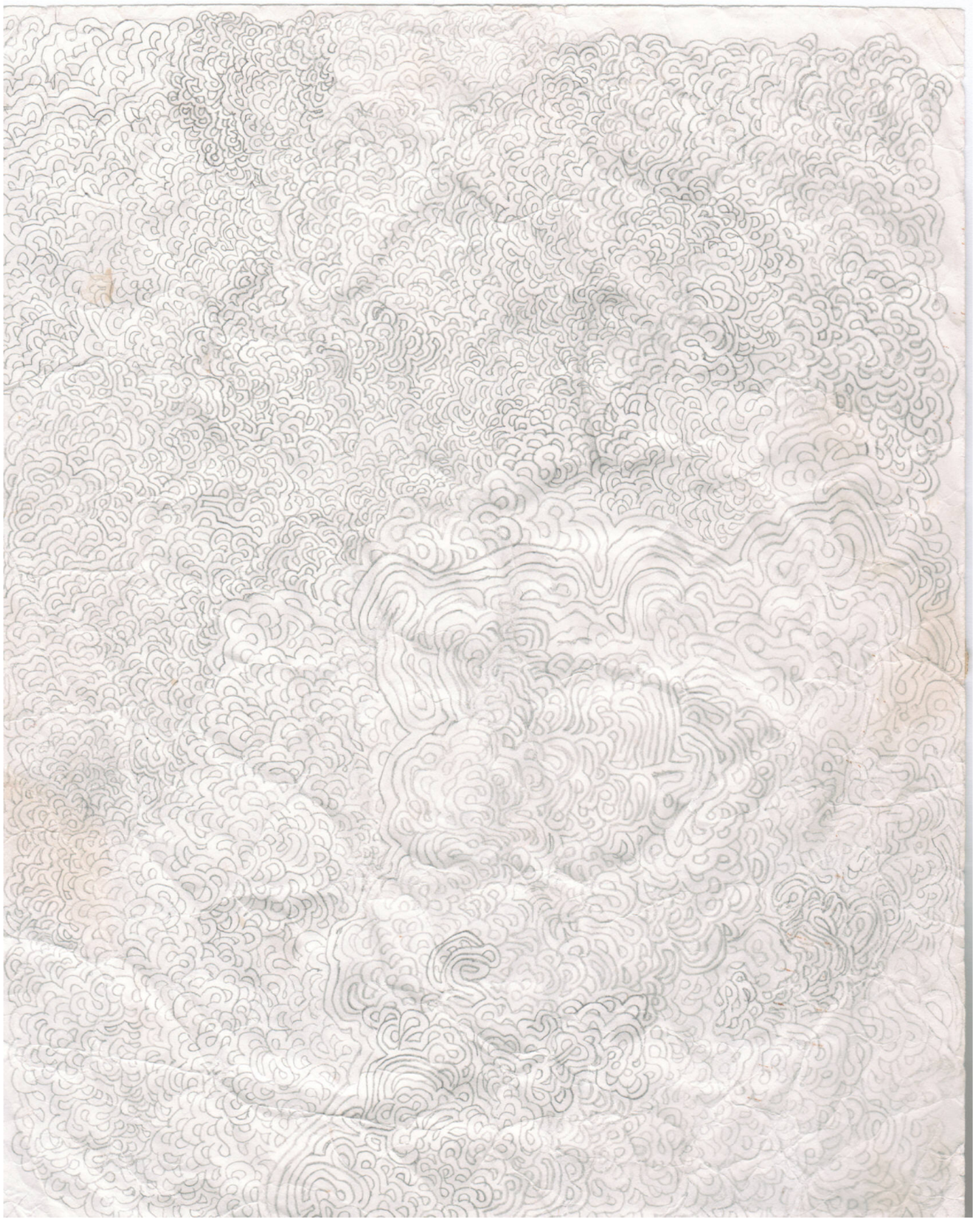
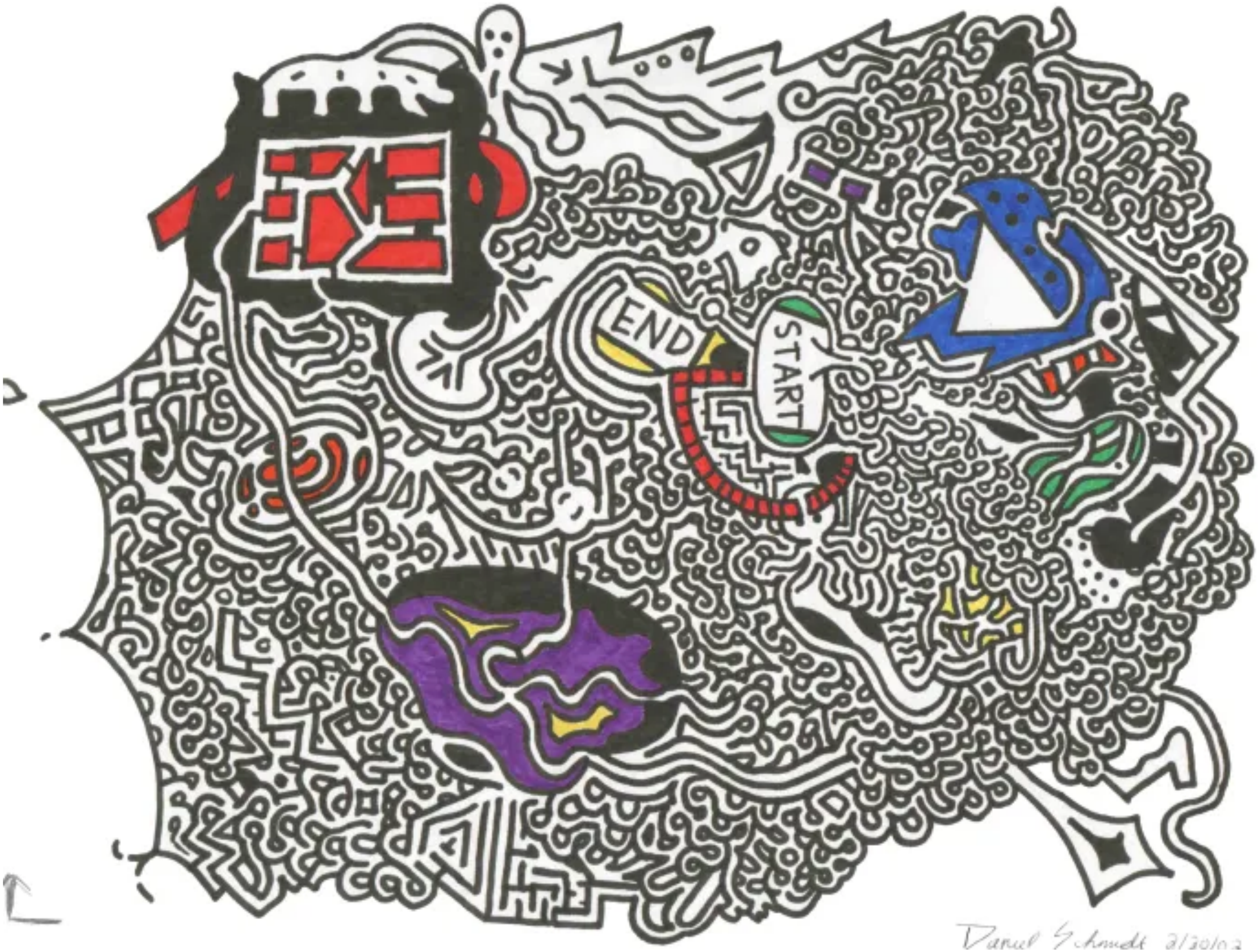
Don’t Cross the Lines

Mazes as minimal protocols

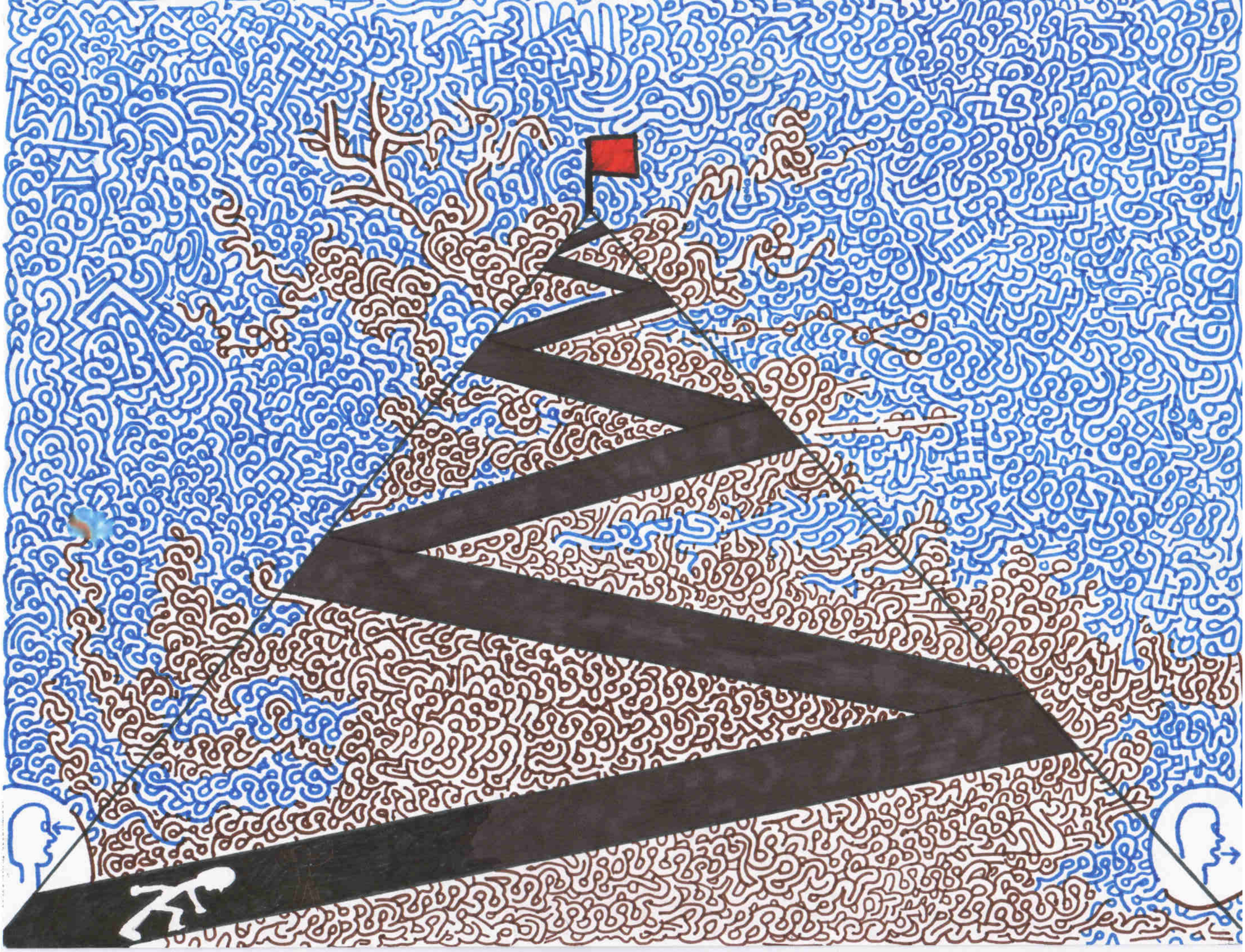
Dan Schmidt / September 2026

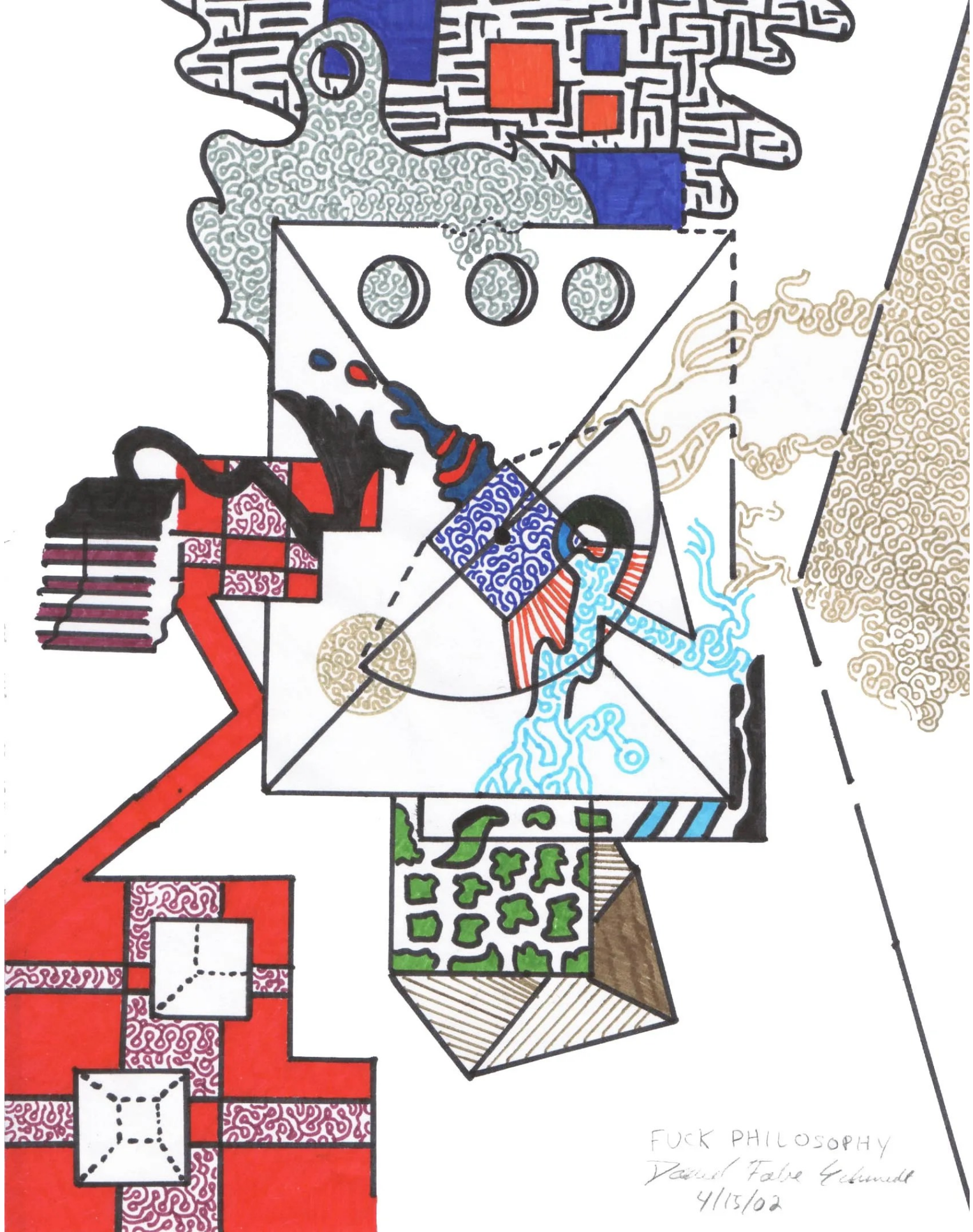
I started drawing mazes when I was a kid. I didn’t know why.





