

The Complete
Miserere



GEORGES ROUAULT

(1871-1958)

Artist's Preface

I dedicate this work to my master, Gustave Moreau, and to my valiant and beloved mother who with unstinting patience watched over and aided my early efforts when I wandered at the crossroads, an ill-equipped young pilgrim of art. Let me add that both, in their own way, were endowed with the same smiling and encouraging nature, seldom found in these times of bitterness and offense in which we seem to live today.

Most of the subjects date from 1914-1918. They were originally drawn in Indian ink, and later, at Ambroise Vollard's request, were transformed to copper plates. It was apparently desirable that a first impression on copper should be made. With these as a starting point, I have tried, taking infinite pains, to preserve the rhythm and quality of the original drawing. I worked unceasingly on each plate, with varying success, using many different tools. There is no secret about my methods. Dissatisfied, I reworked the plates again and again, sometimes making as many as twelve to fifteen successive states; for I wished them as far as possible to be equal in quality.

The engravings were printed under my careful supervision and were completed in 1927. Later Vollard had all the plates cancelled. After waiting twenty long years for their publication, which was postponed for different reasons, I was fortunate enough to recover the engravings in 1947, and entrusted their publication to the Etoile Filante, Paris.

It was planned that Andre Suares should write an accompanying text, unfortunately he was unable to do so.

The death of Vollard, the war, the Occupation and its consequences, and finally my lawsuit caused infinite delays. Though ever hopeful, there have been black moments when I despaired that these engravings, to which I have always attached a great significance, would ever be published. I rejoice that this has come to pass before I vanish from this planet.

If injustice has been shown toward Ambroise Vollard, let us remember that he had taste and a passion for making beautiful books, regardless of time; but it would have taken three centuries to have completed the works which he wanted, without considering our human limitations, to entrust to the artist.

George Rouault
Paris, 1948



1. **Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.** Have mercy on me, God, according to Thy great mercy. (Psalms, 51:1). 22 5/8 x 16 1/2 inches. [50570] \$1,000.

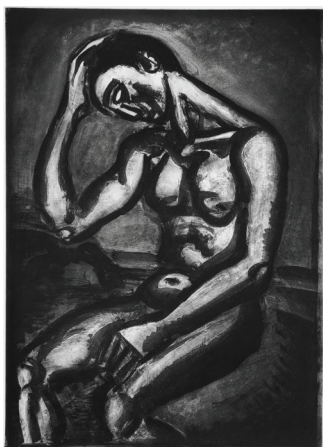
2. **Jésus honni...** Jesus reviled... 21 5/8 x 15 4/5 inches. [50571] \$1,200.





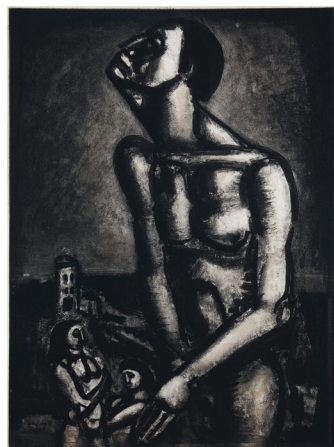
3. **toujours
flagellé...**
forever
scourged...
19 1/5 x 14 1/2
inches. [50572]
\$1,200.

4. **se réfugie
en ton cœur,
va-nu-pieds de
malheur.**
take refuge in
your heart, poor
wanderer.
19 x 14 3/5 inches.
[50573] \$1,400.



5. **Solitaire,
en cette vie
d'embûches et de
malices.** Alone in
this life of pitfalls
and malice. 22 4/5
x 16 2/5 inches.
[50574] \$1,500.

6. **Ne sommes-nous
pas forçats?** Are we
not slaves?
23 1/2 x 17 1/5 inches.
[50575] \$1,000.



7. **nous croyant
rois.** we believe
ourselves kings. 23
1/5 x 16 1/2 inches.
[50576] \$1,000.

