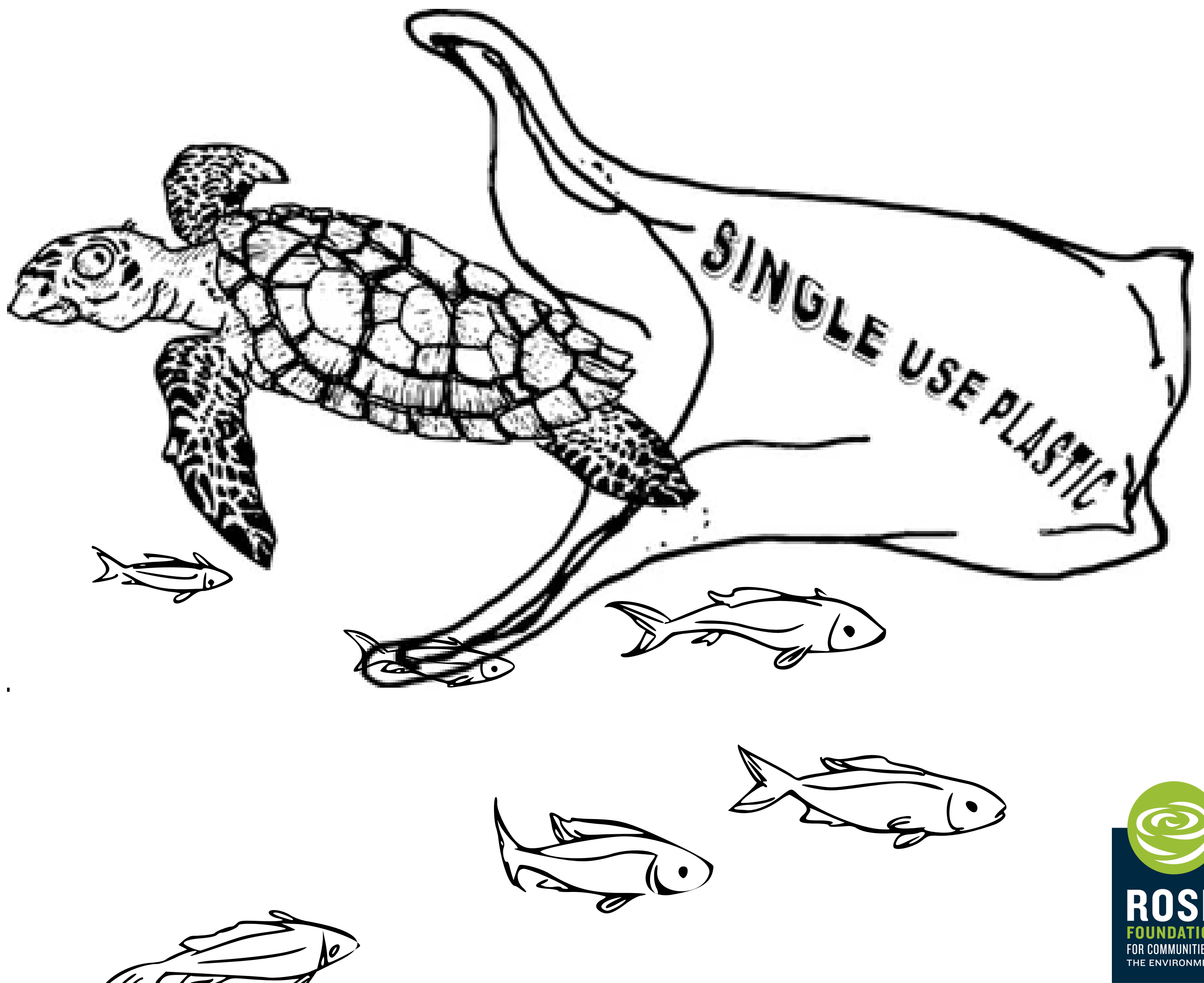




# THE JOURNEY OF A PLASTIC BAG

By: Mindy Leung



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## About the Author:

Mindy was born and raised in Oakland, California. She participated in the New Voices are Rising 2022 summer program, where she learned about the challenges that low-income communities of color face due to racial disparities, class, climate change, environment, and other factors, as well as how to develop creative community-based solutions. Mindy completed the 2022 Summer Academy and continued her studies as a School Year Fellow, where she expanded her knowledge of environmental justice through independent research projects and involvement in the community.