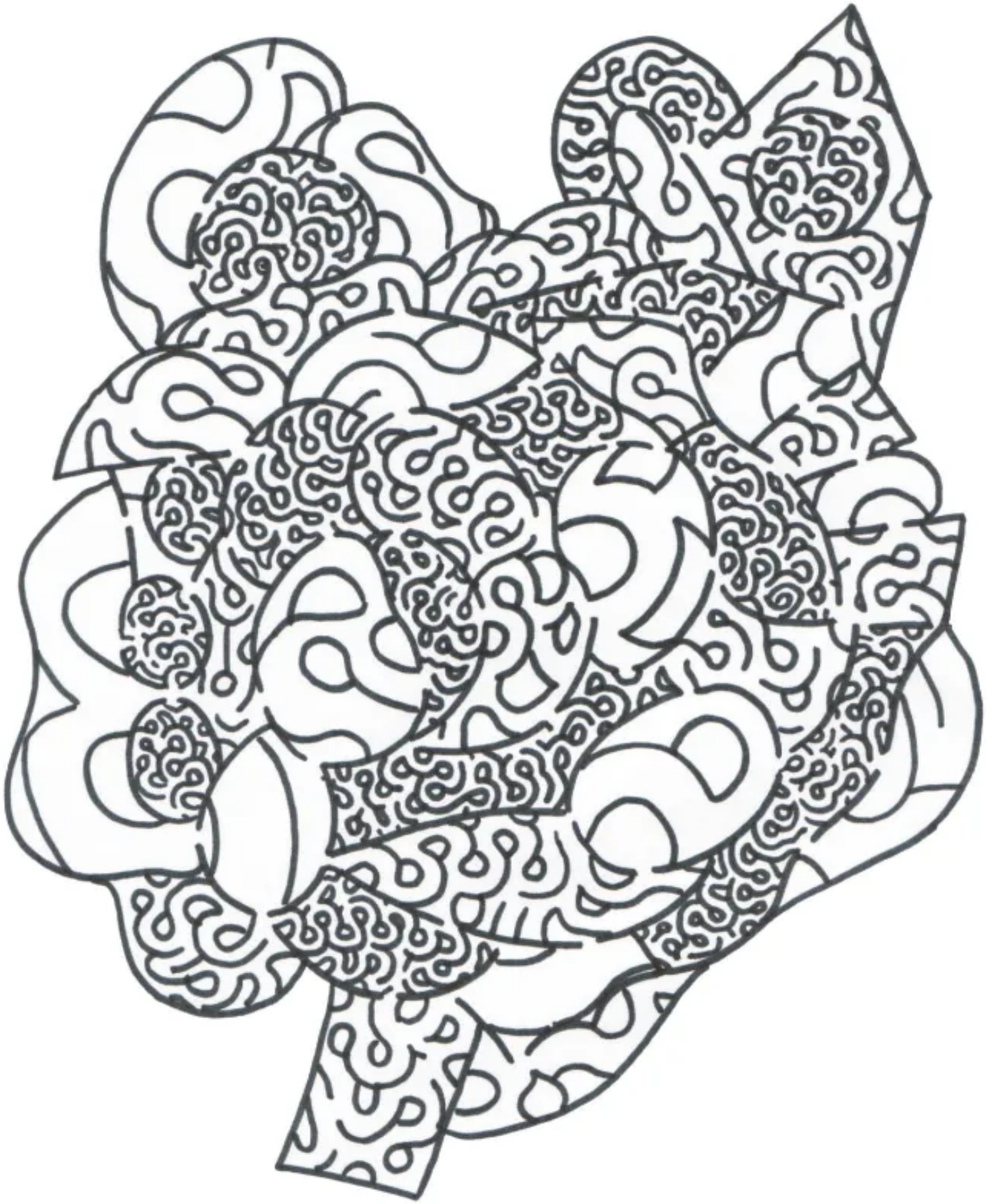
Daniel Schmidt 2/2010




FUCK PHILOSOPHY
David Fabe Schmidt
4/13/02



ETERNITIES



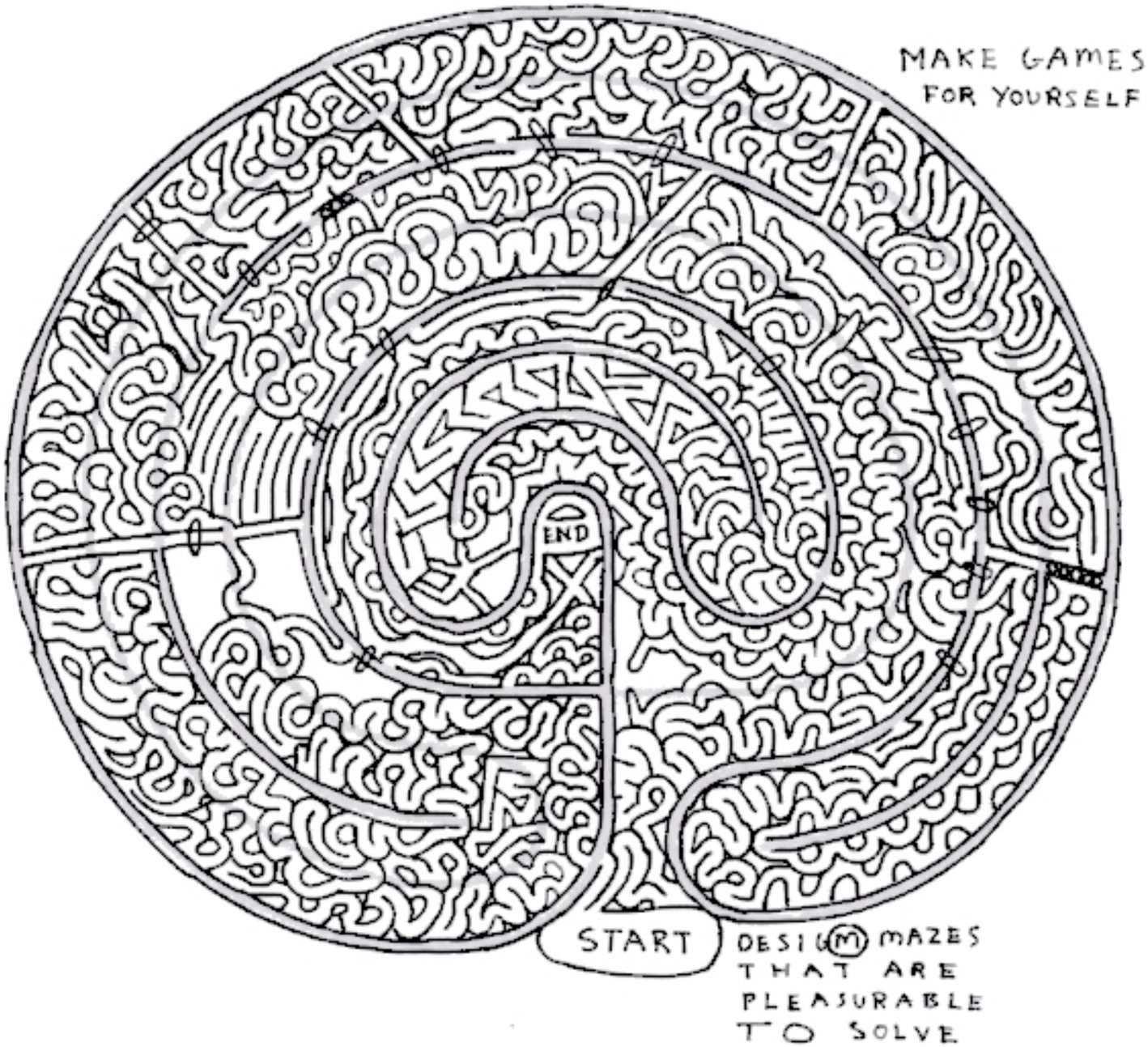
FRAGMENTS OF EQUILIBRIUM

YOUR FORTUNE: A big decision awaits you.

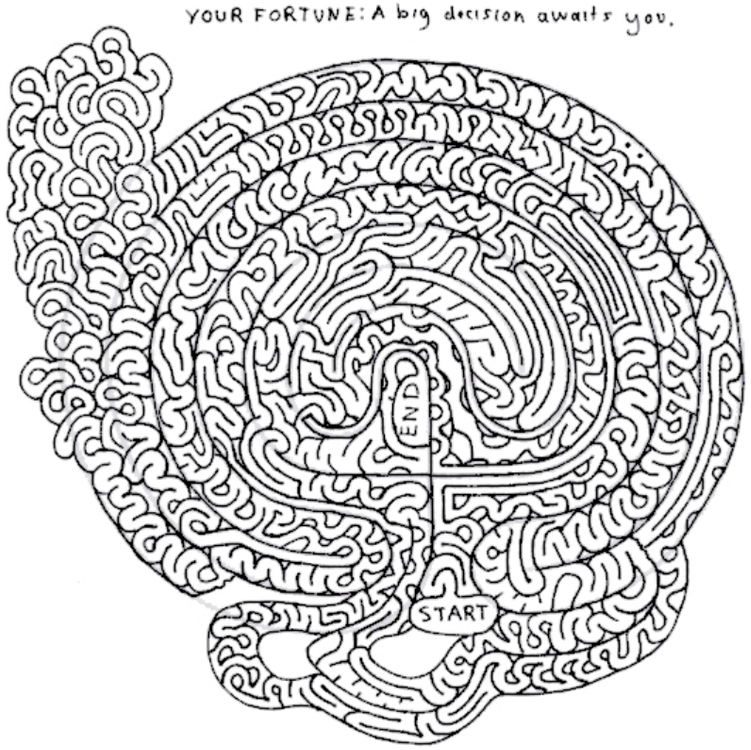


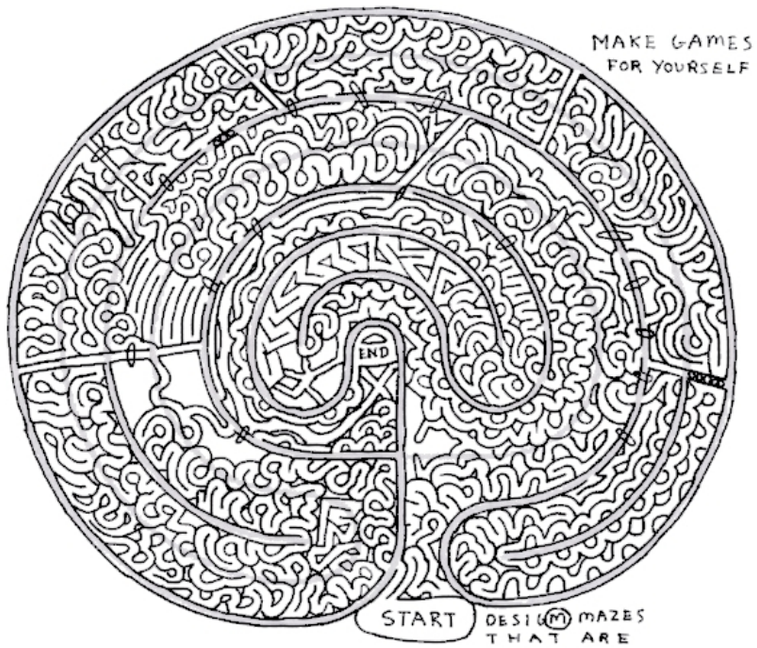
YOUR FORTUNE: A big decision awaits you.

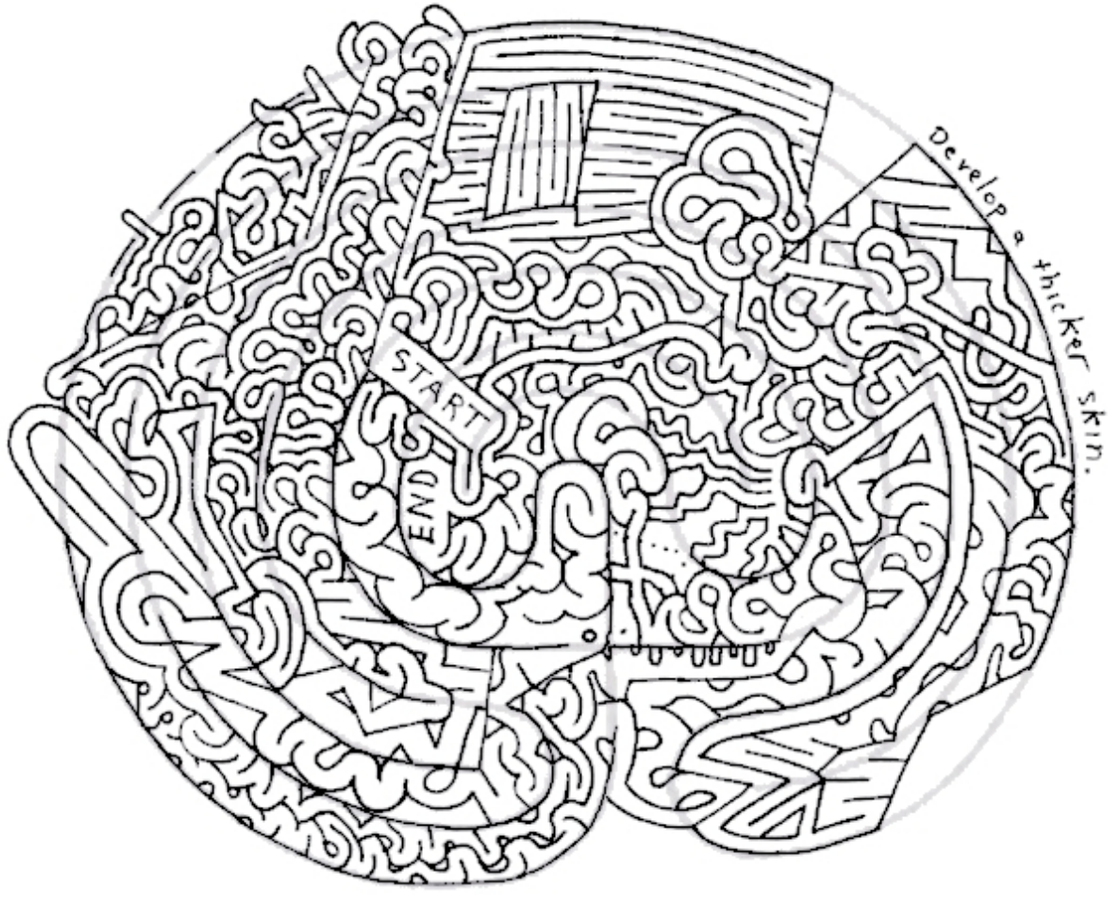




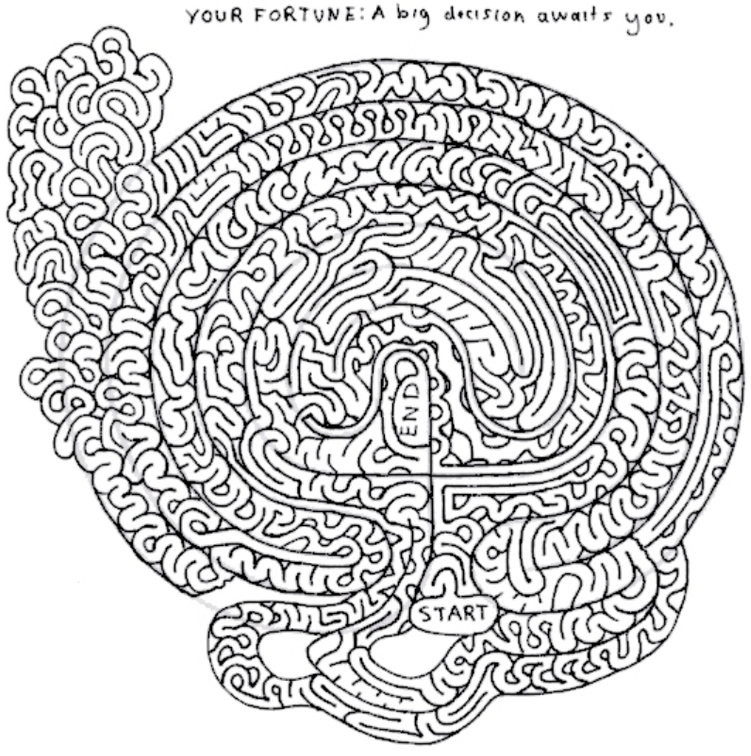
YOUR FORTUNE: A big decision awaits you.

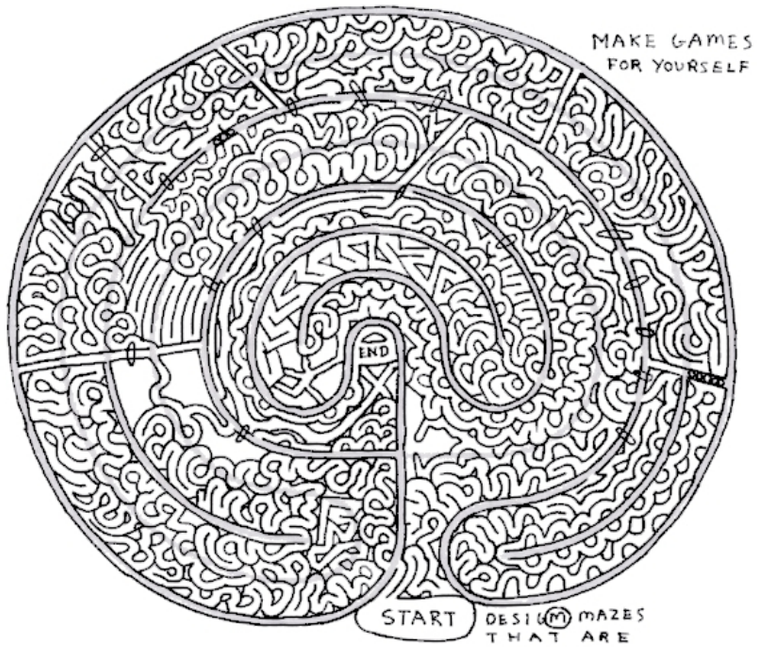






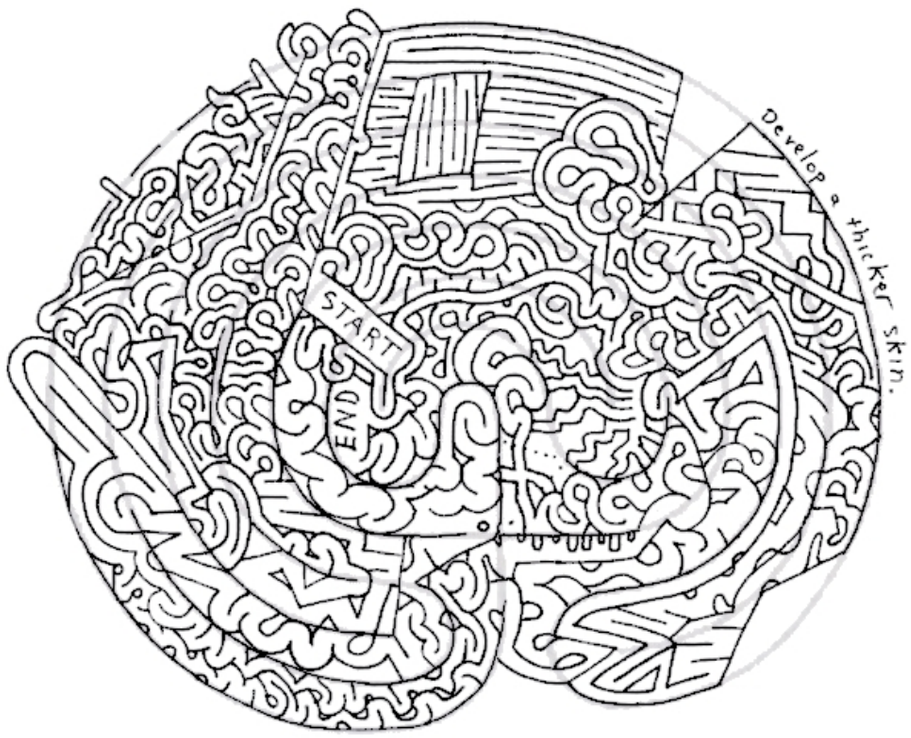
YOUR FORTUNE: A big decision awaits you.