8. **Qui ne se grime
pas?** Who does not
wear a mask?
22 2/5 x 16 7/8 inches.
[50577] \$8,000.



MISERERE

In the great ages of faith, artists produced religious works as a matter of course and almost without conscious intention. Their main function was to express a system of generally held beliefs which constituted not only a religion but a philosophy. Their artistic focus, then, was to produce the most successful form as vehicle for the given subject matter.

Today, however, the religious artist must convey not only form but content, and within an atmosphere challenging to religious faith. The art, then, has a tendency to become emotional and self-conscious, often reflecting aggressiveness or defensiveness in its more passionate manifestations.

Georges Rouault's work is an important example of religious art produced under these difficult circumstances. Of the 20th century religious artists he is exceedingly passionate, and yet does not suffer from self-consciousness or defensiveness. That he was a fervent Catholic is obvious from some of his works and can be deduced from all of them, even from the least evidently religious. But he was also a Catholic reacting to the conditions of the 20th century. "My only ambition is to be able some day to paint a Christ so moving that those who see Him will be converted". This is the statement of a man conscious of being in a minority and imbued with the spirit of proselytization. *(continued on next page)* ►



9. **Il arrive parfois que la route soit belle...**
It happens, sometimes, that the way is beautiful... 14 3/4 x 20 inches. [50578] \$800.

10. **au vieux faubourg des Longues Peines.**
in the old quarter of Long-Suffering. 22 1/4 x 16 1/2 inches. [50579] \$1,400.



11. **Demain sera beau, disait le naufragé...**
Tomorrow will be fair, said the castaway... 20 x 14 1/16 inches. [50580] \$1,000.

12. **Le dur métier de vivre...**
The hard task of living... 18 7/8 x 14 1/4 inches. [50581] \$1,200.

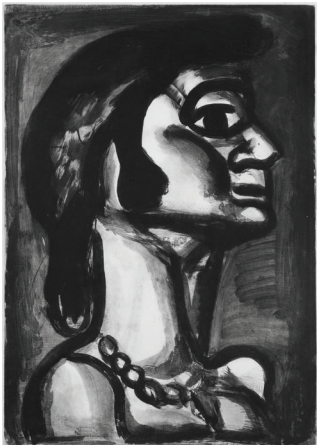




13. il serait si doux d'aimer.
to love would be so sweet. 22 3/4 x 16 1/4 inches. [50582] \$3,800.



14. Fille dite de joie. So-called good-time girl. 20 1/8 x 14 3/8 inches. [50583] \$800.



15. En bouche qui fut fraîche, goût de fiel. In the mouth that was sweet, the taste of gall. 20 x 13 7/8 inches. [50584] \$800.



16. Dame du Haut-Quartier croit prendre pour le Ciel place réservée. The Society lady fancies she has a reserved seat in Heaven. 22 5/8 x 16 1/4 inches. [50585] \$900.

Rouault believed that the only salvation for the artist is to live his imaginative life in isolation. His withdrawal is a part of the general flight from the world of reality which expressed itself in abstract painting on the one hand, and in the other imaginative tendency ending in Surrealism on the other.

But Rouault never attempted to cut himself off all together from the world in his art. As a Catholic he held up the teaching of the Gospel as a solution for present-day problems. When he painted the crucified Christ it was not as a remote event in the past or as a traditional symbol but as the expression of a faith which he believed could still work miracles. Through the whole of his work there runs a message which is directed towards the actual state of the world. It is, then not surprising that an artist of such strong religious feeling as Rouault could also depict prostitutes and corrupt judges. The two aspects of his art are, in fact, inextricably entwined.

