

My dear friends Ginoux,

I will reply to Mrs. Ginoux's letter without delay, to tell you that I am happy to have heard from you; I am very sorry to hear that Mr. Ginoux was injured and suffered much pain. I urgently request you to let somebody else pack my things, so that he need not wear himself out with it; I shall be pleased to pay you back all the expenses that you may incur, but I insist upon his not exerting himself too much lest the wound burst open again. In this way, however, I count on your sending the things off on Saturday, for I am anxiously awaiting them.

Yes, I too was very sorry that I could not return to Arles to say goodbye to you all, for you know well that I had become attached to the people and things of your town with a sincere friendship. But lately I had contracted the other patients' disease to such an extent that I could not be cured of mine. The other patients' society had a bad influence on me, and in the end I was absolutely unable to understand it. Then I felt I had better try a change, and for that matter, the pleasure of seeing my brother, his family and my painter friends again has done me a lot of good, and I am feeling completely calm and normal. The doctor here says that I ought to throw myself into my work with all my strength, and so distract my mind.

This gentleman knows a good deal about painting, and he greatly likes mine; he encourages me very much, and two or three times a week he comes and visits me for a few hours to see what I am doing.

Twice they have written articles on my pictures. Once in a Paris newspaper, and the other time in a newspaper in Brussels, where I had an exhibition, and now, a very short time ago, there was an article in a paper of my native country, Holland, and the consequence was that many people went to look at my pictures. And this is not the end. Besides, it is a certain fact that I have done better work than before since I stopped drinking, and that is so much gained.

But still I often think of you all, one cannot do what one wants in life. The more you feel attached to a spot, the more ruthlessly you are compelled to leave it, but the memories remain, and one remembers – as in a looking glass, darkly – one's absent friends.

Here is the address:

Vincent van Gogh,
chez Ravoux, Place de la Maine,
Auvers-sur-Oise,
(Seine-et-Oise)
Petite vitesse

In this way there can be no mistakes. And I thank you in advance for your trouble, and mind that Ginoux hires a man to do the packing, and does not exert himself; I shall repay your expenses.

Wishing you good health and complete recovery,

Cordially yours, Vincent van Gogh