

Dear reader,

Please find a letter we have written with you in mind. Not everything in this letter will apply to you or be true for you, but we hope some of it will be relevant.

As well as providing you with something to read and look at for a few minutes, we very much hope this letter will offer you some ideas, inspiration, reference and motivation for your own letter writing.

At a time like this when you are suffering untold hardship, it can be an enormous struggle to find words, thoughts or ideas that can be shared.

This letter is part of a series we will be sharing with you and we have written it in the hope that it can help you to think and find things to say about yourself.

Sometimes, writing to others, or even to yourself, can be a useful tool for reminding yourself how to think. It is extremely difficult to keep thinking in times of crisis so we have sent you this as a very small way of reminding you there is art and there are books and you have ideas to share and thoughts to organise and dreams to work out.

Over the next few days and weeks we will be issuing these letters and we very much hope you find them of value.

If you would like to get any feedback to us, please share it with staff, your family members, the Governor and each other— word will reach us and we can learn more about what you might want and how we can make this series more useful to you.

In the meantime, we send you this letter with our best wishes and we hope you know there are many people holding you in mind.

You are important to us.

The Safe Ground team.

*(Not as good  
as yours, but  
I tried!)*

My name  
My address



Your name  
Your address

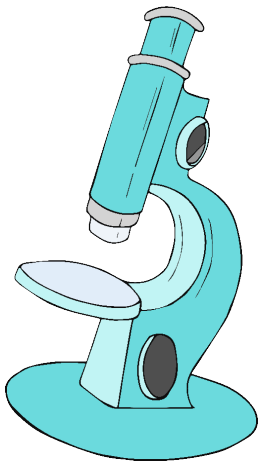
Today's date

Dear [REDACTED],

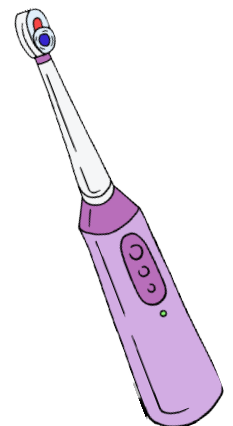
You may not know this, but I think about you every single day. When I am getting ready in the morning, I look at the photo I have of you and I talk to you in my head. The photo is of you in the living room when you must have been about five or six. You're so cute. You have massive eyes and a grin that almost takes up your whole face. I miss that grin, it either meant trouble or fun and I never knew which, but I usually didn't mind that much, you were such a treasure.

I always thought it was weird how you were so bright. I mean, you come from a family with some clever people in it, don't get me wrong, but none of us are particularly good at anything like you are. You were always the one with a poem to write or a play to put on. Do you remember the radio shows you and Donny used to put on in the living room?

You used to make us all listen and you'd interview each other and tell terrible jokes and sing. It was terrible most of the time, but you got all of us to sit still for half an hour. Your grandma used to say you'd be on the stage and your dad used to laugh about what a show off you were.



I just thought you were so clever. You always had ideas and were trying out new things. Do you remember when you got that microscope? We all had to stop you from pulling hairs out of our heads and collecting our spit when we were brushing our teeth. It was disgusting, some of the stuff you put under there. I bet I don't even know about half of it.



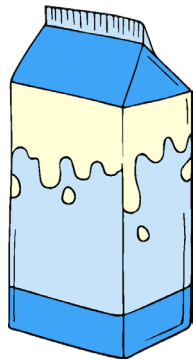
*"You have brains in  
your head. You have  
feet in your shoes.  
You can steer your-  
self any direction  
you choose."*

I've got a drawing you did when you were about 10, on my fridge. It's a blue pen drawing of a dragon and a bird and a forest. I don't know where you got it from or if it was your own idea, but it's so good and clear, you can really tell what it is. It looks like you just did it with a biro because that's what you had handy, but it must have taken hours. I've always kept it because it really shows how you were deep in concentration. I like to think of you like that.

**SAFE GROUND**

When you were at school, so many of your teachers used to talk about how much potential you had and how good you were at their subjects. It's funny how life turns out, but I always knew you had a good head on your shoulders and a lot of brain cells in that skull of yours.

Nothing much has changed round here really. I've redecorated the house a bit— done up the living room and put in a bit of a conservatory/lean to out the back. I don't know if you remember my house, but it's got a little tiny back yard and I've managed to plant a few little pot plants out there this year, so I'm hoping they'll do well. My house is small and I like to keep

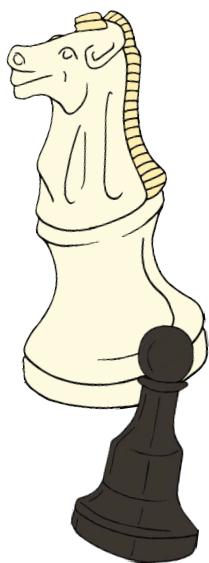


it clean and tidy, not like your Sandra, she's a messy one. I have to have order, so I always clear up after myself and I'm forever telling Doreen to keep the kitchen organised when she's cooking. Drives me mad when there's mess. I like to keep everything in its place and I can get a bit moody when it's not. I don't know what that says about me, Doreen and Donny say I'm a control freak. I think I just need it all ship shape. What's wrong with that?! I don't know if you've got any funny habits like that. You used to never

be able to eat cereal unless the milk was warm (which is disgusting) and you would only ever take your shoes off at the bottom of the stairs, not in the hall. I don't know why, but it used to really annoy me. What was that all about?

My friend was supposed to coming to the library with me— we go every week and get a book. Now we're not allowed out and everything's shut, so I can't really imagine what it's going to be like for a while. No books or visits for me. I am a bit nervous about that. I like getting out and seeing everyone. I go to the shop on a Wednesday and the library on a Friday (so I've got a book for the weekend). I usually see the milkman (we've still got one here) and the newspaper girl drops the Mirror off every Sunday. Now

I don't know what will happen. I suppose I'll have to play a lot more solitaire and try to play two handed dominos. I don't know.



Do you still play chess? I never quite got the hang of it, but I used to like watching you lot. There was a film on recently about a Russian child who became a Grand Master. It made me think of you a bit. I mean, he was a horrible person, but he was obsessed with chess. His poor mum didn't know what to do. He followed his dream and he really did become the best in the world. But, he ended up a total hermit and no one saw him for years, so I suppose you just never know what makes people tick.

*"Certain things, they should stay the way they are. You ought to be able to stick them in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone."*

I can't imagine what it's like for you at the moment, you're far away and we can't be in regular contact or anything. I can only hope you always remember that there are people who care about you and even where you are now, you've got some decent people around. I expect there's a lot of people you don't want to be friends with or that you don't necessarily trust. But, if you can find one person to talk to, that's got to be a good thing, I reckon. You just be careful and make sure you're washing your hands as often as you can. That's all I keep hearing about. Don't touch your face and wash your hands. I feel like a parrot.

If I had a parrot or a pigeon, better, I'd send him to see you and carry you a little message in your ear. He'd bring you a few words of wisdom and a little seed to plant. The words would be

*"Wake at dawn with a winged heart"*

And the seed would be a tree of hope that will grow with you and when it flowers, you'll see yourself reflected in the shiny leaves and the scent of all your hard work and belief will fill you up with strength to keep going.

So, plant that little seed now and keep it growing and look after it.

Let me know how you're getting on and I will probably write a lot more letters now I can't get my books.

Remember your manners and I'll see if I've got any more photos of you that I can send. There's one of you doing a cartwheel somewhere. I'll see if I can find it. We'll all get to move again and meantime, keep it moving as they say.

You're important to me.

