

KOESTLER ARTS + ART AID

Hello from Koestler Arts!

Koestler Arts + Art Aid sheets suggest creative tasks that can be done in-cell. For most all you need is paper and a pencil - though if you have further materials please use them.

You can enter the 2021 Koestler Awards now!

Please complete a Koestler entry form for every entry and see our guidance notes for full terms and conditions. We've increased the maximum number of entries per person to 10 this year. Entry forms should be attached to this sheet. If not, or if you need more, please ask education, the library, or contact us at FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS (no stamp or address needed). The deadline for submissions has been extended to Tuesday 1 June 2021.

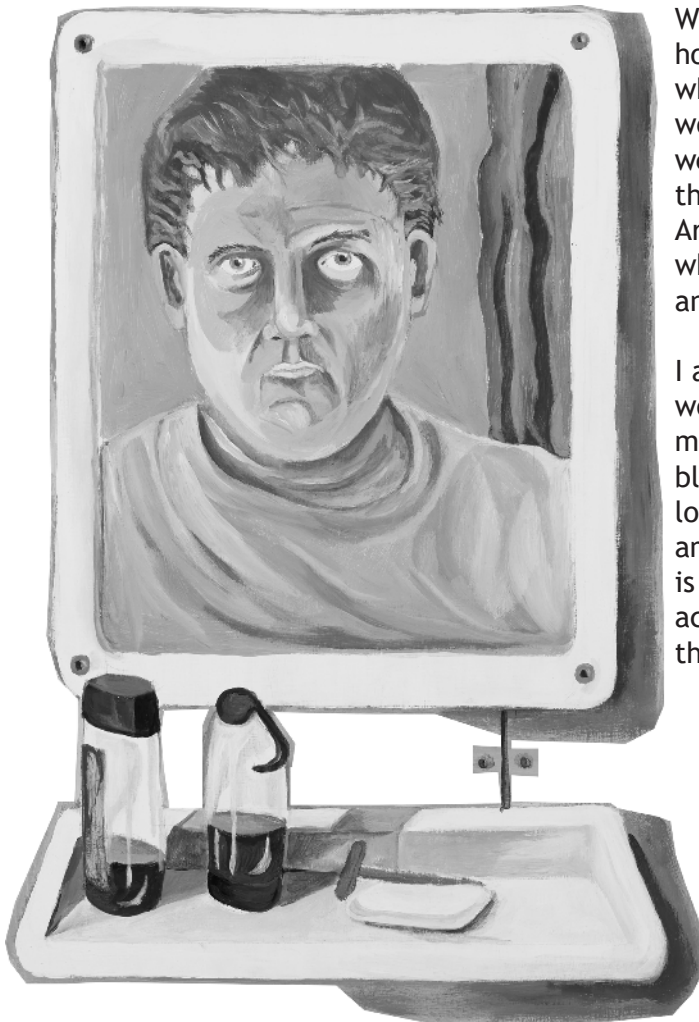
Each month Koestler Arts are commissioning an artist/writer who has directly engaged with Koestler to set a creative task. New Art Aid sheets will be available from the first and third Monday of each month as we approach the Awards deadline.

April 2021, Issue 2

This task is set by Koestler Award winning writer and former mentee, Dale.

My Story

Talking, sharing my thoughts, having an opinion - I've always had something to say and naturally geared towards rap as a form of creative expression. When I was in prison, I found that I wasn't really rapping and was spending more time writing. I enjoy the process of writing down my thoughts, fine tuning how I express what I feel and think about.

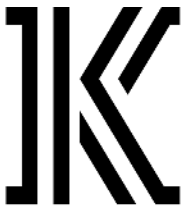


When I got out of prison I missed this, I realised just how therapeutic this was. It took me a while to realise what I was missing. I was going to creative writing workshops and open mic nights - some of these people were really good. I was interested in how they developed their craft to that level. I ended up on the Koestler Arts Mentoring Programme, which offered great support which led me to finish a degree in the arts and set up an arts based business.

I am now able to offer bespoke masterclasses and workshops in film, theatre and creative writing. The most difficult part about being creative is looking at a blank piece of paper, it can be intimidating. It's like looking in the mirror, you ask yourself, what the hell am I thinking? A good technique to get over this anxiety is to smudge the paper, make it dirty. In fact just the act of putting pen to paper (if that's your medium) is the biggest hurdle.