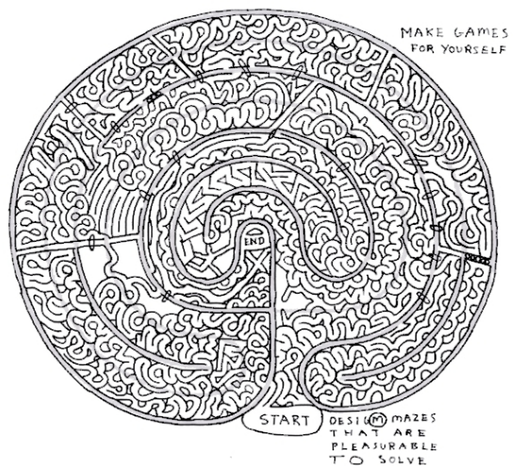
MAKE GAMES FOR YOURSELF

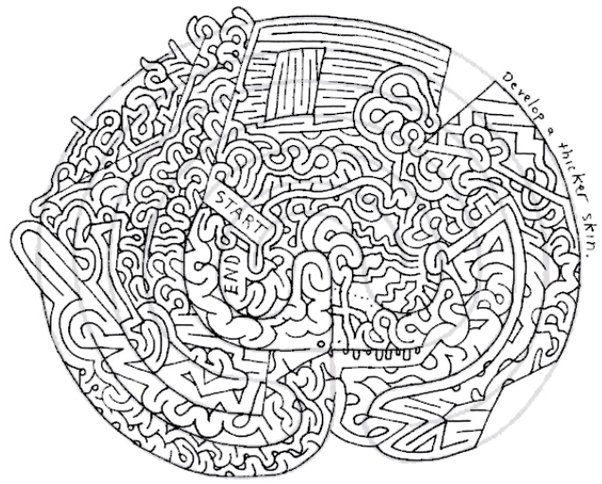
DESIGN MAZES THAT ARE PLEASURABLE TO SOLVE



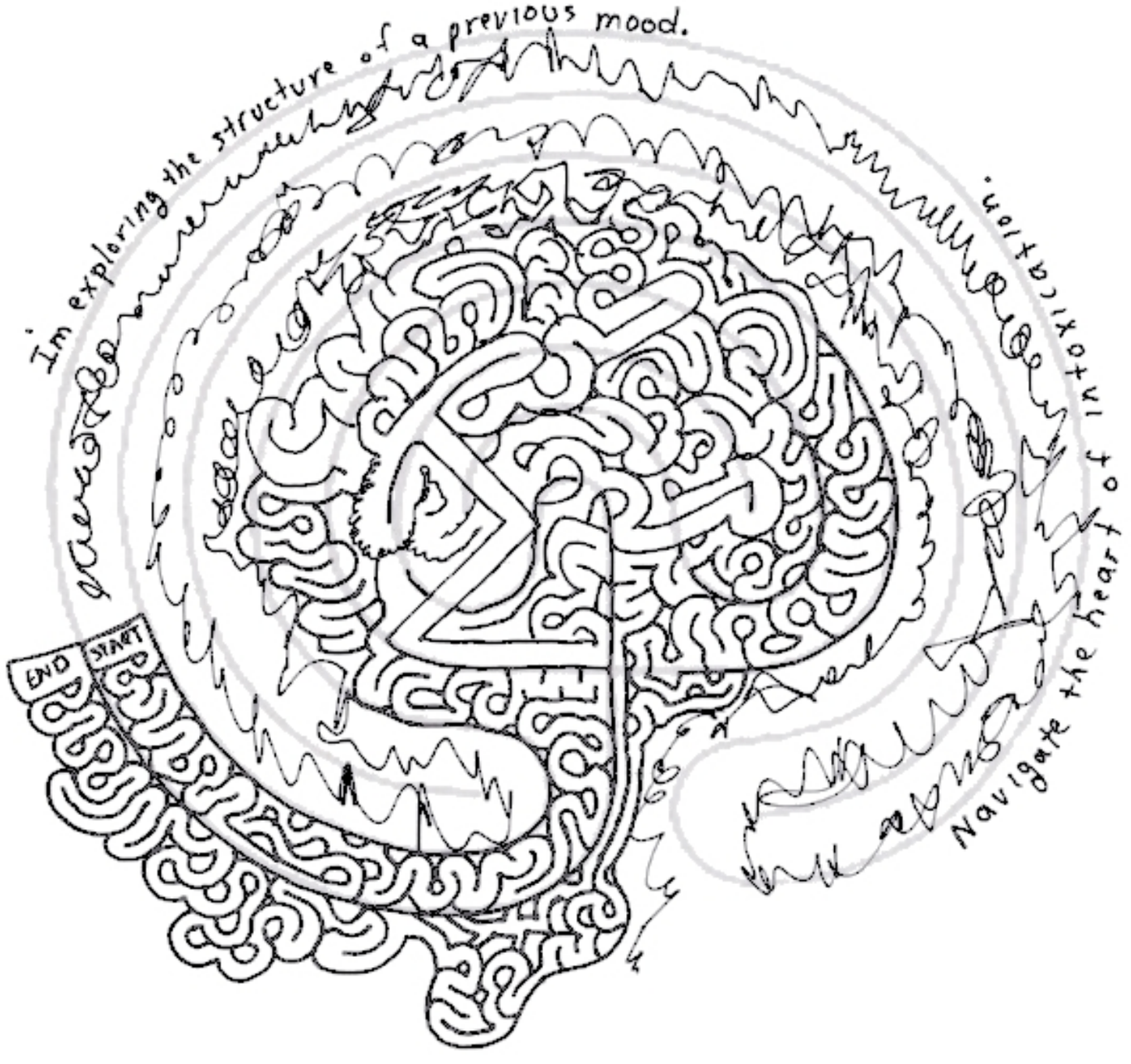



YOUR FORTUNE: A big decision awaits you.
END
START

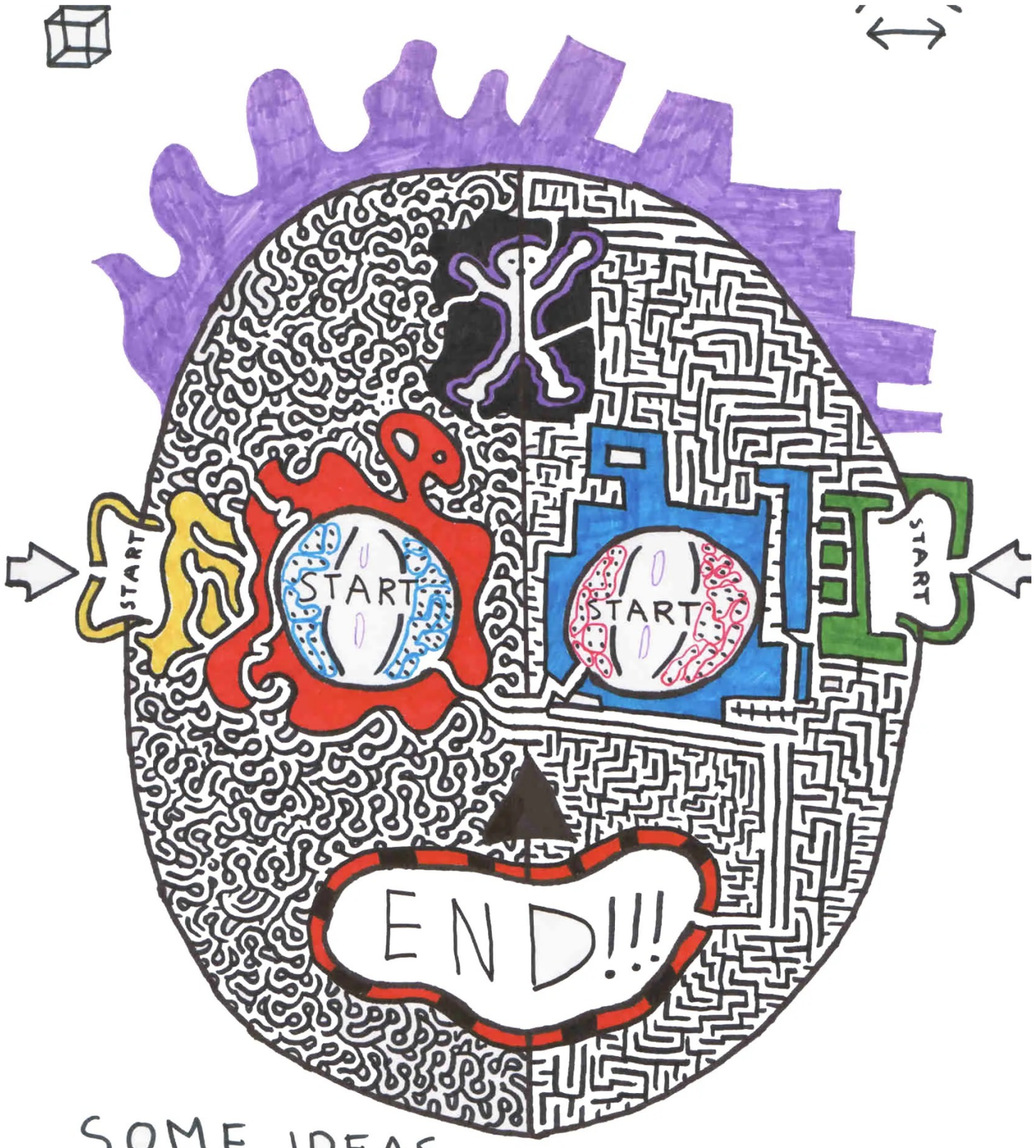

MAKE GAMES FOR YOURSELF
END
START
DESIGN MAZES THAT ARE PLEASURABLE TO SOLVE


Develop a thicker skin.
START
END


Avoid the tangled mess.
END
START


I'm exploring the structure of a previous mood.
Navigate the heart of intoxication.
END
START

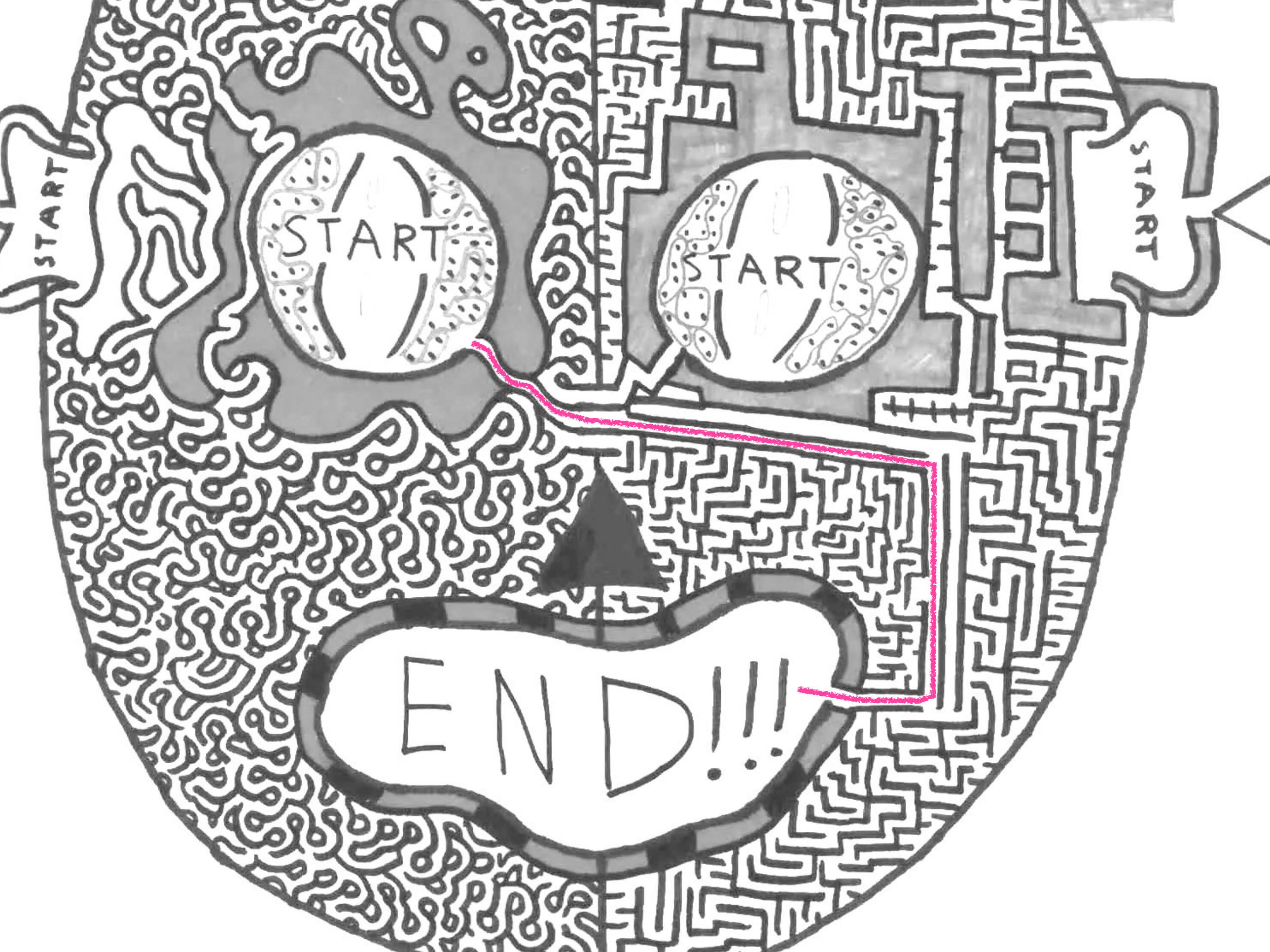
Then I started using maze topology to tell stories.

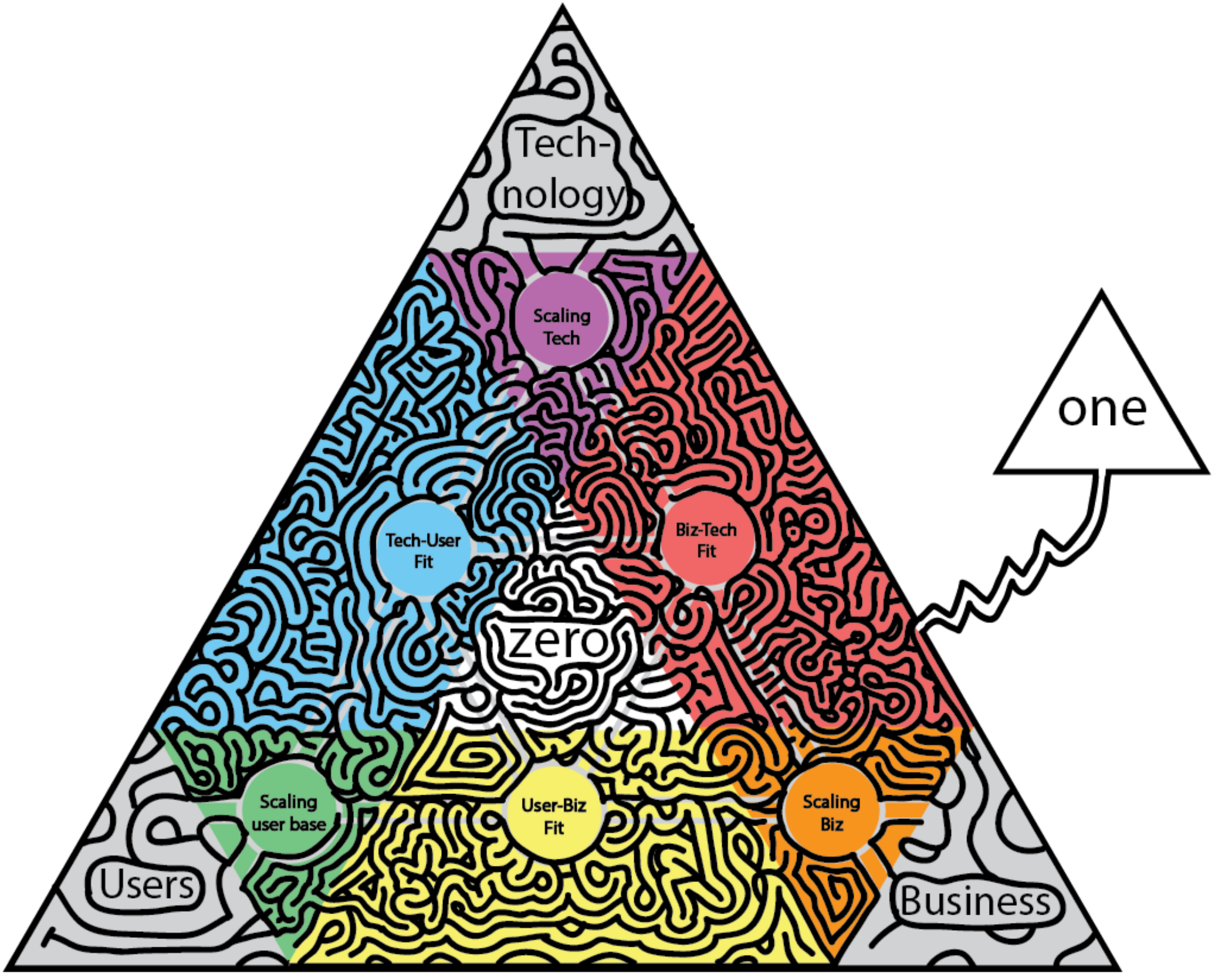


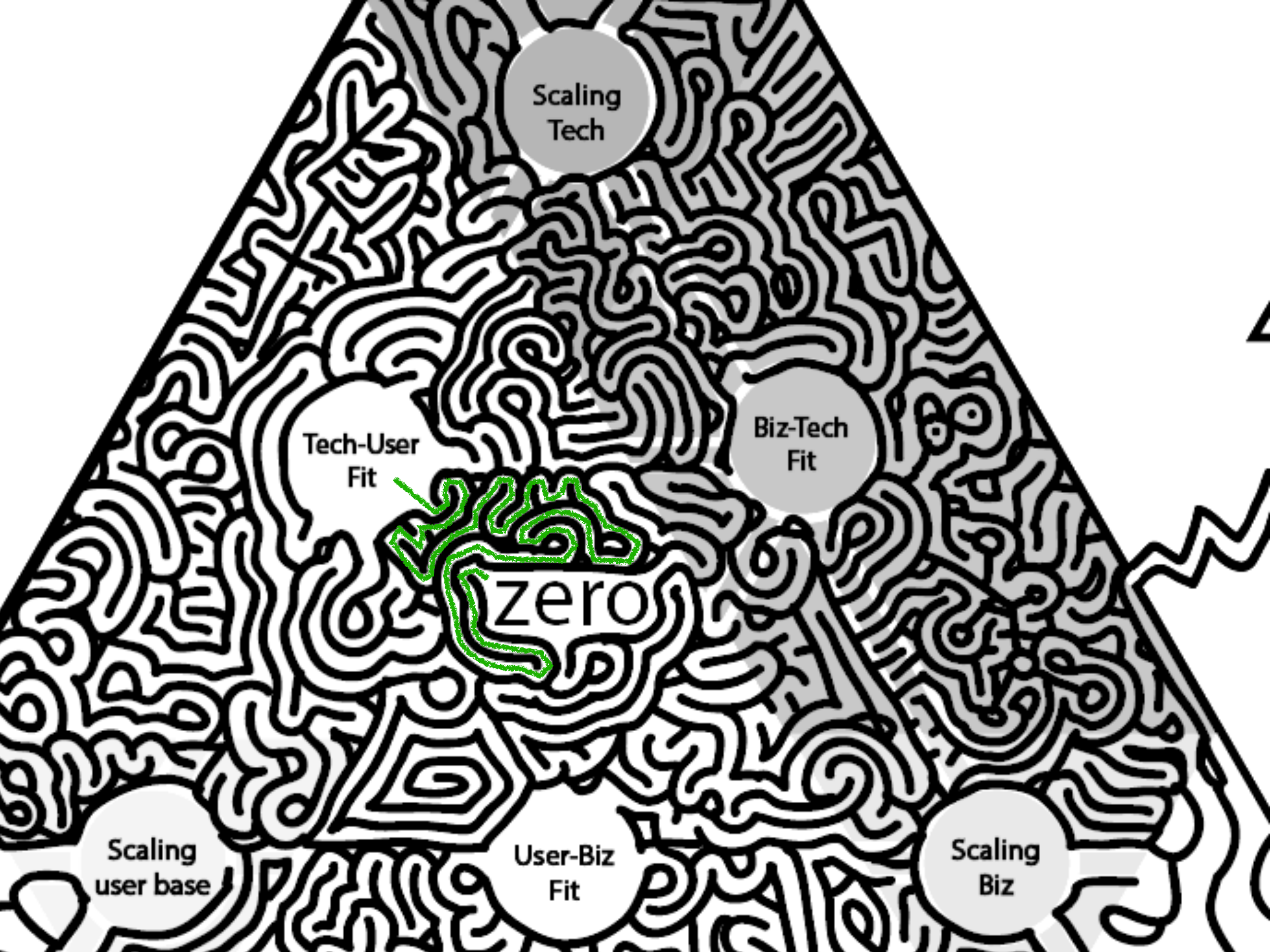
SOME IDEAS ON THE TWO HEMISPHERES

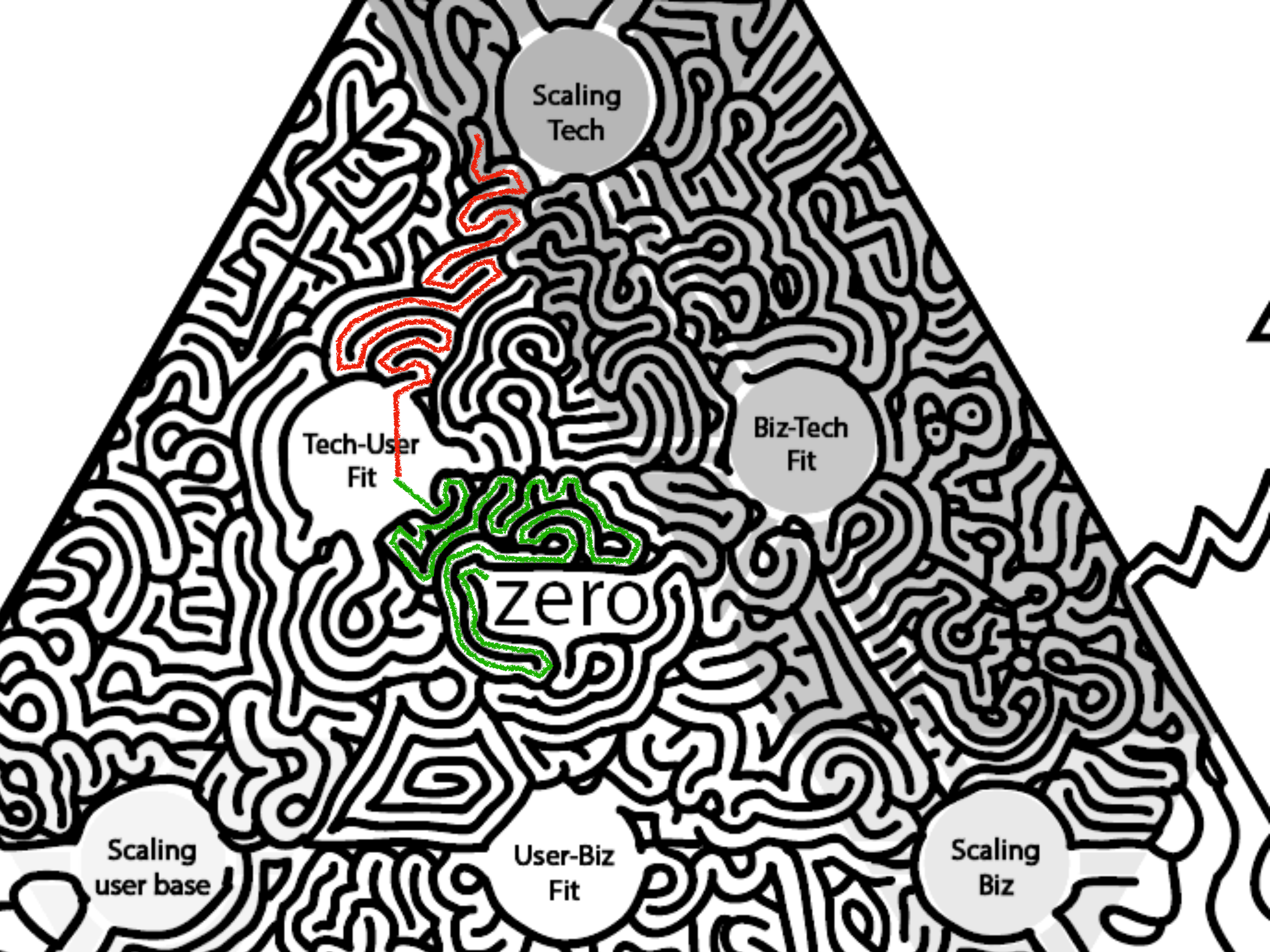
(setting up the vocabulary)

Daniel Fabe Schmidt
4/7/02


START
START
START
START
END!!!