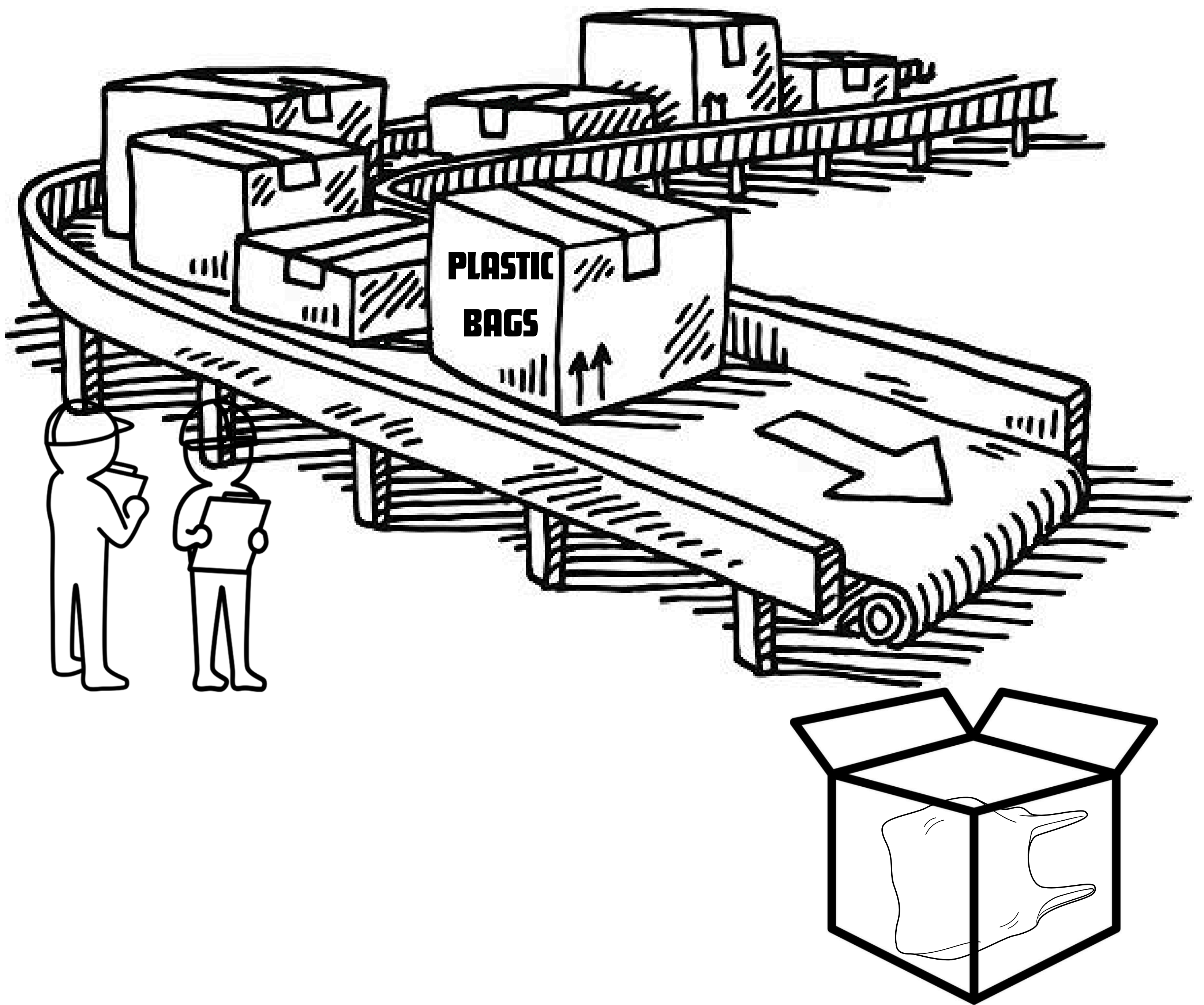


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**Crude oil is mined from the Earth using oil drills to make me! Usually oil drilling releases toxic greenhouse gases and air pollutants that can be harmful to the environment. Most are located in primarily low-income, minority communities that have historically been burdened by a multitude of environmental justice issues.**



**Here is the factory where the factory workers are working hard to make me and ship me off to consumers.**  
**Over 66% of residents within three miles of plastic manufacturing facilities are people of color, over-exposed to air pollution, and enduring underfunded public services.**

