

Ulysses versus The Very Hungry Caterpillar

The story of two codebases



Andy Carter
andycarter.dev

Developers Up North

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Andy Carter (he/him)

Technical Team Lead at Evoluted



@andycarter.dev



in/drandycarter



andycarter.dev



Street art
SHEFFIELD

“the ratio of time spent reading versus
writing is well over 10 to 1”

Robert C. Martin

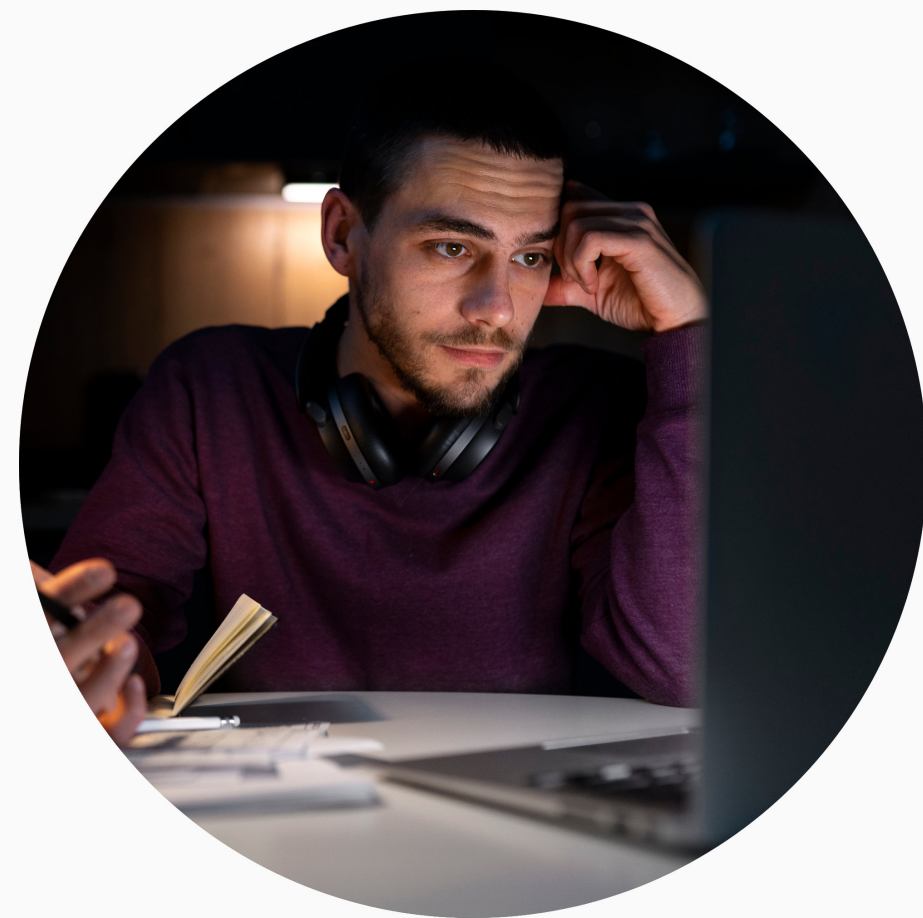
Who's reading our code?



