



# SUCCULENT TEARS

PIECE 1/3

Illustration

BY CAILIN ALCOCK

**SERIES: PIECES 1-3**

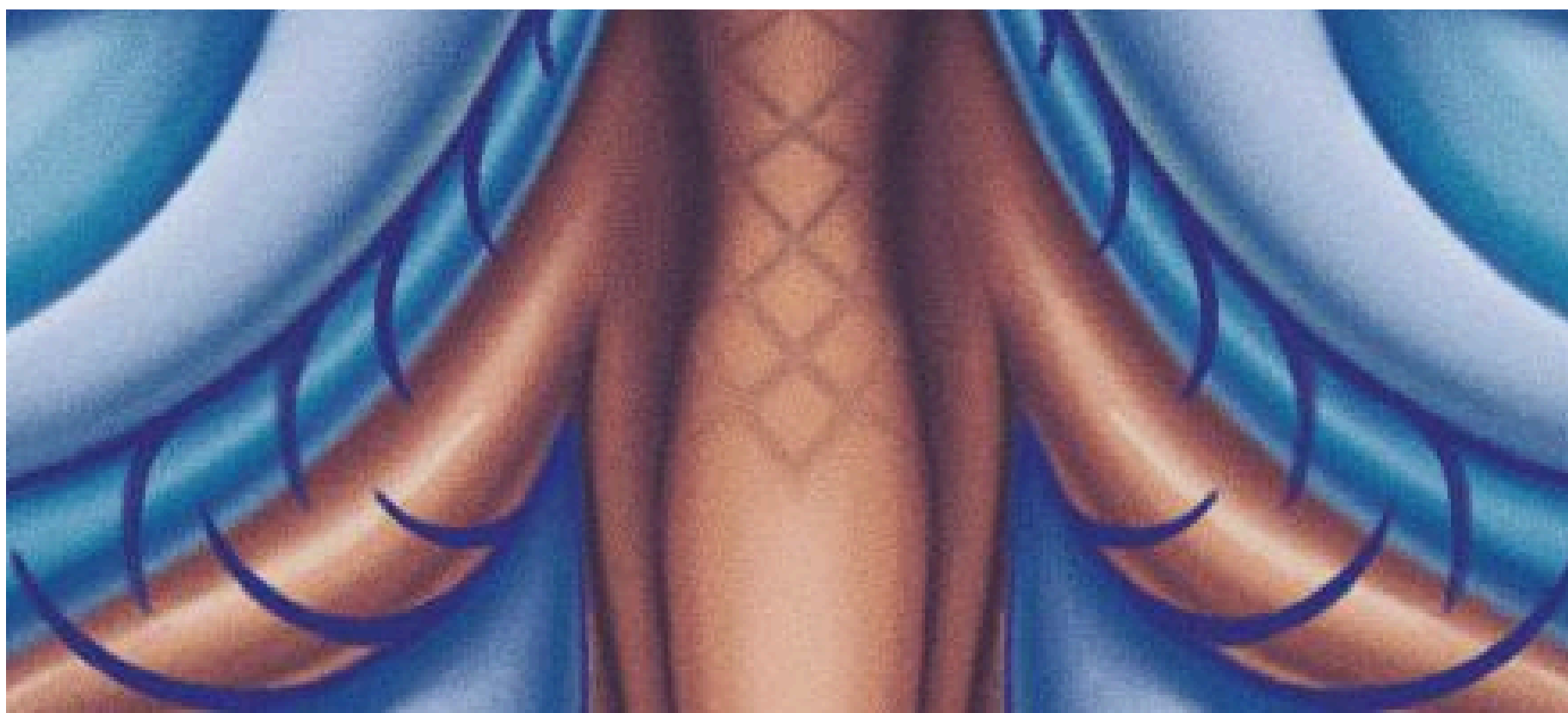


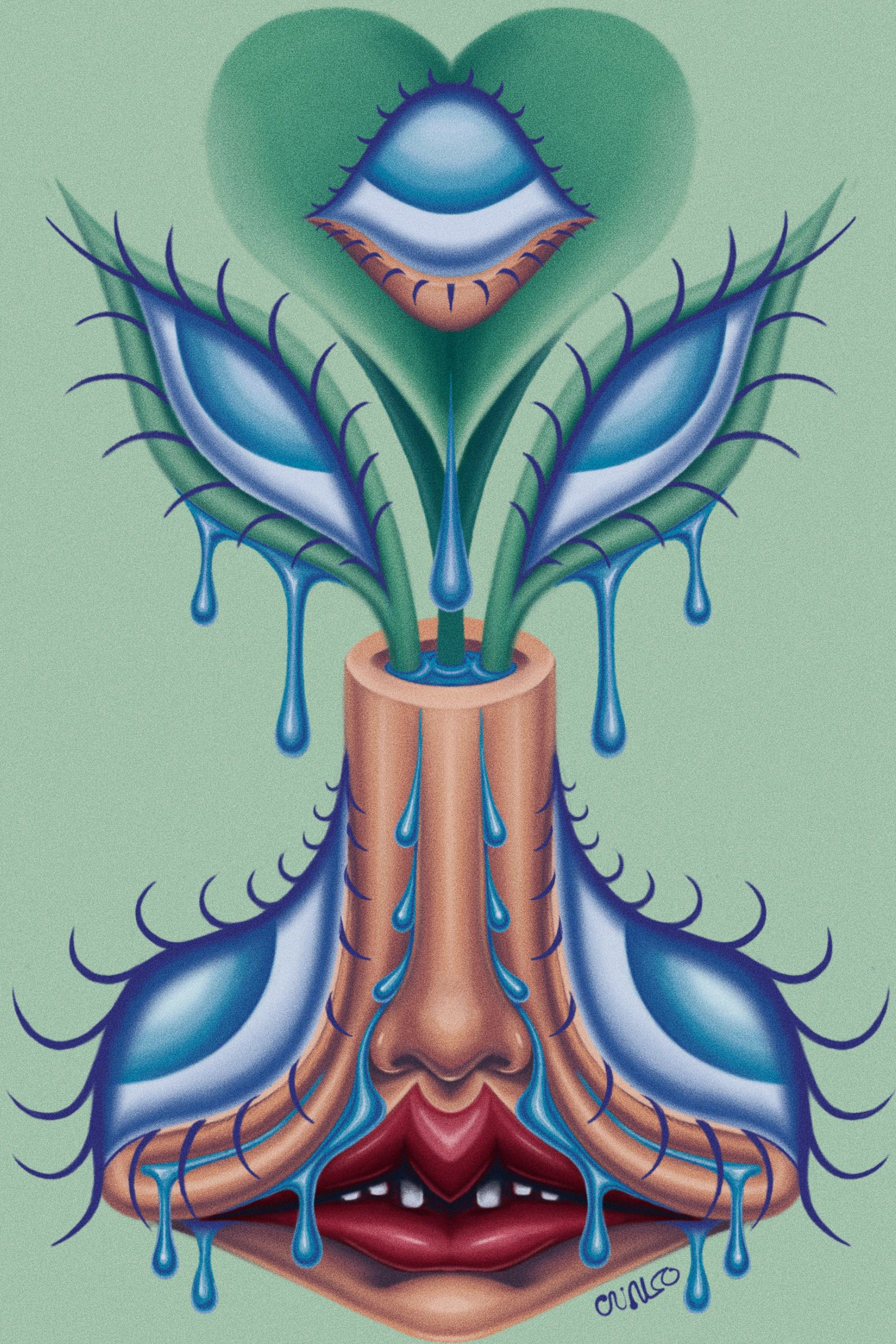
Head hung over a tablet, blue light reflected back into my face. The clenched knuckles of my left fist, dig into my rested chin. The right wrapped around a stylus, feverishly lacerating across a screen. Music blasting through noise cancelling headphones.