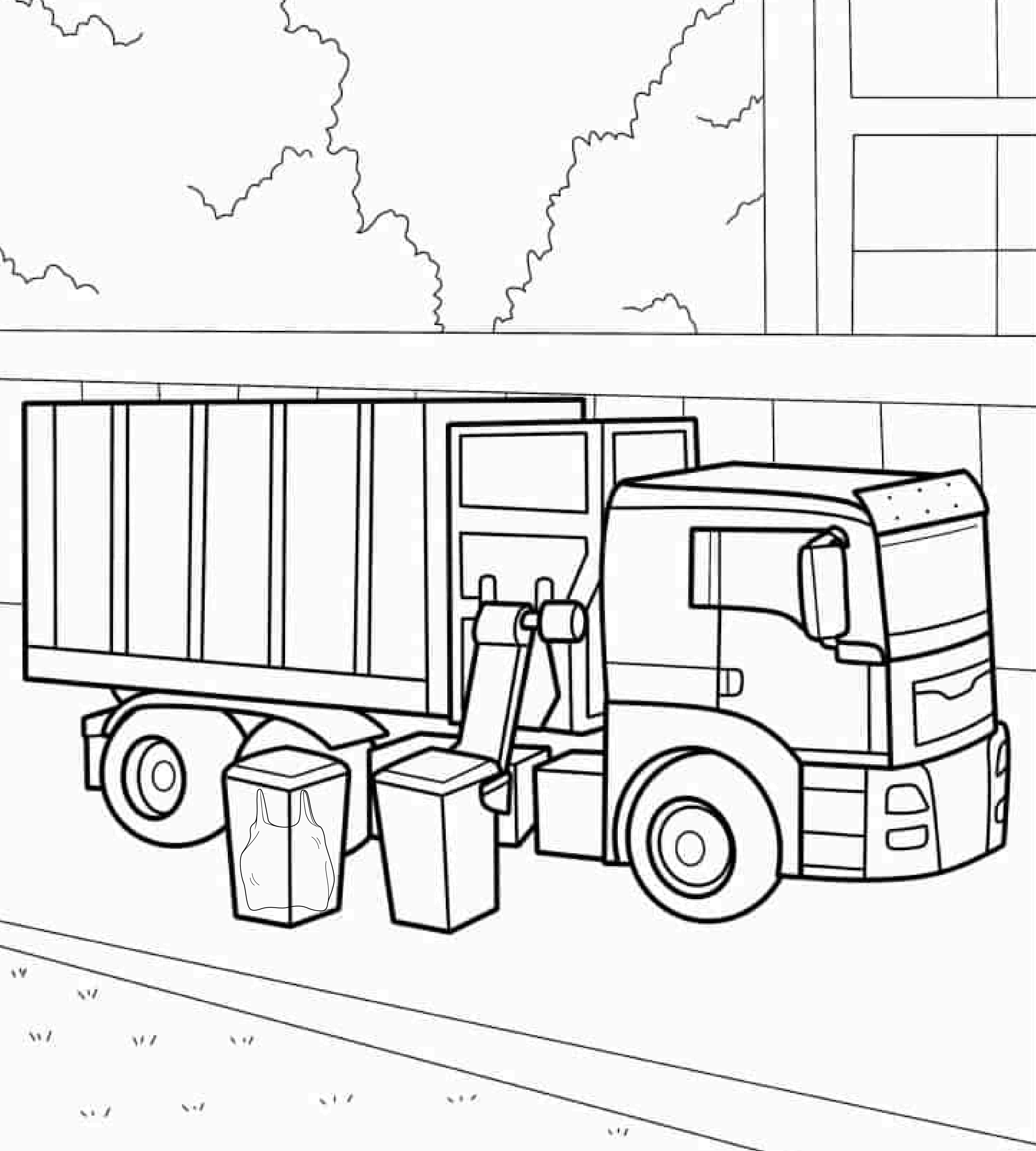


**I get shipped to a grocery store where I will wait for someone to use me for their groceries.**

**Single-use plastics are commonly used in neighborhoods where residents may have limited access to affordable alternatives or reusable products. Disposable plastic items are often cheaper and more accessible, making them the default choice for individuals and businesses in economically disadvantaged areas.**