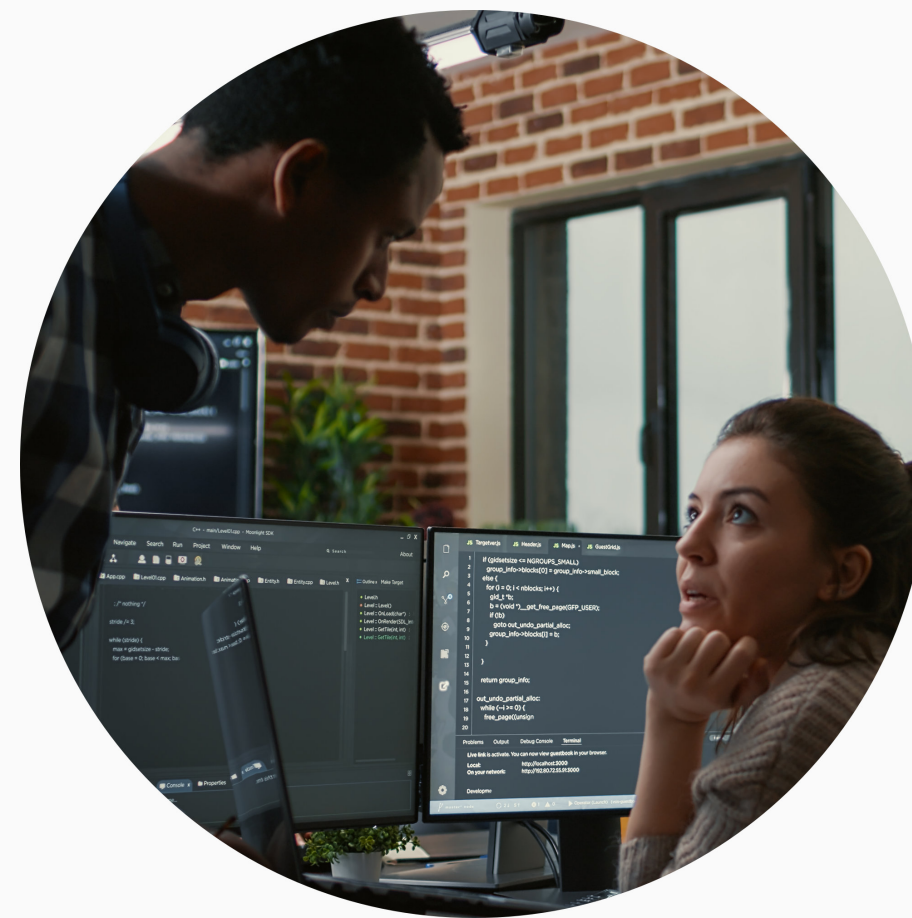
The less experienced developer



The stressed developer



The code reviewer



The interrupted developer



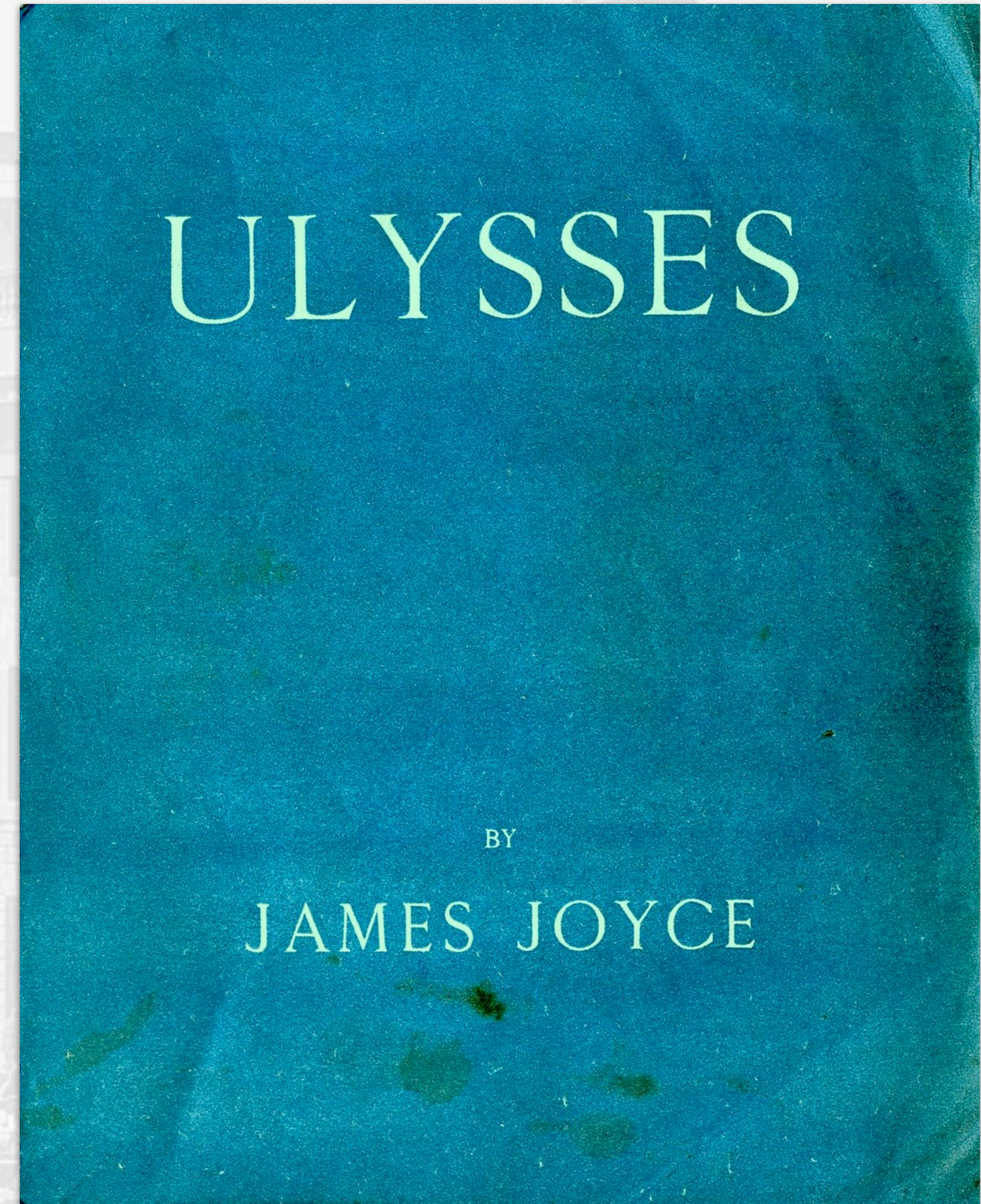
James Joyce's Ulysses



ULYSSES

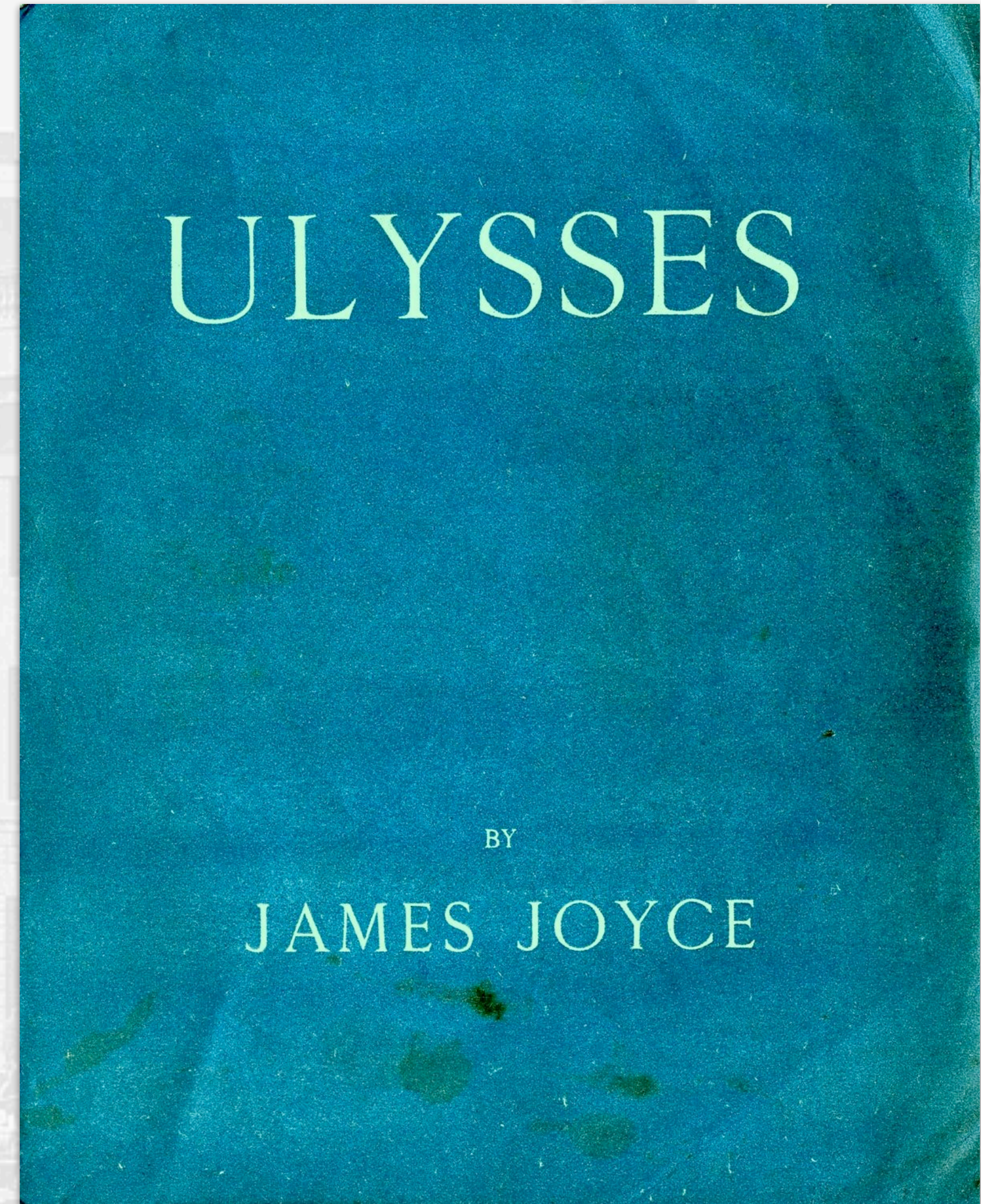