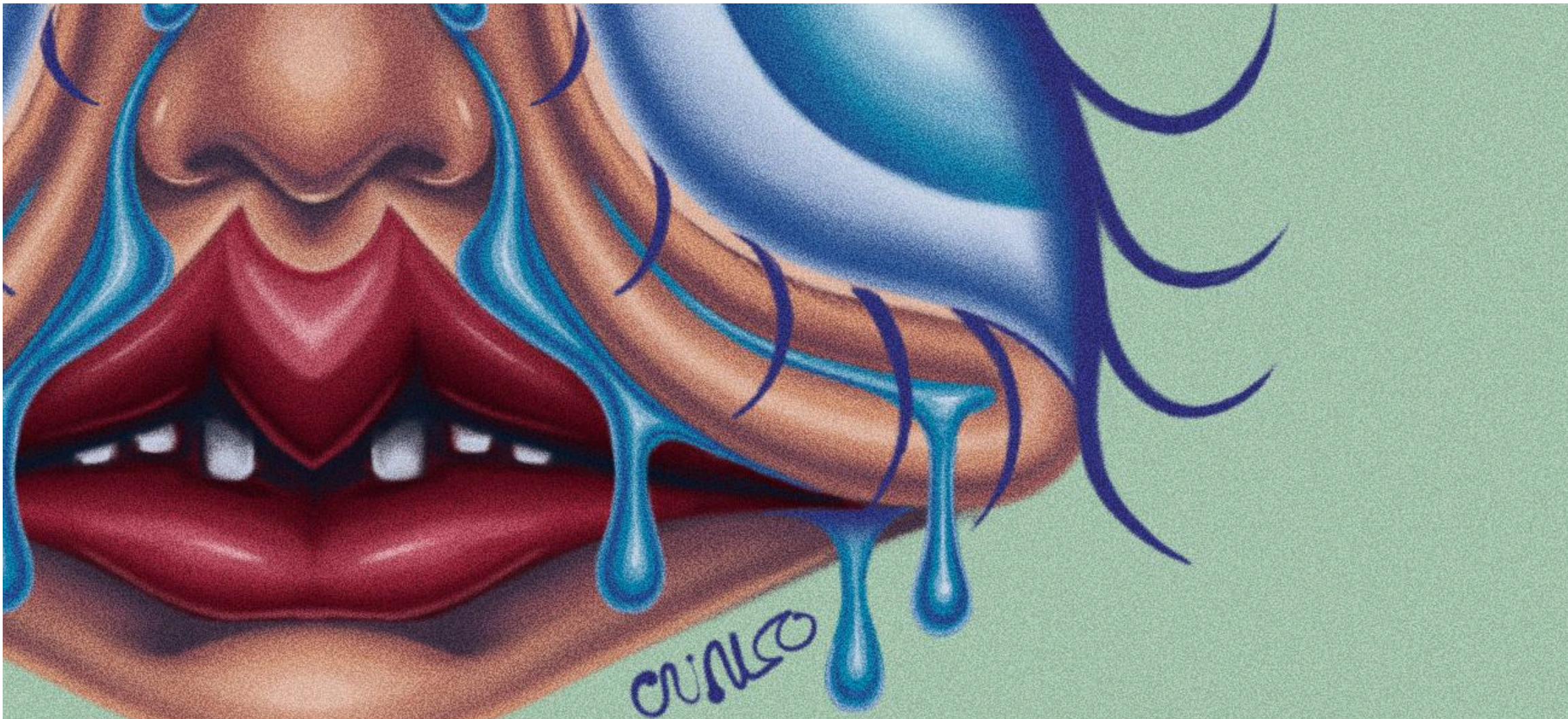
I've always described my creation as a compulsion. A nervous tick, a place of comfort, an escape.

Having a tiny screen shaped studio in my hands is most suitable for soothing this fixation.

Succulent Tears began at the gate of the Johannesburg international airport, awaiting the plane to transport me back to the United States. Where, at that time, I had been living for the past 7 years (now almost 9).







My amalgamation with the virtual page, so needed in this moment of static transferral, and a desirable distraction from the recent goodbyes.