**When I am not used anymore, I'll get  
thrown in the trash can.**



**Then when the trashcan is full, the garbage truck will come by and empty all the trash cans in the neighborhood.**

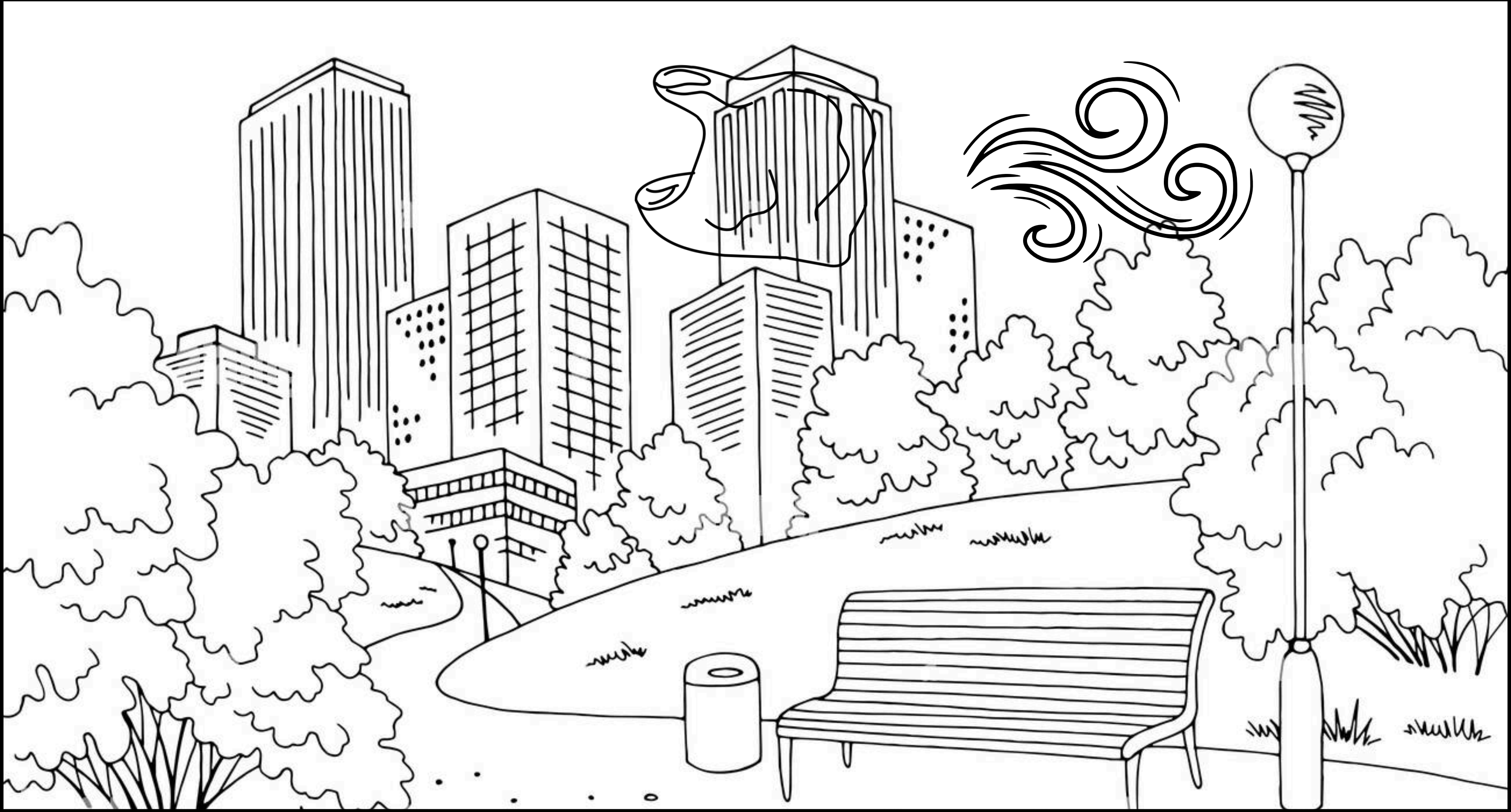


**The garbage truck driver will take me away  
with the other trash and transport me  
somewhere else.**

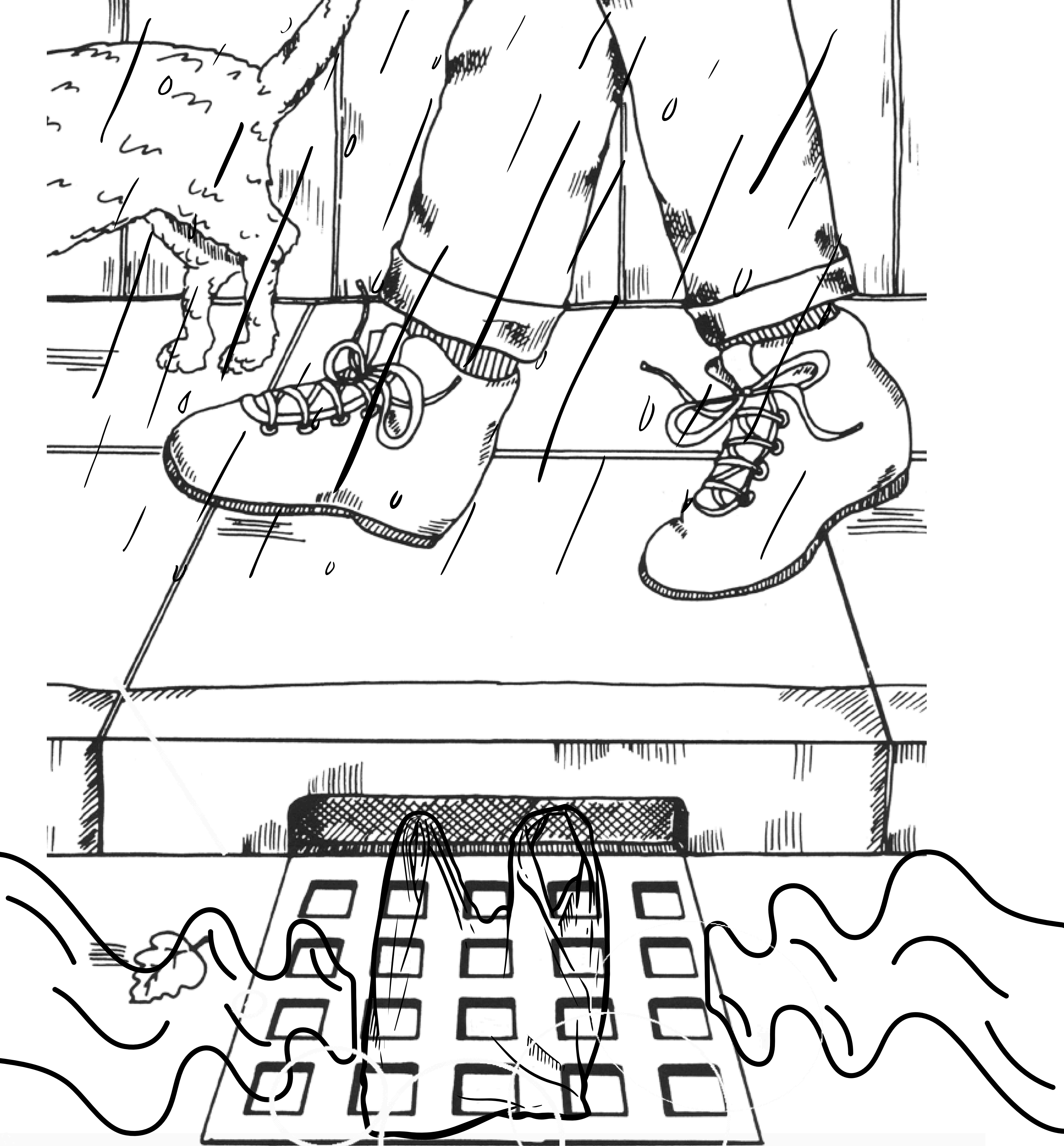




**The trucks dumps me in a landfill near an area predominantly populated by people of color and low-income residents. This does not seem like the right place to have our land fill.**



