




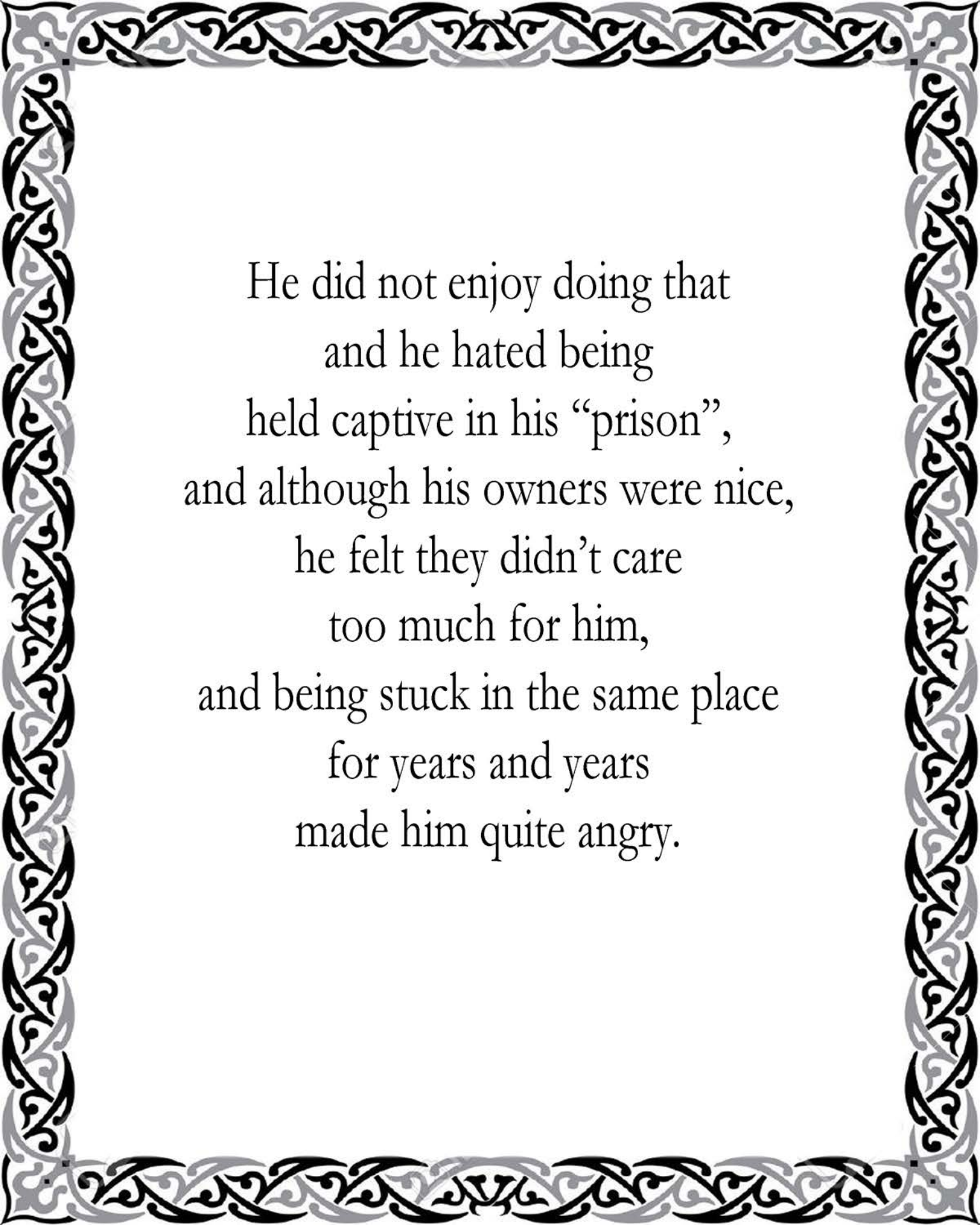
Keaton's Cage

written by
Nathan Frias

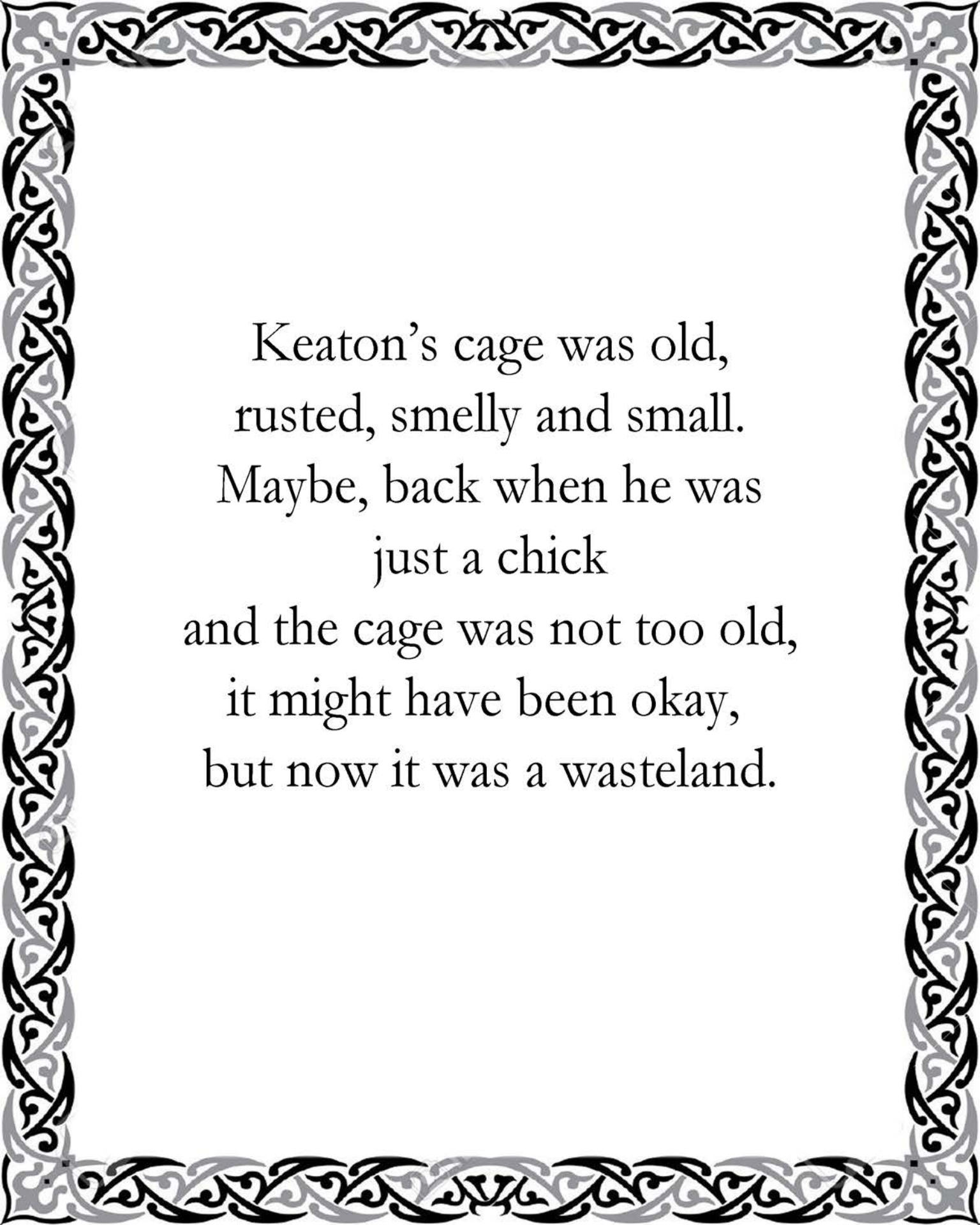
Illustrated
by
Emily Owens

A decorative border with a repeating pattern of stylized, interlocking scrollwork and floral motifs, rendered in black and grey, framing the text.

