

Letter 211  
The Hague, 4 July 1882  
Tuesday afternoon

Dear Theo,

Tidings from Sien that she is getting along well. If it continues like this, she will leave the hospital a fortnight after her confinement. This persuaded me to take the new house, so that she may find a warm nest when she returns after so much pain. So I made an arrangement with the owner. First, that he would help me move at once, namely that he would lend me a few men from the yard for an afternoon to carry my furniture over, because I myself am not allowed to lift many heavy things, indeed none at all. And second, that I shall not pay him any rent before I myself or Sien comes to live there definitely, for perhaps she will come back from the hospital before me. Meanwhile, I must make some arrangement with the old landlord about the current month (for as I was ill and did not know when I should recover, I could not give him notice). I hope I shall get off with paying just one or two weeks' rent; at least I do not intend to pay him the full month.

Perhaps you have sent something already, and then I shall find your letter with the hospital porter tomorrow morning. But if you haven't sent anything, I ask you kindly to do it soon, for I am short of cash and will have to pay 10 guilders in advance to enter the hospital again, so that my going back depends on receiving your letter. This morning the porter didn't yet have a letter for me.

Now most of the moving is done. Sien's mother is helping me; it is quite a job, for the whole house is full of plaster, and must be scrubbed. But the studio and the alcove are clean, and almost all the furniture has been moved. Just now we are sitting down for a bite of lunch.

I am feeling pretty good, at least much better than I have for a long time. Yesterday I met the superintendent of the hospital, Dr. van Tienhoven, on the street, and told him how I was getting on, and he said it was all right.

So I hope to be quite well soon.

If I had planned this new house myself with fitting it up as a studio in mind, I couldn't have done better than the way it is now. And no other house on this street is like this inside, though the exteriors all look alike. My being in it is really the fault of the storm which broke the window of the other studio; if it hadn't happened, I shouldn't have known anything about this house.

It was the carpenter who told me about it at the time, and said, Why don't you go and live next door?

Well, brother, in the midst of all the moving, I hammered off another drawing, and this time it was a watercolour. It was a sketch which had remained unfinished because of my illness. So that now things are coming to life again. It represents fishing smacks on the beach, big hulls of boats lying on the hot sand, and the sea far away in a blue haze; it was a sunny day, but the sun was behind me, so one must feel it only in a few short-cast shadows and the vibration of the hot air above the sand. It is only an impression, but I think it is rather correct [F none, JH 159].

My fingers are itching to set to work again, and I need not tell you that I would rather go to Scheveningen than to the hospital. But what must be, must be. Now I am longing very much for your letter, and even more for your visit, if only I am not in the hospital then.

I wonder what you will say about the new house and also what you will think of Sien when you see her, and about the new little baby. I hope with all my heart that you will feel some sympathy for Sien, as she deserves it.

Another thing...do you think you could get some more of that Ingres paper as thick as the enclosed sample, but with a little more tone? If so, bring it along when you come, together with those of my sketches which you do not care to keep. Of course I hope that you will keep "Sorrow" and the best ones, especially the large "Sorrow," for yourself.

Adieu, with a handshake,  
Yours sincerely, Vincent