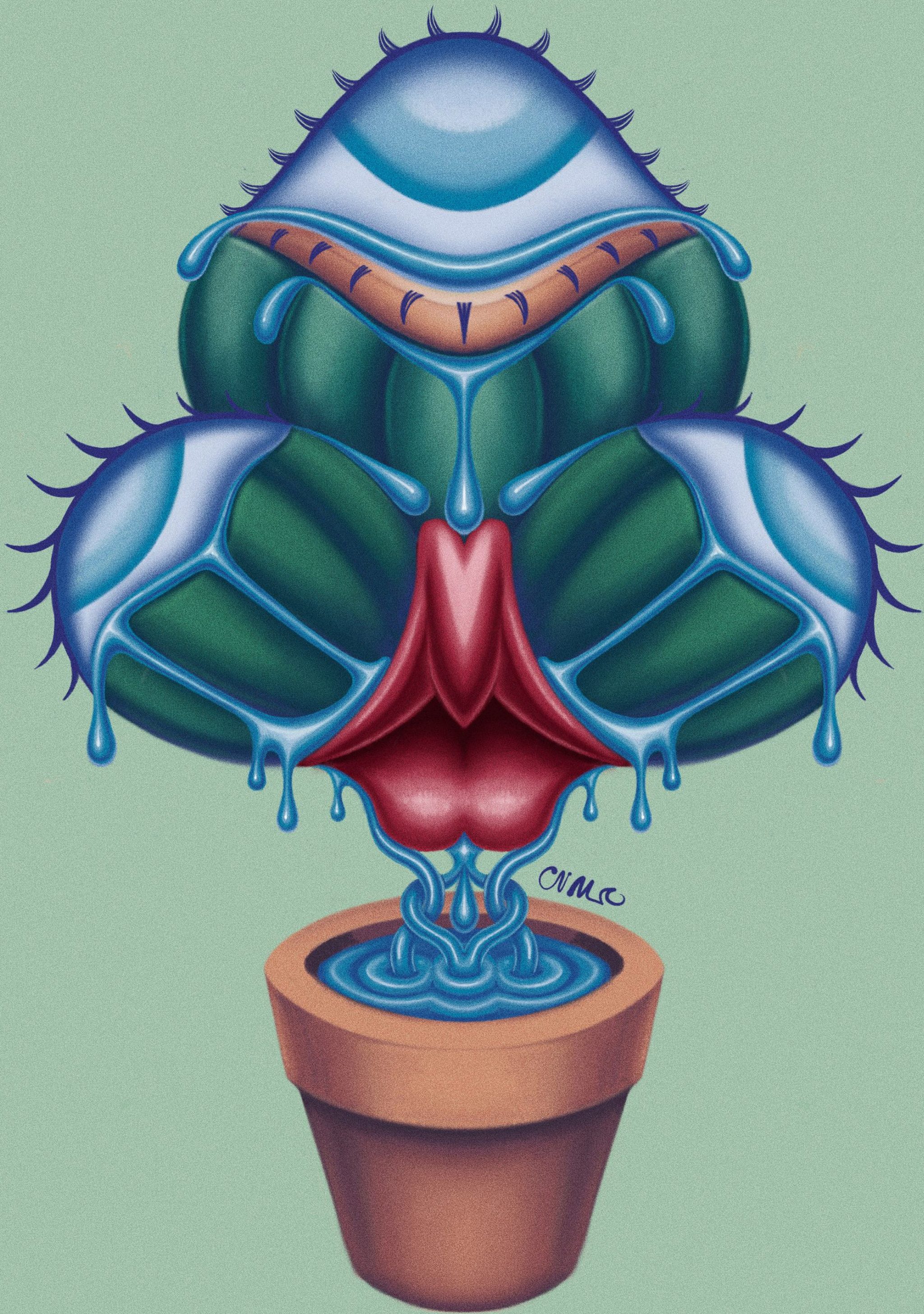
As an immigrant with the relative flexibility of coming and going, the dual existence creates constant longing. As life in the new land develops, the old life in the homeland becomes foreign. An unwelcome metamorphosis, necessary to continue a life in a country with better financial opportunities and security. And saturated tears well for both departure and arrival.

