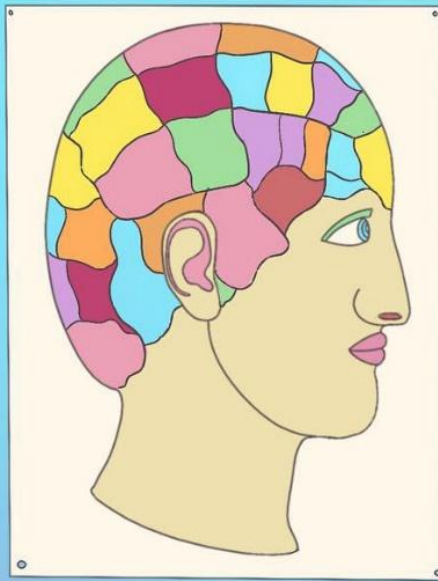
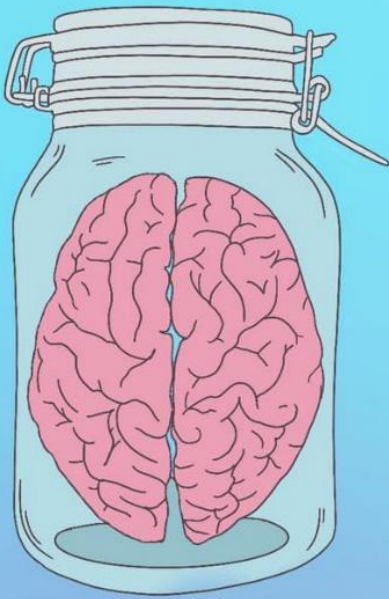