James Joyce's Ulysses

- Stream of consciousness
- Shifting narrative styles



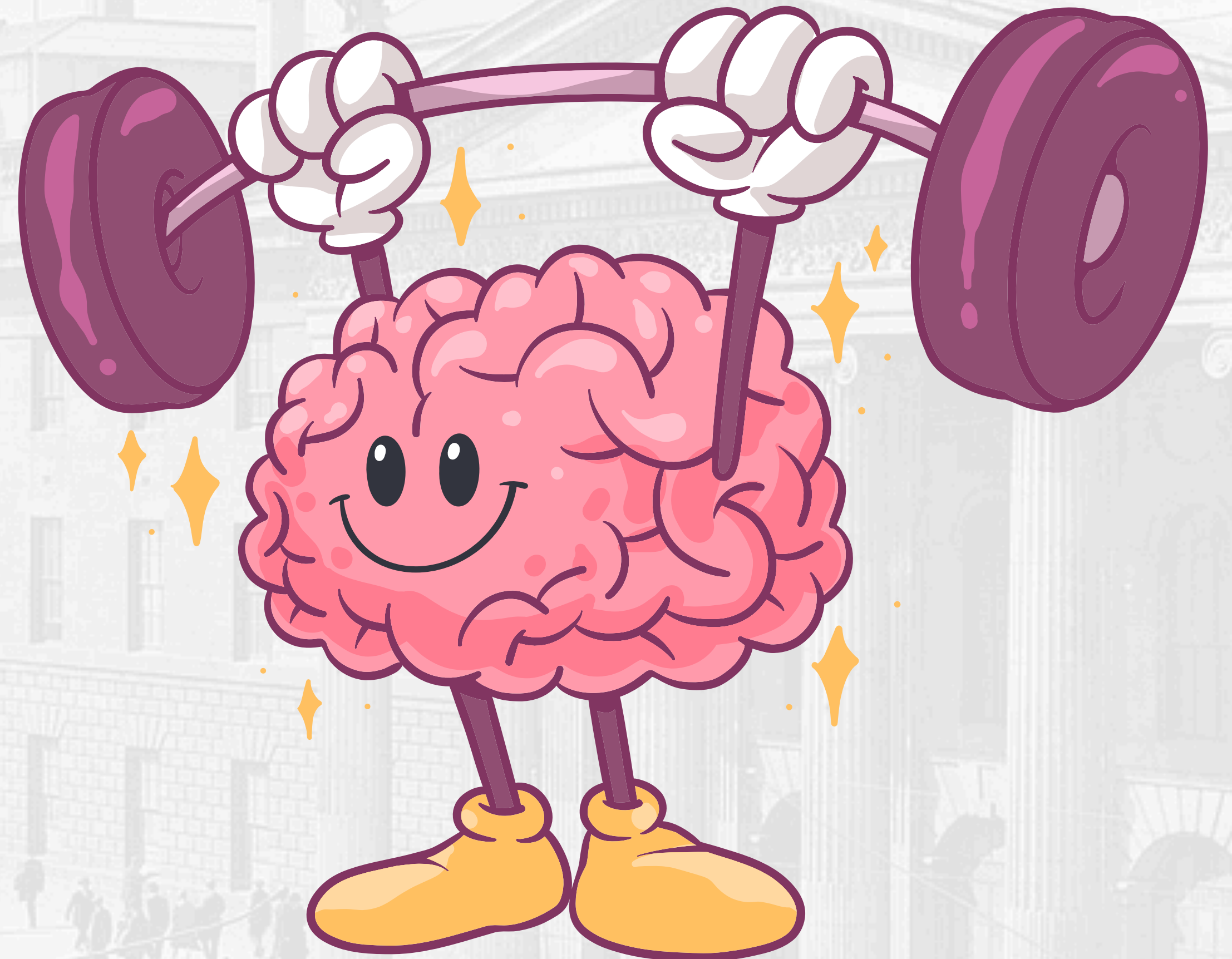
James Joyce's Ulysses

- Long and deeply nested code
- Inconsistent styles and naming conventions

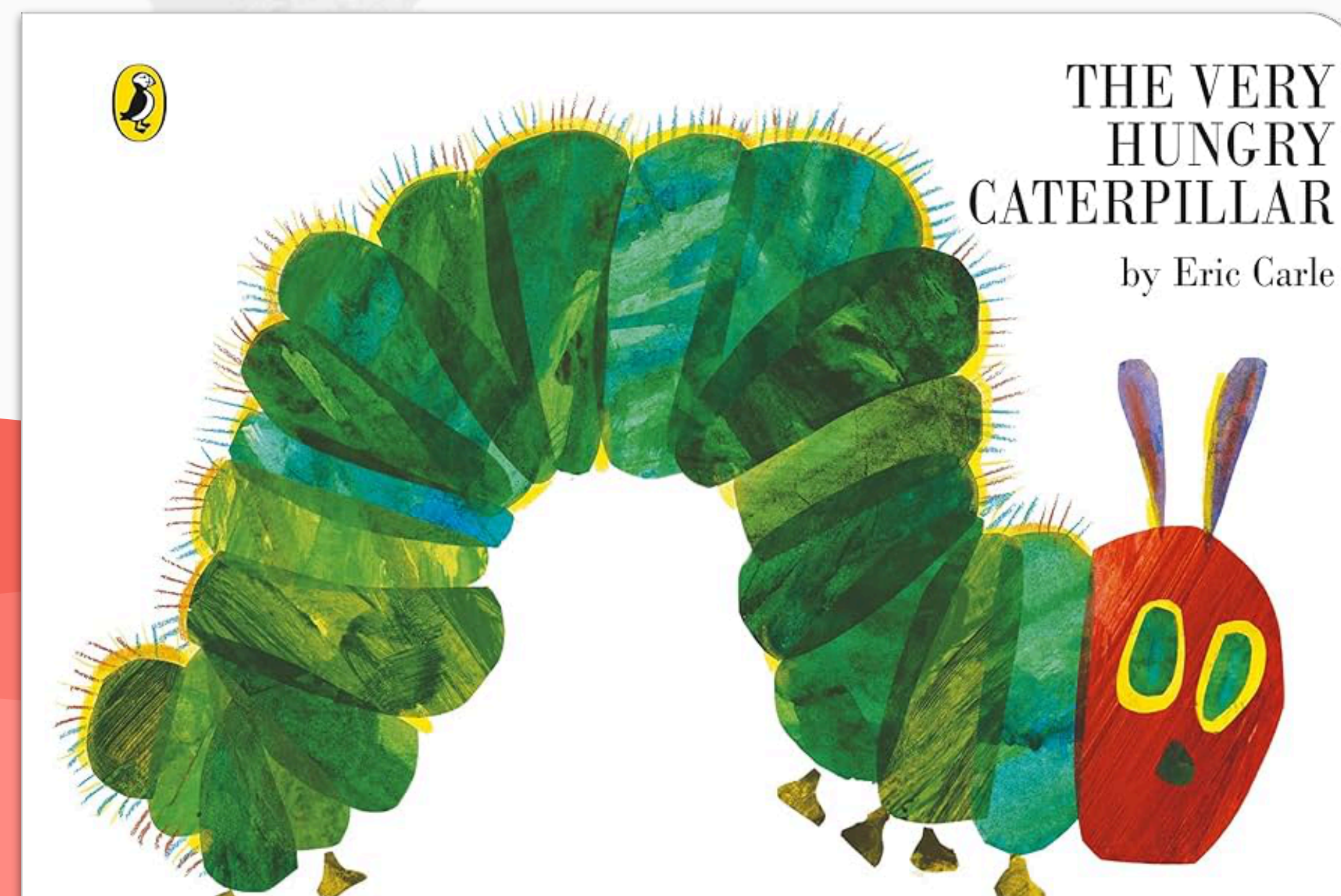


