

Letter 636
Auvers-sur-Oise, 21 May 1890

My dear Theo and Jo,

I forgot in the other letter first to give you the address here, which is provisionally Place de la Mairie, at Ravoux's. Besides, I had not yet done anything when I wrote you. Now I have one study of old thatched roofs with a field of peas in flower in the foreground and some wheat, background of hills, a study which I think you will like [F 750, JH 1984]. And I already feel that it did me good to go South, the better to see the North.

It is as I thought, I see more violet hues wherever they are. Auvers is decidedly very beautiful.

So much so that I think it will pay better to work than not to work, in spite of all the bad luck with the pictures that may be expected.

There is a great deal of colour here – but there are such pretty middle-class country houses, much prettier than Ville d'Avray, etc., to my thinking. It seems that Desmoulins, the man who did Japan, has been here, but has gone again. If you can send me some money toward the end of the week, what I have will last me till then, but I haven't any for a longer time.

I would also like to ask for 10 meters of canvas if it would not inconvenience you; but if, seeing that it is near the end of the month, it should inconvenience you, you might send 20 sheets of Ingres paper.

These I need in any case so as not to waste time. There is a lot to draw here. Old fellow, having thought it over, I do not say that my work is good, but the thing is that I can do less bad stuff. Everything else, relations with people, is very secondary, because I haven't the gift for that. I can't help that.

Not working or working less would cost twice as much money, that is all I can see, if we look for any other road to success than the natural road of work – which we shall hardly do. Look here, if I work, people here are just as likely to come to my house without my going to see them purposely as if I took steps to make acquaintances.

It is by working that you meet people, and that is the best way. Besides, I am quite convinced that this is your opinion and Jo's too. I can do nothing about my disease. I am suffering a little just now – the thing is that after that long seclusion the days seem like weeks to me.

I felt that in Paris and here too, but serenity will come as my work gets on a bit. However that may be, I do not regret being back, and things will go better here. I'll be very glad if some time from now you were to come here one Sunday with your family.

You will see clearly that in order to come to understand the country and the way of life, seeing other countries as all to the good.

But I find the modern villas and the middle-class country houses almost as pretty as the old thatched cottages which are falling into ruin. Mmes. Daubigny and Daumier, they say, are still staying here, at least I am sure that the former is.

When you can, you might send me Bargue's Exercises au fusain for a while. I need it urgently, I will copy them so as to keep the copies for good.

A very hearty handshake,

Vincent