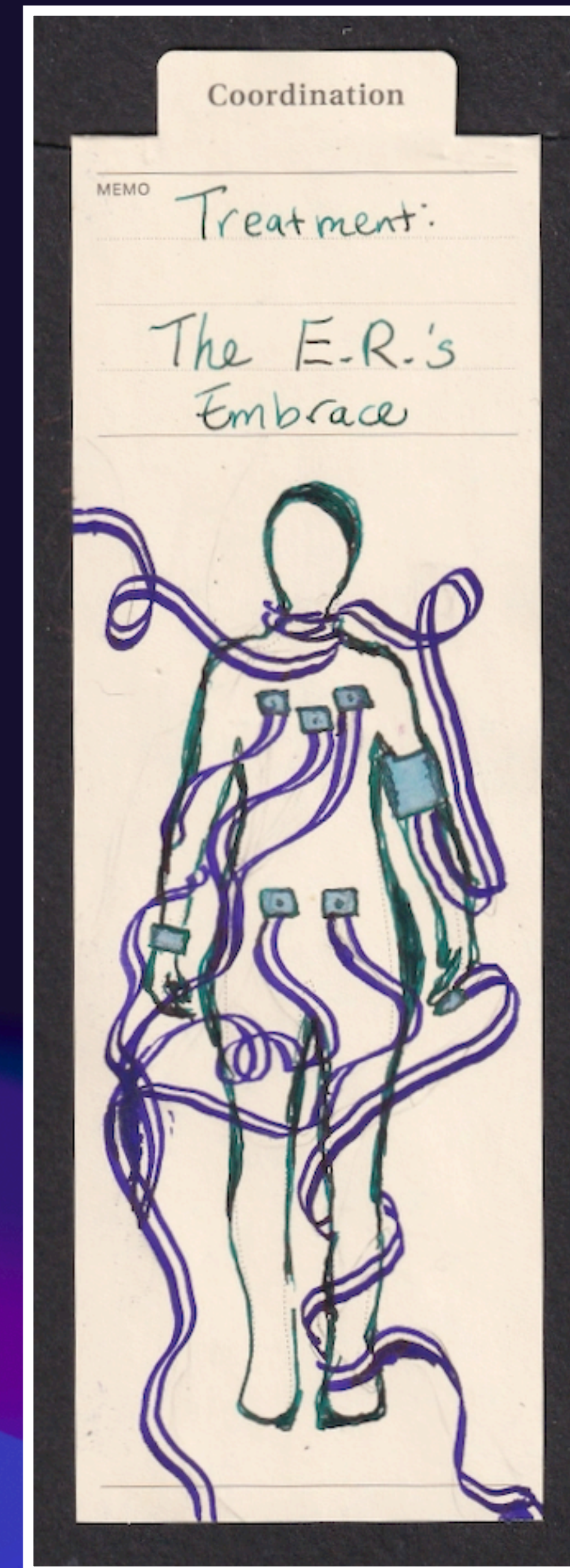
CLOSING

I Hope



Because we all have bodies,  
healthcare is uniquely  
situated as an issue that  
can unite people across  
political spectrums to  
create systemic change.

I believe it's critical we envision different, hopeful systems of health&care.



# Thank you!

illmarks: Body Mapping for Chronic Illness & Disability  
Reach out anytime: [illmarks@nyxmir.com](mailto:illmarks@nyxmir.com)

*Artivism from Bedspace / Artivismo desde el Espacio-cama*