All his life
Keaton was just a house pet
who did the same thing every day:
wake up, eat, sleep, and repeat.

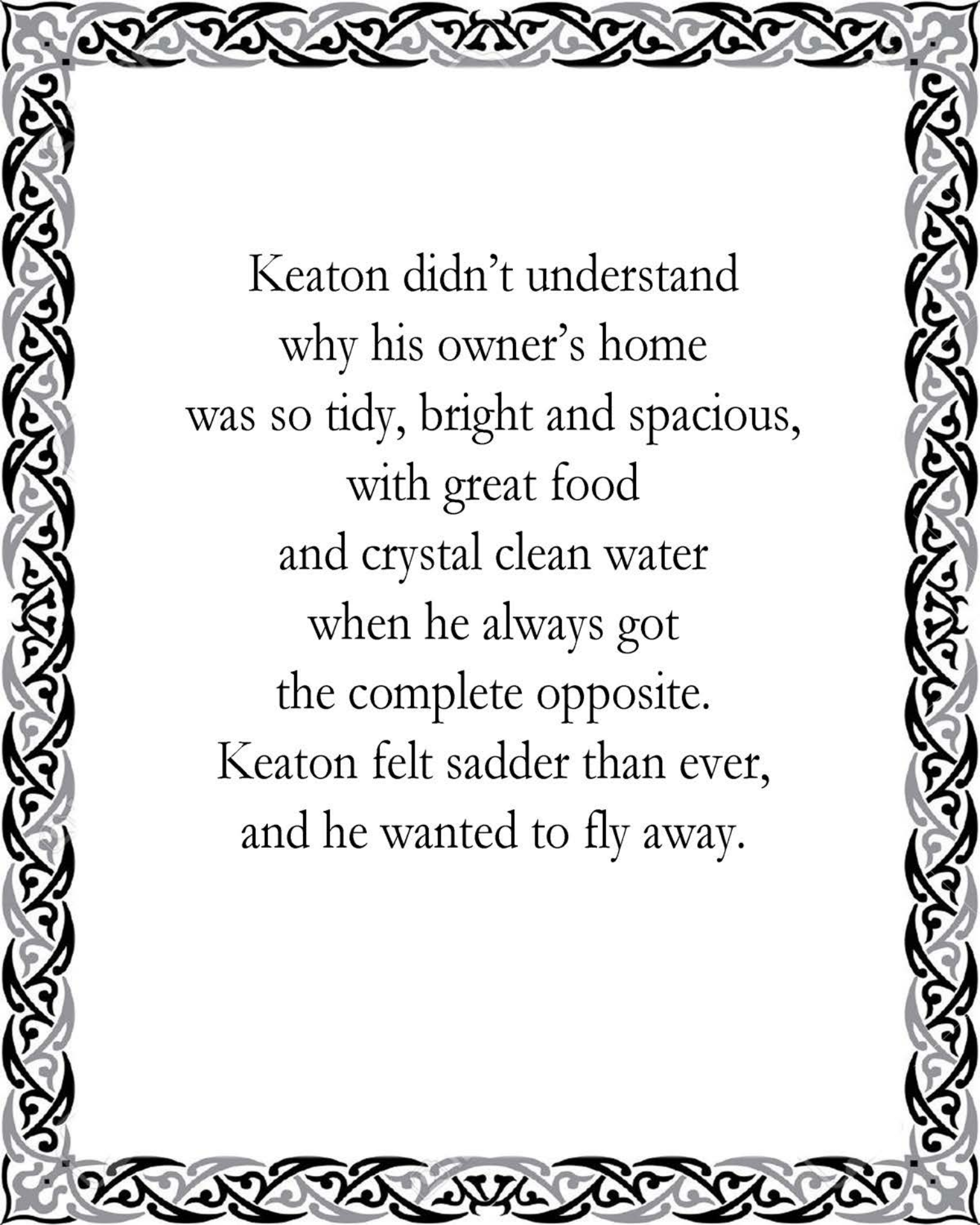
A decorative border with a repeating pattern of stylized, interlocking scrollwork and floral motifs in black and grey, framing the text.

