

TORMENTED PAINTER

In Vincent's work we're all but blind
to shadows of despair
that mixed with hope within his mind
and drove him out of doors to find
the freshness of plein air.

Most do not know he briefly went
as pastor to the poor,
to whom he freely gave or lent
until his stipend all was spent:
this showed his inner core.

What melancholy marked the face
of his self-portraiture!
And yet he was a man of grace,
a lover of the human race
and beauty's connoisseur.

His mystery we barely sound
from letters signed and sent
to Theo, brother tightly bound,
in whom his dearest friend was found,
who paid for paints and rent.

Impressionistic works galore
flowed from his fevered brush:
out of creative treasure store
eight hundred canvases and more
with strokes of colors lush!

This world was far from ready yet
to praise that master's flow,
until the dying sun had set
upon the paint we can't forget
bequeathed by sad Van Gogh.

— *David L. Hatton, 5/5/2018*