

Letter 485
Arles, c. 10 May 1888

My dear Theo,

I have had to pay my bill provisionally, while stipulating on the receipt that this payment was only made so that I could regain possession of my belongings, and that the exorbitant bill will be submitted to the magistrate.

But I have almost nothing left after all this: I bought things for making the little coffee and soup at home, and two chairs and a table. That means that I have exactly 15 francs left. So I beg you to send me some more money, in any case not later than on your return to Paris.

I feel sure that I'll soon have several new canvases on the easel.

What I'm sending is packed up and will leave today.

Only it is discouraging to work hard and to see one's subsidy going into the hands of people whom one loathes.

But we'll put a stop to that. I'll make a permanent studio here, where I can put up another painter if necessary.

Foreigners are exploited here, and from their point of view the natives are in the right; they consider it a duty to get whatever they can. Right in the country, like McKnight, you pay less, but McKnight is getting very dull and has worked very little so far. And it is better to work hard and spend more, if one must.

If you would put on one side the best things in what I have sent, and consider these pictures as payment to be deducted from what I owe you, then, when the day comes when I'll have bought you in something like 10,000 francs in this way, I'll feel happier.

The money that has already been spent in other years ought to yield some return also, at least in kind.

I am still far from that.

But I feel that on these surroundings there is everything one needs to do good work. So it will be my own fault if I don't succeed. Mauve painted and sold in a single month 6,000 francs' worth of watercolours, as you told me yourself some time ago. Well, there are runs of luck like that, and after going through all these worries I feel that it's possible.

In this batch there are the pink orchard on coarse canvas, and the white orchard, lengthways, and the bridge. If we keep these, I think the price may go up later, and some fifty pictures of this quality would compensate us in some measure for our very bad luck in the past. Take these three then for your own collection, and do not sell them, for they will each be worth 500 later on.

And if we had 50 like these put aside, then I should breathe more freely.

Well, write me soon.

Ever yours, Vincent