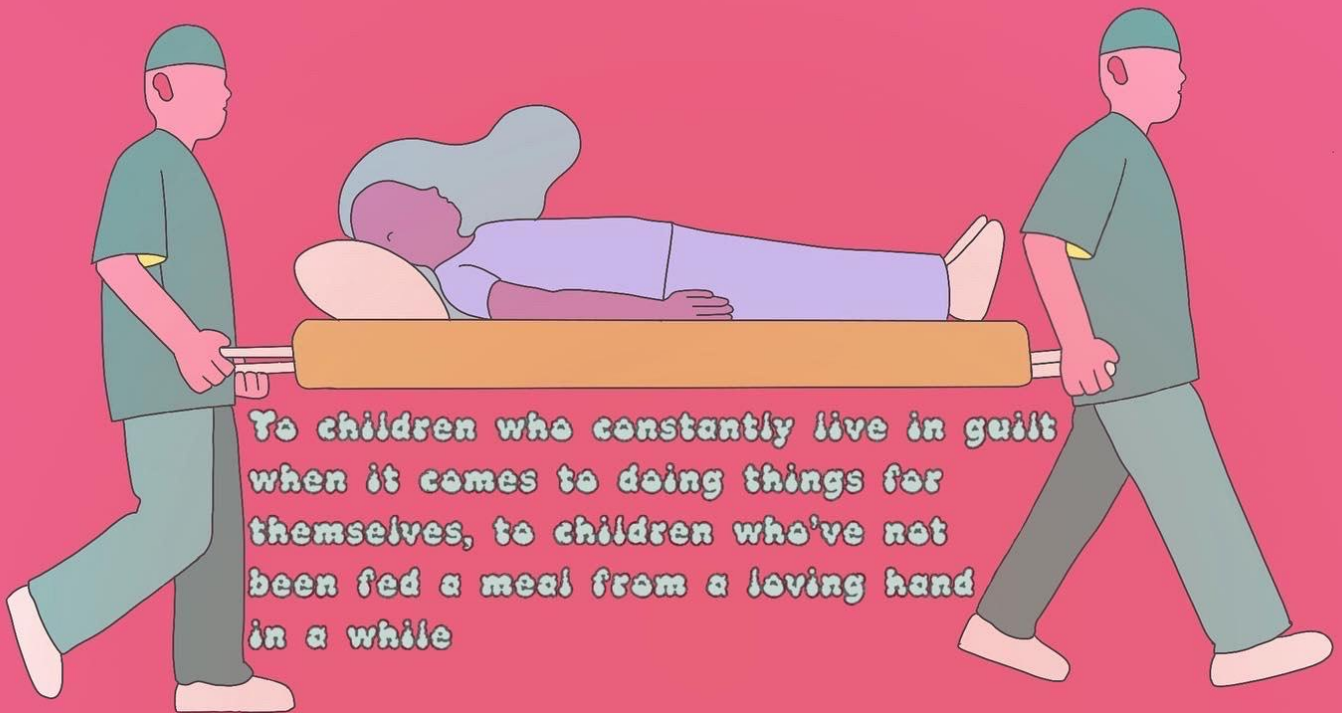


5 YEARS AGO MY LIFE CHANGED
IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE MY MUM HAD A BRAINSTROKE
AND HAS BEEN PARALYSED EVER SINCE.
SHE'S A LOT BETTER NOW BUT WE HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO.
& I JUST WANNA TAKE A MOMENT
TO RECOGNISE ALL THE CHILDREN
WHO'VE HAD TO BECOME
CARETAKERS
