CONVERSATIONS WITH MY GARDENER

Hello.
Anyone Home?
Anyone Home?
Coming!
I did say I didn't have a ladder.
You'd best get one for the roof.
- Did you tell the lady you?
- What lady?
- The one I called.
- I don't know any lady.
I don't need a ladder.
Hello, by the way.
Sorry, hello.
You're here for the aerial?
Not a bit. I'm here about the ad
in Henri's caf
for the gardener's job.
- Sorry I thought...
I am looking for someone.
I want to revive the kitchen garden.
Don't I know you.
Could be.
Long ago?
Hang on it'll come to me.
In the army?
Before?
Before the army?
- Fuck!
The Cake,
The head's birthday.
Father what was it?
Father Colin.
Too kind, children!
Light the candles, Charles.
Same every year.
With one candle to hide his age.
That crow banger I nicked...
was the candle.
What a fuss it made!
I'll say! The old man
took his belt to me.
My mother was shouting
"Don't kill him!"
How were we found out?
It was the P.E. Teacher.
We called him Kodak. He'd snap away
at fetes and prize-givings.
And?
On the snap before the explosion
we had our ears covered!
It was as plain as the nose
on your face we'd done it.
- Right.
- No, not wine.
You can't vex me
by refusing a little Chirouble.
A tiny drop, then.
Just to be polite.
I'm through with wine.
I drank too much of it for years.
One day my wife said,
"Stop or I'll leave you."
I listened and stopped
there and then.
Wise decision.
To memories.
What was our name?
Oh yes! The Daredevils!
That's right.
Here's my ladder.
You hired Deruzeau?
First name in the yellow pages.
You've money to spare!
I'd best be going.
Wait.
We haven't fixed the days.
I'll call in tomorrow.
I'm no friend of Deruzeau.
- See you then.
- See you then.
You've more land than I thought.
Been here long?
Yes, you were still asleep.
The whole lot as a vegetable patch
seems a bit much.
No, just a country priest's garden...
...like my mother's down there.
Yes. That I can do. It's there. Lettuce, radishes, carrots, spuds... the same as her. A little kitchen garden. And the rest tidy. That'd be good. Veg for you and your lady and sundry guests... a few tomatoes, your herbs, green beans, broad beans... the basics. Yes, yes. I'll see your lady for the lettuce, she might have favourites. She won't be coming until it's sorted. No rush. I can come three times a week. I've time now I'm retired.

- Already?
- The railway!

We fought for social issues. I wasn't a leading light. I made up the numbers. The wife wouldn't have liked me demonstrating. Oh, I had a rummage in the shed for tools. Not a won'thwhile one to be seen. Except the sickle. It's temperamental, but it works. I cleared a corner. But we need a scythe. We'll buy it together. It's just a scythe. Scythe for grass or scythe for undergrowth? Wood handle or metal handle? Prices vary massively. We'll go together.

- Fancy a coffee?
- No, a tea.
Tea? I haven't got any.
Coffee, then.
Right.
But I won't digest it.
What are all these pictures?
Some have nothing on.
Those are waiting.
Waiting?
I'm a painter.
Oh?
Oh?
You mean... an artist?
Yes, that's my job.
Sit down.
Excuse me.
Well, well.
It's quite a job, though.
I wouldn't have the patience.
It's not a matter of patience...
...more being willing
to take one's time...
...to look around carefully.
When I'm working
I've no time for looking.
You never watch the sun set?
The stars, the mist...
The mist?
You can't see much when it's misty.
Winter snows, a womar's skin...
A womar's skin?
That's not the same.
They're things you see
but don't admit to looking at.
This one's good. Precise.
Like a photo.
I was young when I did that.
Not bad for a beginner.
But it doesn't show her nature
like a good portrait should.
- Don't you recognise her?
- No.
It's my mother.
I didn't know her.
I'd never been here.
She was always in her white coat at the chemist's.
We used the health centre.
As far as I remember.
I told the wife about the cake last night.
And?
Didn't find it funny.
I thought of that too.
What a mess!
I was expelled, stripped of holidays, sent to boarding school...
You too?
No, I served my time.
Time?
School to us workers, was like military service.
The law made us go.
But when you're old enough, you start work.
You'd have carried on studying.
Baccalaureate, maybe more.
Not really.
I scraped through the Bac...
...then on to art school...
...then a workshop, then painter.
It goes to show, eh?
Well...
Let's check the shed for tools.
Right.
What a shambles!
Like old Deruzeau's junk shop.
Deruzeau, the electrician?
He's not old.
No, that's his son.
A fool.
Not that foolish.
He married the Matouret girl.
Matouret rings a bell.
