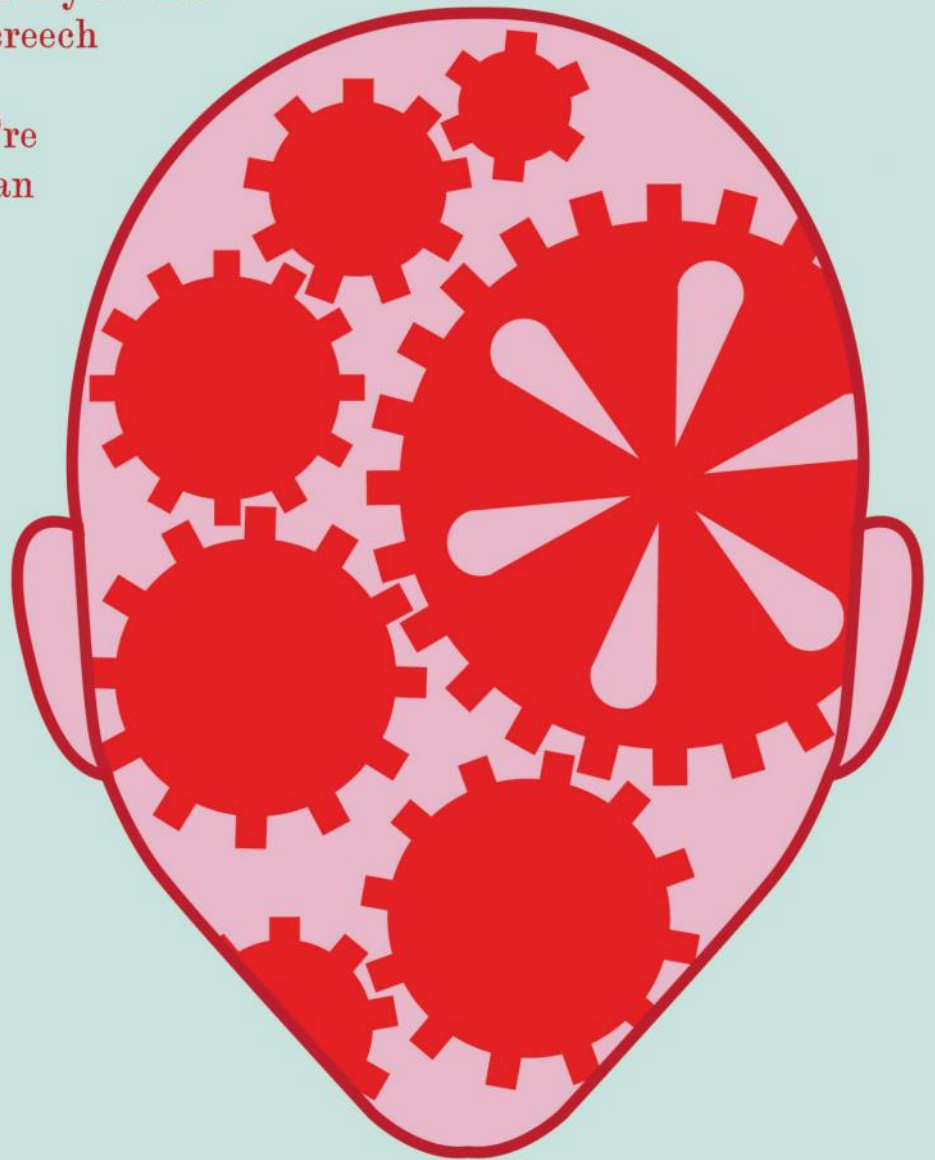


The conditioner bottle makes a cavernous farting noise when Alma squirts whatever's left of it on her hands. It's stubborn and thick and I used up most of it while she was shaving her legs. She shakes her arm trying to loosen the cream and the only thing that comes off it is red dust from her elbows. I wanna call her ashy because that makes her feel human, but I can't ignore the worn metal that creeps through the skin suit. She's got until the end of the year, at most. I just got refurbished. The fleshy parts of me run with blood while my gears continue their silent and perfect machinations.

"Let me help you with that." I scrape the inside of the bottle with my finger and massage the conditioner into her hair.

She leans her head into my hands.

The gears inside it pulse, screech and zap at my fingers like interrupted currents. They're more erratic and human than the seven organs left inside me. I massage deeper, in tune with the cogs. Tick. Tick. Tack. Squak. Eeek. Tick. Tick. Tack.



Coging

by: Laura Andrea