OF THEIR
PARENTS.





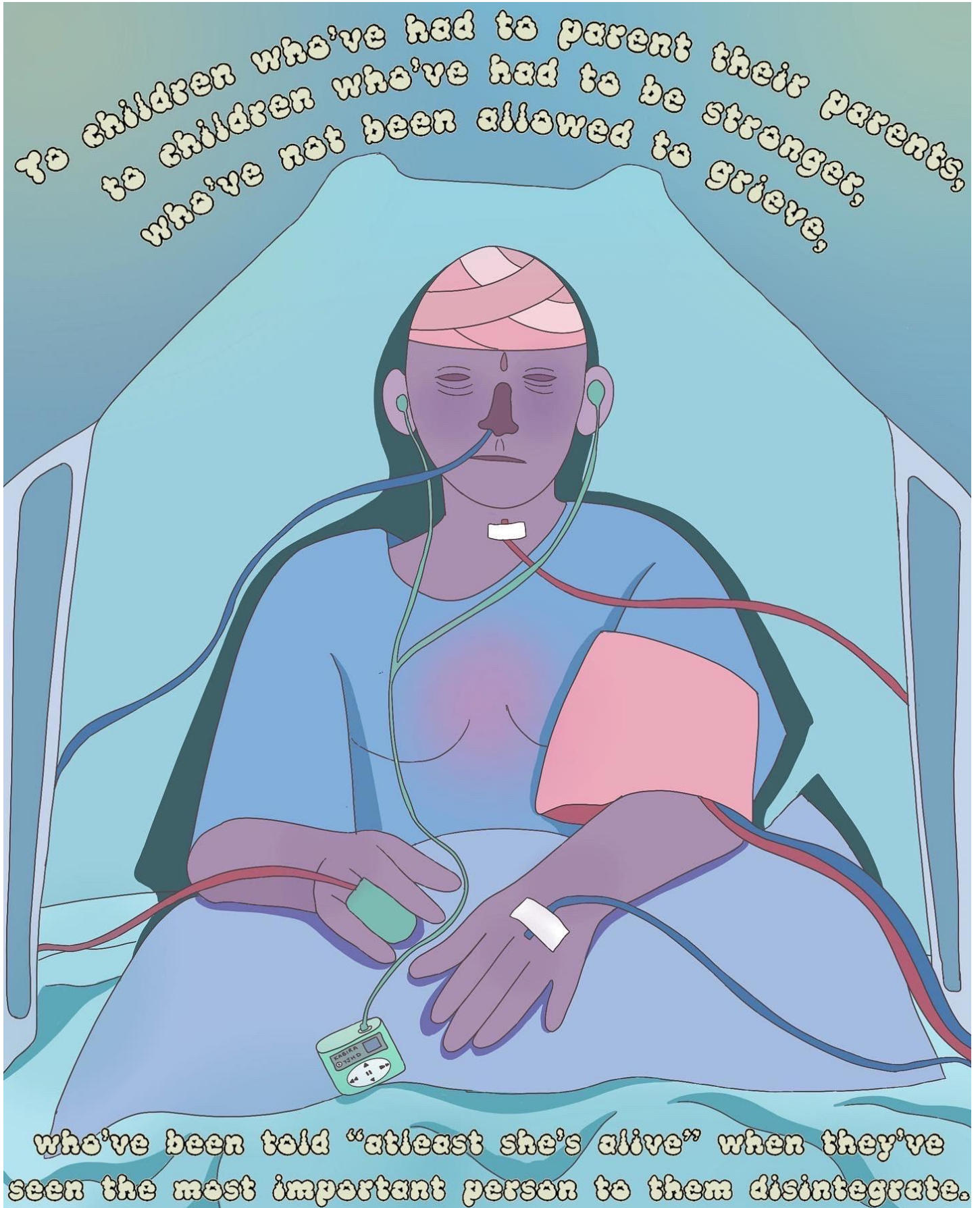
To all the children
who were forced to grow up
way before time, to children who've sat
in way too many hospital waiting rooms,
to children who've had to take care of their parents
even when there's no one to take care of them,
to children who've had to sacrifice and put
themselves last,



