

001 ■ October 20, 1947 — June 30, 1948

Shōwa 22-23 / Age 27-28

October 20, 1947

Dear Gogh-kun (*Vincent Willem van Gogh*),

It's been quite some time since I last wrote — how have you been? Lately the mornings and evenings have turned sharply cold, and with the days growing shorter, I haven't been able to paint at all. On top of that, work at Nippon Express has been so busy that all the energy I might have given to painting has been swallowed up there instead. When I can't paint, writing letters to you like this has become one of my small pleasures.

Whenever I think of you, Gogh-kun, a stubborn surge of strength rises up from deep in my belly — a defiant, “*damn it all*” kind of feeling. I sometimes think what a strange and fortunate fellow I am to have a man like you for a friend.

Yesterday, after coming home from Nippon Express, I decided I would go out right away to make some pen drawings. I didn't even comb my hair or shave my stubbly beard. Wearing a rumpled stand-collar jacket and wooden clogs, I headed out. And then I ran into a woman. Our eyes met with a sharp jolt, and I quickly turned my face away and hurried past. She was someone who had worked at a desk beside mine during the war — the very woman to whom I once sent a love letter written in blood, which ended in failure. I felt utterly miserable, looking so shabby. She, meanwhile, was as beautiful as ever.

You are the only one who recognizes me as an artist. No matter what anyone else may say, just knowing that you come to visit me makes me so happy I could cry.

Gogh-kun, I have new works finished. Please come and see them again.

October 20

Chiyu

To Brother Gogh

*Source: Uemae Diaries, 1947-2020: Chiyu Uemae and Gutai (ed. Hiroyuki Nakatsuka, 2019)*