He did not enjoy doing that
and he hated being
held captive in his “prison”,
and although his owners were nice,
he felt they didn’t care
too much for him,
and being stuck in the same place
for years and years
made him quite angry.



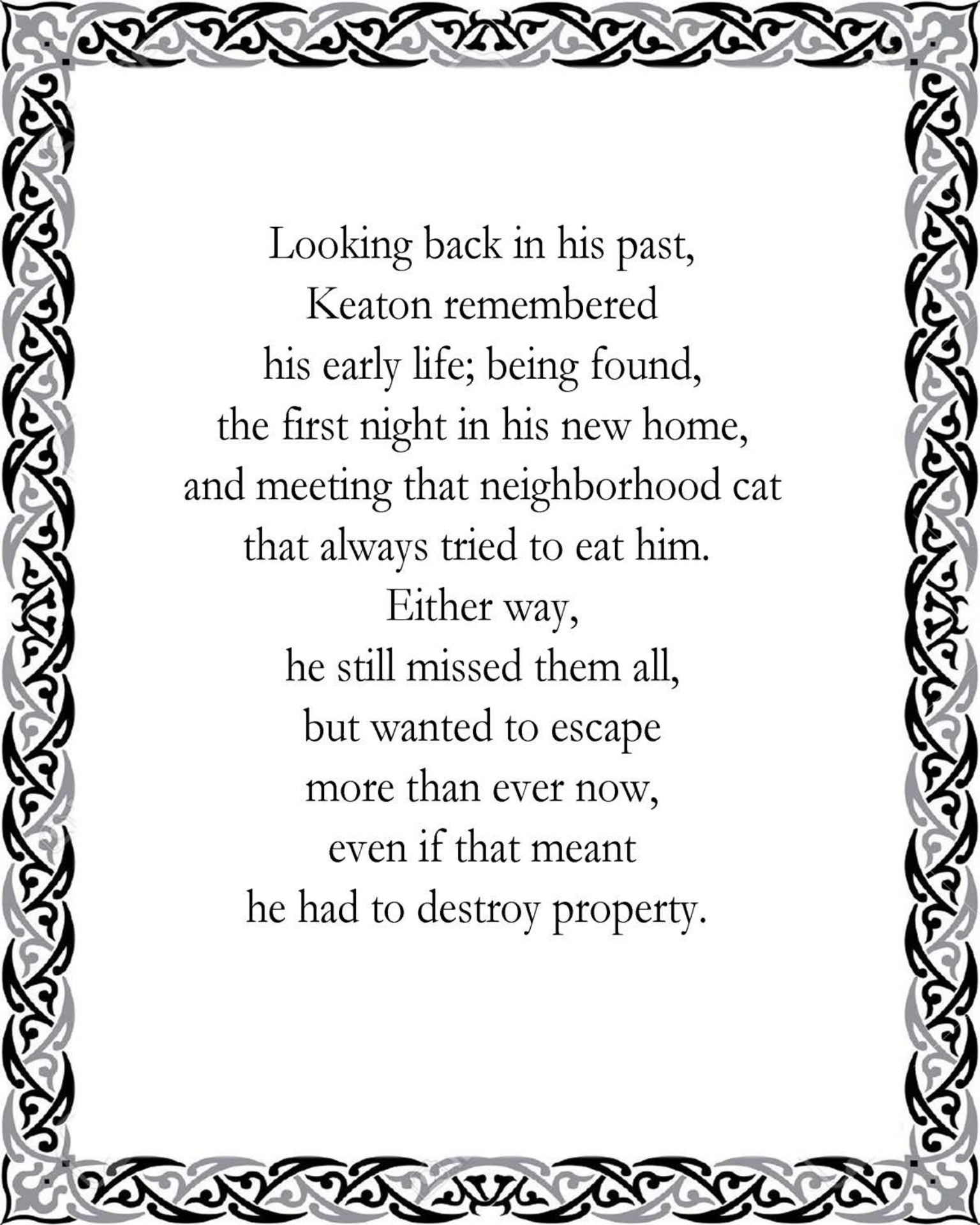
Keaton's cage was old,
rusted, smelly and small.
Maybe, back when he was
just a chick
and the cage was not too old,
it might have been okay,
but now it was a wasteland.



