

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.

Your name
Your address

My name
My address

Today's date

Dear [REDACTED],

You've been on my mind so I thought I'd take the time to drop you a letter and let you know what's going on with me.

I can't phone you as often as I'd like and in this strange time, I can't guarantee being able to see you in person, so at least a letter is a way of communicating with you that I can control, even if I'm not always sure when it will arrive. Maybe you can re-read this letter at times we can't see one-another, sometimes I do that with the letters you send me.

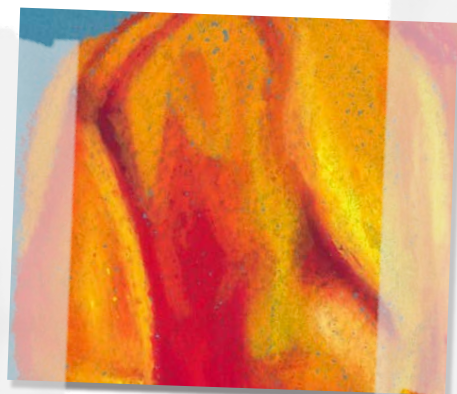


Today is Friday. This week I've started work on my final project in the art class I've been doing. We have to draw a life model which is really scary. Considering I couldn't really draw a straight line a few weeks ago, to now be looking at a real person and trying to draw them on a piece of paper is a massive achievement. I don't care so much about what it looks like in the end, I can tell how much I've learnt about drawing. I understand stuff I never understood before about light and shadow and that seems significant. At the end of every class, we all look at each other's work and are supposed to say something about it. I don't always feel like I can, but I am always really surprised that although we were

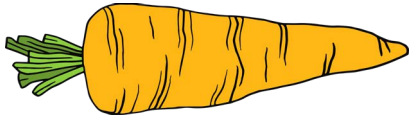
all looking at the same thing, it's like we've all seen something so different. Maybe that's something to say in itself.

I can't send you my full drawings, they're on huge sheets of paper! So I cut out these small sections. I just drew in light and shadow and didn't worry too much about the final product. It's cool because you probably can't work out what they are, but when you piece them into the larger drawings they make perfect sense. I will show you sometime.

I've been quite disciplined with my exercise, which is also great for me. I can feel my mental state is so much better for it. I know I need to pay attention to what I eat and how much sleep I get but keeping up the exercise routine is working for me and I can tell I'm slowly getting stronger. I can do more reps than before and I'm not taking as many breaks.



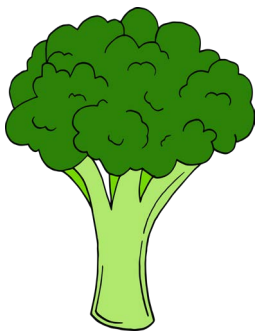
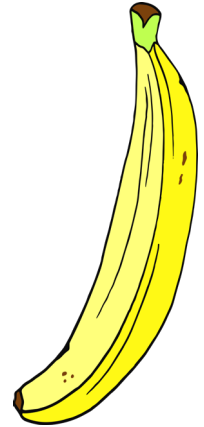
SAFE GROUND



One of the decisions I made earlier this year was to read more. I have got a bit lazy over the last few years, so I've been really doing my best to make sure I've always got a book on the go. It's a mixed bag and there are some I really haven't enjoyed, but there are loads that have been great.

I'm reading one at the moment about the ways everyone tells lies and how they all add up. It's a story about a girl who falsely accuses someone of doing something to her, it gets totally out of control, but along the way, all these other lies are happening and everyone's kind of covering stuff up all the time. It's really clever and it makes a lot of sense— I suppose it makes me think about how hard it can be to be honest and how so many people can't really tell each other the truth about so much stuff in their lives.

I wonder if I could write a book. They say there's a 'book in everyone', but I think it's different thinking you're really interesting and actually being able to make something someone wants to read. I guess that's why people have reading and writing groups and creative writing courses and things like that. Maybe one day I'll do something like that. I could write a chapter about you and me...what do you think I should put in and what should I leave out!! What if I wrote something and you hated it?

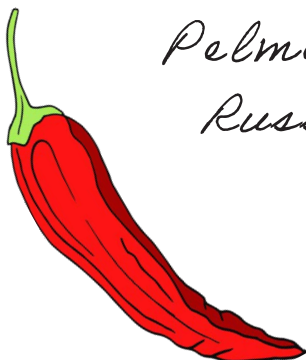


Someone I work with goes to a poetry night once every month. I've never really got on with poetry, I just can't understand it. I suppose it's like anything, some people like football, some people like tennis. Just different tastes. But recently I've been trying to get into it and

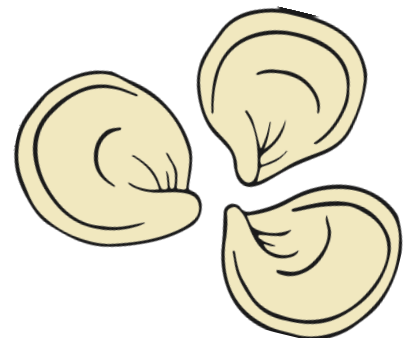
I've found some of it I really do relate to. I've written down some of my favourite lines in this letter for you. This one is by George the Poet. He writes his poetry to music and talks about real things.