To children who constantly live in guilt
when it comes to doing things for
themselves, to children who've not
been fed a meal from a loving hand
in a while

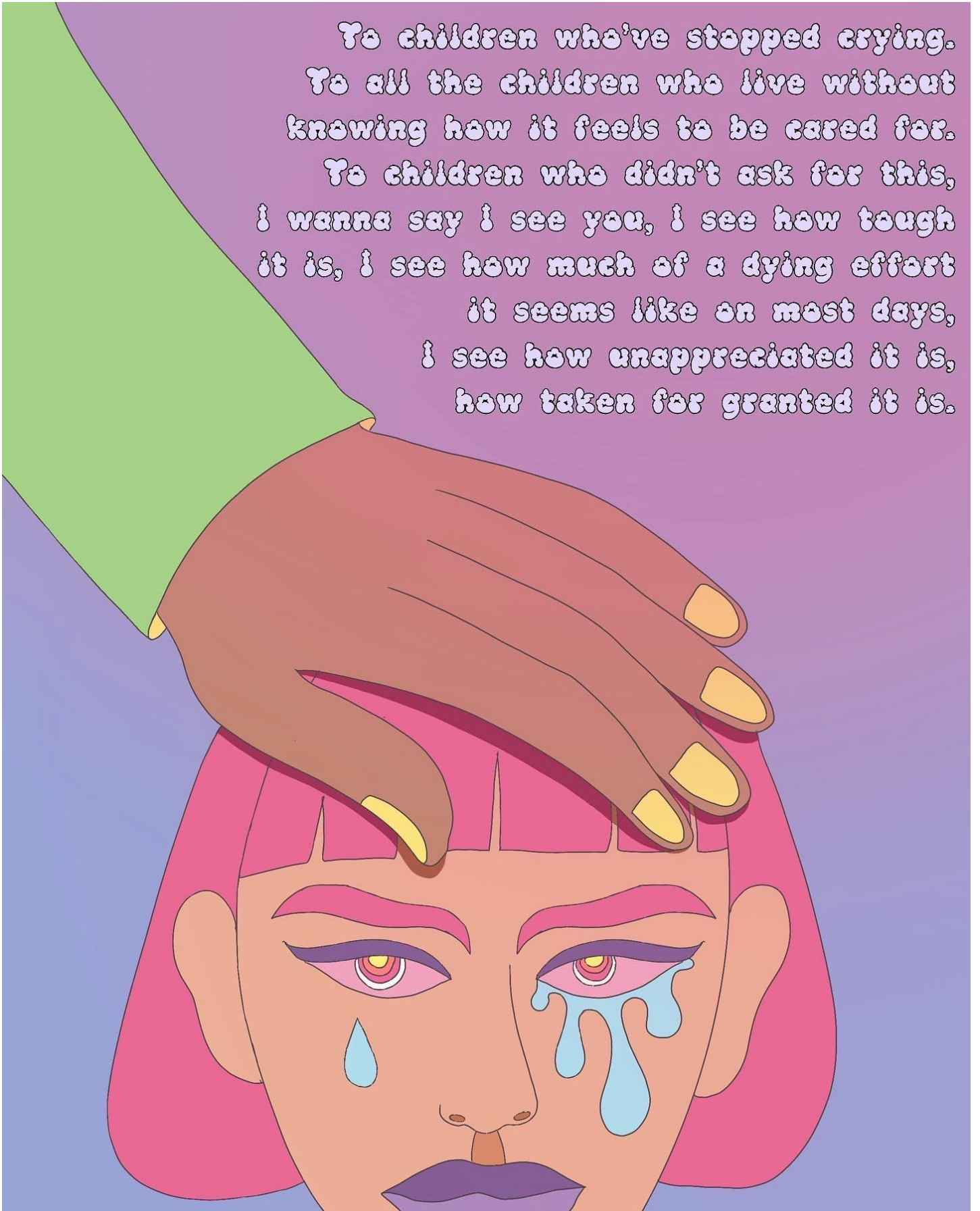


to children who've sat
contemplating and calculating
the death of someone
they love so often,



To children who've stopped crying.
To all the children who live without
knowing how it feels to be cared for.

To children who didn't ask for this,
I wanna say I see you, I see how tough
it is, I see how much of a dying effort
it seems like on most days,
I see how unappreciated it is,
how taken for granted it is.