A decorative border with a repeating pattern of stylized, interlocking scrollwork and floral motifs in black and grey, framing the text.

Keaton didn't understand
why his owner's home
was so tidy, bright and spacious,
with great food
and crystal clean water
when he always got
the complete opposite.
Keaton felt sadder than ever,
and he wanted to fly away.

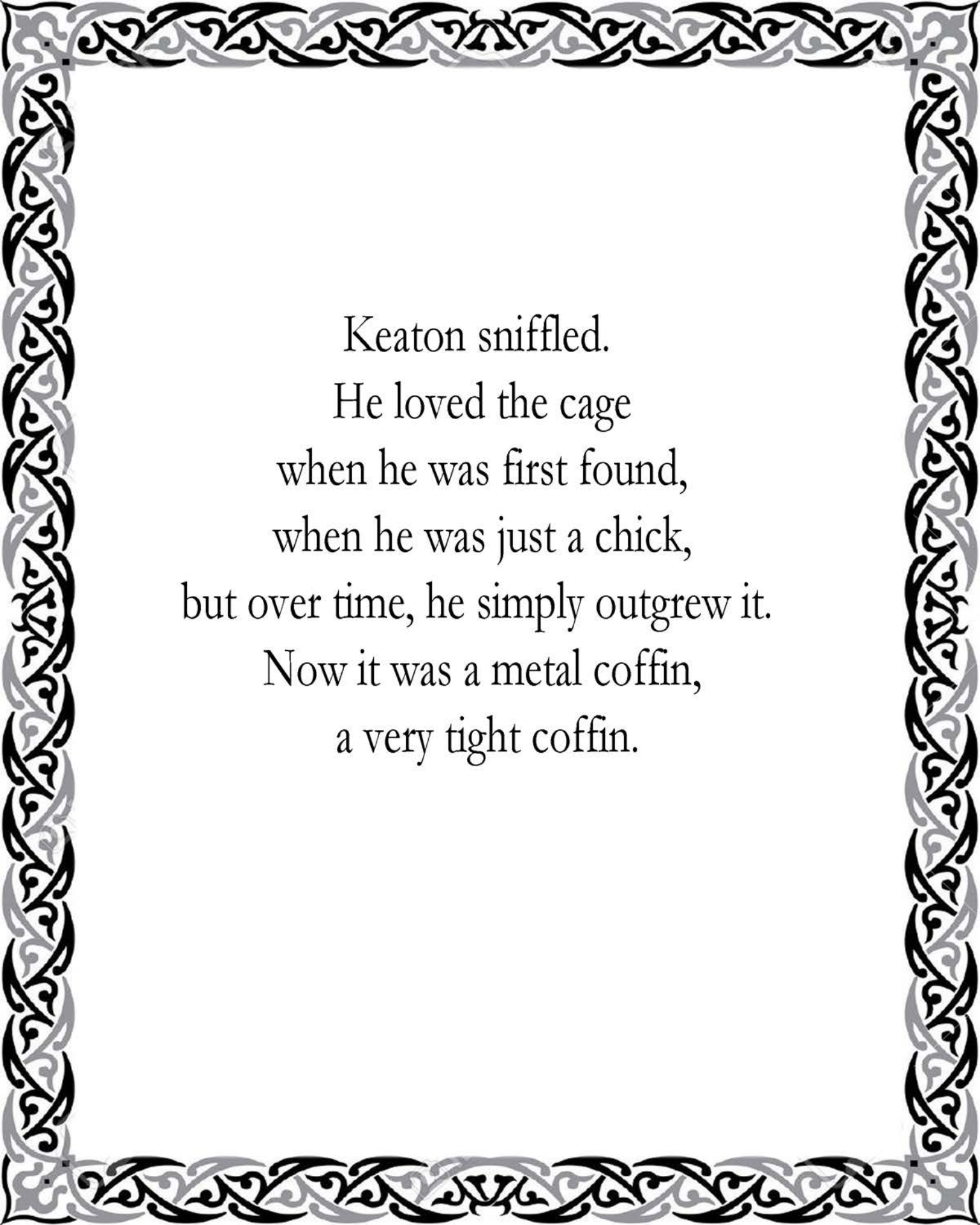


A decorative border with a repeating scrollwork pattern surrounds the text.