He asserted the superiority of spiritual truth - whether religious or artistic - over the truth of reason: "Tout est imponderable dans les regions spirituelles ou s'aventure l'artiste, mais il y regne un ordre plus vrai que celui du controleur des poids et mesures" ("All is imponderable in the spiritual regions where the artist explores, but therein reigns an order which is more true than that which controls weights and measures"). Art was a miracle, an ascent to heaven. *(continued on next page)* ►

It could be said that if he did not paint the sordid aspects of secular life, his strictly religious paintings would not carry the weight that they do. Through his varied depictions he vivified and gave substance to his art by infusing it with socially relevant content. In his more savage painting he took up themes which had aroused the great socially conscious artists of the 19th century - Daumier, Forain, Toulouse-Lautrec; The corruption of bourgeois society. Rouault did not paint with the reforming zeal and satire which inspired his predecessors, nor did he condemn the individual, but rather society. His painting is a lamentation on the wickedness of the world, which is redeemed by Christ's sacrifice.

Rouault derived his technique from the great masters of emotional art in the past, the ancestors of Expressionism. He tells us that the first artists whose work he knew and admired were Daumier and Forain. In temper he had more in common with the former but technically he learned much from Forain, whose quick brush drawing is the basis of the fluent touch to be found in Rouault's early works. To these were later added the models Goya and Rembrandt. Here too, the similarity with one artist, Goya, is the field of subject and with Rembrandt in that of technique.

Rouault challenged the principles maintained in his time. In an age of science and rationalism he pursued an art of mysticism. One cannot be but impressed and moved by the intensity of his emotion, and by the conviction with which he conveyed it through his works.

--Debt to Anthony Blunt's introduction, 1963



17. Femme affranchie, á quatorze heures, chante midi.

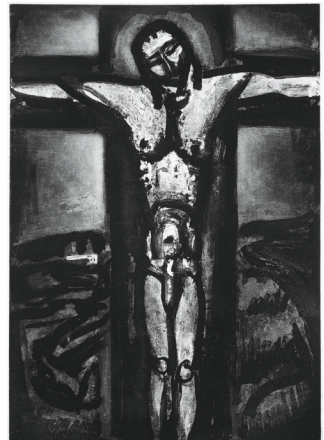
Emancipated woman, at two o'clock, cries noon.
22 1/8 x 17 inches.
[50586] \$1,000.



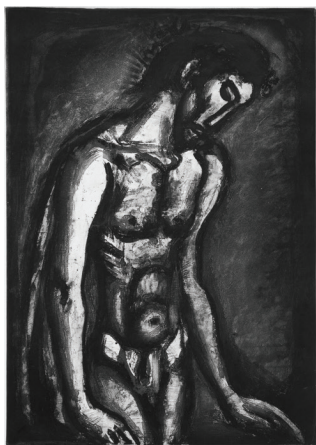
18. Le condamné s'en est allé... The prisoner is led away...19 7/8 x 13 5/8 inches. [50587] \$1,000.



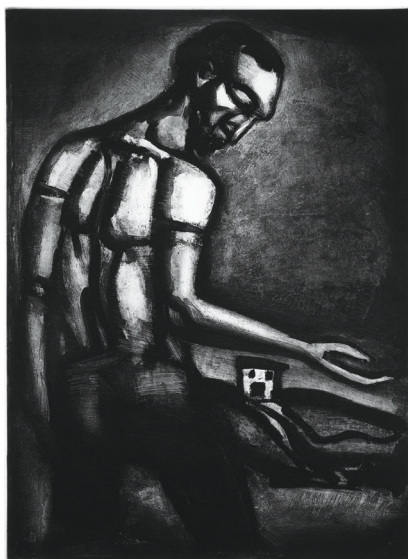
19. son avocat, en phrases creuses, clame sa totale inconscience... his lawyer, in hollow phrases, proclaims his complete indifference...
21 1/8 x 16 1/8 inches.
[50588] \$1,500.



20. sous un Jésus en croix oublié lá. under a Jesus forgotten on a cross.
22 7/8 x 16 1/2 inches.
[50589] \$1,600.