- Henriette?
- Muriel.
Her folks are loaded.
That's right.
Her mother lined her knickers
with rubber!
It was a right fuss
meddling with them.
How do you know?
That's what they said.
Wasrt she pretty?
Very pretty?
You had a crush on her?
Like everyone.
You didn't tell her?
I did.
And?
It made her laugh.
And she said yes to Deruzeau.
That hurt?
Yes, at the time.
But I never think about it,
it's so long ago.
Oh yes, once.
I gave Deruzeau...
...a poke on the snout
- What?
We were posting different bills.
So it came to blows.
Silly, but it made me feel better.
You'll need a lamp.
- I've one in the car.
- Not now.
What's all this ironmongery?
People accumulate junk.
Especially around here.
We'll have to think on, though.
I could sort through it
with my son-in-law.
I doubt you'll keep much.
We'll dump the rest.
- Or give it to a charity.
- You think?
They'll strip it down to the bone...
...but grab what you want to keep.
They take all or nothing.
Anyway, we need a scythe.
The sickle's murder on my back.
We'll take this one.
That's a fine product.
- Shall I wrap it?
- No, I'll try it.
- What for?
- Wretch!
You'd know why
if you used one all day.
The weight's important,
the handling, the balance...
you don't want to tire the arms
or the hips.
- Ever heard of the zzee?
- The zzee?
You sell scythes and don't know.
I'll show you.
Mind your backs.
Hold this, please.
Here we go.
Zzee!
Well beaten, ground and sharpened.
You won't regret buying it.
I've workmen coming in
so I'll be in Paris
sorting out business.
- You could make inroads.
- No problem.
When you get back.
I'll be taking off.
- Where?
- Annual firemars trip to Royan.
- It's Royan this year?
- Every year.
A day to prepare, a day's trip
and a day to recover.
Three days.
- Royan every year?
- Every year.
But I'll have mown the grass by then.

An army cut:
back and sides.
- It'll be a surprise for your lady.
- She won't be coming.
Oh? Will she stay on there?
We're breaking up.
Not divorce?
It's heading that way.
My fault though.
I was a bit silly,
had a couple of flings.
Models, mainly.
When you spend hours
with a lovely naked girl,
you just think of painting.
As long as you just look,
it's professional interest.
No, that's just it.
After the session,
you look with different eyes.
You see the lovely naked girl,
not the model.
Yes, I see.
In the past,
my wife would close her eyes.
But now they're open.
So the lettuce are up to you.
Lettuce is lettuce.
Not a bit. There are more varieties
than you can shake a stick at.
There's Webb, Cos, Iceberg, Endive...
Not Endive. You pick the rest.
So I'm in charge of lettuce.
Yes. And all of the fruit and veg,
everything.
You won't be disappointed, old son.
But I'll need a garden tap.
Best keep these in a safe place.
The workshop's locked.
Fine. You won't mix up
my tools with yours!
Just put them in here.
She's forgotten the bread.
- Who?
- The neighbour.
Maybe not. From the baker's
by the old bridge?
- Yes.
- From Raguet, no doubt.
You knew the son, Antoine.
Toinou Raguet.
A little fat lad that smelled of pee.
No. You have a good memory.
Because I haven't moved from here.
I've lived among the memories.
And Toinou Raguet?
The customers
didn't want him at the oven.
He went into medicine.
Now he's a nurse for loonies.
They don't care about the smell.
And the bread?
I'm coming to that.
The bread was his father.
Old Raguet dropped dead last night.
I talked to him yesterday.
He was just a little pale
from the flour on his face,
but no more.
He was found
nose down in the croissants.
- So no bread.
- No.
- Known a "Double Bill"
- Why?
He was always repeating.
"Morning, morning".
"Nice day, nice day."
He did drink though.
He'd say,
"Water and flour make glue."
"Glue."
And this morning
nose down in the croissants.
Excuse me.
Hello.
No. I was talking with my gardener.
With a friend, I mean.
You don't know him.
Yes, he's a specialist.
Specialist.
Three days a week.
Yes, very happy.
And you?
I'll write a cheque then.
Yes, I insist.
How much?
Oh! That much.
No, like I said. I insist.
Yes, all right.
I'm painting... half-heartedly.
I'm daubing.
Daubing a few landscapes.
Yes, I'm getting by.
No, I'm coping.
The neighbour comes in...
and does the housework,
the grub, the shopping.
What's the neighbour like?
You're being a pain!
It's hard.
Hard to live with her,
hard to leave her.
Is your wife jealous?
She has no reason to be.
- Have you been married long?
- Ha!
Coming up for 27 years.
Royan every year?
How do you do it?
Nice too.