Tech-
nology
Scaling
Tech
Tech-User
Fit
Biz-Tech
Fit
zero
Scaling
user base
User-Biz
Fit
Scaling
Biz
Users
Business
one


Scaling
Tech
Tech-User
Fit
Biz-Tech
Fit
zero
Scaling
user base
User-Biz
Fit
Scaling
Biz


Scaling
Tech
Tech-User
Fit
Biz-Tech
Fit
zero
Scaling
user base
User-Biz
Fit
Scaling
Biz

A MAZE OF INNOVATION:
GUTENBERG'S INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS

STIMULUS

SYNTHESIS

SWIMMING

SHOEMAKING

FARMING

COIN-MAKING

COOKING

WINE HARVEST

START

END

VISION: PRINT COPIES OF THE BIBLE

PRINTING PRESS

INVENTION

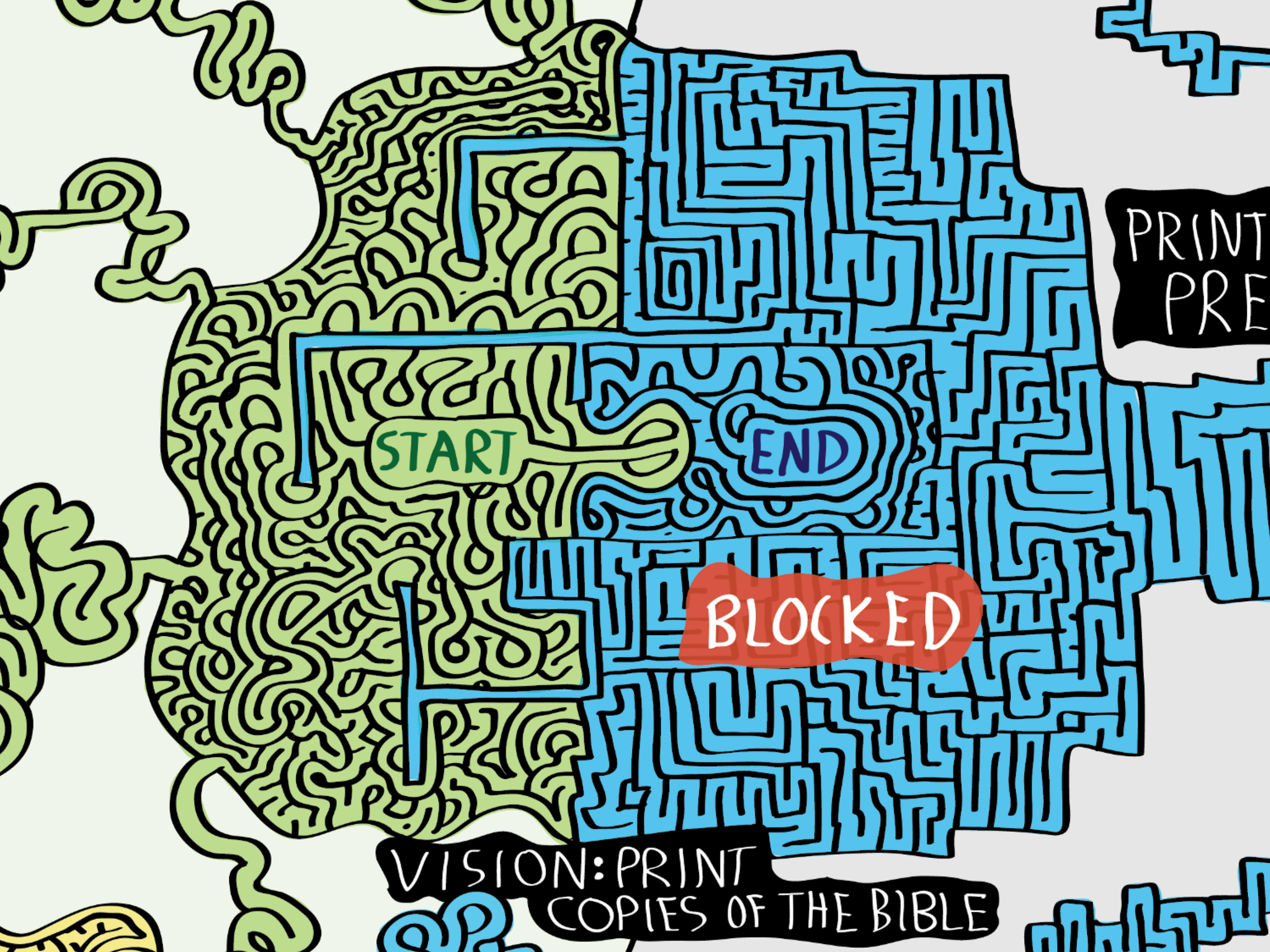
Daniel F Schmidt

START

END

PRIN
PR

VISION: PRINT
COPIES OF THE BIBLE


START
END
PRINT
PRE
BLOCKED
VISION: PRINT
COPIES OF THE BIBLE

A MAZE OF INNOVATION:
GUTENBERG'S INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS

STIMULUS

SYNTHESIS

SWIMMING

SHOEMAKING

FARMING

COIN-MAKING

COOKING

WINE HARVEST

START

END

BLOCKED

VISION: PRINT COPIES OF THE BIBLE

INVENTION

PRINTING PRESS

Daniel F Schmidt

A MAZE OF INNOVATION:
GUTENBERG'S INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS

STIMULUS

SYNTHESIS

SWIMMING

SHOEMAKING

FARMING

INSPIRATION!

COIN-MAKING

COOKING

WINE HARVEST

START

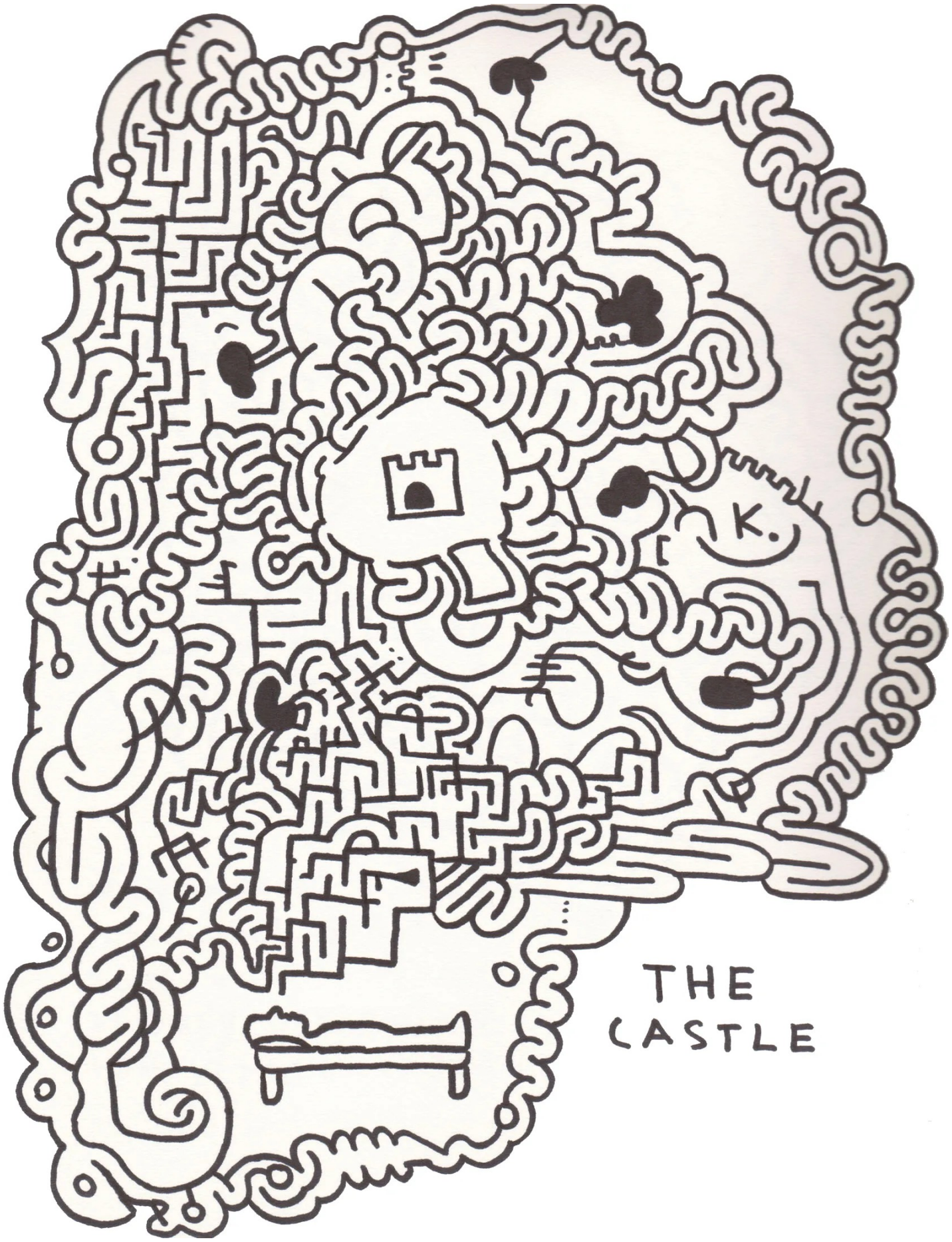
END

VISION: PRINT COPIES OF THE BIBLE

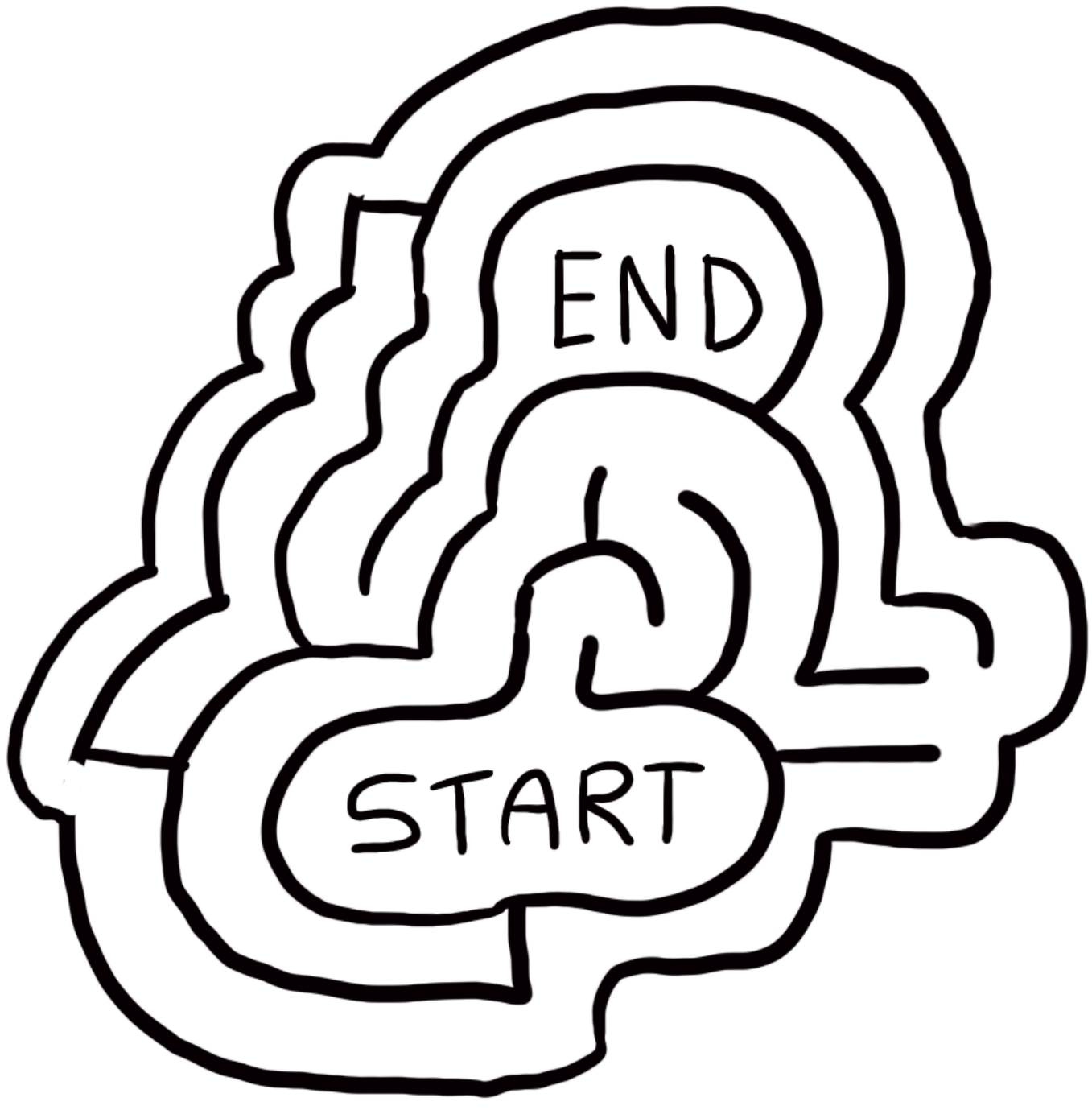
PRINTING PRESS

INVENTION

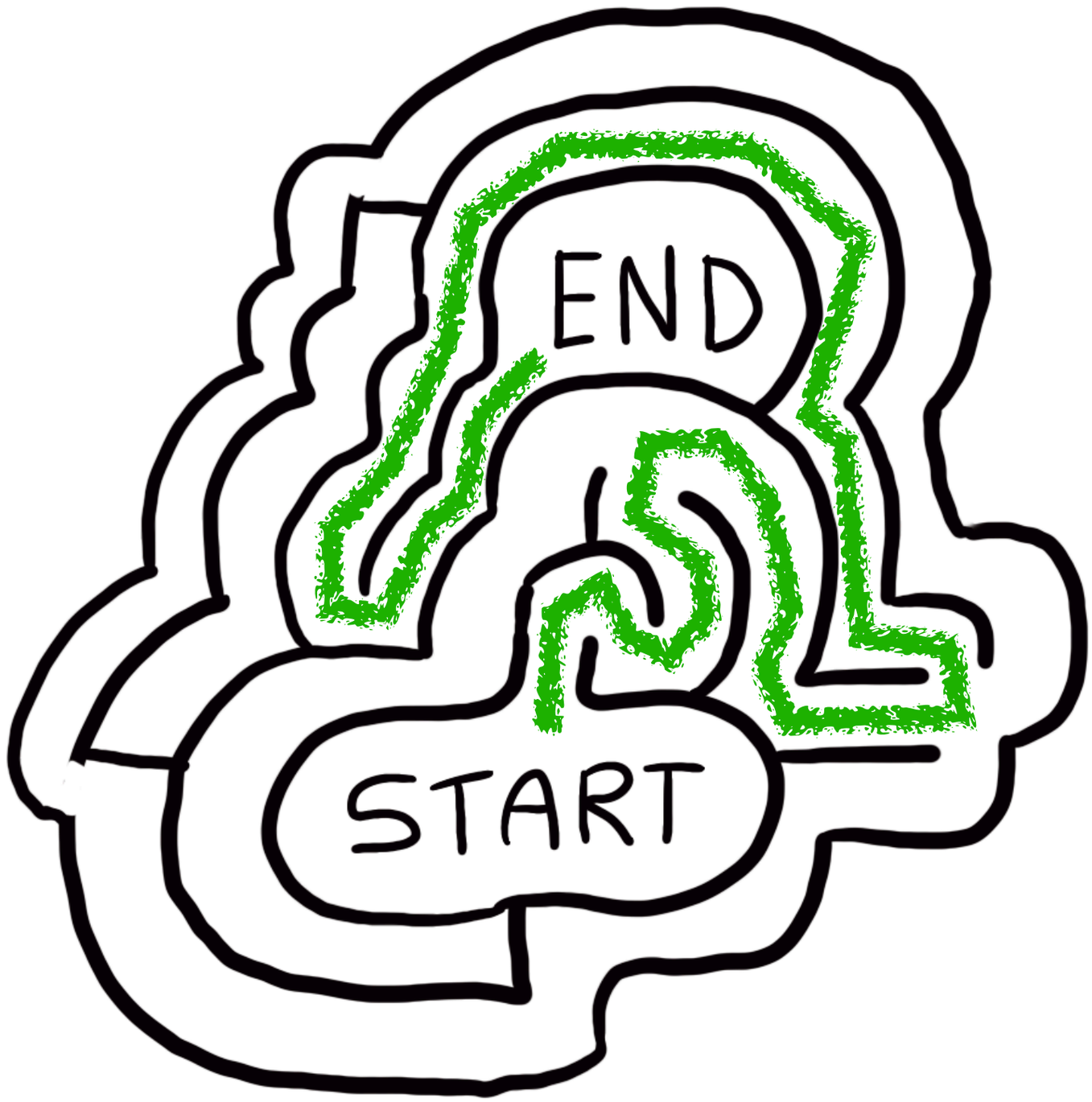
Daniel F Schmidt


K.
THE
CASTLE

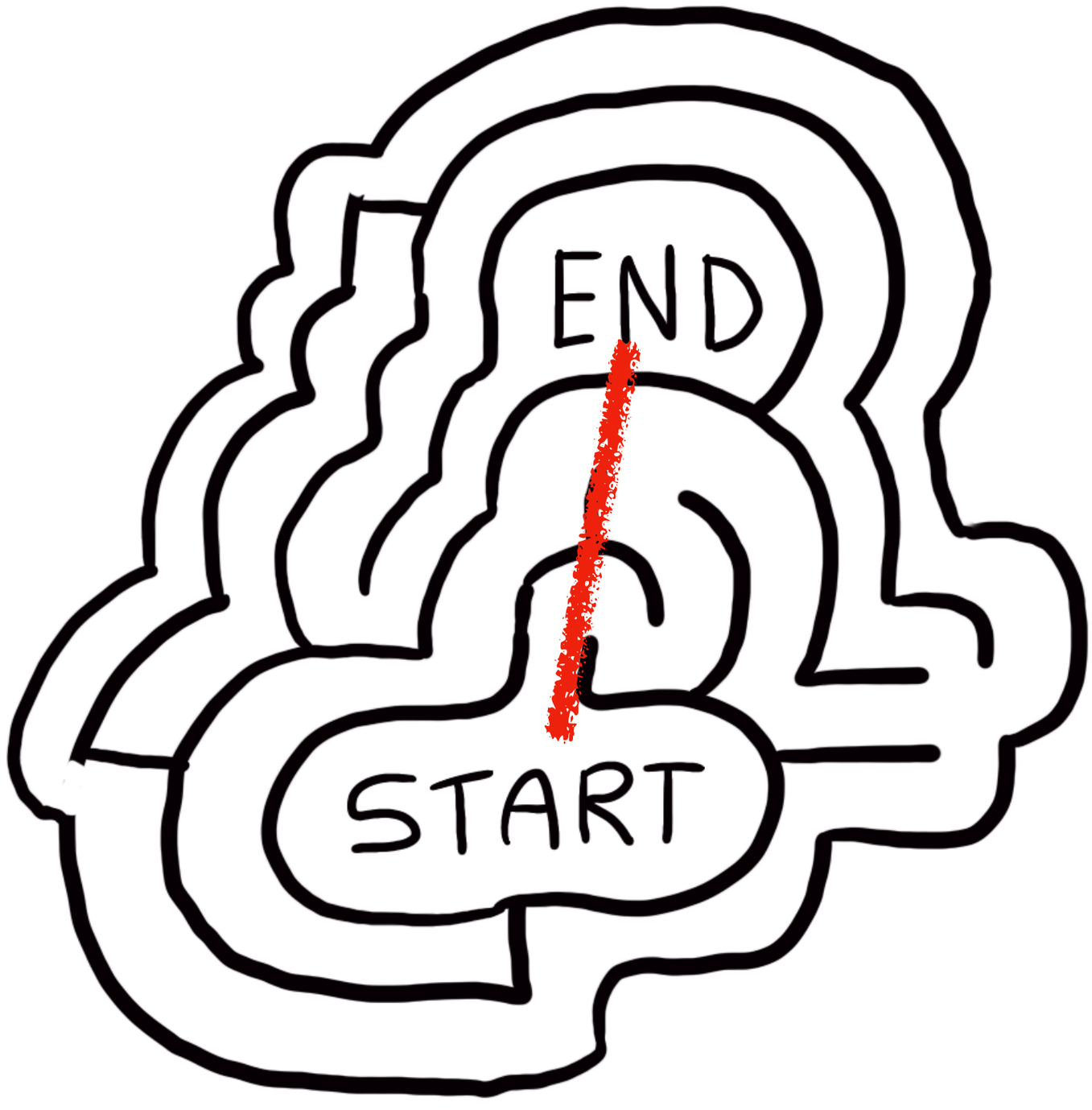
Mazes are minimal protocols.