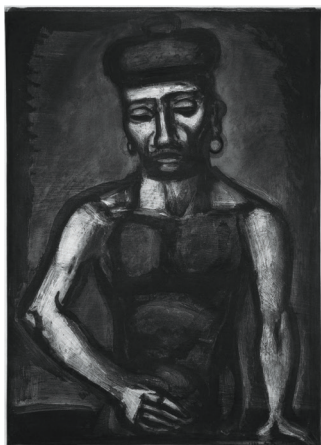
21. **Il a été maltraité et opprimé et il n'a pas ouvert la bouche.** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7). 22 7/8 x 1 1/4 inches. [50590] \$2,000.



22. **En tant d'ordres diver, le beau métier d'ensemencer une terre hostile.** In so many different ways, the beautiful calling of sowing a hostile earth. 23 1/4 x 17 inches. [50591] \$1,400.



23. **Rue des Solitaires.** Street of the Lonely. 14 3/8 x 20 inches. [50592] \$800.



24. **Hiver
Lépre de
la terre.**
Winter,
scourge of
the earth.
20 3/8 x 14
1/2 inches.
[50593]
\$950.



25. **Jean-François jamais ne chante alleluia...** Jean-François never sings alleluia... 23 3/8 x 16 3/4 inches. [50594] \$1,200.



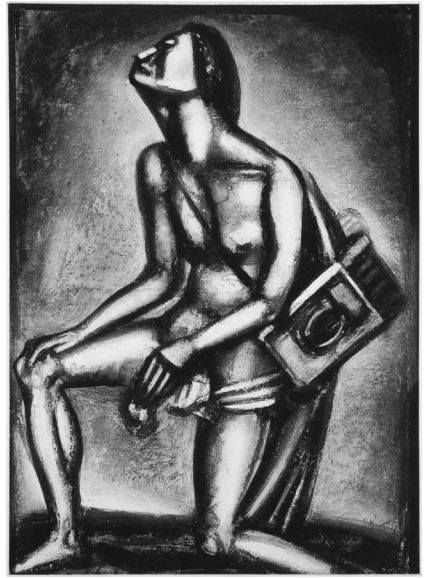
26. **au pays de la soif et de la peur.**
in the land of thirst and fear.
16 3/4 x 22 7/8 inches. [50595] \$1,000.



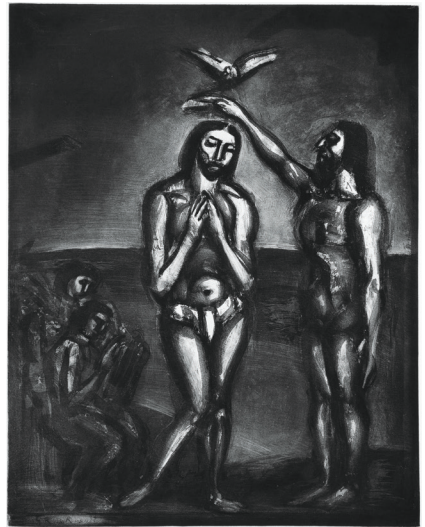
28. **Celui qui croit en moi, fût-il mort, vivra.** He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. (John II:25). 22 3/4 x 17 1/4 inches. [50597] \$600.



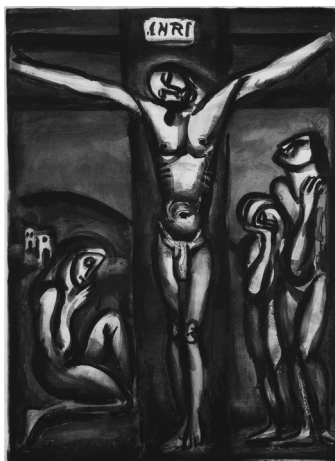
29. **Chantez Matines, le jour renaît.** Sing Matins, a new day is born. 20 1/8 x 14 3/8 inches. [50598] \$750.



27. **Sunt lacrimæ rerum...** Mortality hath her tears... (Virgil, Aeneid, I).
23 x 16 1/2 inches. [50596] \$1,400.



