

Letter 077
Isleworth, 13 October 1876

Dear Mother and Theo,

Tomorrow the boys go home, and then I shall receive my money. I asked Mr. Jones to let me go to you those three days, my heart is so with you. It depends now on you both – if you say that I may come, Mr. Jones will let me go. Besides longing to sit at Theo's bedside, I should like so much to see my mother again and, if possible, also go to Etten to see Father and speak with him. It would only be for a short time; I should be with you but for one or two days.

Monday last, I was again in Richmond, and my subject was, "He has sent me to preach the Gospel to the poor"; but whoever wants to preach the Gospel must carry it in his own heart first. Oh! May I find it, for it is only the word spoken in earnestness and from the fullness of the heart that can bear fruit. Perhaps I shall go to London or Lewisham again one of these days.

Just now I gave a German lesson to Mr. Jones's daughters, and after the lesson I told them the story of Andersen's "The Snow Queen."

If you can, let me know by the next mail if I may come; I was so happy over Mother's last letter.

One of these days I hope to visit Mr. Stokes's school. And I shall have to buy a pair of new boots to get myself ready for new wanderings.

The view from the window of your little room must be fine now – you see, I know it from long ago. We are having a great deal of rain here at present, in Holland I suppose it is the same. At Christmas I shall have a fortnight or three weeks to go to Holland; if Anna can go too, we might come together. And now winter is slowly approaching again – try to be your old self by that time. How welcome is that Christmastime in winter. Oh! my boy, I look forward so much to the time when it will be cold here and I shall have to make my rounds at Turnham Green.

When I think of you as one "who comforts his mother, and who is worthy to be comforted by his mother," I almost envy you. But try to get better soon. Yesterday, I asked Mr. Jones to let me go to Holland, but he would not allow it, and at last he said, "Write to your mother; if she approves, I will too."

What beautiful poems are De Genestet's¹ "On the Mountains of Sorrow" and "When I was a Boy."

A handshake for both of you and for the Roos family, and for Willem and any others you see whom I know. And let me hear soon from you again and believe me,

Your loving brother, Vincent

1. A popular Dutch preacher-poet. Both poems quoted in full.