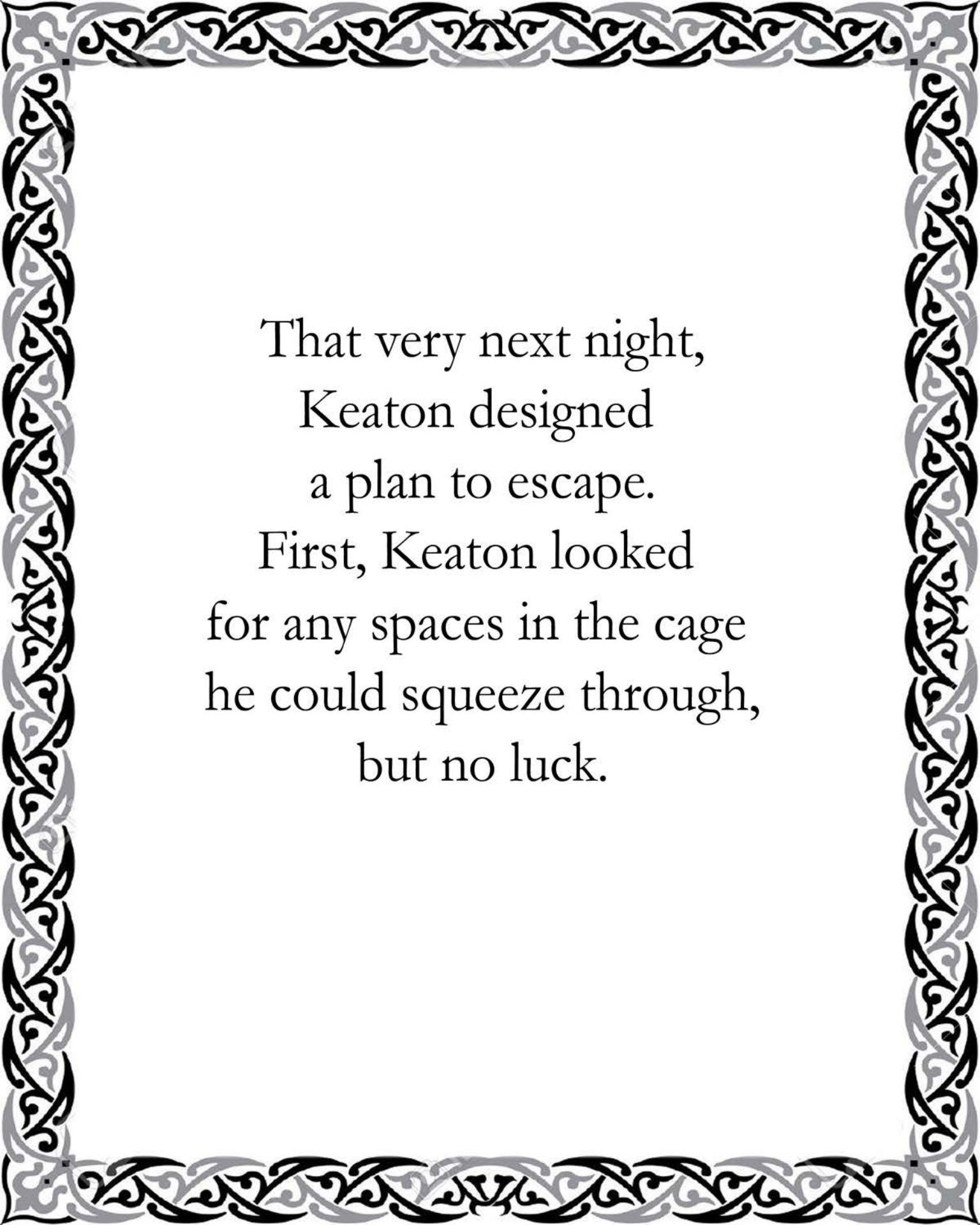
Looking back in his past,
Keaton remembered
his early life; being found,
the first night in his new home,
and meeting that neighborhood cat
that always tried to eat him.

Either way,
he still missed them all,
but wanted to escape
more than ever now,
even if that meant
he had to destroy property.