Image:

Self Portrait in Cell Mirror
HM Prison Lewes
Bronze Award for Portrait
2019



My Task

Freewriting is an exercise where you just sit down and write without stopping. There's no time frame but 10 minutes is a good target to aim for. The purpose is to free your creativity and put that pen on that paper and stop procrastinating. It stops you worrying about whether your writing is good and gets you on your way. I always find a few good lines I can recycle and reuse in another more well crafted piece.

Guidelines for Freewriting

1. Set a time limit, you can start with 10 minutes (later on, perhaps 15 or 20).
2. Don't stop writing. Forget about punctuation, grammar or spelling. Can't think of what to write? Then write "I don't know what to write, my head is total mush because I..." Write whatever is in your head.
3. Don't cheat yourself. That means not going too slow or too fast. Write the words as they come into your head.
4. No editing. No readjusting words or looking at what you've written or what would be good to come next. Only read back on your words after the time limit is over.

Freewriting looks crazy but actually has an important theory behind it. Think of the difference between speaking and writing. The advantage of writing is you can edit what you say, but that can also hold you back. Everyone massively edits large chunks of words before they even touch the paper. Obsessed with mistakes, we constantly think about spelling and grammar.

Think about occasions when you spoke well. Seldom was it because you got the beginning right. Usually it was a matter of a halting or even a garbled start, but you kept going and your speech finally became coherent and even powerful.

There is a lesson here for writing: trying to get the beginning just right is a formula for failure - and probably a secret tactic to make yourself give up writing.

Practiced regularly, freewriting counteracts the learned habit of editing at the same time as writing. It will make writing less blocked and words will flow more easily.

Editing can come later and your freewriting can develop into song-writing, poetry, fiction or essay writing - just get those words down first!

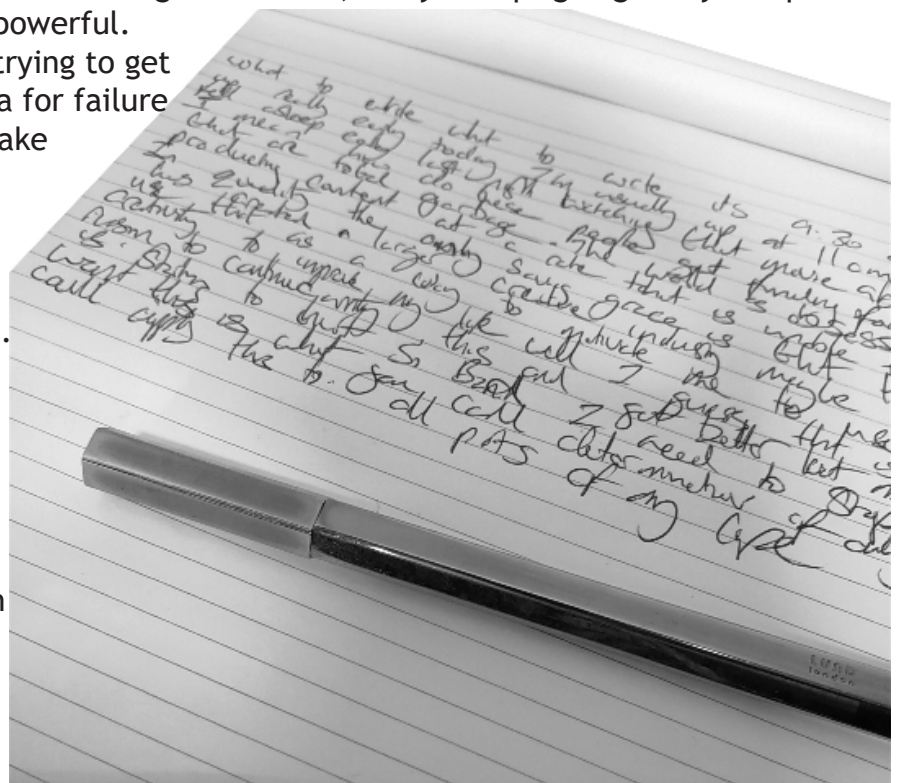


Image: Freewriting by Dale