30. **Nous...c'est en sa mort que nous avons été baptisés.** We...it is in His death that we have been baptized. (Romans 6:3).
21 5/8 x 16 5/8 inches. [50599] \$1,500.



31. **Aimez-vous les uns les autres.**
Love one another.
(John 13:34). 23 3/8 x 16 3/4 inches.
[50600] \$1,400.



32. **Seigneur, c'est vous, je vous reconnais.**
Lord, it is Thou, I know Thee...
22 3/4 x 17 7/8 inches. [50601] \$2,500.



33. **et Véronique au tendre lin, passe encore sur le chemin...and Veronica is still among us with her veil of compassion...**
17 1/4 x 16 7/8 inches. [50602] \$2,000.



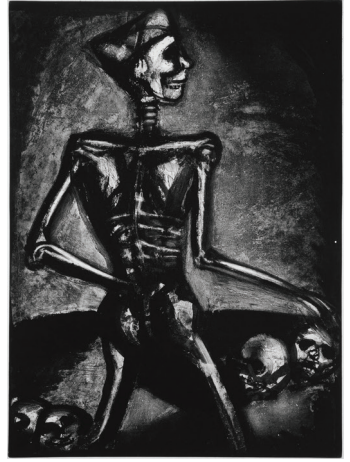
35. **Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde.** Jesus will be in agony even to the end of the world. (Pascal, Pensées).
23 x 16 1/4 inches. [50604] \$1,600.



34. **Les ruines elle-mêmes ont péri.**
Even the ruins have been destroyed. (Lucian, Pharsalia, IX, 969). 22 7/8 x 17 1/2 inches. [50603] \$900.



36. **Ce sera la dernière, petit père!** This will be the last time, dear father! 23 3/8 x 17 inches. [50605] \$1,400.



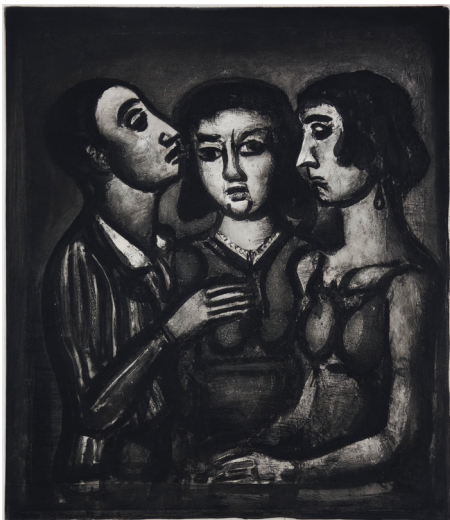
37. **Homo homini lupus.** Man is a wolf to man. (Plautus, *Asinaria*, II, 4, 88). 23 1/8 x 16 1/2 inches. [50606] \$600.



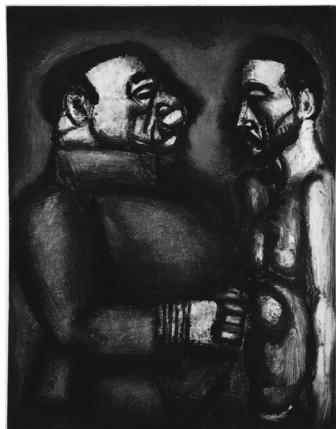
39. **Nous sommes fous.** We are mad. 22 1/2 x 16 1/4 inches. [50608] \$900.



38. **Chinois inventa, dit-on, la poudre à canon, nous en fit don.** The Chinese, they say, invented gunpowder, and made us a gift of it. 22 7/8 x 16 1/2 inches. [50607] \$1,000.



41. **Augures... Omens...**
20 1/8 x 17 1/4 inches. [50610] \$1,200.



40. **Face à face.** Face to face.
22 3/4 x 17 1/4 inches.
[50609] \$1,000.