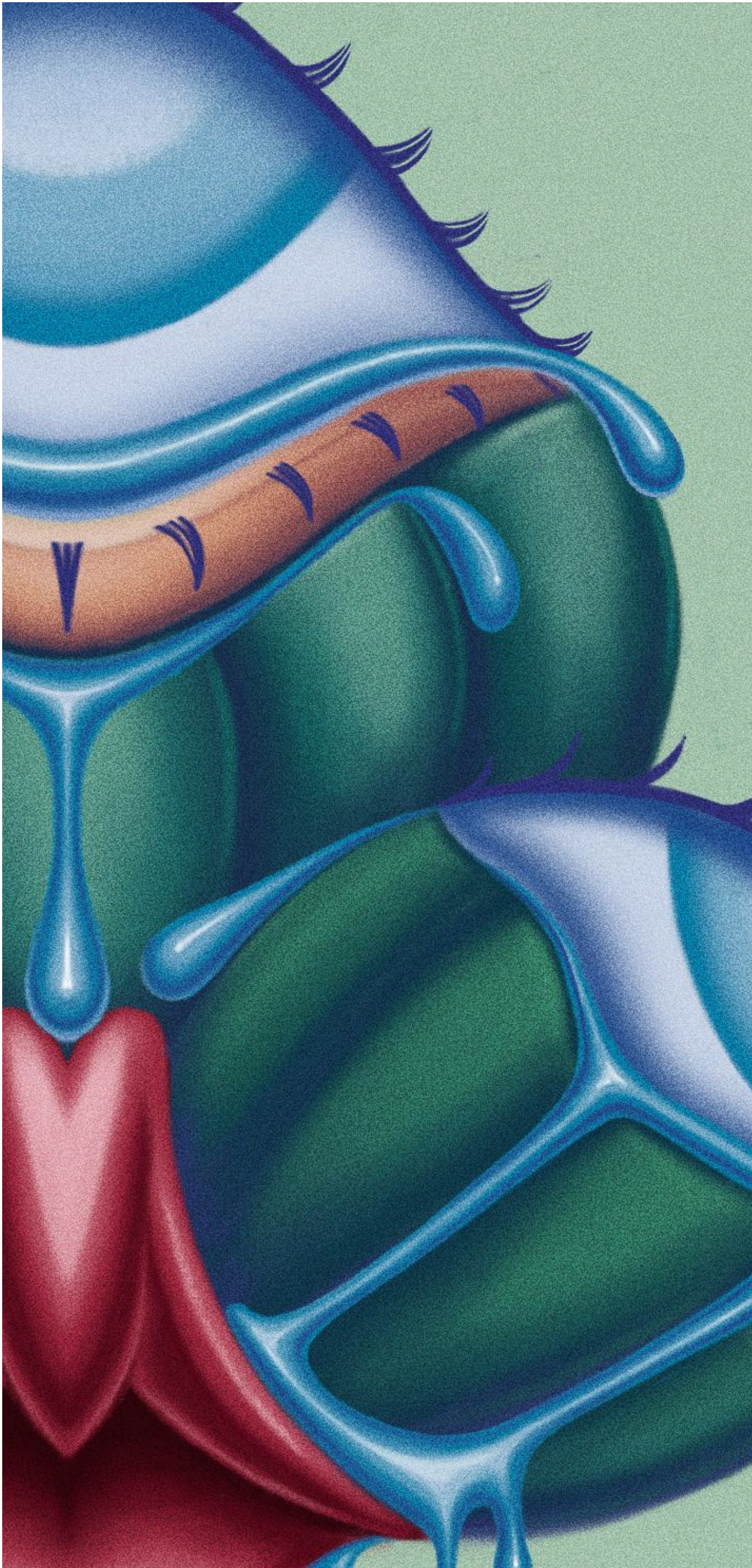
There are three kinds of tears, serving different purposes, triggered by unique stimuli.

1| Basal tears are continuously produced in small amounts to keep the eyes from drying out. Their composition is higher in oils and proteins to form a protective barrier.

2| Reflex tears, produced rapidly and in higher quantities in reaction to sudden irritants, contain high concentrations of water and antibodies.