**I am BORED. Luckily the wind can pick me up and take me to explore different places. Where will the wind take me?**



Your paragraph text

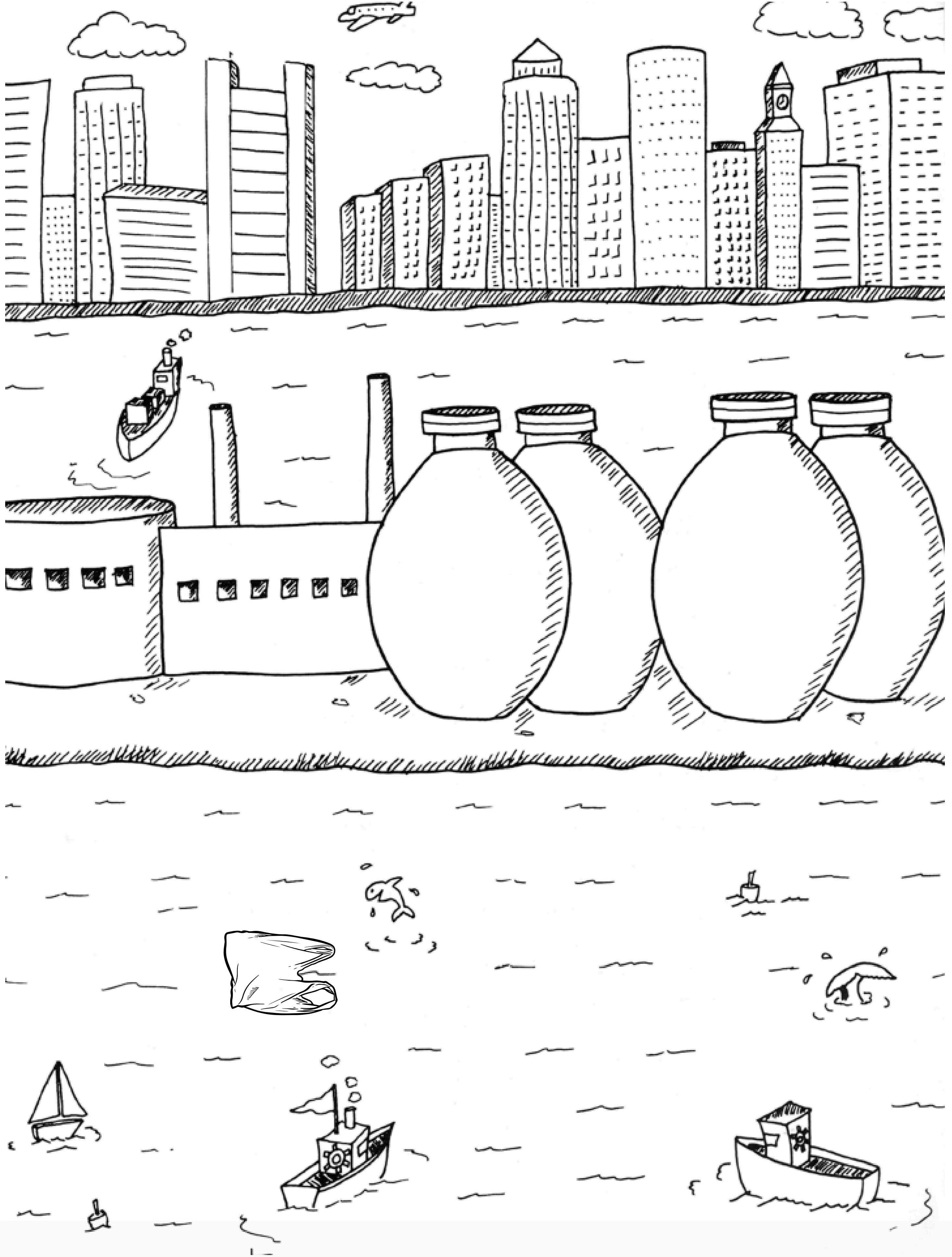
**Oh No! It is raining. The pouring rain weighs me down and I fall in a flowing water stream, into a storm drain**



