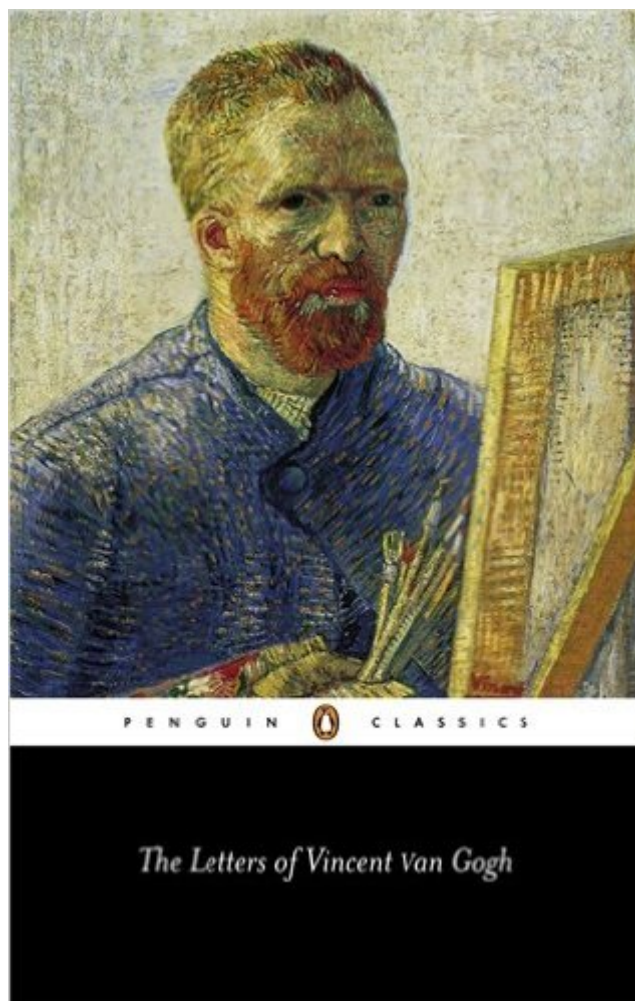


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The Letters Of Vincent Van Gogh (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

"If ever there was any doubt that Van Gogh's letters belong beside those great classics of artistic self-revelation, Cellini's autobiography and Delacroix's journal, this excellent edition dispels it." *—The Times (London)* "Be clearly aware of the stars and infinity on high. Then life seems almost enchanted after all." Few artists' letters are as self-revelatory as Vincent Van Gogh's, and the selection included here, spanning the whole of his artistic career, sheds light on every facet of the life and work of this complex and tortured man. Engaging candidly and movingly with his religious struggles, his ill-fated search for love, his intense relationship with his brother Theo and his attacks of mental illness, the letters contradict the popular image of Van Gogh as an anti-social madman and a martyr to art, showing instead that he was capable of great emotional and spiritual depths. Above all, they stand as an intense personal narrative of artistic development and a unique account of the process of creation. The letters are linked by explanatory biographical passages, revealing Van Gogh's inner journey as well as the outer facts of his life. This edition includes the drawings that originally illustrated the letters. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this book several years ago in a college bookstore. How fortunate these students were to have been able to read and discuss this with others! I have had a long interest in Van Gogh and found this book to be fascinating, an almost voyeuristic look into his short life. I am glad to see that it is available * * and would hope that people now seeing the traveling Van Gogh portraiture exhibit might read it. De Leeuw has compiled letters covering over 25 years of Van Gogh's life, letters that offer the reader an intimate look into the artist's thoughts and emotions. He writes about his friendships, his family, his attempts at love affairs, his religious beliefs and questions, and most importantly, about his art. These letters reveal him as anything but the anti-social person often portrayed in the past, with the ones about his relationship with his brother Theo being particularly touching. Van Gogh was a prolific correspondent and an absolutely wonderful writer. His prose is remarkable--he could have been a writer as well as an artist. These letters shed light on the inner thoughts and the inspiration for his art and show him as a person of great passion and compassion.

While Vincent van Gogh has always been one of my favorite artists, this compilation of his letters combined with a more in-depth study of his work has intensified my appreciation of him as both an artist and a person. I've always felt it was impossible to separate this particular artist from his work and reading his letters has led me to a better understanding of why this is. These letters beautifully capture his soul and spirit and reveal him as the caring, expressive and socially aware person that he was. The combination of strength of character and vulnerability expressed in these letters explain both the intensity and sensitivity of his work.

A very fine collection of the letters, with multiple sides of VVG revealed. To read a collection of letters by an artist whose work you know very well is to invite yourself to take a look at him as a person. As a person, I found that I liked him best in these letters when he was struggling with his religion, his art, and his purpose. I'm glad that Roskill didn't make a selection that focused solely on the more famous and theatrical depressions. I don't agree that this work reveals Van Gogh as a writer. For me, they definitely confirmed his status as a painter. At his best in these letters, he's painting with words. Which doesn't make it a less interesting read. I found this a good adjunct to taking a look at the work again, it added an extra dimension to experiencing him as a painter. Well worth the time it takes.

This is probably the most terrific book I have ever read in my whole life. Before I bought this book I

couldn't believe how Van Gogh's life was so joined to his brother Theo and, after reading this book, I realized how important could be in your life the presence of such an important person as a brother that support your life's choice as an artist or any other thing which needs strong support and stubbornness to be archived. This told, the book offers Van Gogh's mail to Theo disclosing the whole process of Van Gogh artistic development from the early years when he was spending his lonely life, to his relationship with Sien, to the days of the great hope (Antwerp, Paris), to the total ruin in Arles and Saint Remi in south of France. All those letters end with a greeting from Van Gogh which I consider unique and that I want to borrow for my own: With a hand-shake your faithful Luca.

Van Gogh is a tremendously powerful letter-writer. In these letters mostly written to his brother we see a great, suffering, soul, a devoted artist tormented and striving. This may all sound like 'cliche' but Van Gogh is perhaps the most conspicuous example of the cliché of the suffering, rejected in his life artist who knows great recognition only after death. Van Gogh is a person of great intelligence, and of a very strong conscience. There are no greater letters I think ever written by an artist. And while they may be filled with a troubled and agonized spirit they too have a great richness of feeling and appreciation of life.

this collection of van gogh's letters to his brother Theo both captivated me and broke my heart. Such an intimate look into the vulnerability of the artistic soul. Those who appreciate the artistic process will love this collection of letters. You don't need to be an admirer of Van Gogh's to appreciate this; but you will walk away admiring the man behind the sunflowers.

It is a connection with a wonderfully prolific artist's joys and troubles. I enjoyed reading his intimate letters with his brother, never knowing that they would end up in print makes it all the more interesting to me. It is a very nicely done book. I will treasure it always.

I own many books about Vincent van Gogh...this one allows you to see into the artist's mind and feel his emotions like none other. I have picked it up when I haven't felt like reading a lot as you can readjust a few of his letters to his brother, Theo, and come back to read more another time...or sit and really steep yourself in this wonderful artist's mind and creations for pages and pages.

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