42. **Bella matribus detestata.** Wars, dread of mothers. (Horace, Odes I, i, 24-25).
23 1/4 x 17 1/2 inches. [50611] \$3,800.

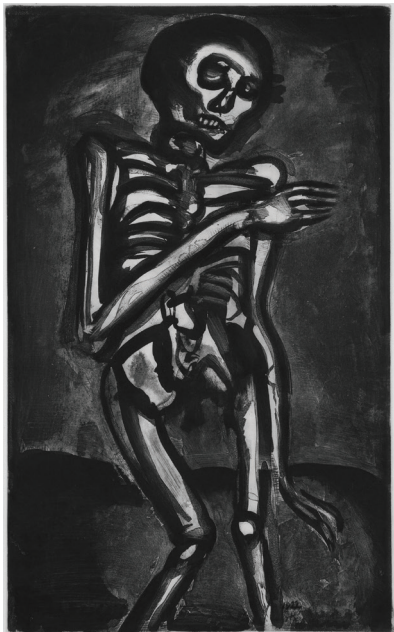


43. **Nous devons mourir, nous et tout ce qui est notre.** We must die, we and all that is ours. (Horace, Ars Poetica, 63). 20 3/8 x 14 3/8 inches. [50612] \$1,500.

44. **Mon doux pays, où êtes-vous.** My sweet land, what has become of you?
16 5/8 x 23 1/2 inches. [50613] \$1,500.



48. **Au pressoir le raisin fut foulé.**
In the wine-press, the grape was crushed.
15 5/8 x 19 1/4 inches. [50617] \$800.



45. **La Mort l'a pris comme il sortait du lit d'orties.** Death took him as he rose from his bed of nettles.
21 1/4 x 13 1/4 inches. [50614] \$750.



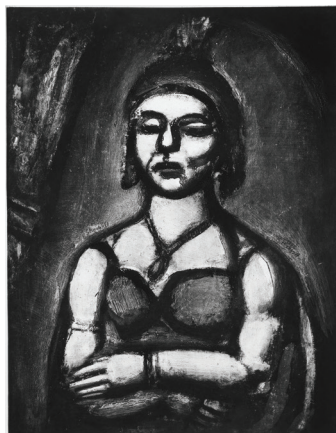
46. **Le juste, comme le bois de santal, parfume la hache qui le frappe.**
The just man,
like sandalwood,
perfumes the blade
that cuts him
down. 23 1/4 x 16
5/8 inches. [50615]
\$1,400.



47. **De profundis.**
Out of the depths... (Psalms
130:1). 17 1/8 x 23 3/4 inches.
[50616] \$800.



49. **Plus le cœur est noble, moins le col est roide.** The nobler the heart, the less stiff the collar. 23 1/8 x 16 3/4 inches. [50618] \$1,400.



50. **Des ongles et du bec.**
Tooth and nail.
22 7/8 x 17 5/8 inches.
[50619] \$950.



52. **Dura lex sed lex.** The law is hard, but it is the law. 22 5/8 x 17 1/4 inches. [50621] \$1,000.



51. **Loin du sourire de Reims.**
Far from the smile of Rheims.
20 1/4 x 15 1/4 inches.
[50620] \$1,000.



53. **Vierge aux sept glaives.**
Our lady of The Seven Sorrows.
23 x 16 1/8 inches. [50622] \$1,200.



56. **En ces temps noirs de jactance et d'incroyance, Notre-Dame de la Fin des Terres vigilante.** In these dark times of vanity and unbelief, Our Lady of Land's End keeps watch. 23 1/4 x 17 1/4 inches. [50625] \$3,200.



54. **Debout les morts!**
Arise, you dead!
23 1/4 x 17 1/2 inches.
[50623] \$700.

55. **L'avuegle parfois a consolé le voyant.**
Sometimes the blind have comforted those
that see. 23 1/4 x 17 1/4 inches.
[50624] \$2,000.