Cognitive load

- Short term memory limitations
- Context switching causing mental fatigue

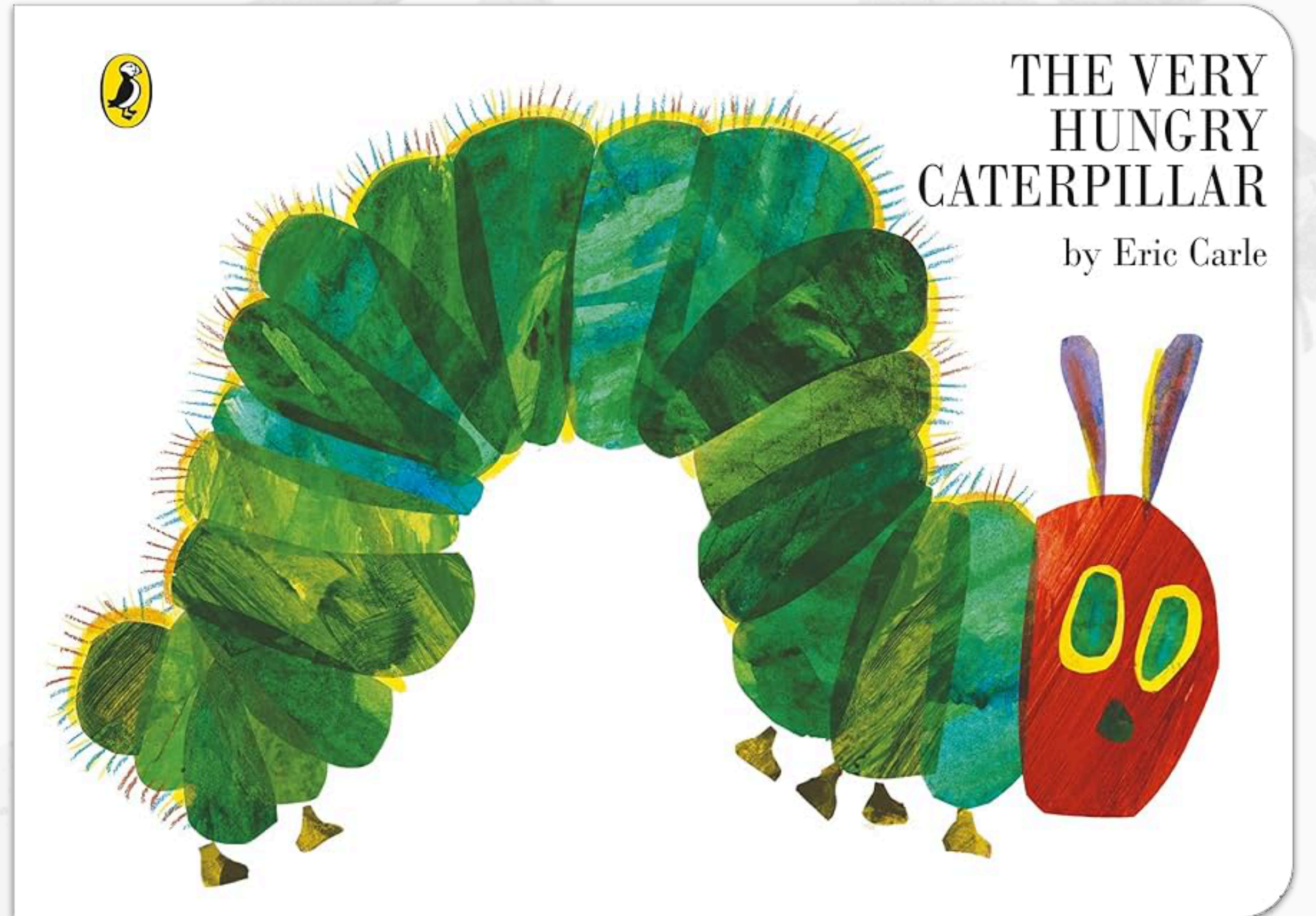


Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar



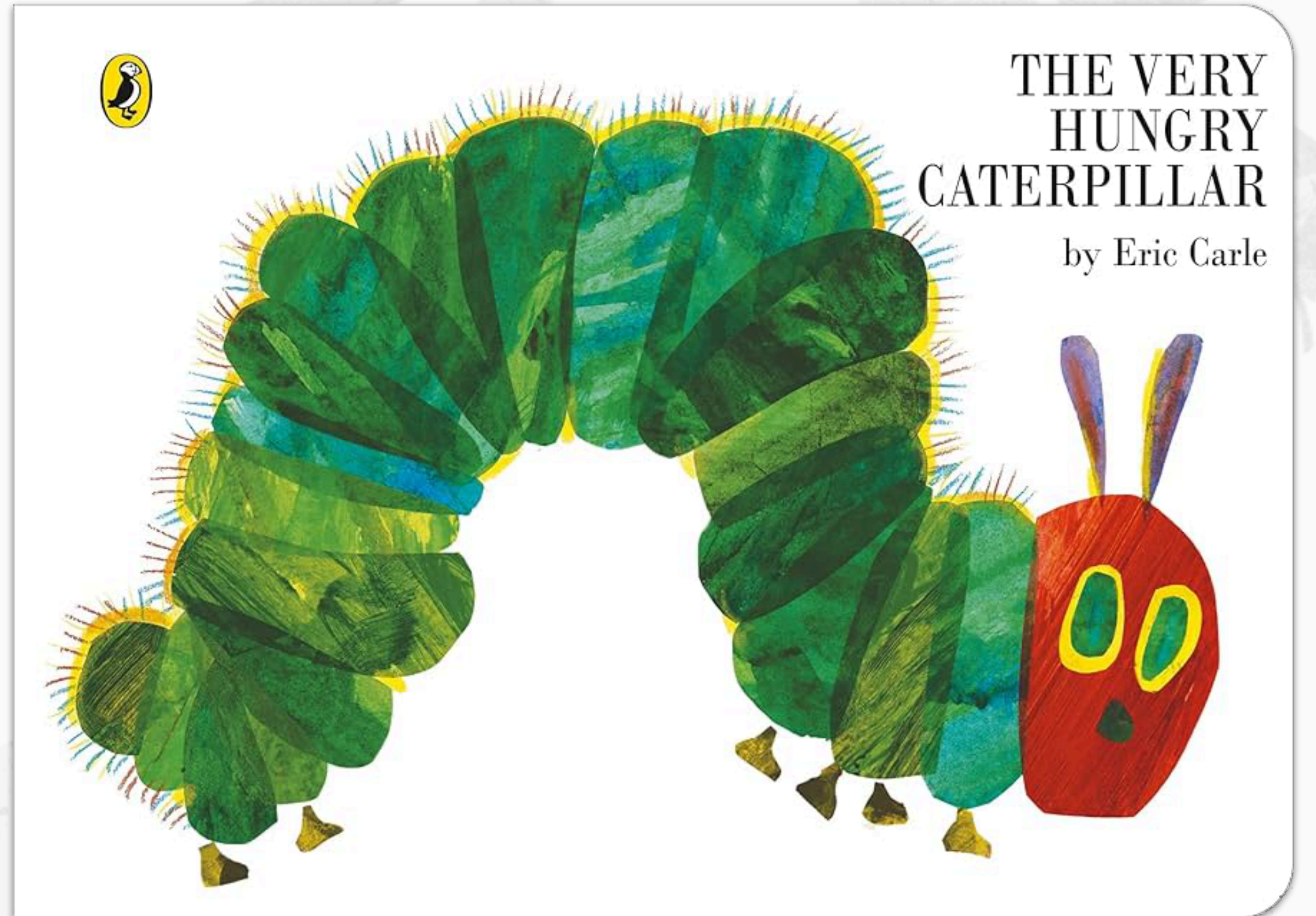
Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar

- Simple, repetitive structure
- Consistent and explicit language



Eric Carle's The Very Hungry Caterpillar

- Small, focused functions
- Logical, predictable flow
- Consistent naming and styling



