

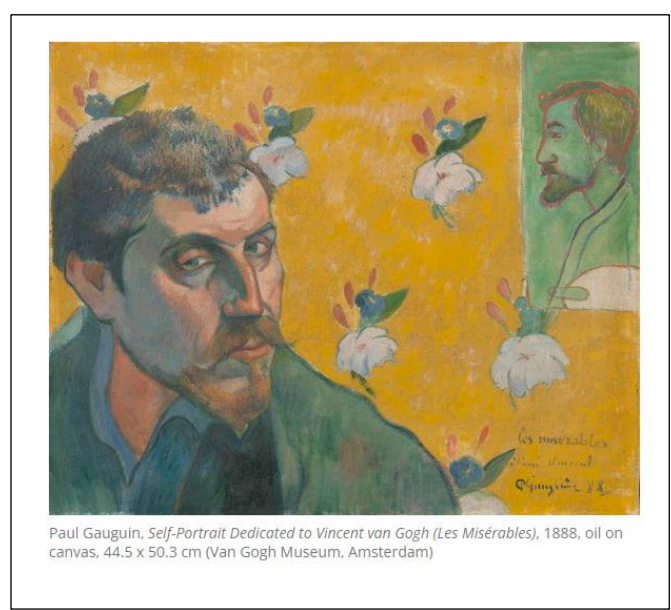
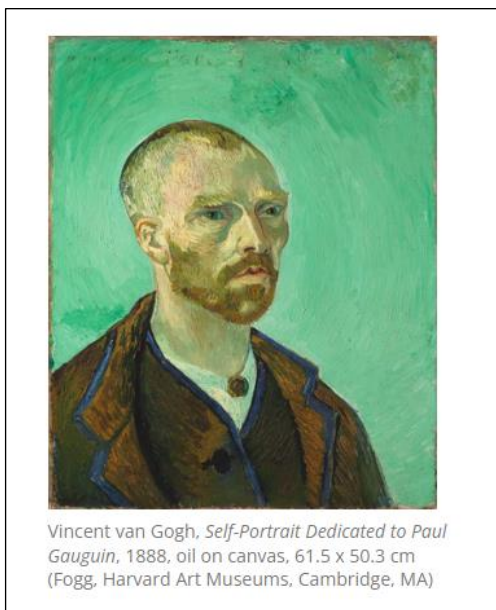
The Self-Portrait for Paul Gauguin series:  
(Pictured Below)



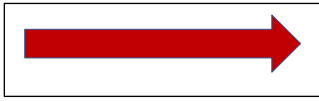
Hello:

I hope this finds you well and reading a good book.

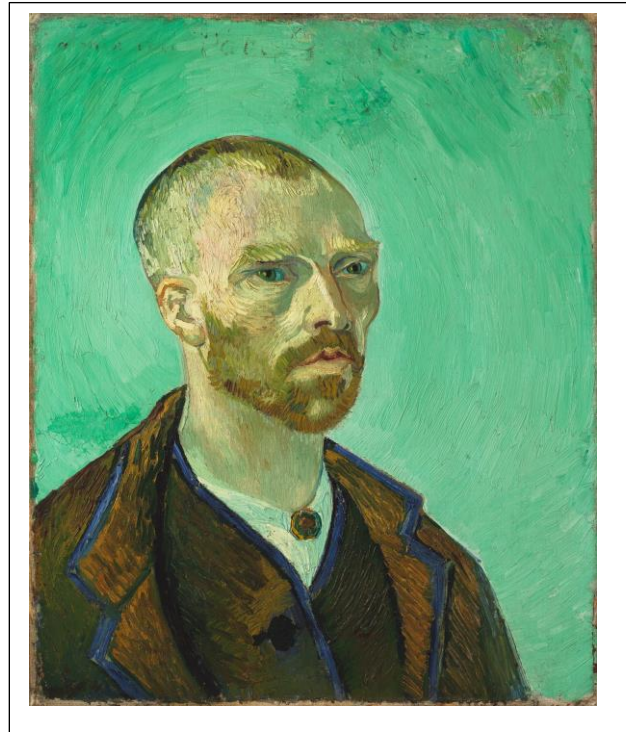
Van Gogh painted in series, often producing three or more canvases of a similar scene and/or theme. The theme of three canvases on a particular subject is an unexpected plot development in my current novel-in-progress: "Saving Van Gogh." A lot of the fun in writing novels is doing the research, and I had already spent some time on the middle painting, because this painting is also a major plot point in my first novel in this series, "Stealing Renoir."



Let's take a closer look at the second painting in the series.



“A mon ami Paul Gauguin”



Here is a closeup of the dedication:



Van Gogh gave this self-portrait to Gauguin after they had been roommates in Arles for five tumultuous weeks. Gauguin sold the canvas for 300 Swiss Francs, about \$1500.00 in today's currency. The painting was looted by the Nazis, kept in the storage room in *Niederschönhausen* Castle, and then auctioned off at the Fischer Gallery's notorious *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) Auction in 1939, where it brought 175,000 Swiss Francs, about 3.6 million dollars in today's currency. The *Entartete Kunst* Auction in Lucerne, Switzerland, was the Nazi Party's attempt to raise some money from the sale of art that it had confiscated from Jewish citizens. (There's more about this in "Stealing Renoir.")

