

My dear Theo,

Enclosed I send you a list of paints which again I want as soon as possible.

You gave me great pleasure by sending those Millets. I am working at them zealously. Because I haven't been seeing anything artistic, I was getting slack, and this has revived me. I have finished the "Veillée" [F 647, JH 1834] and am working on the "Diggers" [F 647, JH 1834] and the "Man Putting on His Jacket," [F 649, JH 1835] size 30 canvases, and the "Sower," [F 690, JH 1837] smaller. The "Veillée" is in a colour scheme of violets and tender lilacs with the light of the lamp pale lemon, then the orange glow of the fire and the man in red ochre. You will see it; it seems to me that painting from these drawings of Millet's is much more translating them into another tongue than copying them.

Besides that, I have a rain effect going [F 650, JH 1839] and an evening effect with some big pines [F 652, JH 1843]. And also one of the falling leaves [F 651, JH 1844].

I am very well – except for a great depression sometimes, but I am feeling well, much better than last winter, and even better than when I came here, and still better than in Paris.

Also in my work my ideas are becoming – it seems to me – more stable. But then I do not quite know if you will like what I am doing now. For in spite of what you said in your last letter, that the search for style often harms other qualities, the fact is that I feel strongly inclined to seek style, if you like, but by that I mean a more virile, deliberate drawing. I can't help it if that makes me more like Bernard or Gauguin. But I am inclined to think that in the end you will come to like it.

For, yes, you must feel the whole of a country – isn't that what distinguishes a Cézanne from anything else?

And Guillaumin whom you cite, he has so much style and such a personal manner of drawing.

Anyhow, I will do the best I can. Now that most of the leaves have fallen, the countryside is more like the North, and then I realize that if I returned to the North, I should see it more clearly than before.

Fortunately those abominable nightmares have stopped tormenting me. I hope to go to Arles one of these days. I should so much like Jo to see the "Veillée." I think I shall send you a package in a little while, but it is drying very badly because of the dampness of the studio. Here there is hardly any cellar or foundation to the houses, and you feel the damp more than in the North.

Those at home will have moved by now. I will add six canvases for them to the next package. Is it necessary to have them framed? – perhaps not, because they are not worth it. Above all do not get the studies that I send from time to time framed, we can do that later on, it's no use their taking up too much room.

I have also done a canvas for M. Peyron; a view of the house with a big pine [F 653, JH 1840].

I hope you and Jo continue well.

I am glad that you are not alone any more and that everything is more normal than it used to be.

Is Gauguin back, and what is Bernard doing?

Good-by for now. A good handshake for you and Jo and our friends, and believe me,

Ever yours,

Vincent

I am trying as much as possible to simplify the list of paints – therefore I very often use the ochres as I did in the old days. I know quite well that the studies in the last package, drawn with long sinuous lines, were not what they ought to have been; however I beg you to believe that in landscape I am going on trying to mass things by means of a drawing style which tries to express the interlocking of the masses. Do you happen to remember that landscape by Delacroix – "Jacob Struggling with the Angel"? And there are others of his! For instance, the cliffs and those very flowers of which you sometimes speak. Bernard has really done some perfect things in this respect. Well, don't cultivate a prejudice against it too quickly.

Anyhow, you will see that in a big landscape with some pines, trunks of red ochre defined by a black stroke, there is already more character than in the previous ones.