

# 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.*

*Please note that the 2021 Koestler Awards deadline has now passed (1 June 2021) and Art Aid sheets will be produced on a monthly basis again. New Art Aid sheets will be available from the first Monday of every month.*

*The 2022 Koestler Awards will begin accepting new entries from January.*

*For each Art Aid sheet Koestler Arts are commissioning an artist/writer who has directly engaged with Koestler to set a creative task.*

## October 2021

*This task was set by Koestler Award winner and current mentee, Eva.*

### My Story

In 2015 my life was about to take a drastic, most significant change. I was in custody. Little did I know at the time, that the experience was about to turn into my life's greatest blessing.

There were many challenges ahead of me, all of which, when looking back, were there to strengthen me and help me break free from the illusory shadows that had been tormenting me most of my life. I decided to take responsibility for my life. I opted not only to accept, but fully embrace my current situation and express gratitude for the experience. The moment I did that, a shift of consciousness took place within me. I began to access, for the very first time, my creative artistic abilities. I was able to paint and write beautiful poetry. I won three Highly Commended Koestler Awards in the Handmade Book and Themed categories.

My life was transformed through the arts world. I found something that I felt was an expression of how I felt within, a true avenue to express myself fully.

My advice for anyone that is in prison, is that when you think all is lost, think twice, because life, if you look closer at it, is only taking a turn for the best. There are no negative situations in anyone's lives, just shadowy figments of our imagination that we endlessly fight against. When we finally learn to let go of them, and embrace the flow of life and all that comes in our path, we then realize how truly blessed we have always been.

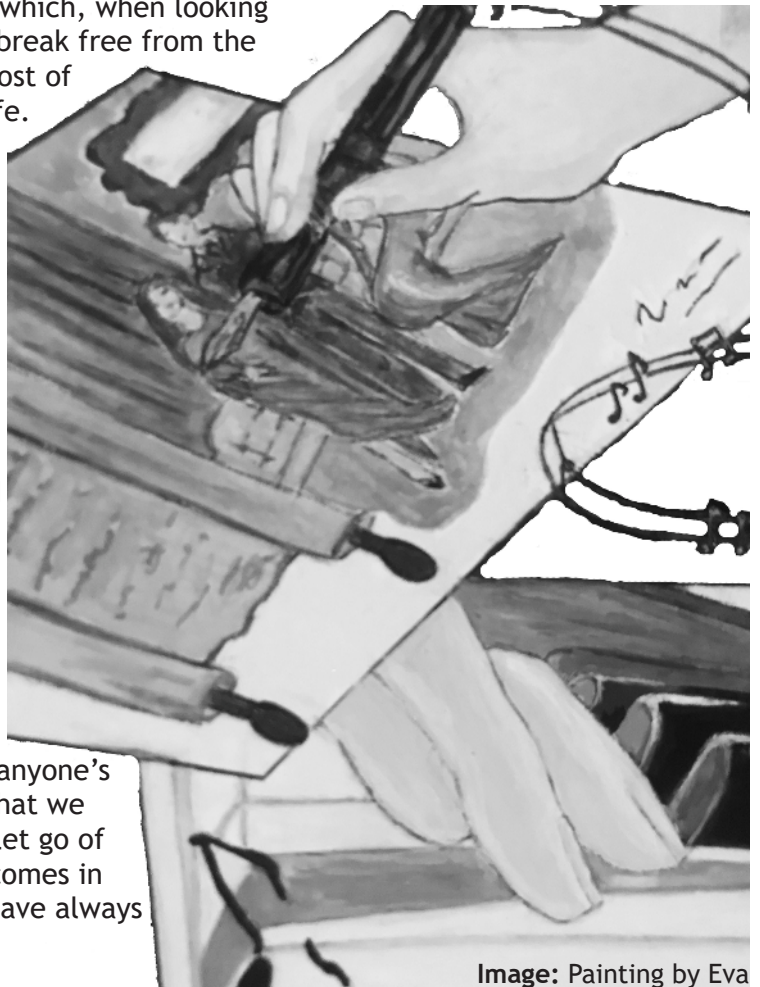
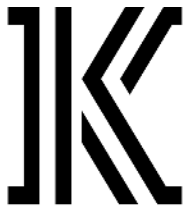


Image: Painting by Eva



## My Task

When I write poetry I always close my eyes and visualize a theme that inspires me, something that I can relate to emotionally. I then write down a few key words that I would like to use in the poem. This task aims to help your writing process, especially if you are stuck for a starting point. Be playful and explore writing using my step-by-step guide below:

1. To begin write down a list of words that mean something to you. They could be objects, feelings, events, experiences or more abstract words that you connect with. Be free to express your thoughts and feelings and write down whatever comes into your head.
2. Look at your list and choose one or two words that you would like to explore further. These will be your source of inspiration.
3. What emotions, thoughts or feelings are triggered by your source of inspiration? Make a list of all your associations. These may be happy or sad, common references or personal connections.
4. Once you've listed all the words you can think of, begin to flesh out your writing. Write short statements, phrases or sentences including the words on your list. If you struggle, challenge yourself to write without stopping for 5 minutes and see what you come up with.
5. Now you can then read over your work without judgement and think about how to develop it further. Do your sentences lend themselves to a piece of non-fiction writing, a mini life story, a piece of fiction or poetry? Change/modify/add things as you wish until you are happy with it. What matters is that it flows and is easy to understand. If it means something to you, it will mean something to somebody else.



This exercise is a starting point to inspire you to create. Feel free to explore and write down words about different objects or experiences, and construct these words in a playful way to express your creativity.

6. If you enjoyed doing this simple task, maybe share your words with others; how does it make them feel to hear it or read it? This may inspire you to keep on writing or do a drawing or collage to illustrate your written work.

**Image:** *Head Space*  
HM Prison Long Lartin  
Portrait, 2020