

My dear friend Signac,

Many thanks for your postcard and the information it contained. As to my brother's not having replied to your letter, I am inclined to think that it is hardly his fault. I myself have not heard from him for a fortnight. The fact is that he is in Holland, where he is getting married one of these days.

Well, look here, without denying the least bit in the world the advantages of marriages, once it has been contracted, and of being quietly settled down in one's own home, when I think of the obsequial pomp of the reception and the lamentable congratulations on the part of the two families (still in a state of civilization), not to mention the fortuitous appearances in those chemist's jars where the antediluvian civil and religious magistrates are kept – goodness gracious – mustn't one pity the poor wretch who is obliged after having provided himself with the necessary documents, to repair to a locality, where, with a ferocity unequaled by the cruelest cannibals, he is married alive at a slow fire of receptions and the aforesaid funereal pomp.

I remain greatly obliged to you for your friendly and beneficial visit, which contributed considerably to raising of my spirits. At present I am well, and I work at the sanatorium and its surroundings. From there I have just returned with two studies of orchards.

Here is a hasty sketch of them – the big one is a poor green landscape with little cottages, blue line of the Alpines, sky white and blue. The foreground, patches of land surrounded by cane hedges, where small peach trees are in bloom – everything is small there, the gardens, the fields, the orchards, and the trees, even the mountains, as in certain Japanese landscapes, which is the reason why the subject attracted me.

The other landscape is nearly all green with a little lilac and grey – on a rainy day.

I was very pleased to hear that you have settled down now, and I am longing for news about the progress of your work and about the character of the seaside scenery there.

Since your visit my head has just about returned to its normal state, and for the time being I desire nothing better than that this will last. Above all it will depend on a very sober way of living.

I intend to stay here for the next few months at least; I have rented an apartment consisting of two very small rooms. But at times it is not easy for me to take up living again, for there remain inner seizures of despair of a pretty large caliber.

My God – those anxieties – who can live in the modern world without catching his share of them? My best consolation, if not the best remedy, is to be found in deep friendships, even though they have the disadvantage of anchoring us more firmly in life than would seem desirable in the days of our great sufferings.

Once more many thanks for your visit, which gave me so much pleasure.

A hearty handshake in thought,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

March 1889 (sic)

Address until the end of April: Place Lamartine, Arles