

Letter 097
Amsterdam, 28 May 1877

Dear Theo,

Today was stormy. When I went this morning to my lesson, I stood on the bridge looking toward the Zuider Zee. There was a white streak on the horizon (against which the long line of houses with the East Church stood out); over it hung dark grey clouds from which in the distance the slanting rain came pouring down. Yesterday Uncle Jan went to Leyden, so I was alone for the day; in the morning I went to the East Church, in the afternoon I walked toward the seaside, and I have been working the rest of the day. The work does not come to me so easily and quickly as I could wish, but practice makes perfect, I hope; only if I could, I should like to skip a few years, my boy. I think one only gets some peace after one has accomplished a few years of study and feels one is getting on.

This morning I was in Uncle Stricker's study. It is a beautiful room, and a portrait of Calvin by Ary Scheffer hangs there; yet I should like to see more prints on the wall.

Last week, I got as far as Genesis 23, where Abraham buries Sarah in the cave of Machpelah, the plot he had bought, and without really thinking about it I drew a little sketch of how I imagined the place; it is not worth much, but I enclose it herewith.

Yesterday I had a good letter from home and answered it today; I hope you will write soon, I am looking forward to it.

Just now the men from the wharf are going home – such an intriguing sight. I hear them already early in the morning; I think there are about 3,000 of them, and the sound of their footsteps is like the roaring of the sea.

This morning I bought a small engraving, "Tobias," after Rembrandt, from a Jew for 6 cents.

Uncle Jan sends you his compliments.

How is Mrs. Tersteeg? I am also eager to hear if you have been to Mauve's.

Aunt Mina is going to Etten in a few days, which will be nice for Mother. Father wrote me that the church has been whitewashed and the organ painted. Yesterday he baptized three children. L— is not yet better, and W. v. Eeklen's wife is also very ill. Did you hear that Uncle Vincent has bronchitis again, and it seems to be very bad? It's lucky that he is not abroad, but in his own house, and that Father and Mother can visit him almost daily.

Well, boy, be as happy as you can; my compliments to the Roos family, write soon, with a firm handshake,
Your loving brother, Vincent