Reducing cognitive load

- Chunking
- Recognition over recall

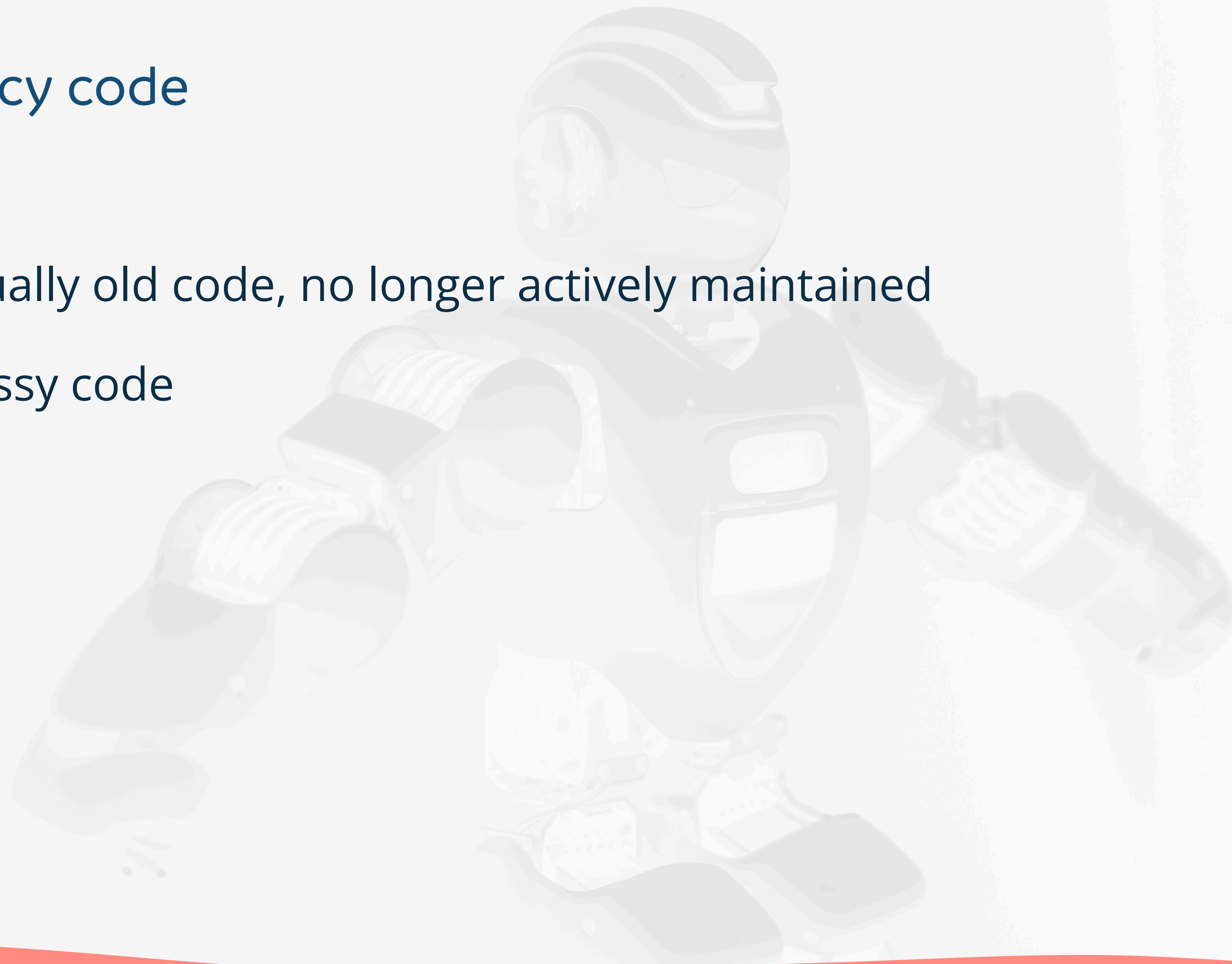




The new legacy code

Legacy code

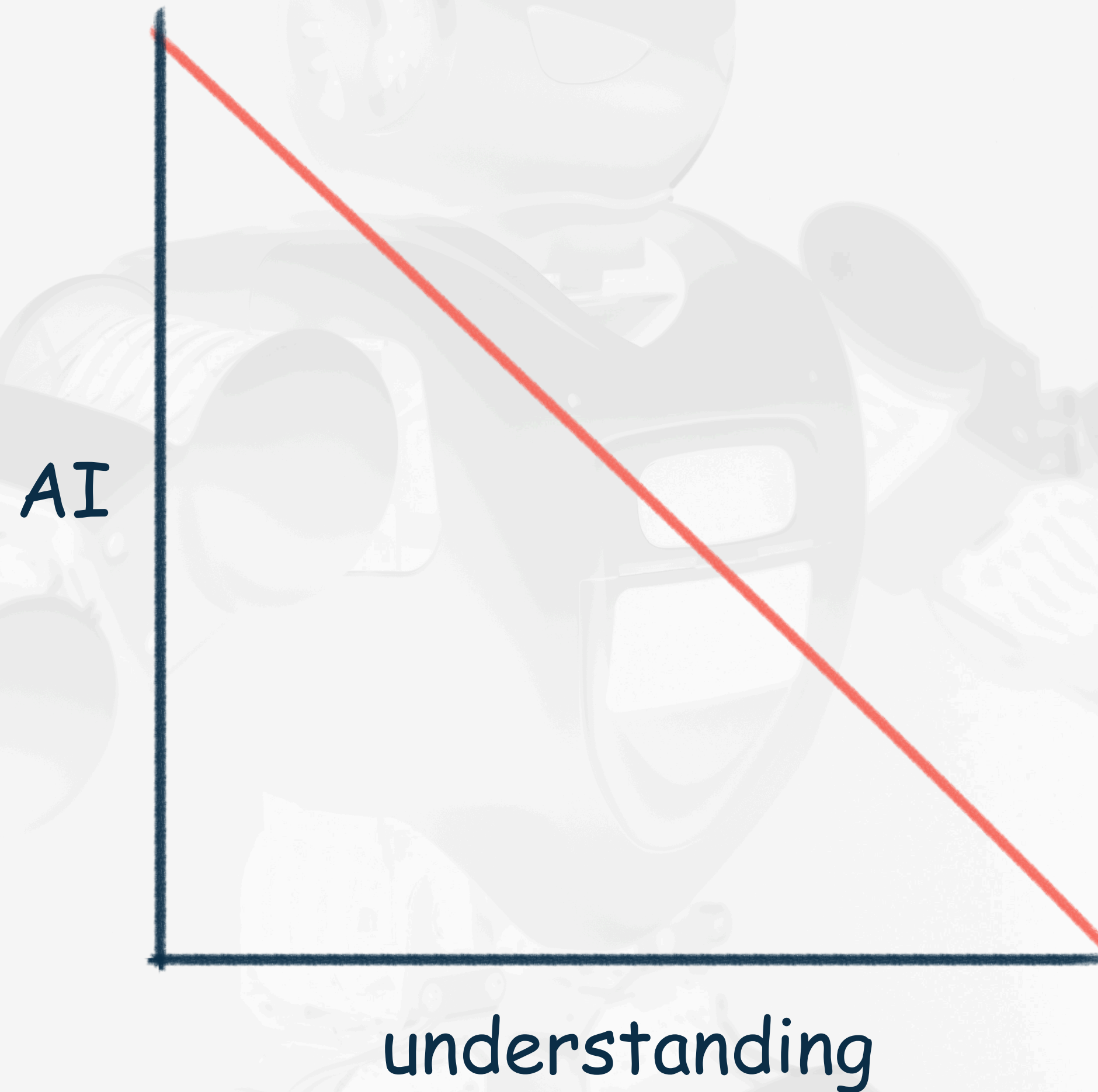
- Usually old code, no longer actively maintained
- Messy code