END
START

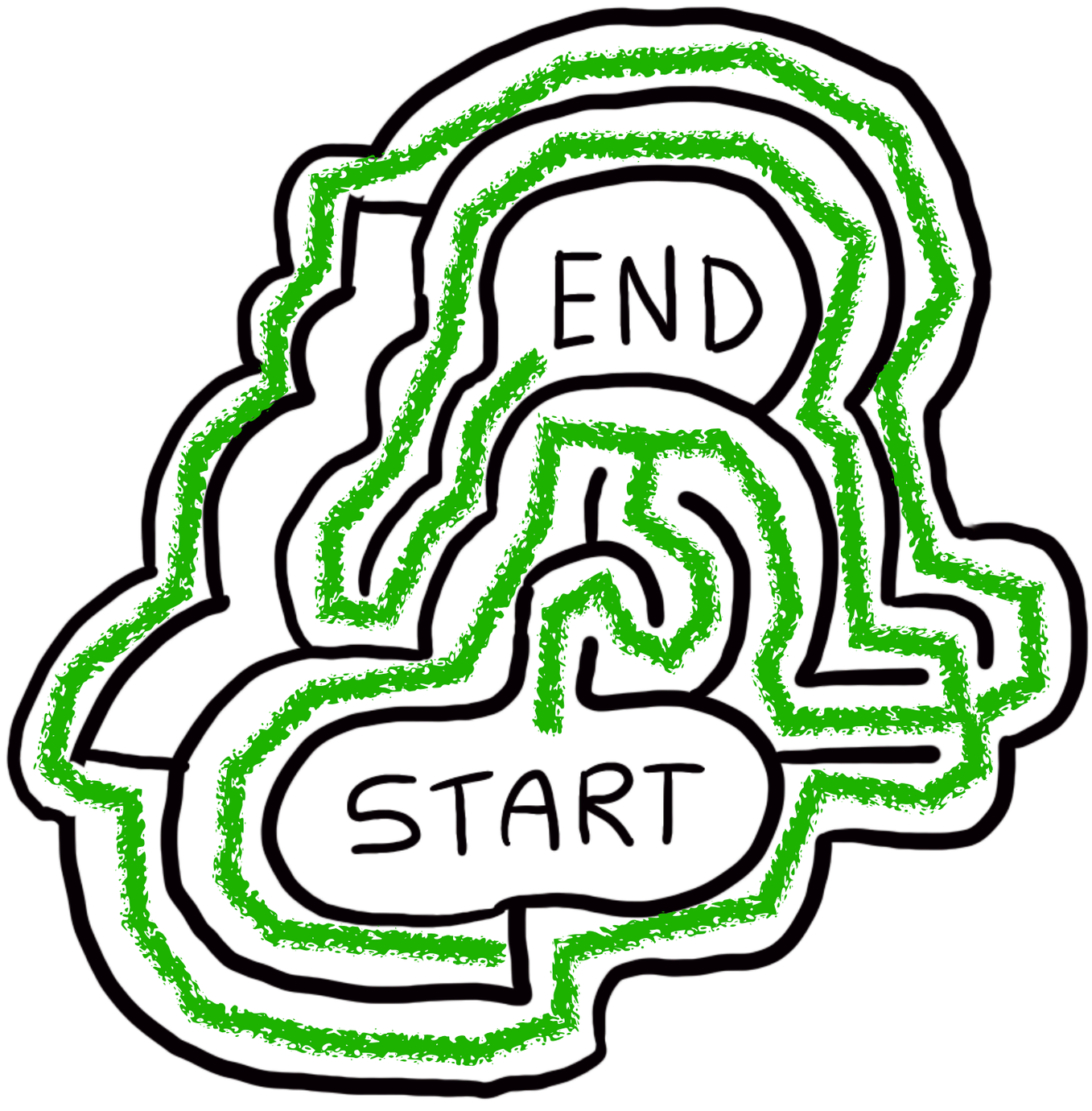
Valid Movement



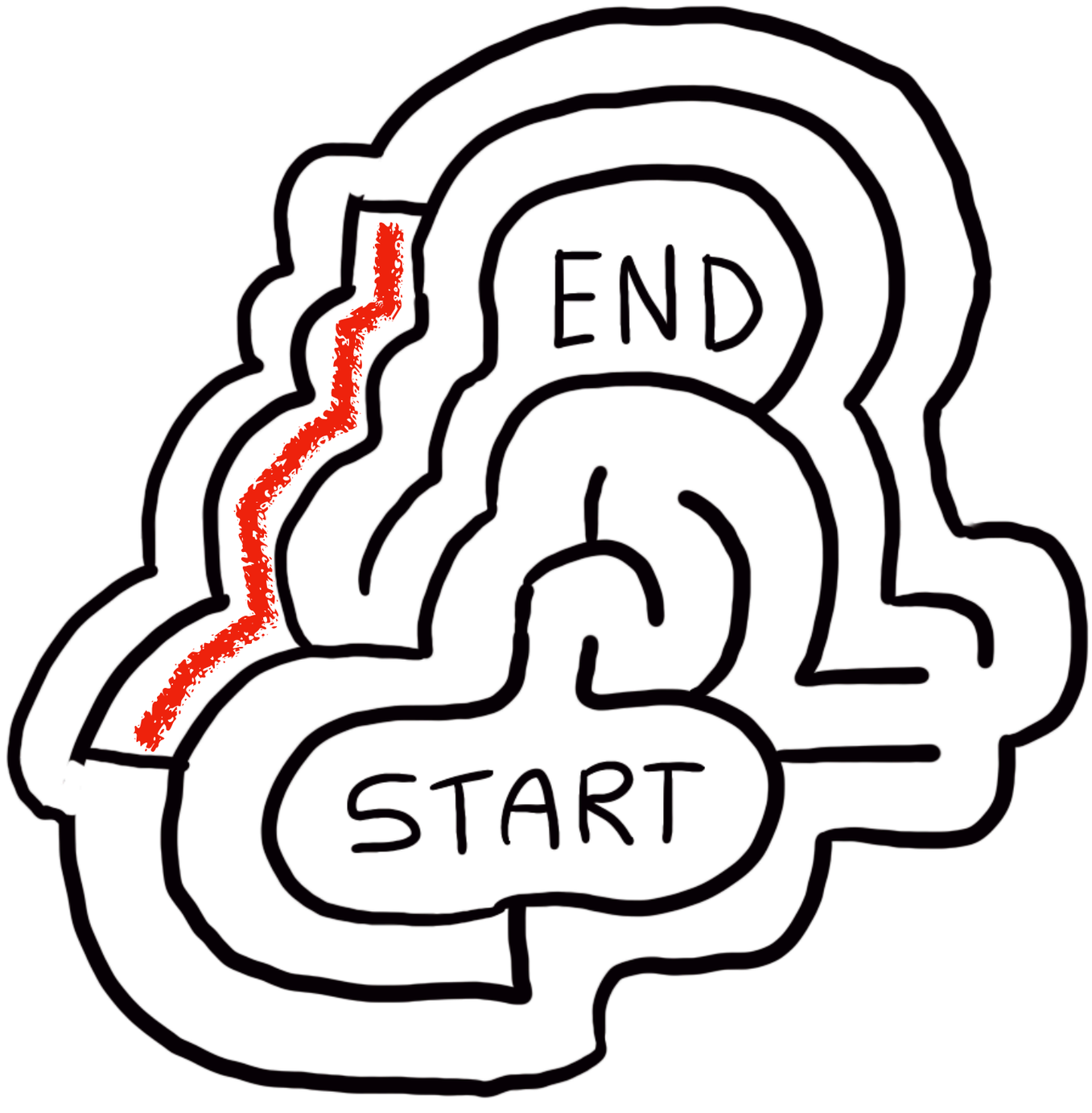
Invalid Movement



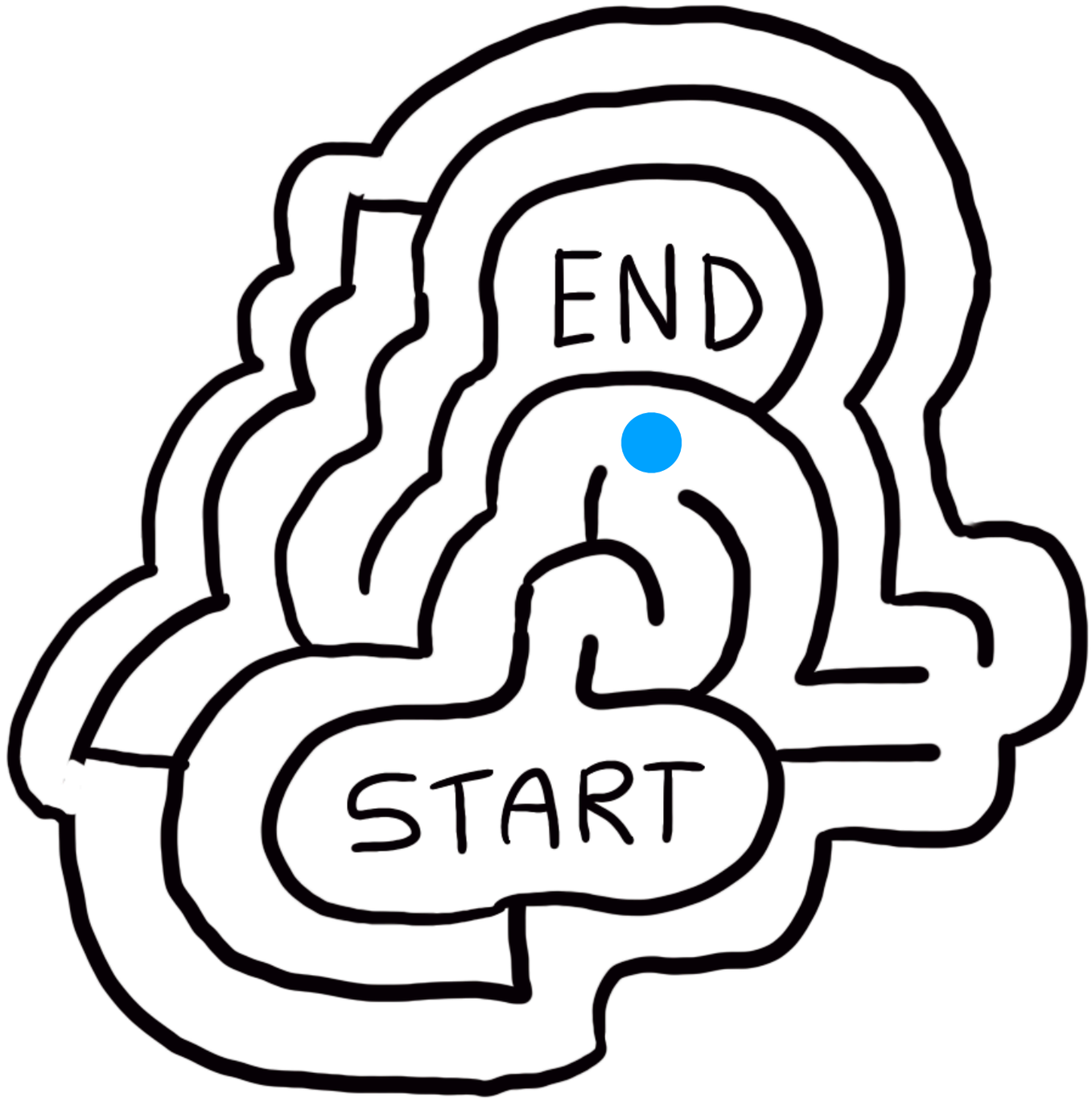
Reachable States



Unreachable States



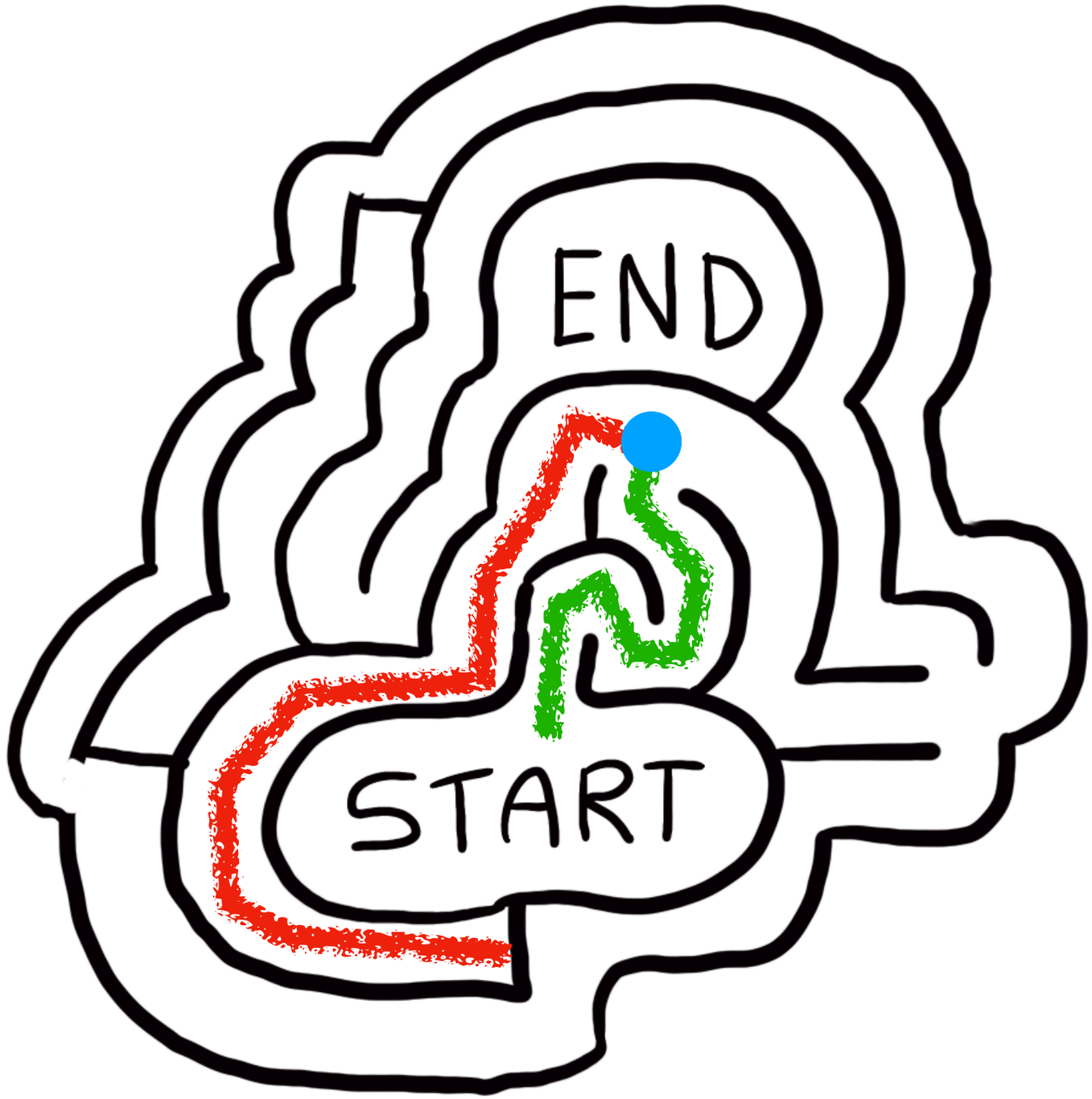
Junctions



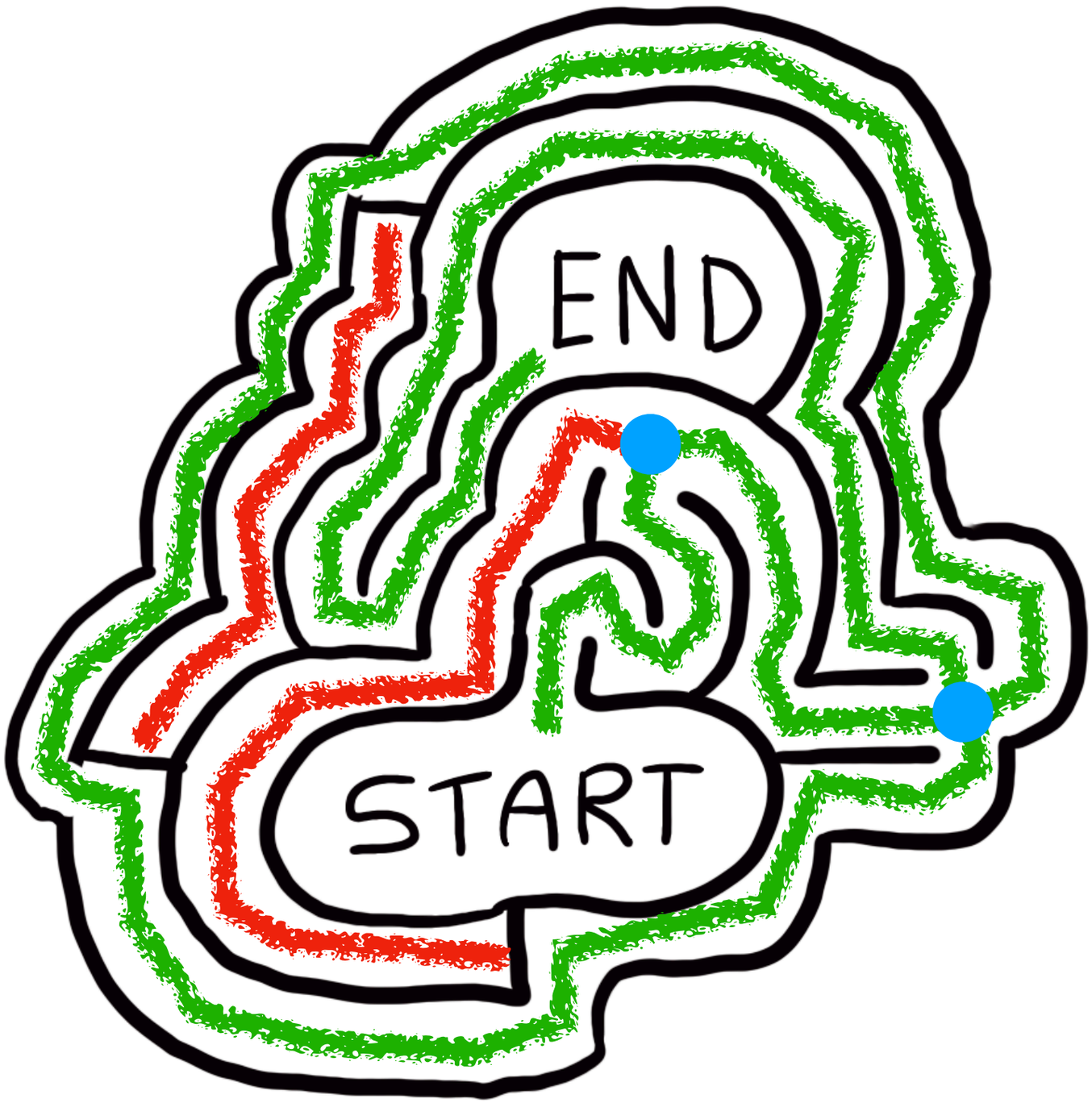
Loops



Terminal States

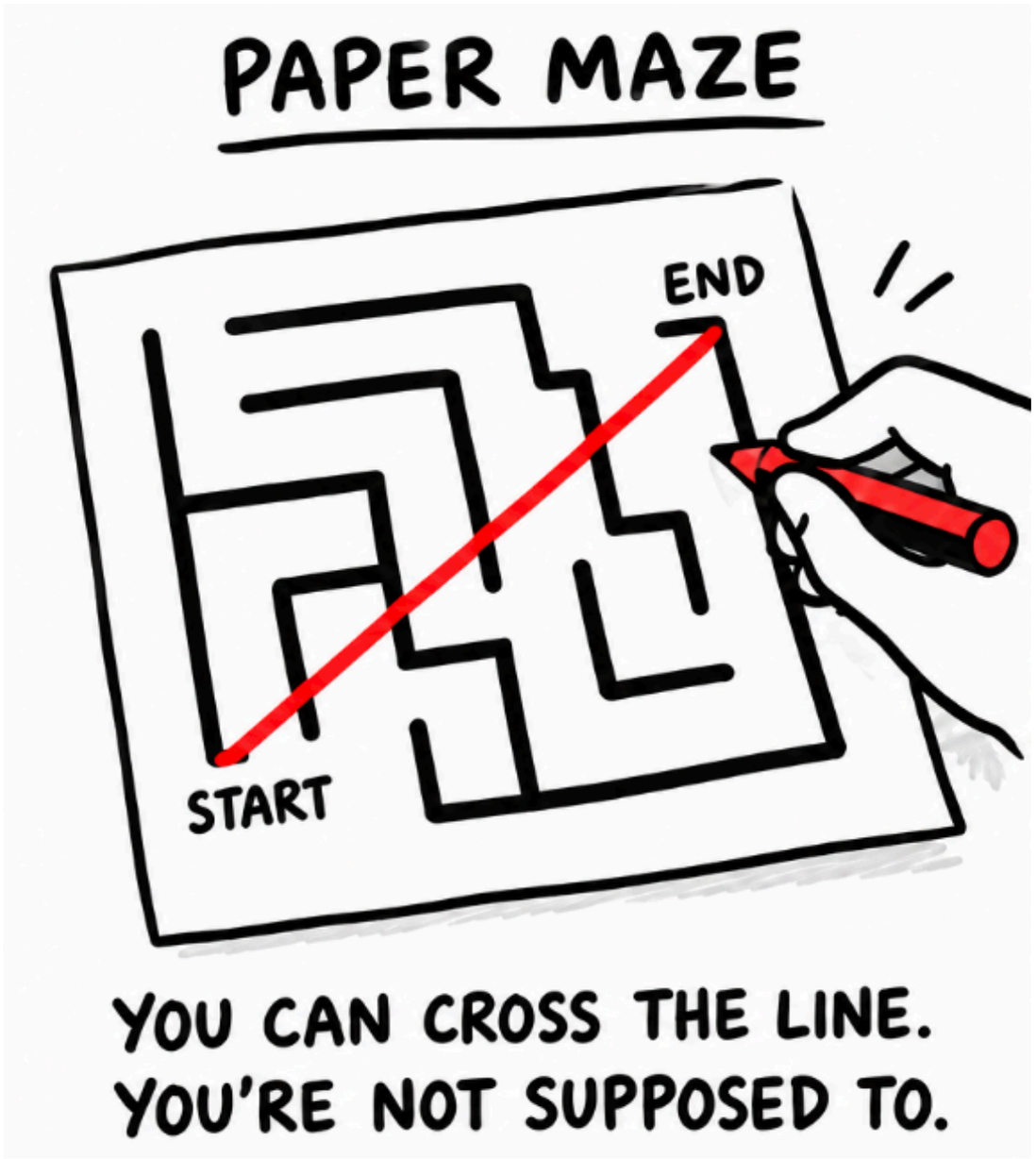


A possibility space
without prescribing behavior inside it

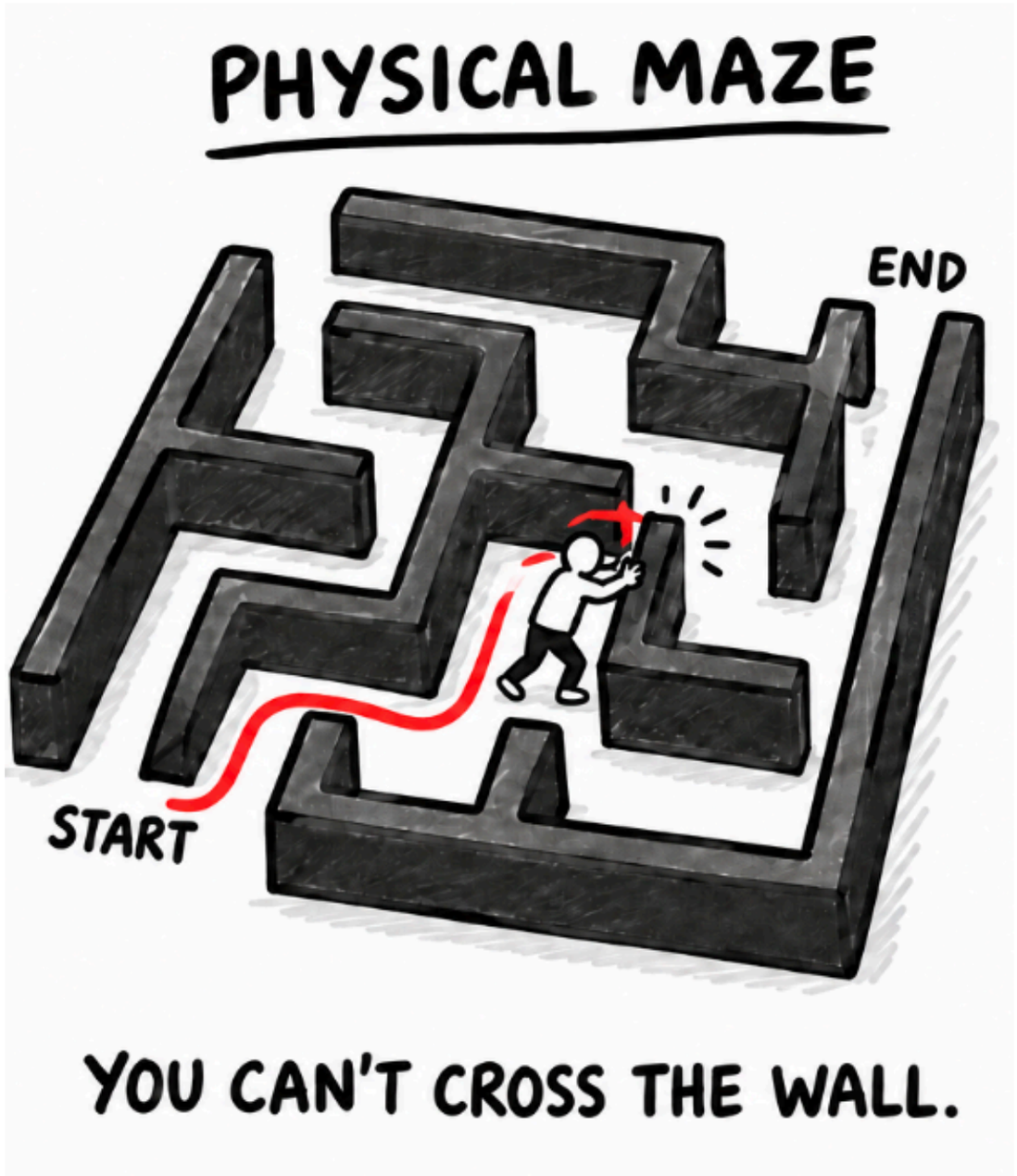


Mazes & Protocols Can Be Classified by the Same Properties

Soft

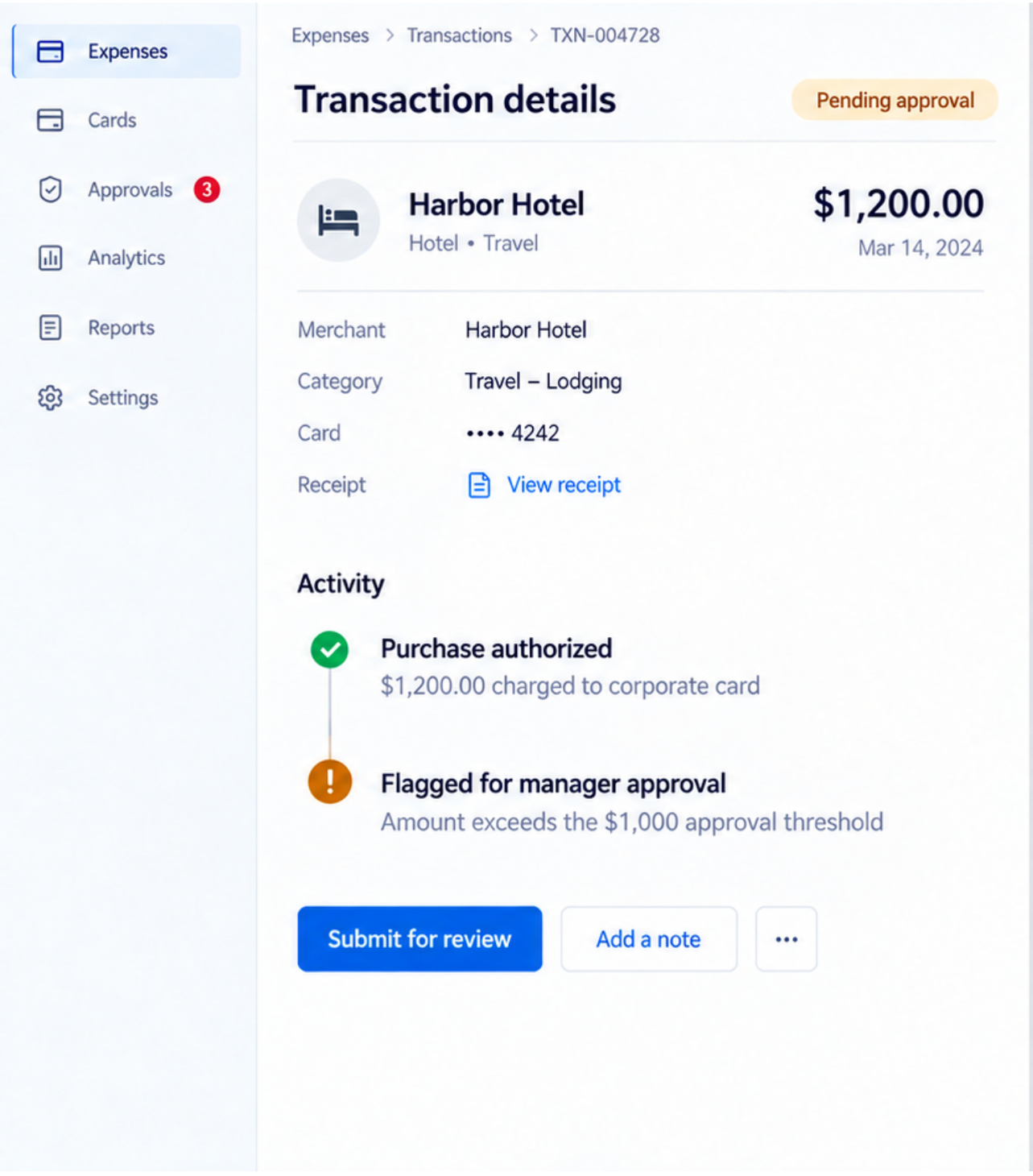

PAPER MAZE
END
START
YOU CAN CROSS THE LINE.
YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO.

Hard


PHYSICAL MAZE
END
START
YOU CAN'T CROSS THE WALL.

Soft

Hard


Expenses
Cards
Approvals 3
Analytics
Reports
Settings
Expenses > Transactions > TXN-004728
Transaction details
Pending approval
Harbor Hotel
Hotel • Travel
$1,200.00
Mar 14, 2024
Merchant Harbor Hotel
Category Travel – Lodging
Card •••• 4242
Receipt View receipt
Activity
Purchase authorized
$1,200.00 charged to corporate card
Flagged for manager approval
Amount exceeds the $1,000 approval threshold
Submit for review
Add a note
Make a payment
Transactions
Card settings
Spending limits
Approvals
Support
Card payment
Complete your purchase with your corporate card
Harbor Hotel
Hotel • Travel
$1,200.00
Mar 14, 2024
Payment declined
Manager approval is required for purchases over $1,000.
Payment method
Corporate card (•••• 4242)
Available balance: $8,500.00
Amount
$1,200.00
USD
Pay $1,200.00
Request approval