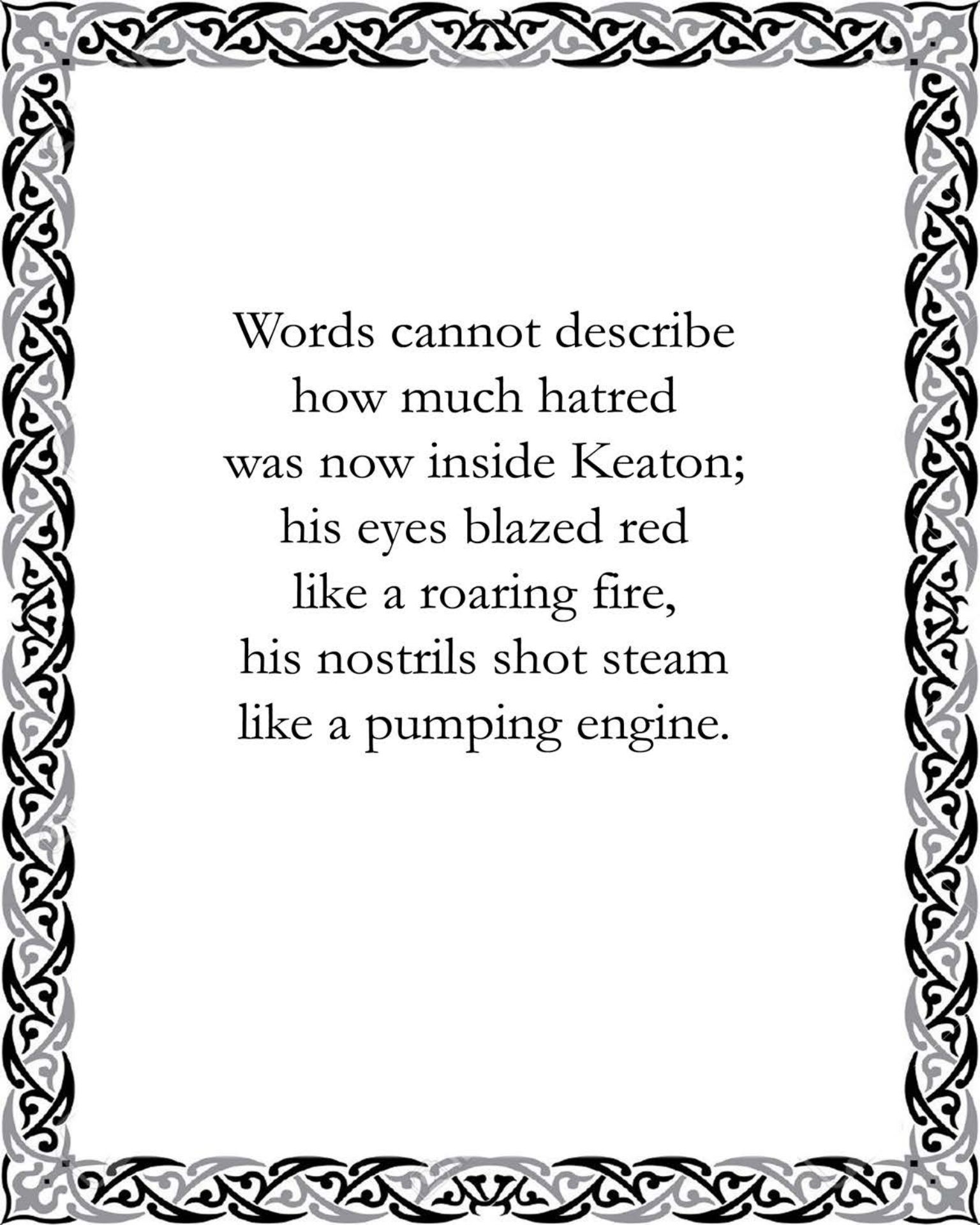




Keaton sniffled.
He loved the cage
when he was first found,
when he was just a chick,
but over time, he simply outgrew it.
Now it was a metal coffin,
a very tight coffin.

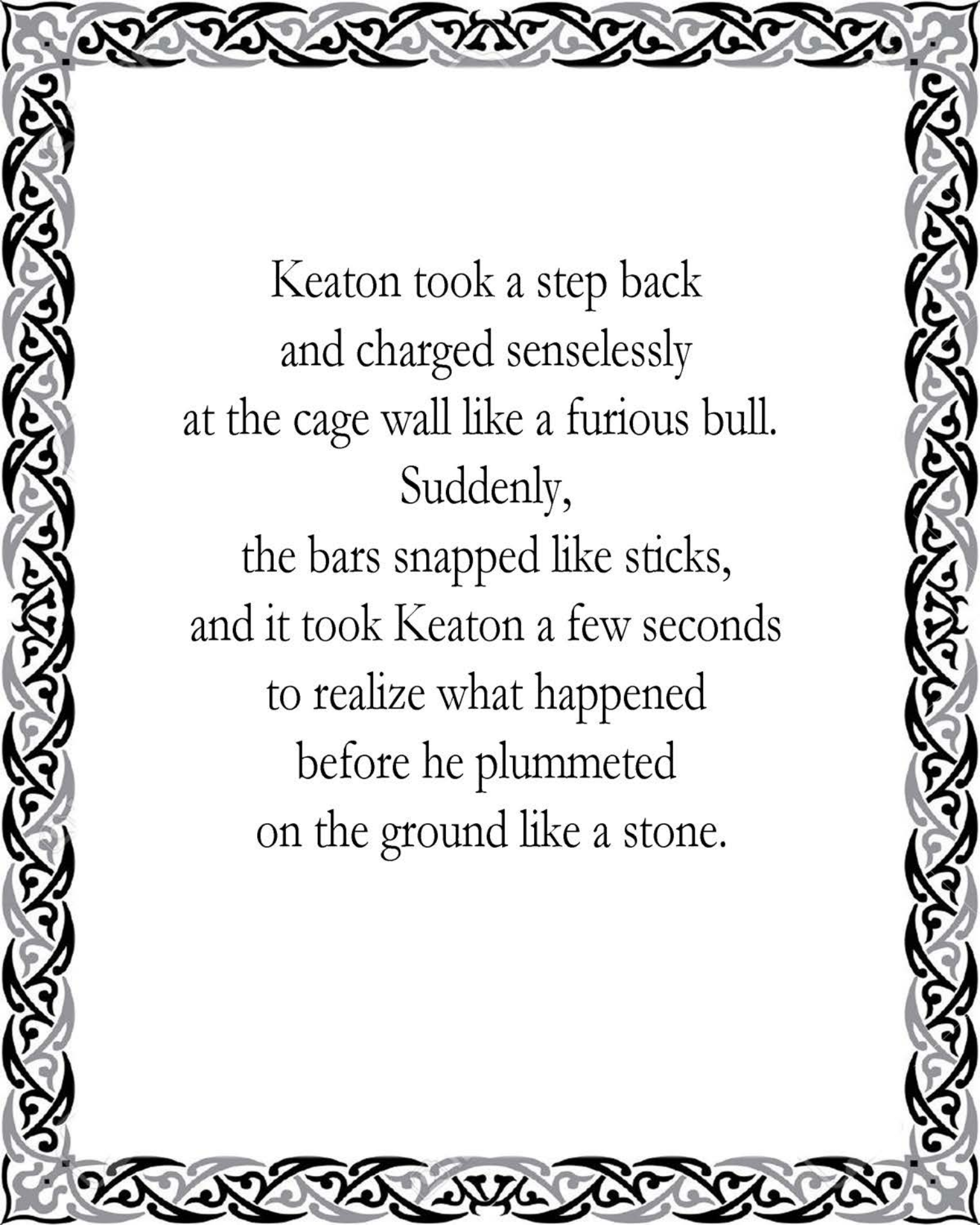
A decorative border with a repeating scrollwork pattern surrounds the text.

