

Letter 649  
Auvers, c. 10 July 1890

Dear brother and sister,

The letter from Jo has really been like a gospel for me, a deliverance from the distress caused by the hours I shared with you, which were a bit difficult and trying for us all. [Earlier in the month Vincent had gone on his last visit to Paris.] It is no slight matter when we are all made aware that our daily bread is at risk, no slight matter when for different reasons we are also made aware of the precariousness of our existence.

Back here, I, too, still felt very sad, and the storm which threatens you continued to weigh heavily on me as well. What is to be done? Look here, I try to be fairly good-humoured in general, but my life too is threatened at its very root, and my step is unsteady too.

I was afraid – not entirely – but nevertheless a little – that my being a burden on you was something you found intolerable – but Jo's letter proves to me clearly that you do realize that I am working and making an effort just as much as you are.

So – having arrived back here, I have set to work again – although the brush is almost falling from my fingers – and because I knew exactly what I wanted to do, I have painted three more large canvases. They are vast stretches of corn under troubled skies, and I did not have to go out of my way very much in order to try to express sadness and extreme loneliness. I hope you will be seeing them soon since I'd like to bring them to you in Paris as soon as possible. I'm fairly sure that these canvases will tell you what I cannot say in words, that is, how healthy and invigorating I find the countryside [F 781, JH 2102; F 761, JH 2120].

The third canvas is Daubigny's garden, a picture I have had in mind ever since I came here [F 776, JH 2104].

I hope with all my heart that the proposed journey will help a little to take your mind off things.

I often think of the little one, I don't doubt it's better to bring up children than to spend all one's nervous energy on making pictures, but it can't be helped, I am, or at least I feel I am, too old now to retrace my steps or to desire anything different. That desire has left me, though the mental suffering remains.

I was very sorry not to have seen Guillaumin again, but I am pleased that he has seen my canvases. If I had waited for him, I should probably have stayed talking to him so long I would have missed my train.

Wishing you both luck, a stout heart and comparative prosperity, may I ask you to tell Mother and our sister once again that I think of them very often. Indeed, I had a letter from them this morning and will be replying soon.

Handshakes in thought,

Ever yours,

Vincent

My money will not last me very long this time, for on my return I had to pay the bill for the luggage from Arles. I have some very pleasant memories of that journey to Paris. A few months ago I hardly dared to hope to see my friends again. I think that Dutch lady [the sculptress Saar de Swart] is most talented. Lautrec's picture, Portrait de musicienne, is quite wonderful, it moved me when I saw it.