Every year?
Yes. Off-season, mind.
It's cheaper.
All the same. Royan every year.
Nice every year.
We go back every year.
We've got our routine.
We arrive, leave the cases.
The owner recognises us,
it's booked each year,
it's clean and comfortable.
The wife's happy.
- You stay long?
- Two weeks.
But don't worry about the garden.
It's the high season.
Don't worry
the garders your kingdom.
Whether you're there or not.
But tell me...
you must know Nice, by now.
How do you rate it?
I'd say... it's lovely... it's...
it's blue...
and big all around.
Every morning the wife and I
plonk ourselves by the sea.
She puts oil all over herself
and I sit next to her.
- What do you do?
- Look at her.
- Is the Promenade des Anglais nice?
- Oh yes.
Oh yes. First we do it in one direction,
then in the other.
You see people,
I don't know if they're English!
They may be,
but as nobody talks...
it's very quiet,
just frail old folk.
So tanned they look like Indians.
Then we go back for meals.
You have to be on time.
But you can have
all the starters you want.
Then we have a nap.
Quiet.
We wake at 5.
Back to the promenade.
We stop and sit on the bench
to look at the sea.
It's nice.
It makes you want to go.
Best be getting on.
I'll bring bread
from the baker on the estate.
- A baguette?
- Perfect.
- Ok?
- Fine.
I'm coming down.
I bought your bread.
And croissants.
That's nice.
I'll take off my boots
or I'll make a mess.
I do at home apparently.
I leave mud cakes on the lino.
Nice slippers!
- I can't stand socks.
- Come in.
They burn my feet.
These are handier.
You can kick all you want,
the soil stays on the sole...
and falls off in the heat
of the kitchen. I get shot!
I'll give this a coat of paint.
Not before time.
- Can I wash my hands?
- Go ahead.
I beat the scythe on my anvil,
a piece of rail.
Pre-war Pont--Mousson.
There's nothing better!
The grocer's van came.
I got you some tea.
- This...
- Let's see.
Got any milk?
Only skimmed.
That'll do.
Tea with milk goes down best.
- Can I ask you a question?
Two, if you like.
You'll say it's not my affair
but, between us...
why bury yourself here?
- Bury?
In Paris you're someone.
But here, quite honestly,
ending up in this hole...
In Paris there are
plenty of "someone's".
Too many.
- As for this hole...
- Just an expression.
This hole is my roots, where I grew up.
- You see?
- Of course. Who better?
And there's something else.
My father wanted me to take over the family chemist's.
And?
The thing is, I didn't want the chemist's. I knew I wasn't cut out for complaints and prescriptions. And?
When it came to it, I said no to pharmacy school. I wanted to be an artist in Paris. And?
My father said to me, "Art isn't a trade. It doesn't pay". "You won't raise a family on that."
My mother couldn't stop crying. They're good at tears. I held out. I didn't give in...
- and I left.
- And?
You've just exhausted your quota of "Ands"
And...
My father died 3 years ago. My mother straight after. After the funeral I came here... I looked around the house... from cellar to attic... and in an old trunk I found... portfolios full of water-colours. Views of the house, the garden, flowers, tress and undergrowth. They were all...
fantastic.
He hid his light under a bushel.
I saw that he hadnt dared to say no.
He had no choice but to take over
the family business.
He kept the chemist's.
Yes.
Along with his artistic aspirations.
Oh! The heat on my tooth...
See the dentist.
No thanks!
He's a champion extractor.
If I listened to him
I'd have nothing but bought teeth.
If it doesn't move, pull it!
I had one here...
a big one with hooks...
He said, "I won't give you a jab,
railwaymen are tough."
It made him laugh.
But my arse was a foot off the chair.
He got it in the end.
It was the wrong one.
Give me his name so I can avoid him.
But it's paid by the insurance.
Good.
Railwaymers perks:
Free trips and full dental care.
Talking of which,
you're keeping me chatting...
and the boss won't like it
if the work isn't done.
- What are you eating?
- A kipper.
At this time?
Every day at this time
I eat a kipper.
As much protein as steak
and it's good for your arteries.
The Japanese eat fish,
they have fewer heart problems.
- You're a wee bit Japanese.
- Don't make fun.
I'm not, but look.
You drink tea; take your shoes off outside and eat herring. It peps me up, anyway. Want a taste. No, thank you. I pulled out the rose bushes. They'd had it. They were old. Mother pampered them. Gorgeous colours and perfumes, old fashioned roses. There was still a label on the stake. The roots had become tinder. A devil to pull out. Ask your dentist. By the way... I wrote down the dentist's name. You never know. How is it pronounced? B... B... - Bzysiski? - He's a pole. Keep it. Just reading his name gives me a toothache. We should choose our names. Oh? And what would you call yourself? - Gardener. - Good call. - And me? - Dauber. I'm sure you call me Dauber to your family. No, not a bit. You must mention me. - Sometimes. - And what do you call me? No offence? Tell me anyway. The boss. That's ridiculous. Yes... it's my son-in-law. Not the garage one, the supermarket guard.
