

Dear Theo,

I should have let you know before that I received your letter and enclosed 150 fr. in good order.

I have also received the September Lhermitte, it is splendid. You write about the Poussins in the Louvre; I am very fond of Poussin. But how long – too long – is it since I saw those paintings? You cannot imagine what a longing I have to see pictures. I shall have to satisfy it anyhow. For the very reason that I hope to go on trying to find buyers for my own work, I think it will be a good thing for me to take a trip now and then.

Longing most of all for Rembrandt and Frans Hals, this week I shall go to the museum in Amsterdam for a day with a friend of mine from Eindhoven, some of whose studies I showed you.

If I can enter into connections for my own work, I shall not fail to do so, and I firmly believe that with perseverance I shall win.

Speaking of my work, I had already written you that I have been very busy painting still lifes lately, and I like it immensely. I shall send you some.

I know, they are hard to sell, but it is damned useful, and I shall continue to paint them this winter.

You will receive a big still life of potatoes, in which I tried to get corps, I mean, to express the material in such a way that they become heavy, solid lumps – which would hurt you if they were thrown at you, for instance [F 107, JH 933].

Well, you'll see for yourself.

That affair with the priest has not given me any more trouble. But of course there will always be God-fearing natives in the village who will persist in suspecting me, for one thing is sure, namely that the priest would only too gladly throw the whole blame of that affair on me. However, as I am quite innocent, the gossip from that quarter leaves me perfectly indifferent; as long as they don't bother me in my painting. I don't take any notice of it whatever. With the peasants to whom the accident happened, where I often used to paint, I have remained on good terms, and I am as welcome in their home as I used to be. I am now busy painting still lifes of my birds' nests, four of which are finished; I think some people who are good observers of nature might like them because of the colours of the moss, the dry leaves and the grasses [F 112, JH 938; F 111, JH 939; F 108, JH 940; F 110, JH 941; F 109, JH 942].

I will write you again at the end of the week, after my trip to Amsterdam.

As next month I shall have to pay the rent again, I can hardly afford the expense. But it must be done. So you will soon hear again.

Ever yours, Vincent

I firmly believe that my work will improve by my seeing more pictures, because when I see a picture, I can analyze how it is done. As to Poussin, he is a painter and a thinker who always gives inspiration, in whose pictures all reality is at the same time symbolic. In the work of Millet, of Lhermitte, all reality is also at the same time symbolic. They are different from what are called realists.

[Sketch JH 943 enclosed with letter. The text reads: "When winter comes (when I have more time for it) I shall make more drawings of this kind of thing. La nichée et les nids [the nestlings and the nests], I feel deeply for them – especially people's nests, those huts on the heath and their inhabitants.]