Unicursal



Multicursal



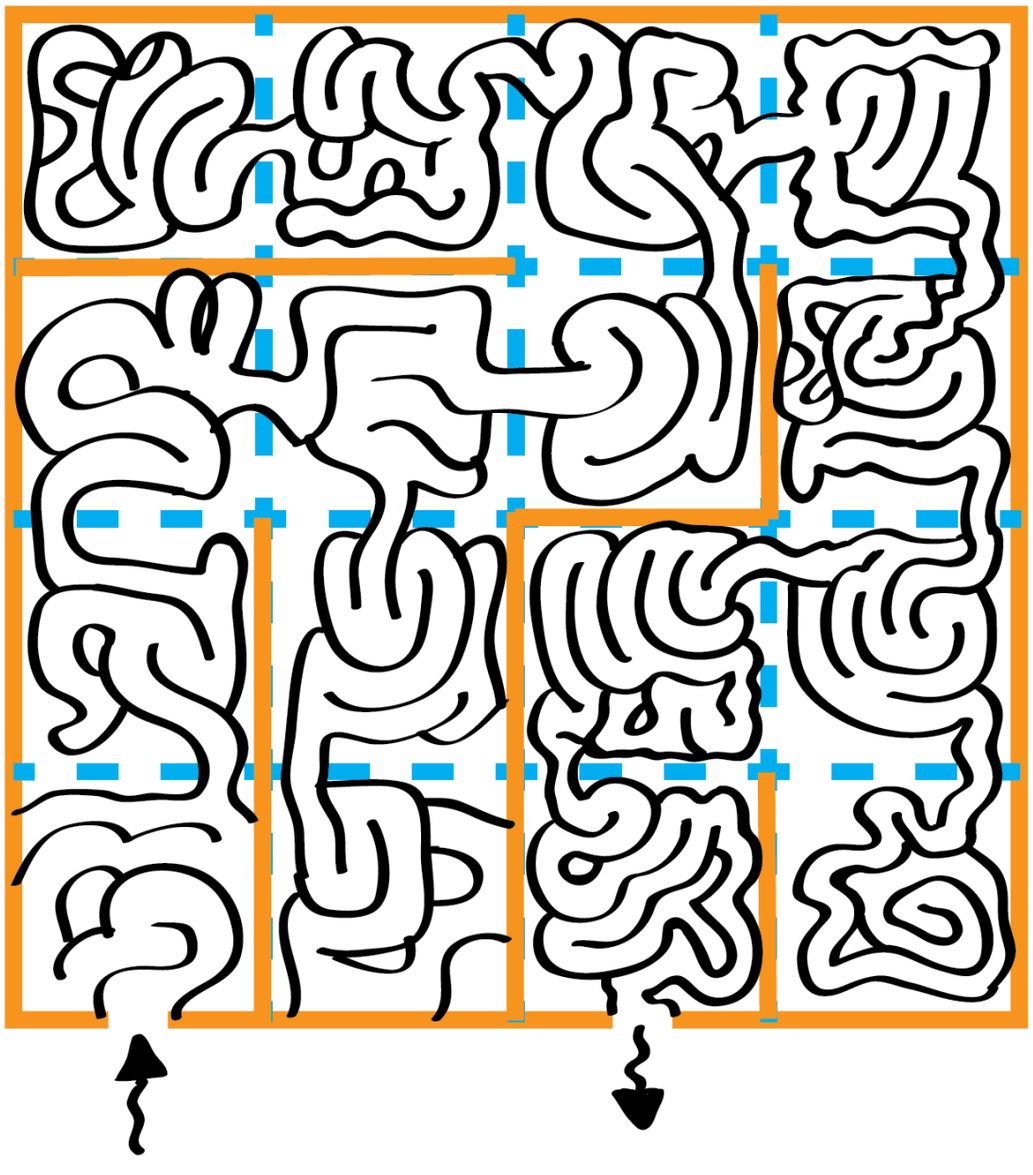
Unicursal

Multicursal

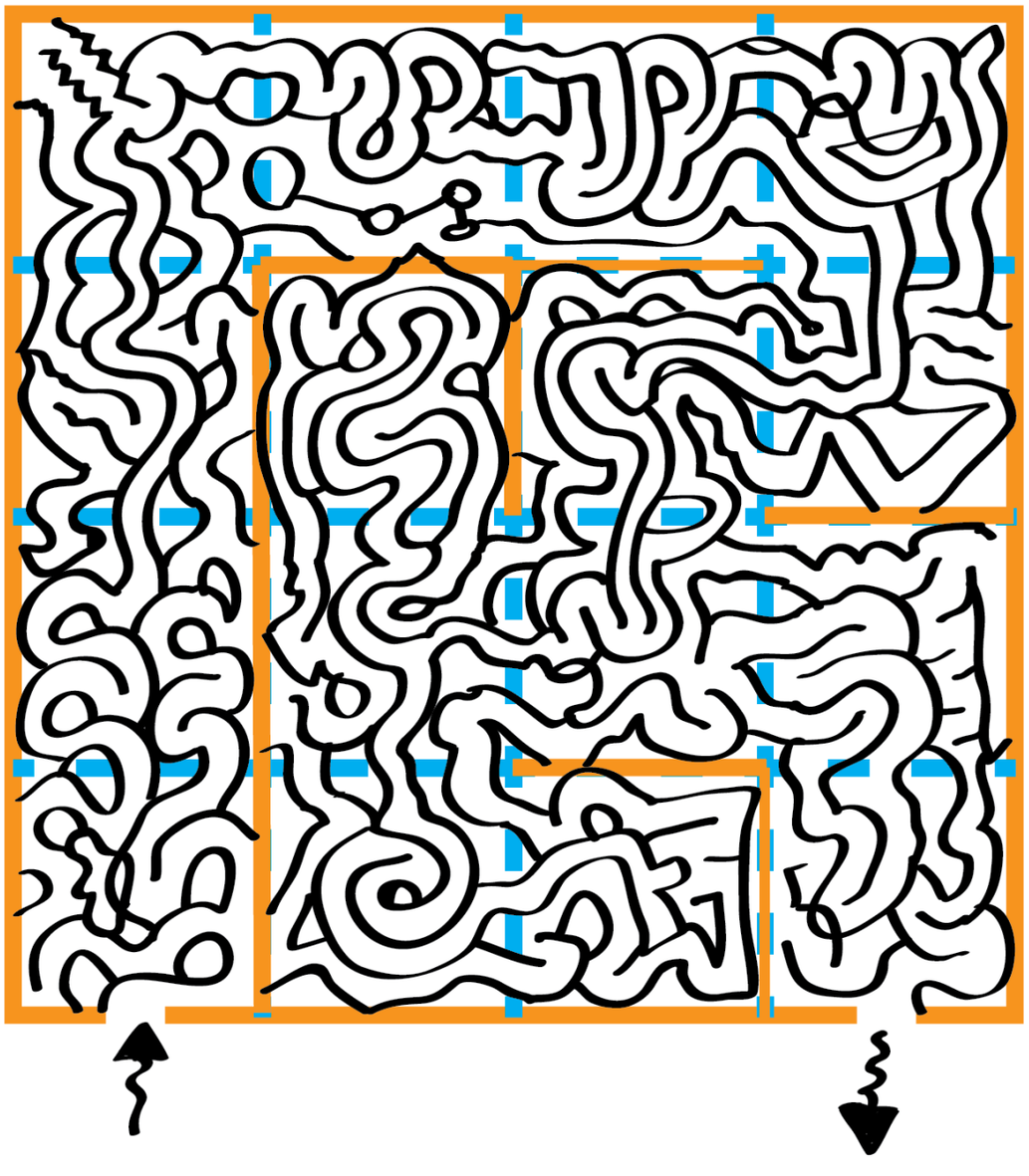




Scale Aligned



Scale Entangled



Scale Aligned

Scale Entangled

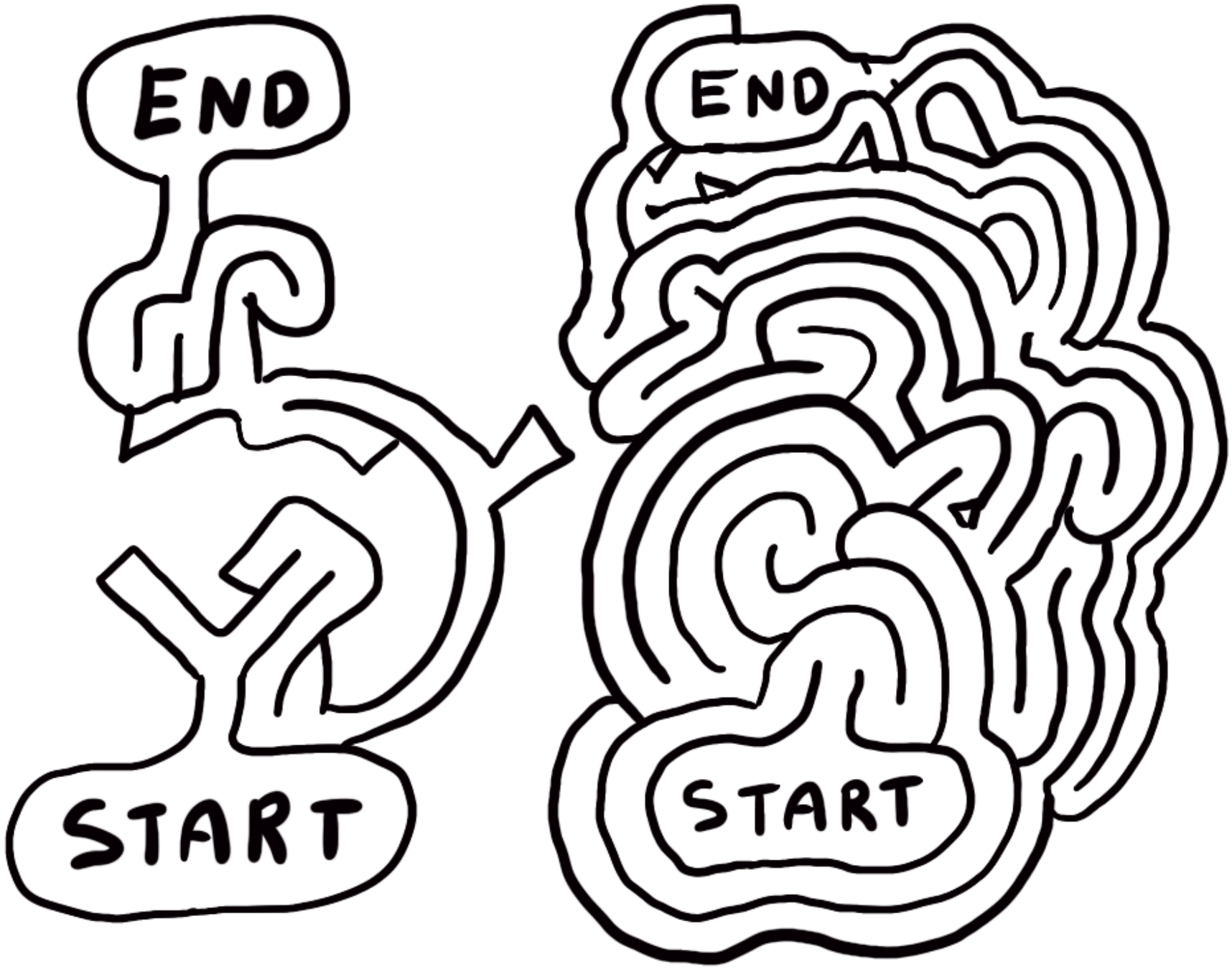




Illustrative routing based on published UPS airport eligibility; connections are schematic.

Bad options look bad early

Bad options stay plausible



Bad options look bad early

Lending Portal | Applications | Documents | Underwriting | **Decisions** | Account

Small business loan application

Final decision

Application #SBLA-104328 | Submitted Mar 3, 2024

Key underwriting metrics

Annual revenue	$420,000
Existing debt	$310,000
Debt-service coverage	0.91
Minimum required	1.20

APPLICATION DECLINED

Insufficient cash flow

Bad options stay plausible

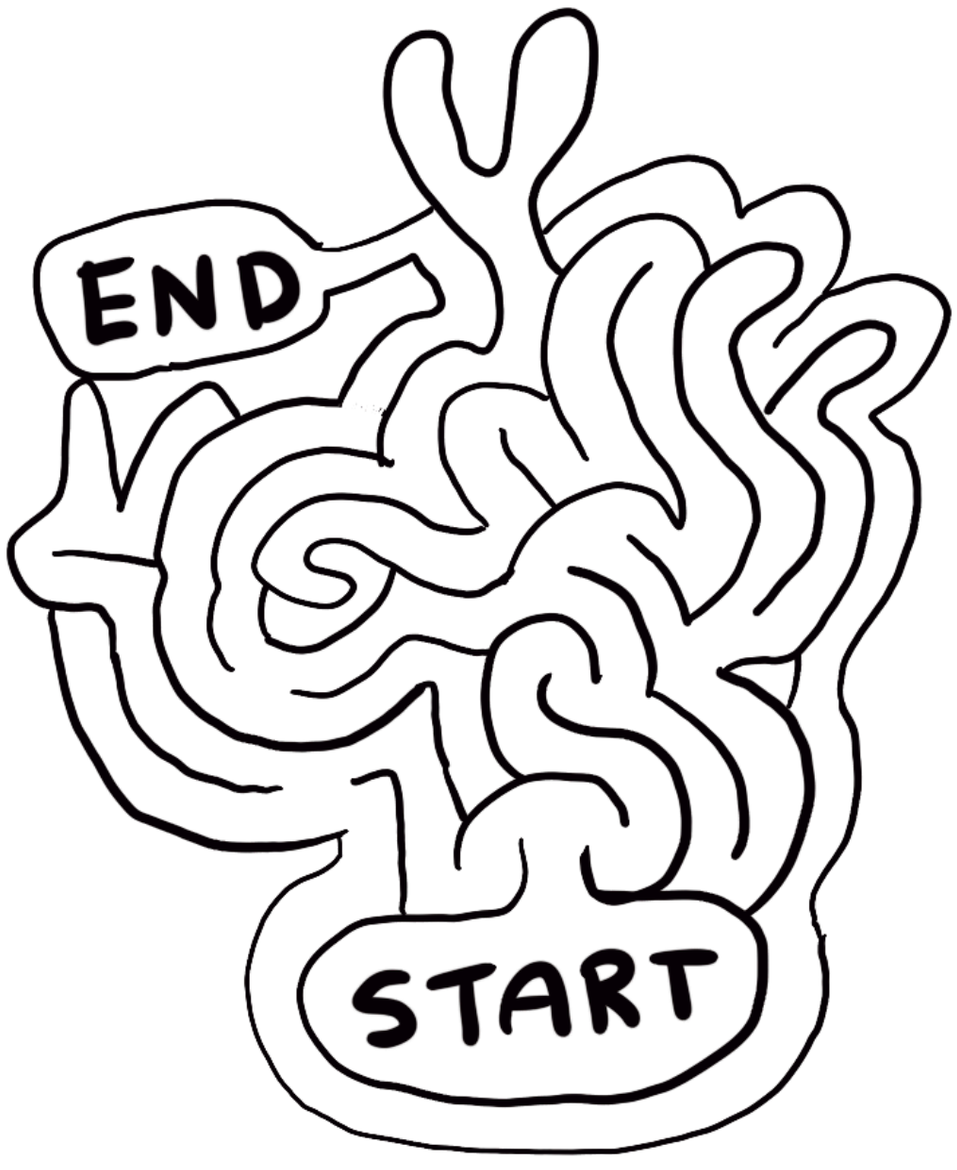
VC FUNDRAISING TRACKER

Seed round · Target $3M

A1 | *fx*

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	INVESTOR	INTRO	FIRST MEETING	PARTNER MEETING	DILIGENCE	OUTCOME
2	Northstar	✓	✓	PASS		
3	Harbor	✓	PASS			
4	Summit	✓	✓	✓	PASS	
5	Foundry	✓	✓	✓	PASS	
6	Atlas	✓	✓	✓	✓	TERM SHEET
7	Pioneer	✓	✓	PASS		
8						

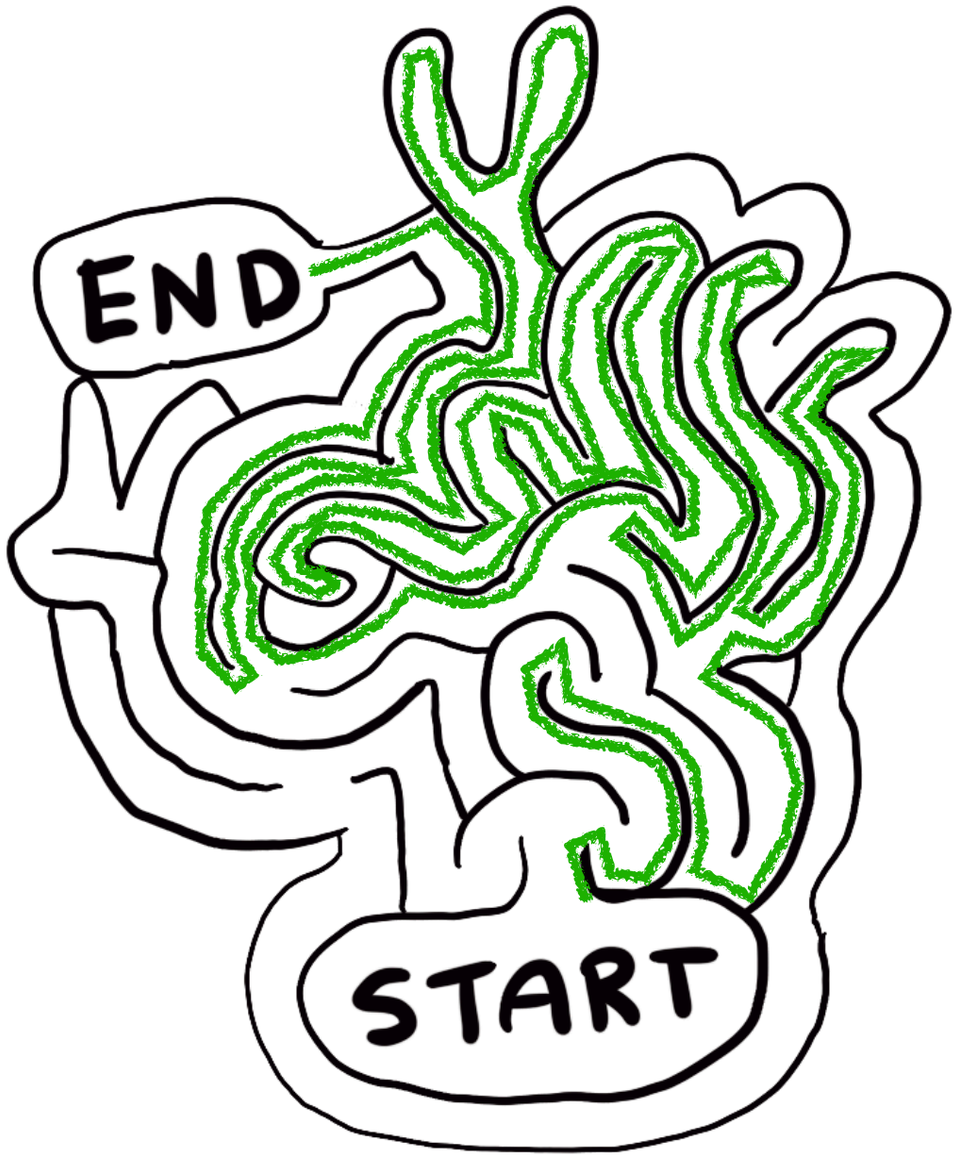
A local rule is sufficient



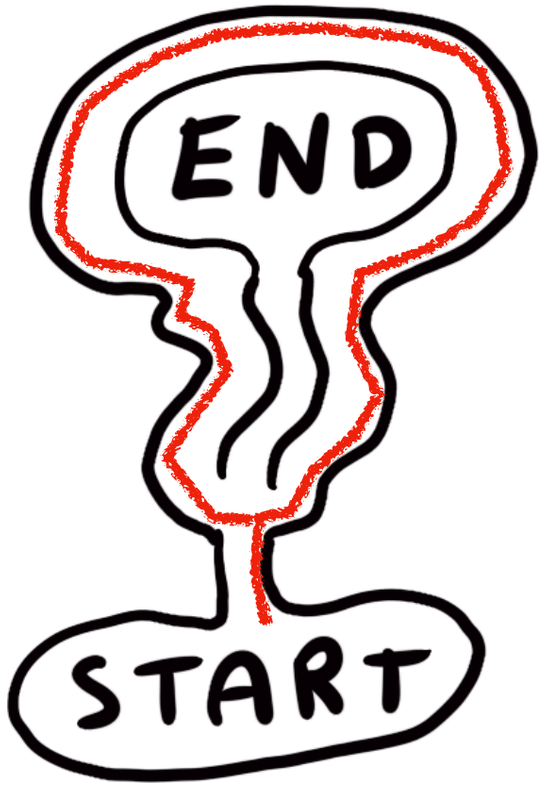
A local rule is insufficient



A local rule is sufficient



A local rule is insufficient



A local rule is sufficient

Ticket #4821 — RESOLVED

Charged, but account still locked

Assignment history

09:02	L1	**Tier 1 Support**	Initial triage
09:14	L2	**Level 2 Accounts**	Escalated
09:31	L3	**Senior Resolution Team**	Escalated
09:44		**Resolved**	Account access restored

