

Letter T09  
Paris, 22 May 1889

My dear Vincent,

Many thanks for your letter; Jo too is very pleased with the one you wrote her.<sup>1</sup> We hear with pleasure that your trip to St. Rémy was accomplished without a hitch, and that your stay there will not last very long, for it can hardly be pleasant to be near so many lunatics. What I should like is to be able to find people somewhere who would be able to take care of you, and would leave you entirely at liberty otherwise. Surely something like this might be found. If you don't have such a dread of going back to Paris or its environs, I myself would try to find a boarding house of this kind.

Please tell us in your next letter what you think of the establishment where you are now staying. How are you treated, do you get enough food, and what is the behaviour of the people you have to do with? Do you see anything of the countryside? Above all, don't harass yourself, either physically or mentally, because for the moment it is better to do everything in your power to regain your strength. Working will come of itself after that.

Some days ago I got your consignment, which is very important; there are superb things in it. Everything arrived in good condition and without any damage. The cradle [F 508, JH 1671], the portrait of Roulin, the little sower with the tree, the baby, the starry night [F 474, JH 1592], the sunflowers and the chair with the pipe and tobacco pouch [F 498, JH 1635] are the ones I prefer so far.

The first two are very curious. Certainly there is none of the beauty which is taught officially in them, but they have something so striking and so near to truth. Who can tell whether we are more in the right than the simple people who buy pictures with glaring colours? Or rather, isn't it a fact that the charm they see in them is also an inspired sensation, as much as that of the pretentious fellows who look at pictures in museums? Now there is in your canvases a vigour which one certainly does not find in the chromos; in the course of time they will become very beautiful by reason of the settling of the layers of paint and they will undoubtedly be appreciated someday. When we see that the Pissarros, the Gauguins, the Renoirs, the Guillaumins do not sell, one ought to be almost glad of not having the public's favour, seeing that those who have it now will not have it forever, and it is quite possible that times will change very shortly. If you could see how feeble the Salon and the Universal Exhibition are with regard to the pictures, I think you would be of the opinion that they will not last much longer. The Dutch school cuts a very good figure beside them.

There are two watercolours by J.H. Weissenbruch which I am particularly fond of, also pieces by Willem and Jacob Maris and Bosboom, Israëls and Breitner. One of the Weissenbruchs is a mill on the bank of a canal, a blue sky with a little cloud hiding the sun. The other is a canal at night with boats in the moonlight. He is a thundering good artist, that one, but Tersteeg says he isn't saleable.

Not long ago I saw Gauguin, who is now working at sculpting. Within a short time he will go to Pont-Aven, where De Haan is staying already. It seems that before long there will be an exhibition of the Independents; I should like very much to know what you think of it, and which canvases you think are most suitable to be shown. I hear tell that everyone can exhibit four canvases, as there is not enough room to admit more.

I shall write again soon, and you write me too if you are feeling well A cordial handshake,

Yours, Theo

1. See Vincent letter 591.