That very next night,
Keaton designed
a plan to escape.
First, Keaton looked
for any spaces in the cage
he could squeeze through,
but no luck.

A decorative border with a repeating floral and scrollwork pattern surrounds the text.

Words cannot describe
how much hatred
was now inside Keaton;
his eyes blazed red
like a roaring fire,
his nostrils shot steam
like a pumping engine.

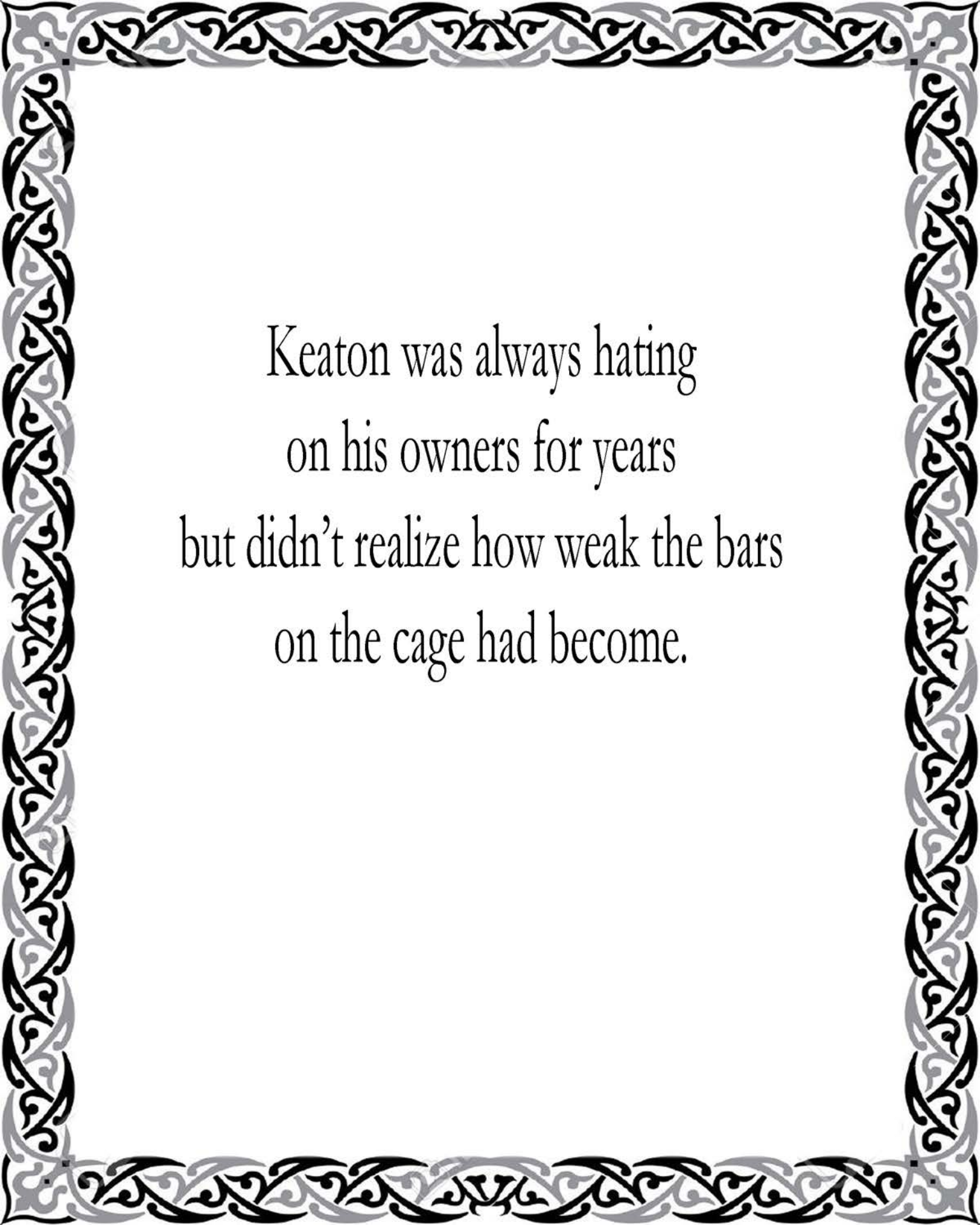


A decorative border with a repeating scrollwork pattern surrounds the text.