"The world is a collection of people's dreams"

There's a new guy at work that has been bringing in food to share and that's been really cool. I've eaten stuff I've never come across before (he's from Russia), so trying out how other people do dumplings and bread and vegetables is a new experience! I don't think I'm going to be cooking any of it, but at least I've tasted it.

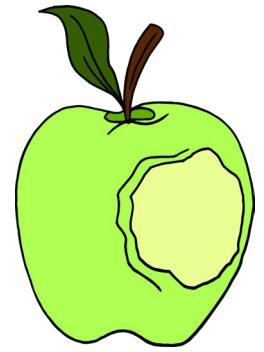


Pelmeni, traditional Russian dumplings



*"He sets himself forwards
And he loves.
And he survives."*

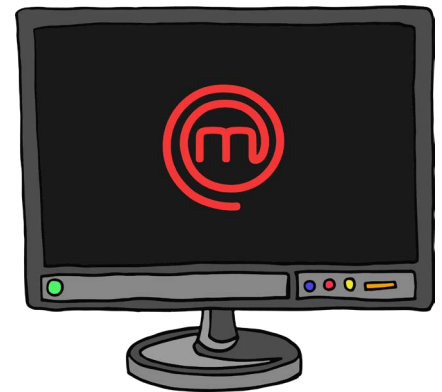
I don't know if you know, but things here are really weird right now. I can't pretend it's all normal because it's not. Lots of people are afraid, there's no real clear message about how to keep people safe or protected or healthy and there's all kinds of rumours and gossip about what's happening. I try to keep myself away from as much of it as possible and just concentrate on keeping myself together so I can be here for the people I care about. It's not easy, but bit by bit I'm doing all I can to keep myself to myself and stay away from the crowd. I've got my books, my drawing, my letters and maybe now my book to write! I might even think about going back to college and maybe doing a part time course or something.



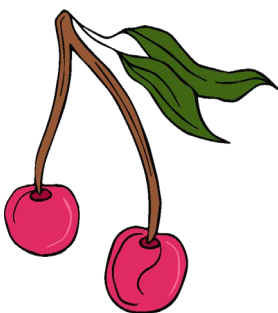
I'm really hoping that before too long things will change again, there will be a bit of calm and the atmosphere will settle down a bit. I can't imagine it staying like this forever. But, if it does, I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing and maybe I'll come out with something really positive at the end of it all.

"The doors of the world unlock"

I watch a bit of tv most days. It's usually quite boring, but I like knowing other people are watching the same thing as me. My favourite programme at the moment is Masterchef. For some reason, I'm pretty obsessed with food and cooking- I wonder if it's because I know it's something I need to do something about. I've never heard of most of the dishes they make, and you know I'm a vegetarian, so I don't even want to eat what they're making, I must just like the competitive part. I always try and pick the winner early and test my skills of perception. I'm usually wrong, but it's a little guilty pleasure. I love food, but I couldn't pick one favourite meal.



Since I started this letter the sky has got really grey and it looks like it might rain soon. That is ok because to be honest, the plants could all do with a good water. I've only got a little balcony, but keeping it in good condition is a lot of work, trust me. Any help from nature is gratefully received.



*"Nothing behind
me, everything
ahead of me, as
is ever so on the
road."*

Well, that's where I'm at. What about you? Is there anything new I need to know? What happened about your pal who got into a bit of bother, is he ok? What are you thinking of doing for your brother's birthday? Any ideas?



I know I haven't always been great at writing, but I'm going to do my best to send you something more regularly. I guess I find it hard to put my thoughts into words sometimes, so I'm putting my new art skills to good use and drawing them instead, as you can see from this letter!

It's not always easy, but I would like to keep you up to date with what's going on in my head, so if I can do this even once a month, maybe it's a way for us to keep closer. I'd like that and I could really do with your words of wisdom and your stupid jokes from time to time.

"Paths that cross will cross again."

I really hope you're well and finding ways to be calm and that you have some good people around you. Finding and keeping them can be the key to so much.

You're important to me,

██████████.

*"Follow your inner moonlight;
don't hide the madness"*