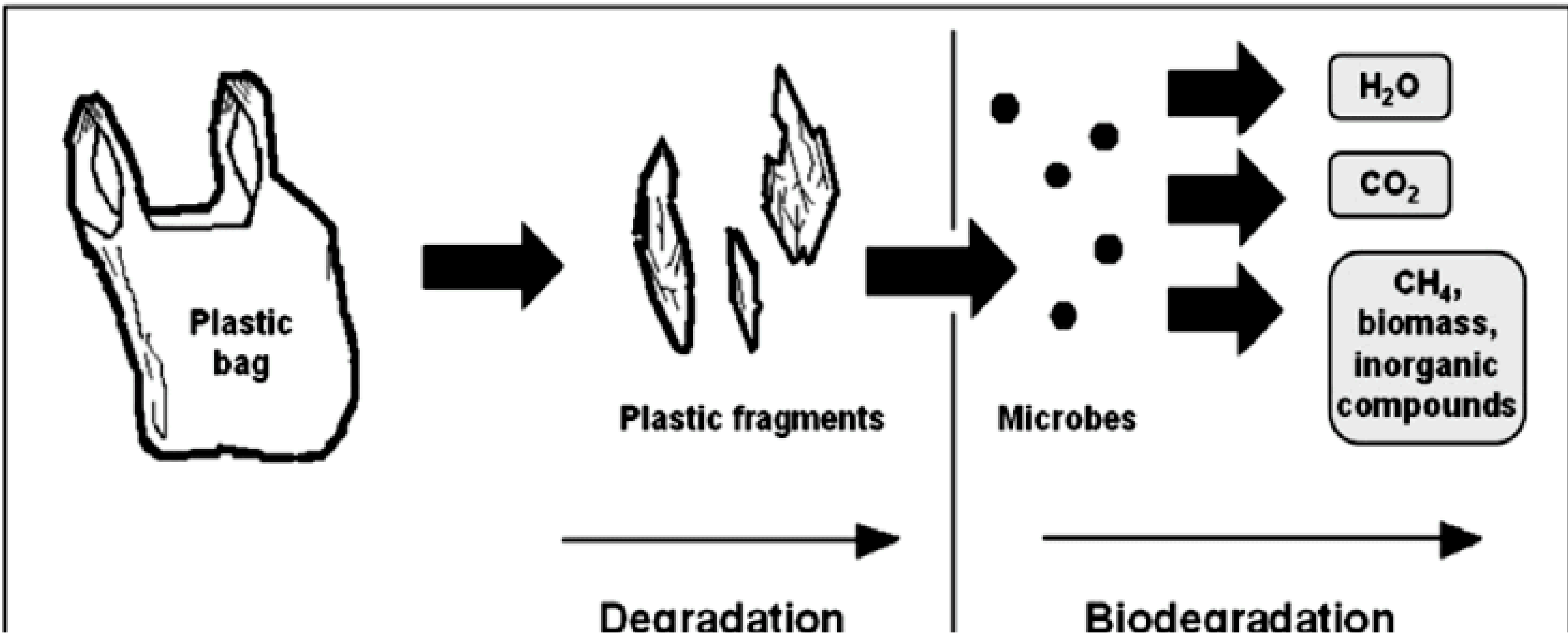


**I was released into the river, carried along by other plastic, trash, and debris, drifting downstream**

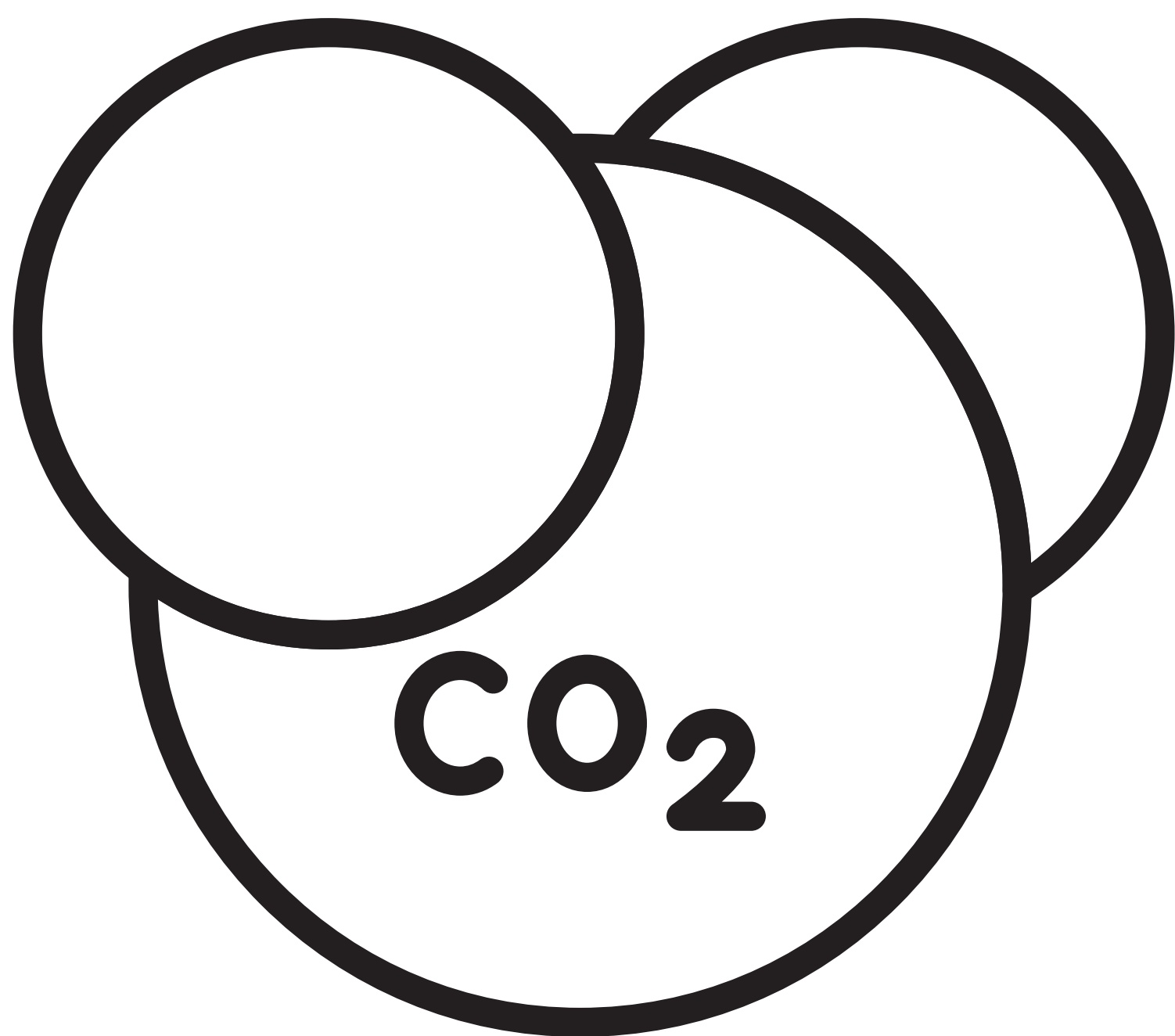
**Runoff often carries pollutants, including chemicals, heavy metals, and other contaminants, from urban and industrial areas into water bodies. These pollutants can negatively impact the health and well-being of nearby communities, particularly those that are already marginalized or economically disadvantaged due to discriminatory zoning policies and bad stormwater infrastructure.**

