

Dear Brother,

It is high time at last that your new little sister had a chat with you herself, instead of leaving it to Theo to send her regards. When we were not yet married I was always thinking, Oh, at present you haven't yet got the courage to write about everything to Vincent, but now we are really and truly brother and sister, and I should be so very happy if you knew me a little too, and, if possible, loved me a little.

As for me, this has been the case for quite a long time . . . Wil as well as Theo have told me so many things about you, and here in the house there are so many things which remind one of you; at the moment I come across a charming little jug or vase or some such thing, I am sure to hear, This was bought by Vincent, that Vincent thought so pretty. Hardly ever a day passes without our speaking of you. You see, I still speak of "our house," and do not seem to be able to accustom myself to saying "the apartment"; I should so much like you to see how pretty and cozily Theo had everything arranged before I came. The bedroom especially is so sweet, very light and a great deal of pink in it – in the morning, when I am lying in bed, I have to look at that fine little peach tree in bloom of yours, [F 405, JH 1394] which looks at me so kindly every morning in its turn. Over the piano in our drawing room (we have one; Aunt Cornélie gave it to us) there also hangs a picture by you – a large one which I like very much. It is a landscape in the neighbourhood of Arles [F 412, JH 1440]. The dining room is also full of them, but Theo is still dissatisfied with the arrangement, and every Sunday morning is spent hanging the pictures in other places and rearranging everything.

It is so delightful on Sundays when Theo is at home all day; I well remember how as a child I always loved Sundays, because at home they were so pleasant and cozy (something which most people could not understand), and now they are much more so. So Monday meant a double festivity for me, for all the art shops were closed on account of the opening of the exhibition – of course we did not go to the exhibition, but enjoyed ourselves in our own way. Paris certainly looked beautiful that day – I so hope I shall come to love it as much as Theo does – but at times I am very much afraid it won't be possible. It is so noisy that we are living in our quiet cité² – it may not be an aristocratic quarter but it is certainly a highly typical one—a big painters' studio across the way, a little arbour and a few lilac trees, which are in deliciously full flower at the moment. What a lot of beautiful flowers there are in Paris – if I should have to enumerate some good qualities of Paris, this would surely be one of the very first things!

A great number of Theo's acquaintances have already come to see us in the evening—last night, for instance, there was quite a reunion. Pissarro and his son, Isaäcson and the young Nibbrig³ (but I don't know whether you know the latter) and my brother – who for some time now has been dining with us every day because his wife has gone to Holland.

I certainly wish I could speak French a little better – I can manage on my own when I do my shopping or when I speak to the femme de ménage [charwoman], but I think carrying on a conversation, especially when Theo is present, is something horrible. So I did not venture on a French letter – although I know that in point of fact you would have preferred it, but Wil told me that she also confines herself to writing in Dutch. As soon as I feel that I am getting to be a bit of a Parisienne, I'll start writing in French – is that a bargain?

Lies and Wil have laid a little plot to come here this summer, the two of them; how pleasant it would be particularly to have Wil here. How she would laugh at me – for she herself is such a clever little housekeeper. She can do everything – whereas I – to make a clean breast of it – I don't know how to do anything – twice already I've let the rice burn and once the prunes – poor Theo, he has to swallow it all.

For the rest we are getting along very well together – we have been married three weeks today – it seems to me as though it happened long ago and also only a short while ago – it doesn't seem the tiniest little bit strange to us – it's as if we had always been together. What is worst is that I don't at all look like a married lady yet – yesterday I went to pay our baker, and the good man could not possibly understand that I myself was Madame Van Gogh, and persisted in calling me mademoiselle, which is really something too frightful!

Now I have to prepared lunch for Theo will be coming home in a minute or two – so I will say goodbye for today – I hope I have not bored you too much, but the fact is that I have grown so accustomed lately to writing about all these little things, which they like to hear about so much, to Breda and also to Amsterdam that I am no longer able to write a serious letter – this will improve later on, I hope.

With most cordial regards, and wishing you all the best,

Your affectionate little sister, Jo

1. Written in Dutch.

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2. 8, Cité Pigalle. *Cité* has the old meaning here of “city-street,” in contradistinction to suburban street.
3. Ferdinand Hart Nibbrig (1866-1915), Dutch neoimpressionist.