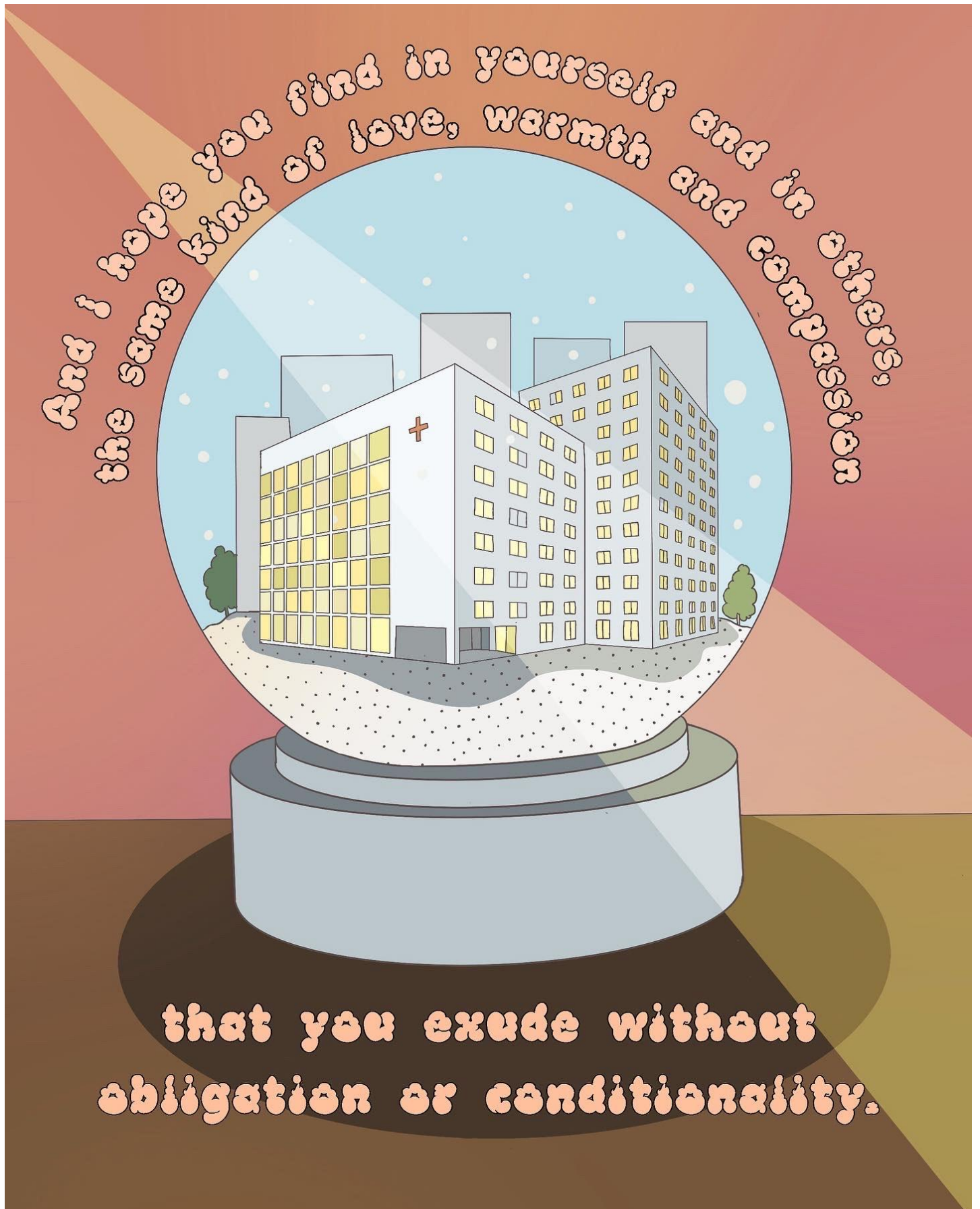


And I hope you realise
that the love in your
labour is divine,
it's otherworldly,
it's strength and I wish
with all my heart you
didn't have to do it,
I want to tell you that
you deserve to take
breaks,

that its okay
to leave and
escape,
you didn't have
to do this, and
that this pain
is painful,
it is.

You're allowed to grieve.





And I hope you find in yourself
the same kind of love, warmth and compassion
and in others,

that you exude without
obligation or conditionality.

It's long hours outside
Long corridors
Hospitals
White blurs
The colour white spinning
But it never turns into a rainbow
Rainbows are for people who have windows
And there's no sunflowers or periwinkles to pluck
"Will she survive will she not"
My nails are chewed up
Cutting into the flesh of my fingers
"Will she survive will she not"
Your eyes move swiftly
Doctors. Is that a doctor? Are they walking
towards me?
Are her eyes closed? Will she wake up? Why won't
she wake up?
Can she wake up?
There are too many hands patting my shoulder
I've never seen these people
They mean well
I don't mean anything at all
What does that even mean
Sometimes you escape hospitals
And you go back to a place you previously called
'home'
It's supposed to be home
But it's not

Home's a lost narrative for kids with dying parents
This is just 4 walls with a hospital bed and the
smell of phenyl and blood
There's no warmth
The warmth in my mother's hand was drained out
through tubes attached to ventilators
My father cries at nights
And I cry too
And we'll both not ask each other
What's wrong
Partly because we know what's wrong
Partly because we've tied our feelings into little
bundles and hung them outside my mother's room
As to when she walks out again
We'll gift ourselves the ability to feel
Till then we'll put on stone faces
The neighbours and your old school teacher and
the people from church will smile at you
Ask you how mom is
No one asks how are you
They say kids with dying parents are reckless
It's just that death's always been a room away, a
drive away from the hospital, a clink on the rails of
your ICU bed
So you see kids with dying parents
We see our parents dying
Psychology says parents influence their children.
Children imitate their children.
You do what your parents do, don't you.
Kids with dying parents are also dying.