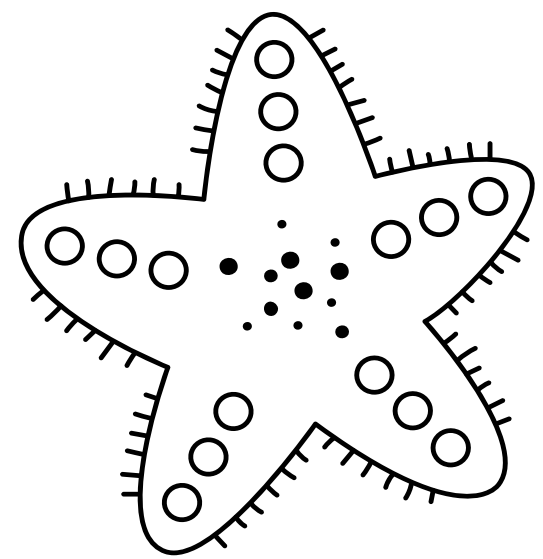
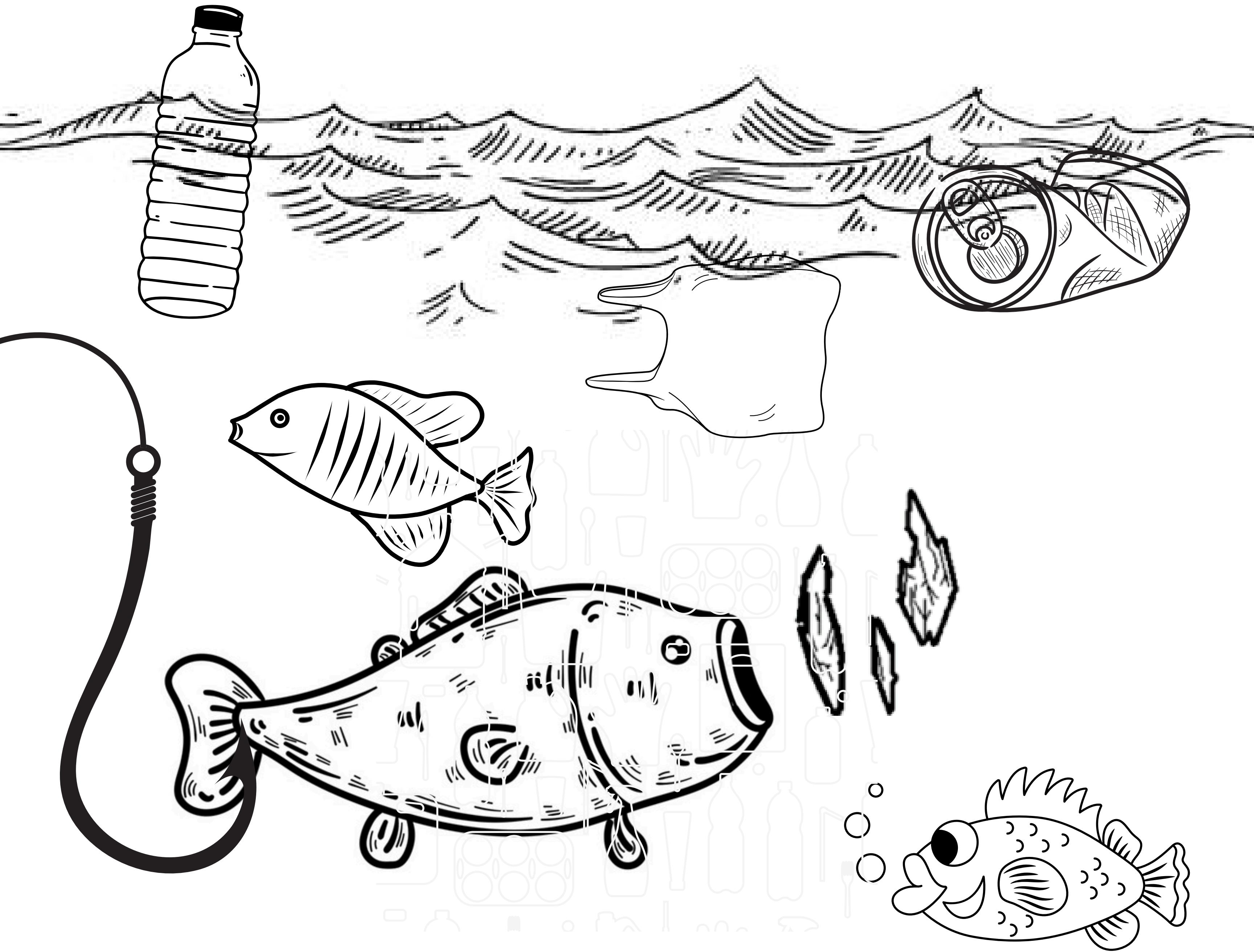


**After a long journey downstream, I eventually find myself in the ocean, surrounded by many marine animals.**

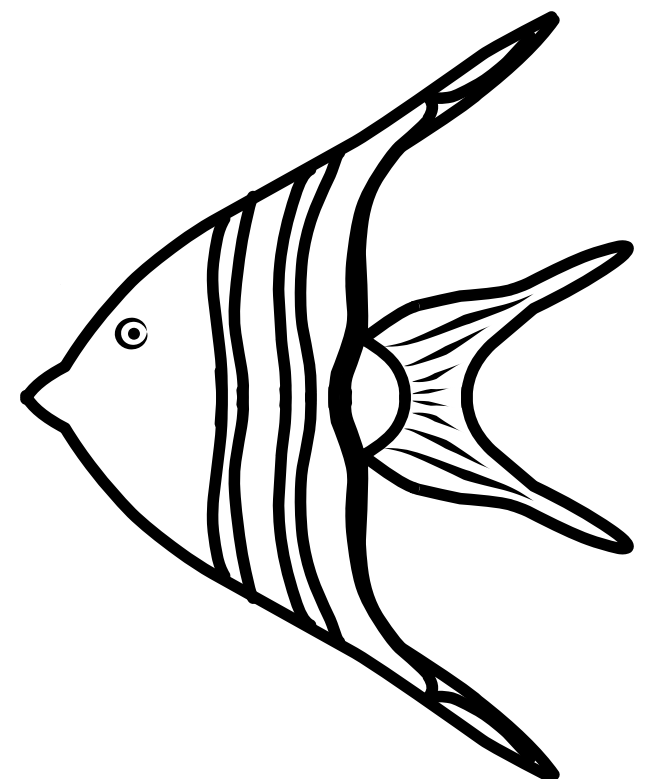
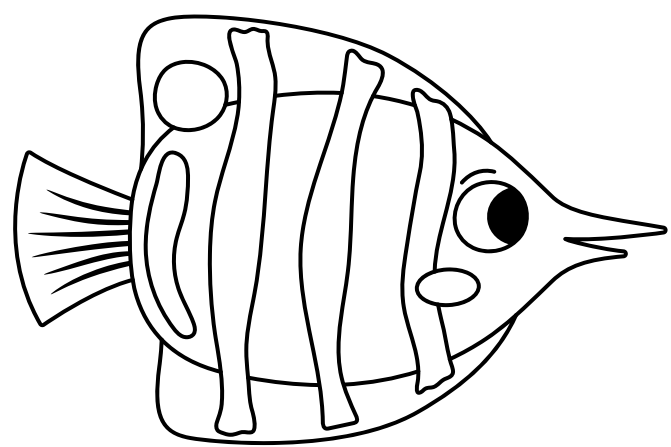