Further study into the second painting (pictured above with the inscription) revealed that the canvas had been slashed and stabbed. Probably by Van Gogh, when he learned that Gauguin may have had an affair with a woman that Van Gogh had secretly admired.

Gauguin restored the painting with wheat paste glue by using newspaper and a hot iron pressed onto the back of the canvas. Gauguin also tried to obliterate the dedication, although his efforts were ultimately unsuccessful.

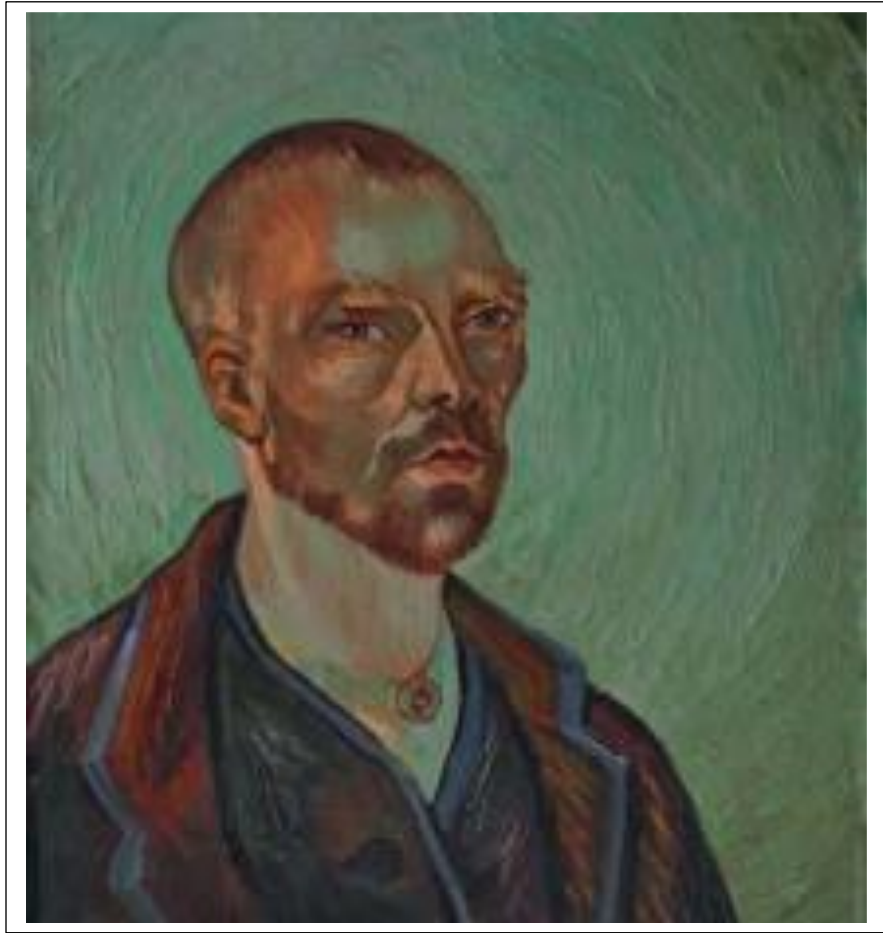
MEANWHILE . . .

The first painting in the series by Van Gogh was miscategorized as a fake. The current whereabouts of this first canvas are unknown, but when compared to Gauguin's gift to Van Gogh, present a compelling argument that it was the first version that was originally intended as a gift.

(Pictured below.)



Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo, in the Fall of 1888, to describe the third painting in the series: “It’s all ashy against pale Veronese (no yellow). The clothing is that brown jacket trimmed with blue, but in which I’ve exaggerated the brown into purple, and the width of the blue trim. The head is modelled in light-coloured thick impasto against a light-coloured background with almost no shadows. But I’ve slightly slanted the eyes in the Japanese manner.”



This painting was probably destroyed by Van Gogh's family, who culled some of his work to avoid duplicates, not realizing their potential worth or historic significance.

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If you haven't already, please take a moment to leave a review on Amazon. It is really helpful with sales. Here is the link to my latest book, "[Stealing Picasso](#)." Thank you.

If you know of anyone who is looking for a speaker, the Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau is great about helping to subsidize appearances. I'm available as a speaker to talk about "[Stealing Renoir](#)," and how World War II was the largest art theft in history.

Or, if Kentucky history is appropriate for audiences, the Speakers Bureau will subsidize my appearance to discuss the findings from my research grant that inspired "[A Promise Moon](#)" and how it relates to the Underground Railroad in Kentucky. I'm also available to talk about



gardening with native plants and “[Let The Earth Breathe.](#)” If you or anyone you know would like to schedule a talk, here’s the [link](#).

Meanwhile, I’ll be giving the following talks:

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Thursday, June 1st, 10:00 am  
“Let The Earth Breathe” at the Elizabethtown Garden Club meeting  
Brown-Pusey House  
128 North Main  
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

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Friday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 pm  
“Let The Earth Breathe”  
LaRue County Library  
215 Lincoln Dr.  
Hodgenville, KY 42748

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Thursday, July 20, 11:00 am  
“Let The Earth Breathe”  
Shelby County Public Library  
309 8th St.  
Shelbyville, KY 40065

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Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm (CST)  
Hopkins County Genealogy Society  
56 North Main  
Madisonville, KY 42431

[Here’s the link to my website for the most up-to-date schedule of talks.](#)

Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown  
[www.singingrockpublishing.com](http://www.singingrockpublishing.com)