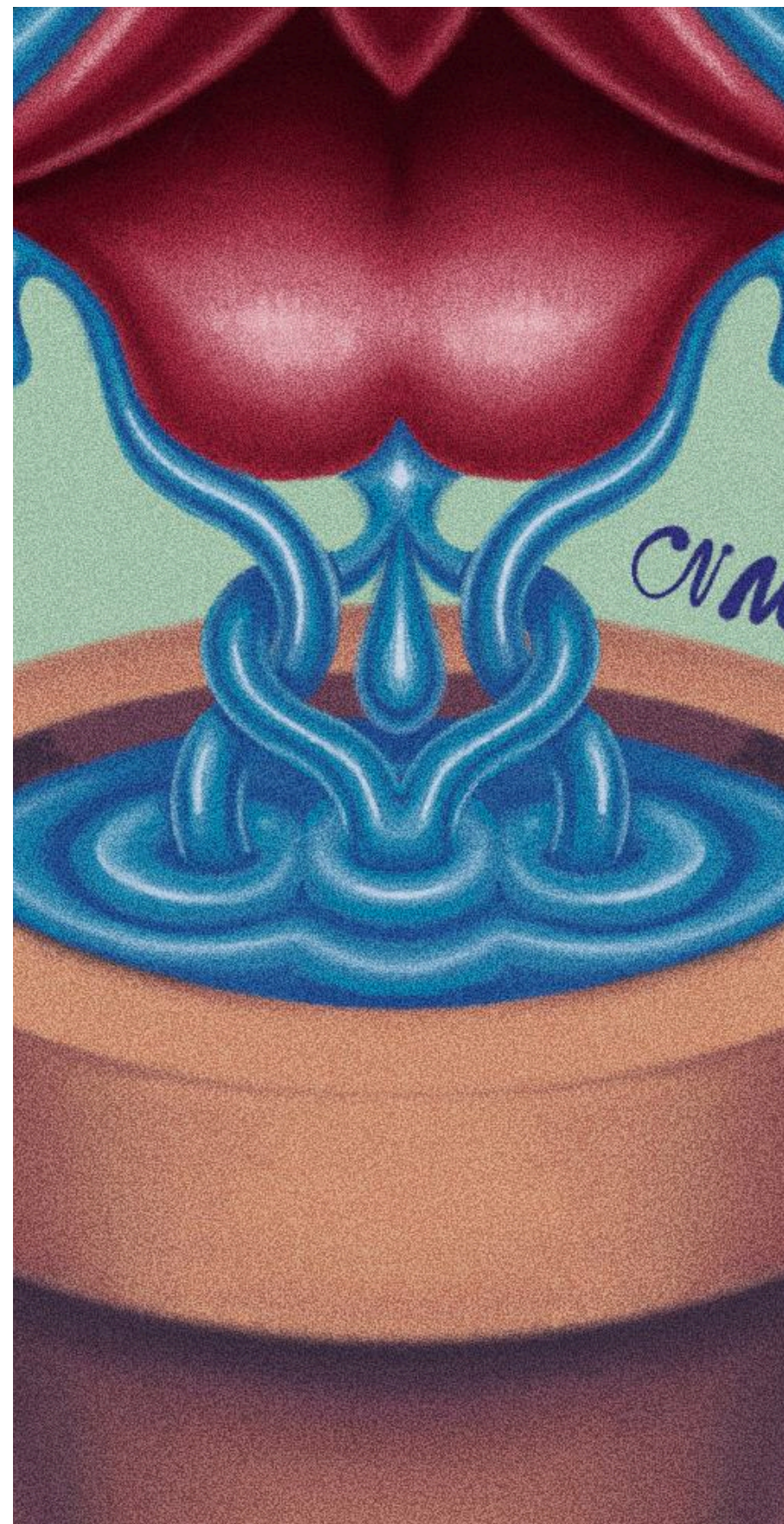






3| Emotional tears tend to mark a transition in the limbic system (the emotional brain). For example, from holding to releasing, or bracing to softening, or intensity to integration. These tears are released when emotional intensity exceeds a regulation threshold. A composition including cortisol, and natural painkillers like endorphins, oxytocin and leucine enkephalin, regulate pain perception, stress and mood. These tears act as calming agents, triggering the parasympathetic nervous system to self soothe. Other theories include an evolved nonverbal social queue, for bonding. And a release of chemicals from the body, a kind of detox.

*Succulent Tears* takes inspiration from plants that retain water. Infusing functioning eyes into the plants creates a loop of self-sufficiency: watering and storing and reusing.



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