A local rule is insufficient

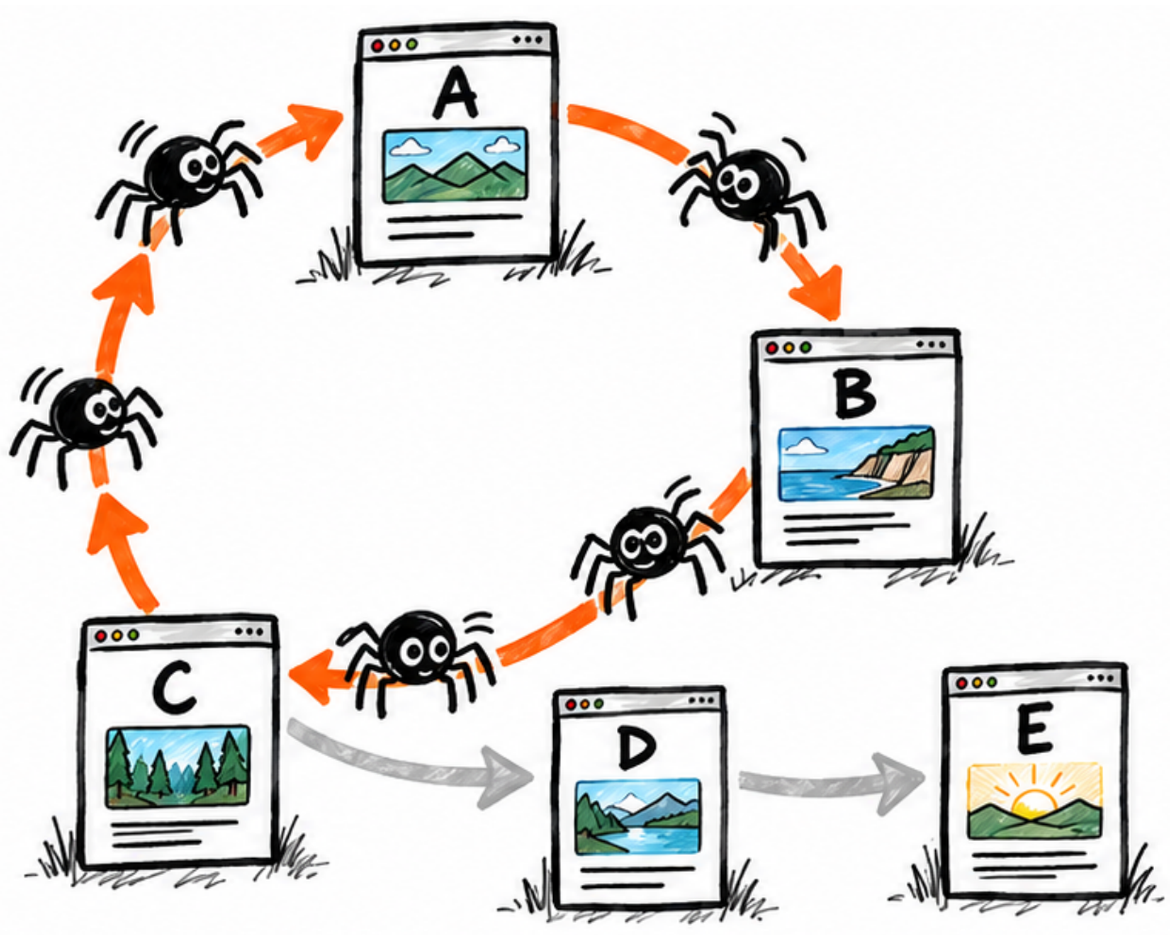
Ticket #4821 — OPEN · 5 transfers

Charged, but account still locked

Assignment history

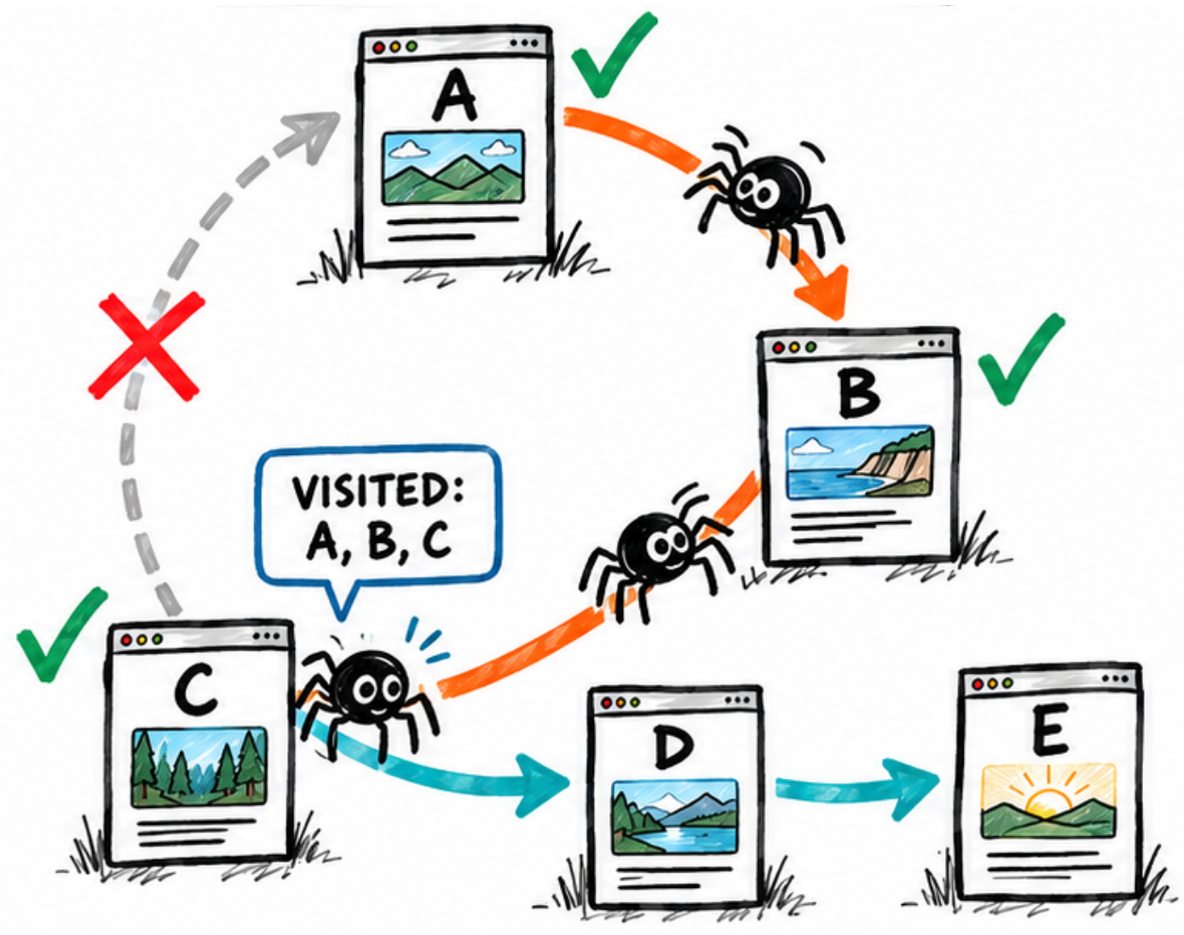
09:02	**Billing**	Payment confirmed
09:15	**Technical Support**	No application error
09:31	**Account Security**	No security hold
09:48	**Billing**	Reassigned
10:03	**Technical Support**	Reassigned
10:19	**Account Security**	Reassigned

No memory



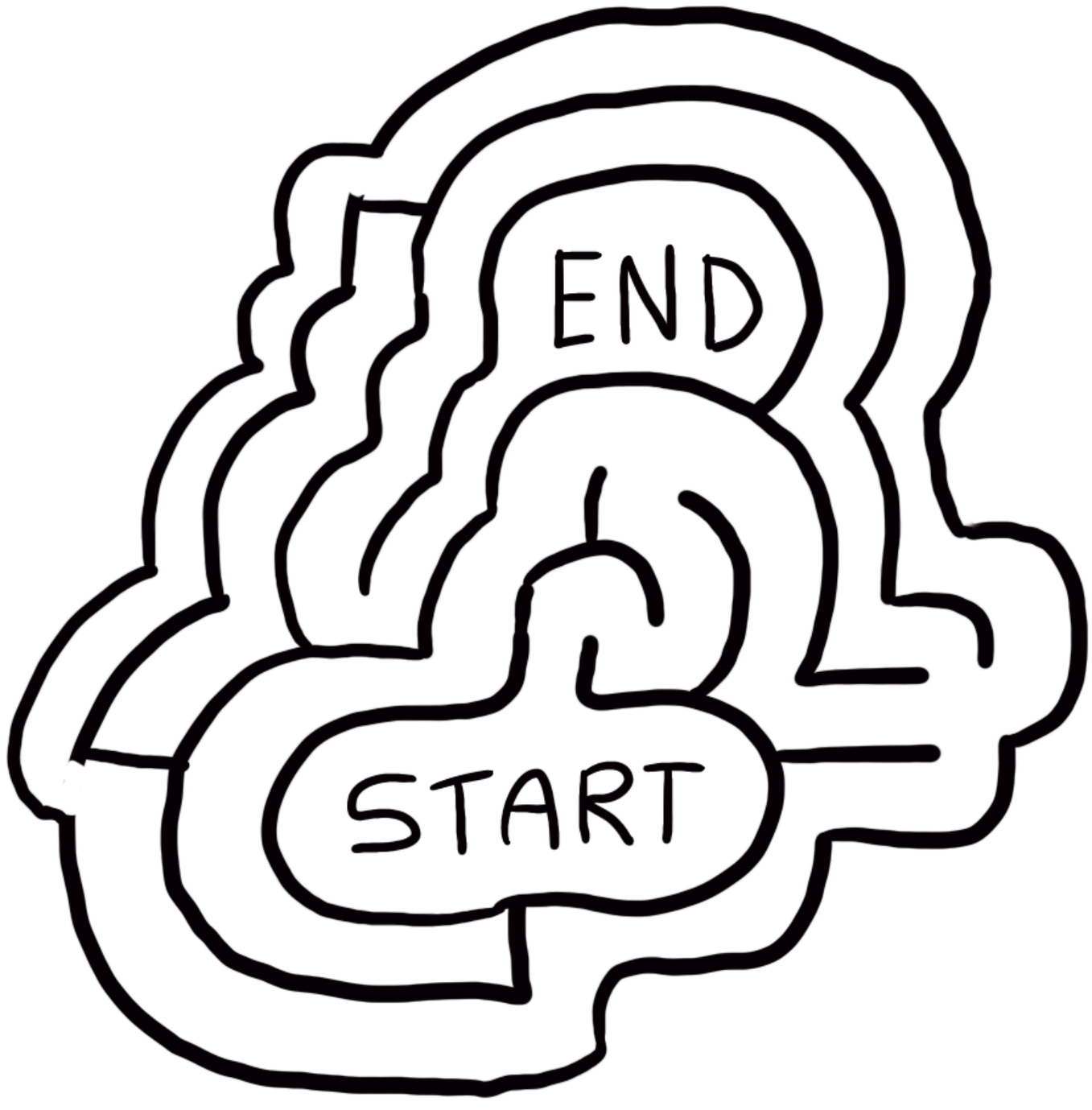
FOLLOW A LINK → REPEAT THE LOOP

Memory



RECOGNIZE THE LOOP → TAKE A NEW PATH

With fog of war, we can use mazes to study navigation protocols



With fog of war, we can use mazes to study navigation protocols



Play Design Leaderboard Level 1 Levels

↵ / G Stop laying guideline

F Drop tank

Swimming

Lungs

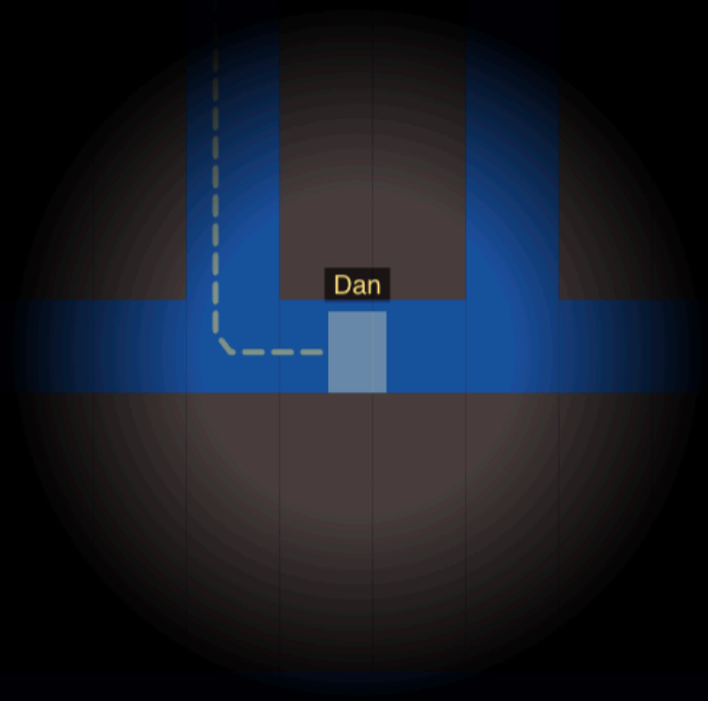
Tank 1

Depth 17.1m

Gold 0 / 50

Bank 0g

Play Game



Columbus
LATITUDE (NORTH)
↑ 6 Peak: 32
STEPS: 258

LEADERBOARD

furthest north · fewest steps wins

1. Santa	↑ 93	1,129 steps to peak
2. Ram	↑ 93	1,235 steps to peak
3. Asterisk	↑ 93	1,497 steps to peak
4. Honnold	↑ 58	1,067 steps to peak
5. Skycn	↑ 58	1,179 steps to peak

Play Game



PEBBLES

8 remaining

Drop (P)

↑
← →
↓

Ants in Maze

FOOD 569 RATE 194.0/1k ticks



Play Game

EDIT Walls Food

Nest Food Home trail Food trail Searching Carrying

← All simulations

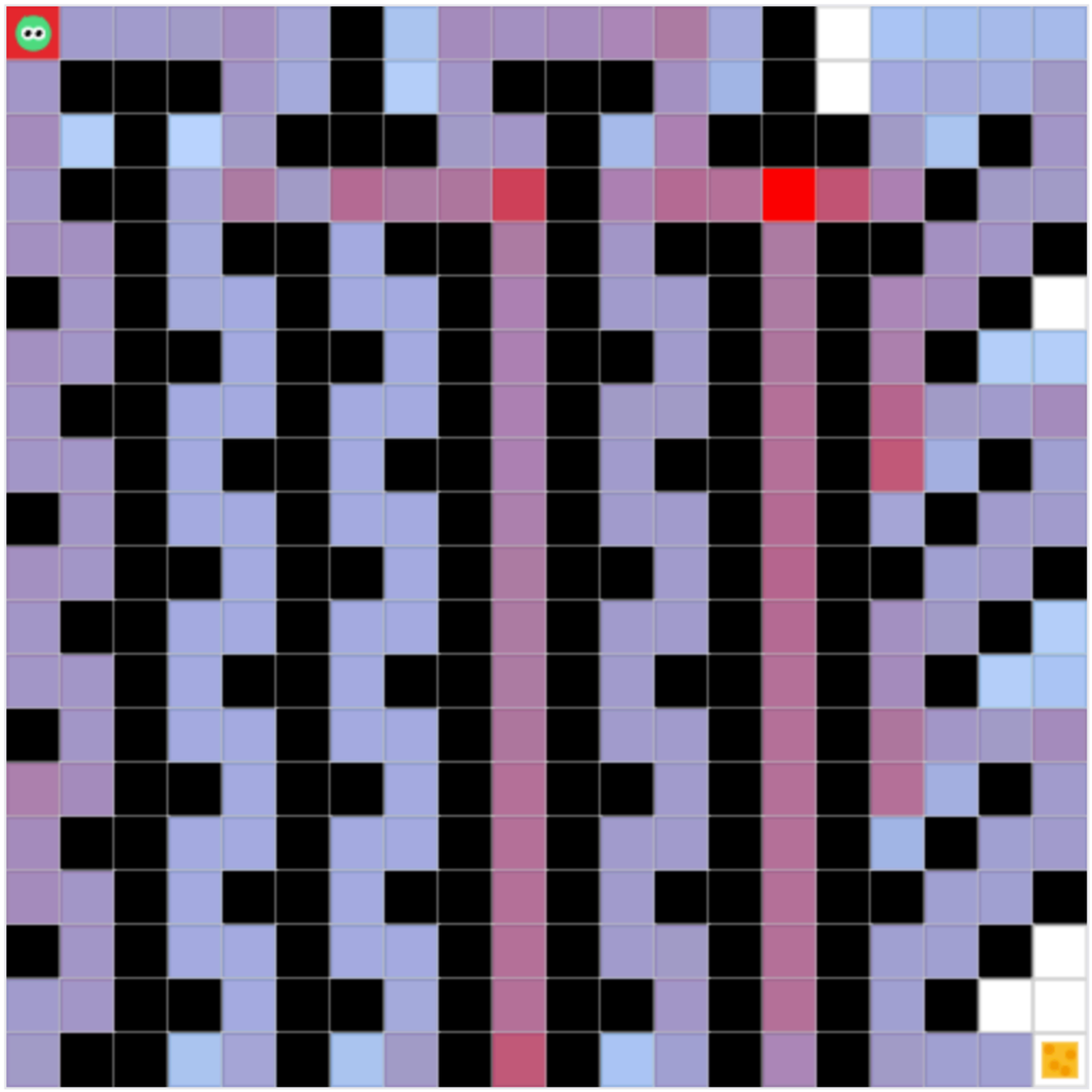
Maze Structure

Log in | Sign up

15 solutions | Median time: 72.4s | 15 attempts

Play Game

Maze View | Heat Map



creamy_penne_pasta's Maze - Heat Map

Shows paths most commonly taken by users

Leaderboard

#1	7ib0	4 months ago • Attempt #1	27.4s
#2	veroxia	about 1 year ago • Attempt #1	36.4s
#3	dustin@starfoundry.com	over 1 year ago • Attempt #1	54.1s
#4	gluti	4 months ago • Attempt #2	59.0s
#5	GabeTK	over 1 year ago • Attempt #1	65.3s
#6	duckman	over 1 year ago • Attempt #4	67.6s
#7	akkartik	over 1 year ago • Attempt #1	68.9s
#8	queenzig801	3 months ago • Attempt #1	72.4s
#9	duckman	over 1 year ago • Attempt #3	74.6s

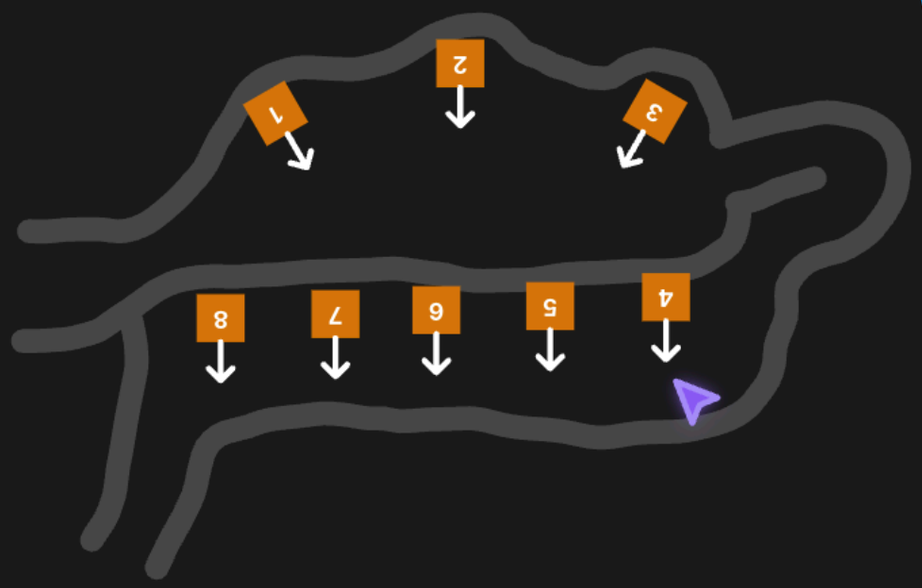
Protocol Maze

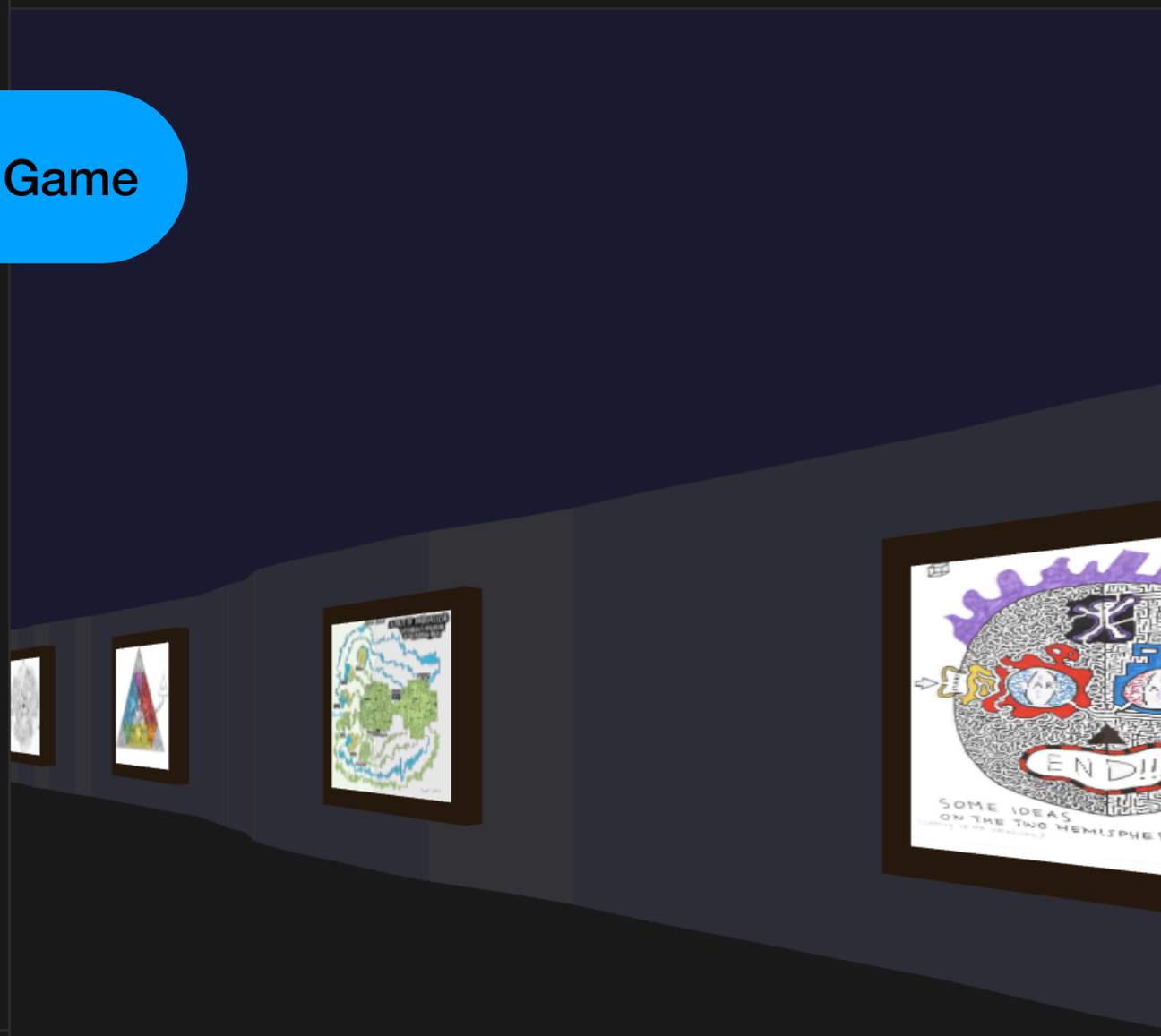
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A/D or Left/Right: Rotate

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