

*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.*

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

## July 2021

*The task was set by Koestler Award winner, mentee and writer, Lee.*

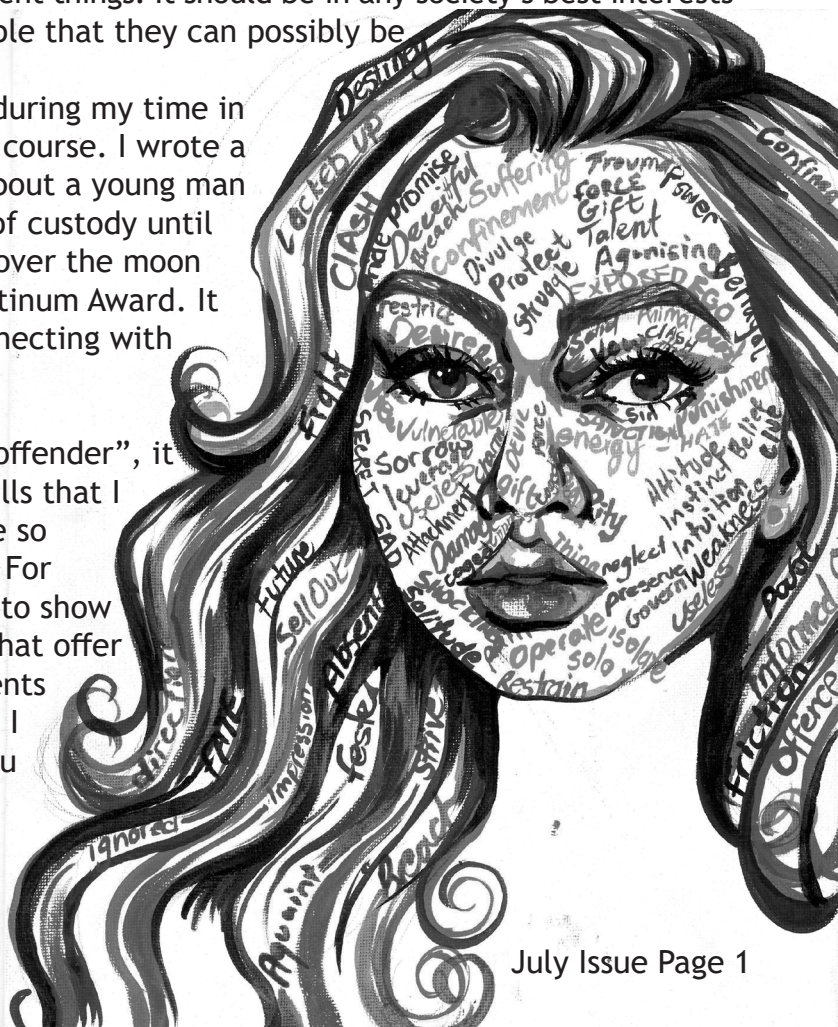
## My Story

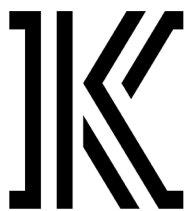
Serving two years in custody was an eye opener for me. Rather than viewing human beings as being either wholly good, or wholly evil, I came to realise that all human beings are in fact capable of both. I have witnessed some of the greatest kindness and support from the least expected places.

I believe that we need to start thinking about the language we use to describe those who have committed crime. If we are to brand a person a criminal, an offender, until the day that they die, how can we ever expect them to become anything else? Who a person is and what a person has done, are most of the time very, very different things. It should be in any society's best interests to encourage people to become the best people that they can possibly be.

One of the more productive things that I did during my time in custody was get involved with a scriptwriting course. I wrote a play called “Opening Doors?” which was all about a young man stuck in the cycle of crime, going in and out of custody until the system sent him to an early death. I was over the moon when Koestler Arts selected my play for a Platinum Award. It was reassuring to know that people were connecting with my writing.

As I do not wish to be seen by society as an “offender”, it is very much my ambition to utilise all the skills that I have to ensure that I can prove that there are so many better things that I can be labelled as. For example, I have utilised my skill with writing to show that I am a “writer”. We need to find labels that offer recognition of the very best of our achievements as opposed to the very worst of our mistakes. I hope that my creative task will help to set you on a path to find a better label for yourself. Whoever you are, you are so much more than an “offender”.