Vibe coding \neq AI assisted engineering

Vibe coding \neq AI assisted engineering



* Not based on scientific data, but the wonderfully creative human mind



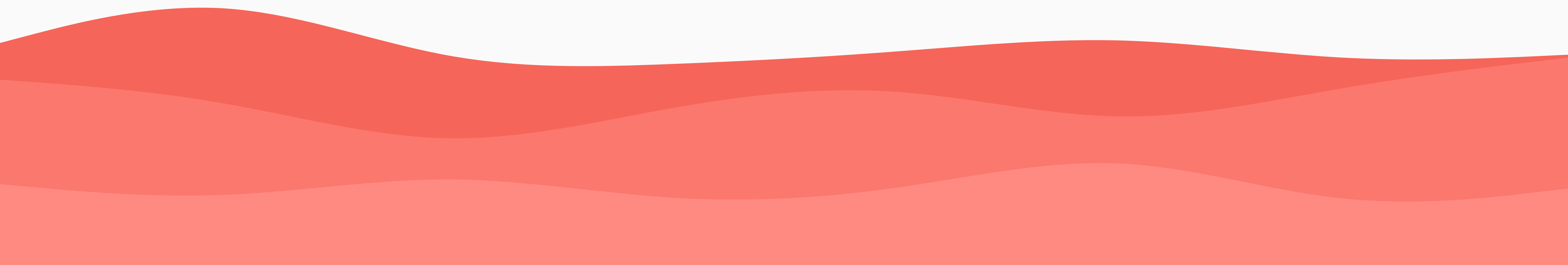
Like James Joyce and Eric Carle,
we, as developers and software
engineers, are creatives