The Series

There are 58 plates in the series, which fall into two sections: Miserere, the artist's plea for divine compassion, and Guerre, his castigation of man's ultimate folly. Originally engraved between 1918 and 1928, they were exhibited for the first time in 1948 by Etoile Filante in Paris in a limited edition of 450 copies.

The etchings of the Miserere represent a continuation of the style which the artist practiced before World War I, but with certain modifications. The theme focuses more on the sufferings of humanity rather than the horror of the world. The impulse is pity more than condemnation. The sufferings of Christ are interwoven with those of man, often in explicit juxtaposition. Rouault wrote out titles by hand so they could be reproduced under each plate.

The second half of the series, entitled Guerre, is more replete with horrors. In some designs the parallel between the sufferings of Christ and those of man is emphasized but in a slightly different way, as a journey by man through the dark night in which the final release is witnessed through the sacrifice of Christ.

The portfolio of unbound sheets was printed on wove paper showing the Ambroise Vollard watermark. The colophon page accompanying the set is signed and numbered but none of the individual images were signed separately.

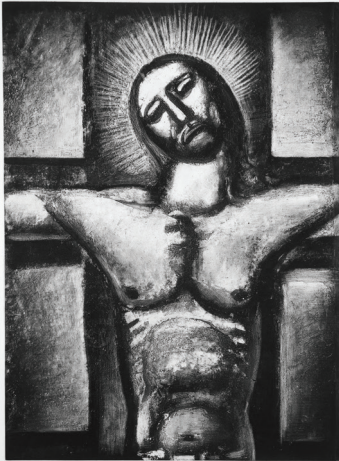
Sheet size: 25 5/8 x 19 3/4 inches.

Medium: Mixed etching

Edition of 425 (+ 25 HC)

Publisher: Société d'Édition l'Étoile Filante, Paris 1948

Printer: Jacquemin, Paris



57. **Obéissant jusqu'à la mort et à la mort de la croix.** Obedient unto death and to death on the cross. 22 7/8 x 16 5/8 inches. [50626] \$2,200.

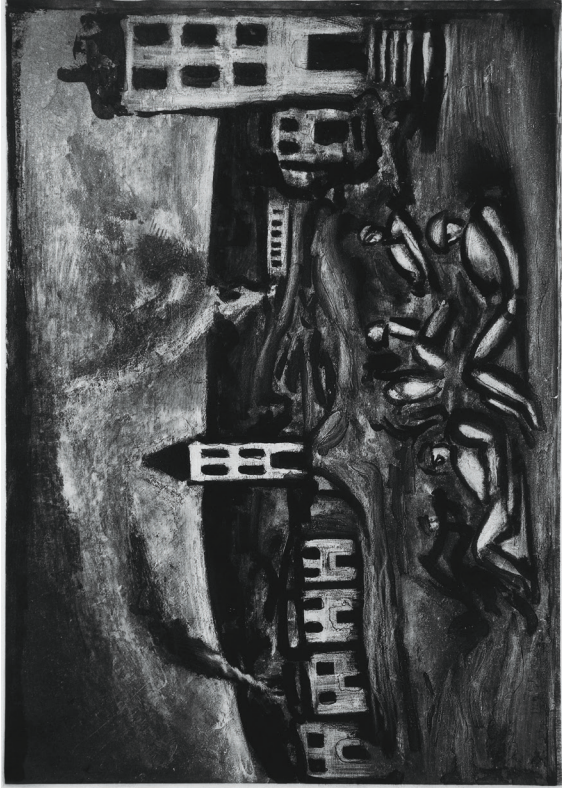


58. **C'est par ses meurtrissures que nous sommes guéris.** It is by his wounds that we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5). 22 3/4 x 18 5/8 inches. [50627] \$2,000.

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44. **Mon doux pays, où êtes-vous.** My sweet country, where are you?
16 5/8 x 23 1/2 inches. [50613]

\$5.00