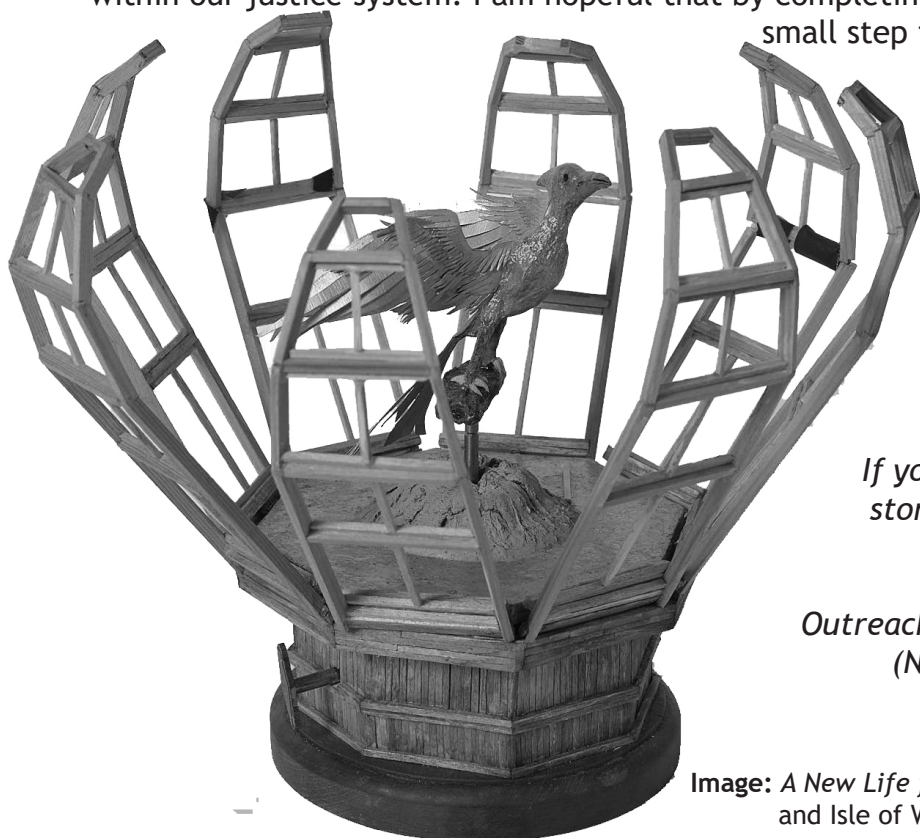
## My Task - Monologues

The creative task that I am setting for you is a task I took part in about a year ago, during my time in custody, while I was effectively in solitary confinement due to the pandemic. It takes in the skills that I learnt in scriptwriting. All you need is a piece of paper and a pen.

The challenge I am setting you is to write a short monologue or diary entry. A monologue is a play that is written for just one character. It generally therefore has just one actor performing one single piece of speech. You don't need to be an excellent writer or lyricist. Your character can be anyone. When I wrote my monologue, I based my character purely on myself as a means to vent my frustration. You may wish to do the same, but you don't have to. The setting does not have to be a cell. Your character can be absolutely wherever. You can adopt whichever genre you like - you can make it a comedy; you can make it a tragedy. However you wish to write your monologue, the ultimate goal is to give you something to occupy the creative side of your mind - to express yourself. If you find it hard to get started with a monologue, one suggestion could be that you format it as if you were completing a diary entry instead. It does not have to be your own diary entry - feel free to be creative and create a diary entry for a character from your imagination.

I hope that this is a task that will help you to channel your feelings and emotions in a productive way. At that point of deep frustration in my life, I certainly found writing deeply cathartic. It offered me an opportunity to vent my frustrations at a time when there were few people about to talk to. I hope that by taking part in this task, it may be equally cathartic and positive for you.

Above all, I want you to know that there are people on the outside that do care and do want to help you achieve something. I have been where you are and I will fight for progressive change within our justice system. I am hopeful that by completing this task, you may be able to make a small step towards success. I send you the best of luck, faith, and hope,  
Lee



*If you have been inspired by Lee's story and would like to apply for Koestler Mentoring, please write to us at:  
Outreach Team, FREEPOST KOESTLER ARTS  
(No stamp or address needed)*

Image: A New Life from the Ashes of the Old, Hampshire and Isle of Wight CRC, Matchstick Model, 2020