I start to degrade and breakdown into tiny plastic pieces releasing carbon dioxide ( $CO_2$ ) and methane ( $CH_4$ ) byproducts into the air.

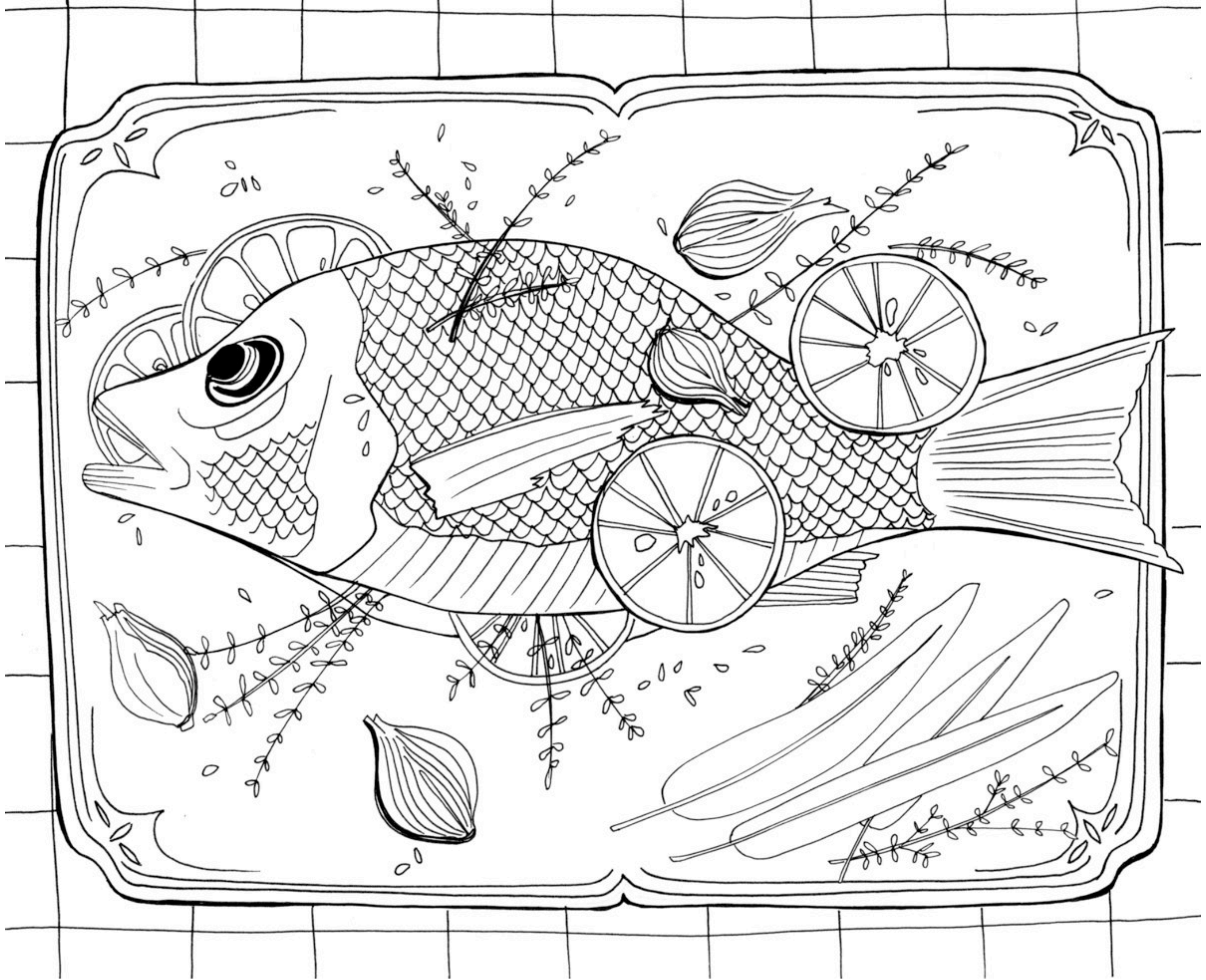




**Oh No! The fish thinks that  
I'm a tasty snack.**







**I made my way into the fish's digestive tract and absorbed into it's blood stream. The fish ended up becoming someone's dinner too. Hahahaha >:)**

**Consuming fish that have ingested microplastics can pose health risks to humans. When microplastics are ingested by fish, they can accumulate in the fish's tissues over time. When humans consume these contaminated fish, they may unknowingly ingest the microplastics along with the fish.**

# Where will the Plastic Bag go next?

The world produces between 300 to 400 million tons of plastic every year, and production is expected to double by 2040. Plastic pollution disproportionately affects marginalized communities that live in close proximity to plastic production and waste sites, leading to environmental injustice. They bear the brunt of environmental degradation caused by plastic pollution