We write code for humans, not machines



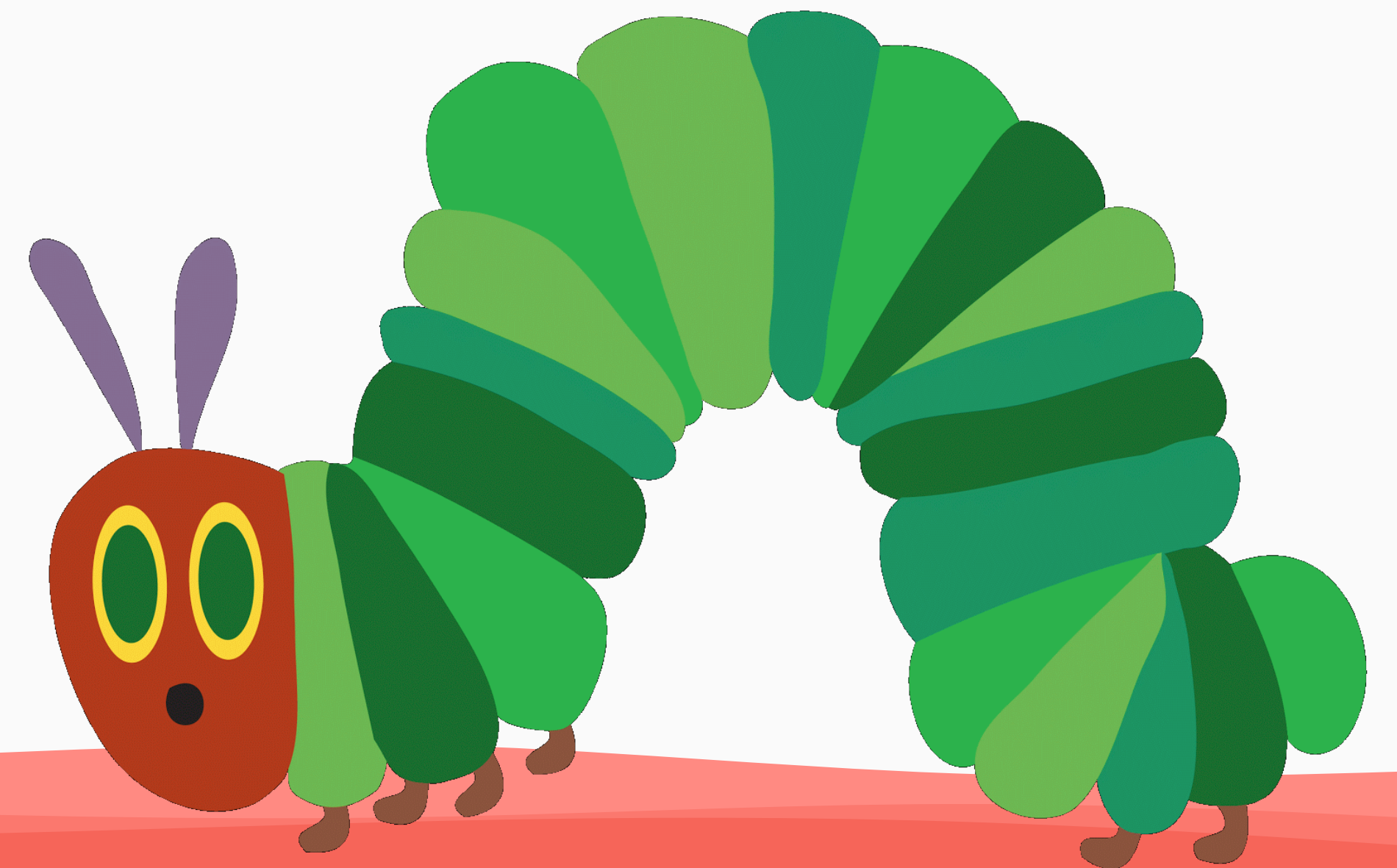
Epilogue

Be more Caterpillar



Be more Caterpillar

- Keep functions small and focused
- Avoid deep nesting
- Use meaningful names
- Maintain consistent styling
- Follow consistent design patterns



ULYSSES

annotated

NOTES for JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES*
DON GIFFORD with ROBERT J. SEIDMAN
REVISED and EXPANDED EDITION



// When I wrote this, only God
// and I understood what I was doing
// Now, God only knows

ULYSSES

annotated

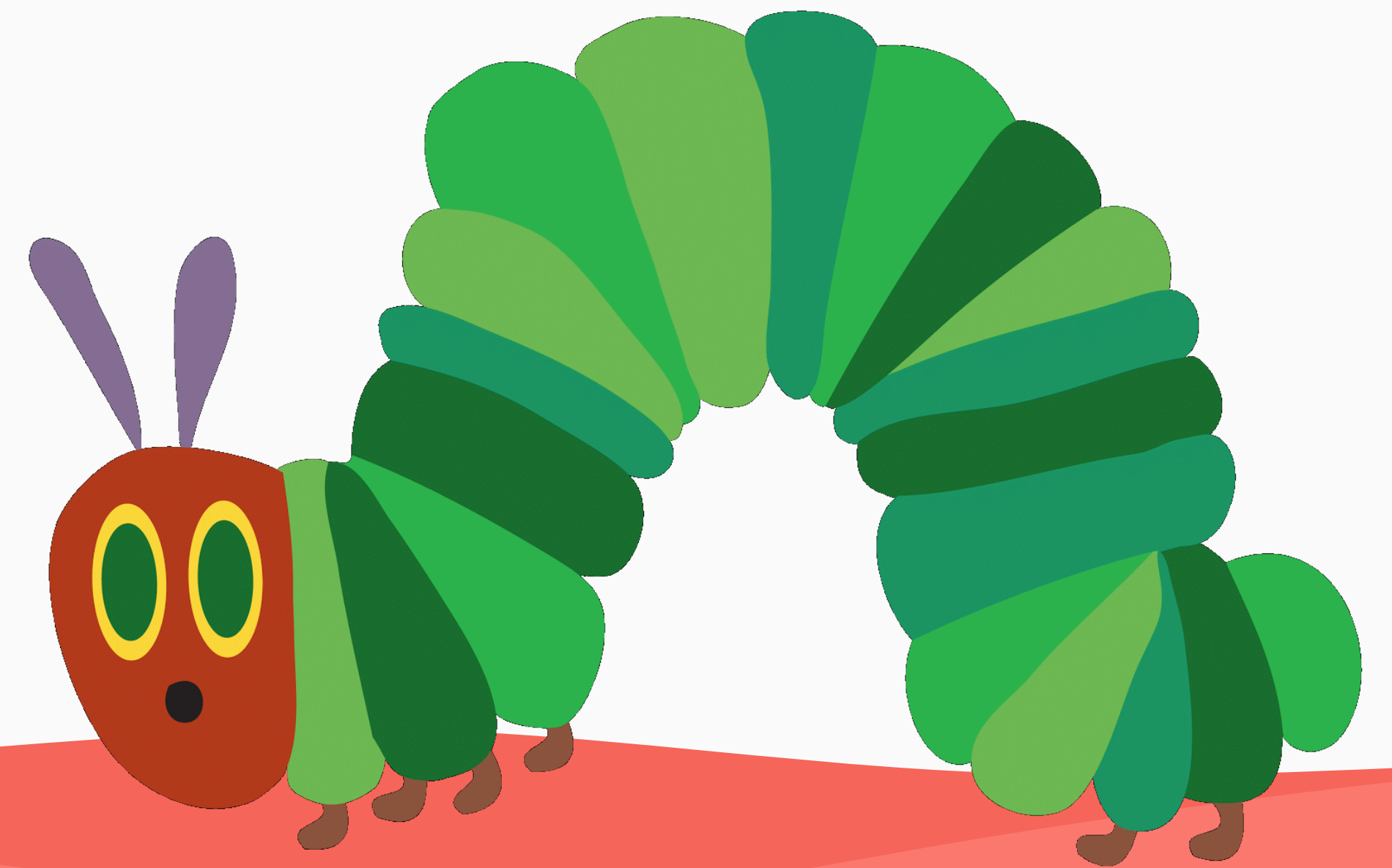
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Thank you Hull



Andy Carter
andycarter.dev



@andycarter.dev



in/drandycarter