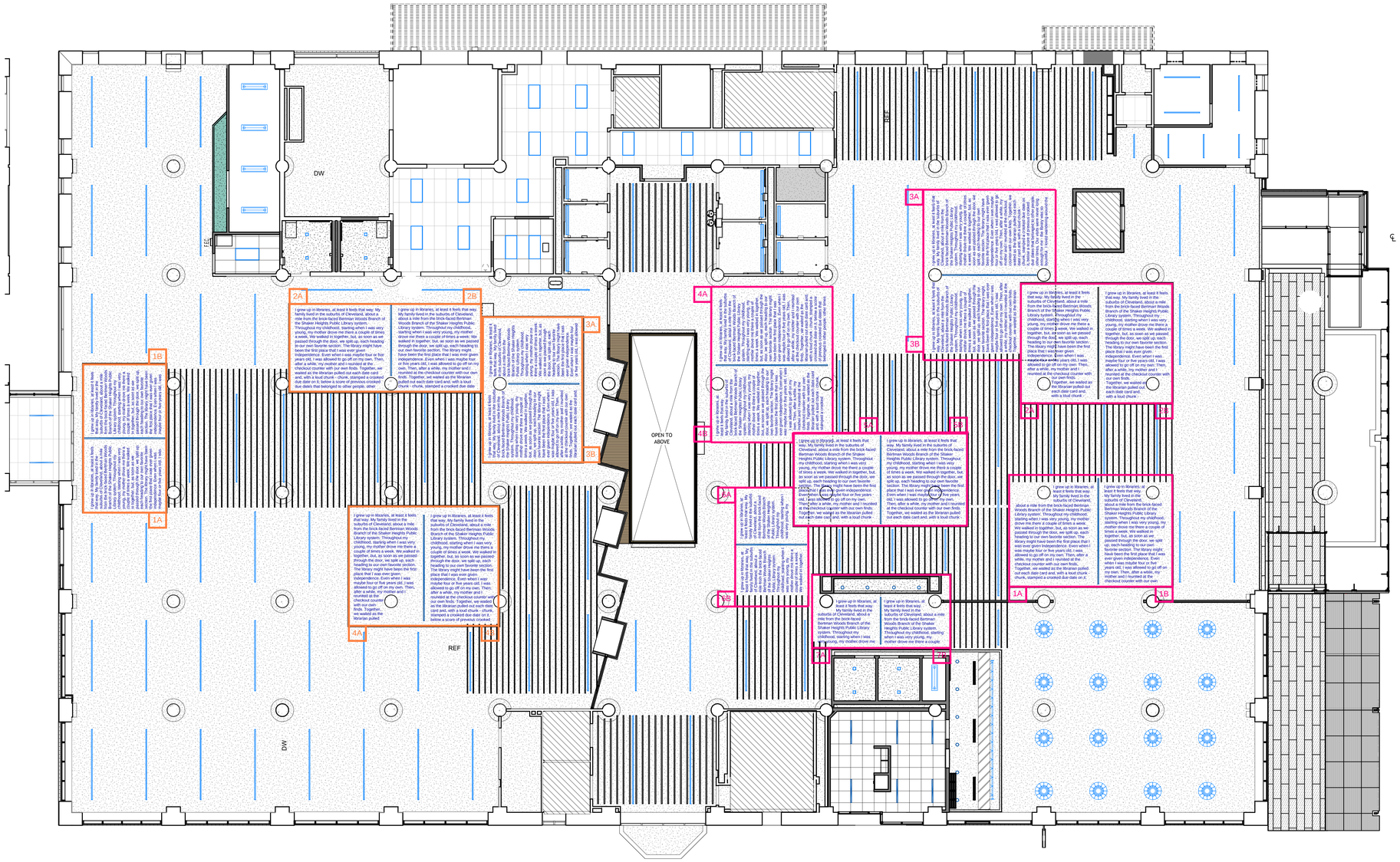


I grew up in libraries, at least it feels that way. My family lived in the suburbs of Cleveland, about a mile from the brick-faced Bertman Woods Branch of the Shaker Heights Public Library system. Throughout my childhood, starting when I was very young, my mother drove me there a couple of times a week. We walked in together, but, as soon as we passed through the door, we split up, each heading to our own favorite section. The library might have been the first place that I was ever given independence. Even when I was maybe four or five years old, I was allowed to go off on my own. Then, after a while, my mother and I reunited at the checkout counter with our own finds. Together, we waited as the librarian pulled out each date card and, with a loud chunk - chunk, stamped a crooked due date on it. below a score of previous crooked