Keaton took a step back
and charged senselessly
at the cage wall like a furious bull.

Suddenly,
the bars snapped like sticks,
and it took Keaton a few seconds
to realize what happened
before he plummeted
on the ground like a stone.



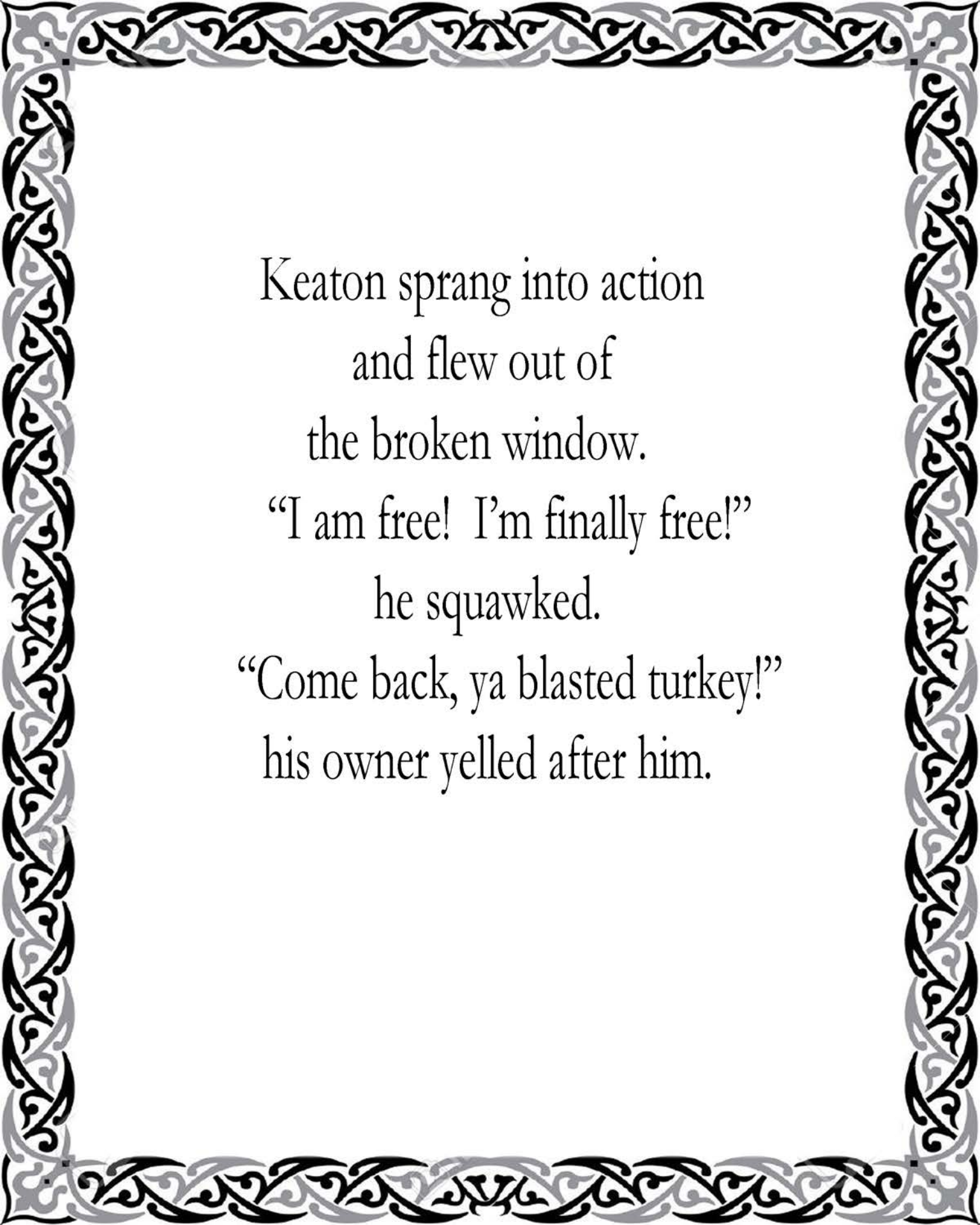
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Keaton was always hating
on his owners for years
but didn't realize how weak the bars
on the cage had become.



Spotting a window,
Keaton quietly picked up a plant pot,
aimed it and threw.

The window shattered,
creating a very noticeable noise.

A decorative border with a repeating scrollwork pattern surrounds the text.

Keaton sprang into action
and flew out of
the broken window.

“I am free! I’m finally free!”
he squawked.

“Come back, ya blasted turkey!”
his owner yelled after him.

“No way! After all,
if you don't want something,
let it go.”