He put the word in my mind.
"The boss" this, "The Boss" that.
Reckons it's modern American.
A bit stupid, is he?
- Not just a bit.
- Right.
That's a good looking knife.
Yes. Good looking and good.
It'd cut sliced bread.
A word of advice, if I may.
Always carry a knife.
And also...
a piece of string.
It can be a lifesaver.
Remember that.
I will.
There.
There's elephants' graveyards
that's a kippers' graveyard.
Mr Gardener's Kipper Graveyard.
Like an Erik Satie title.
He's a musician.
Right. I'll leave the keys
on the kitchen windowsill.
Will you lock up?
- If you come tomorrow.
- I will.
See the plumber,
and tell him about your garden tap,
where, how tall, etc.
I understand.
You'll see the electrician.
Not Deruzeau.
- Don't worry, I changed.
- You pay, you choose.
Will you see the painter for the key?
- When are you back?
- As soon as possible.
Don't worry, I won't stay
a day over three weeks.
Bye, Gardener.
Bye, Dauber.
Go easy, there's rain coming.
Really... You think so.
I don't think. I know.
Yes!
Hello. Yes, it's me. I've just arrived.
It rained all the way up.
Still on for lunch?
The Chinese.
You're sure.
Right. See you tomorrow.
Yes. Take care.
Not eating.
Neither are you.
I'm not that keen on exotic food.
I'm only here to please you.
Some wine?
Seen Maitre Coiffard?
What?
- Not before?
- She's busy.
Could I have the wine list?
I need to know
you've thought this through.
Thank you.
If you...
Thank you.
If you've no regrets.
Once it's under way...
But it's under way.
It's been under way for 5 years.
I've been patient.
And unhappy.
Now I'm impatient.
And relieved.
The sooner the better.
You say five years
but it suddenly matters now.
Why now?
- Have you met someone.
- No.
I was just saying.
How's publishing?
I see you're preparing an album.
"Magritte, Ensor & Co."
The Belgians are trendy now.
When do you go back?
I've people to see.
No doubt!
You're obsessed!
I've things to do, friends to see.
- You like life there?
- Very much.
We could sell Paris.
Why?
I may have a buyer.
I have ten.
The bill please.
I won't see the lawyer.
Why do you want a divorce?
We can each live separately.
Thank you.
But not divorce.
Right. Let's go.
Sorry, but...
I'm sick of this place.
We can split things ourselves,
like adults.
I keep the workshop,
you have the gallery and the flat.
You don't get it. I want a divorce.
Why?
We make a list of what's mine,
what's yours, and we sign.
Sell what you like.
We just change our relationship.
Each to his own.
You see who you like,
do what you like.
What a nerve!
Was I the one taking liberties?
I just want us to stay friends.
We haven't argued.
Let's keep it that way.
Although...
I could make a play for you.
- Don't.
Right.
And your daughter?
How do you tell her
you're divorcing?
My daughter is also your daughter.
There's nothing to tell.
She made my mind up.
What?!
Carole?
Yes! You think she's still
at the cuddly toy stage?
- Carole!
- Yes.
I'm staggered.
Hello, stranger!
Tired of nature already?
Not at all.
Just stocking up on provisions.
- With stretchers?
- Please.
- I hope you're parked nearby.
- In front.
I'll see to it all.
Coming to Tony's viewing on Saturday?
- This week?
- Next.
- We'll all be there.
- I'll try.
If Tony knows you were here...
He'll be really chuffed.
He'd love your opinion.
Good-bye and thanks.
- See you Saturday.
- I'll try.
I'm parked up here.
You're here!
- Hi.
- Good of you to come.
- Seen everything?
- Not yet.
- You will tell me?
- I promise.
We must do lunch
and have a good chat.
OK?
I'll leave you,
my Japanese buyers are waiting.
Sayonara!
Excuse me.
You came?
Not still in the country?
No.
Thanks.
Jean-Etienne, a good friend, an artist.
I was his student.
Jean-Etienne's a photographer.
Nice to meet you.
We were discussing Tony.
What do you think?
I think Tony's finally tapped into his basic talent for colour.
His blacks are superb.
They have exceptional luminosity.
Like Caravaggio.
Sorry, I don't quite follow.
Enlighten me on his blacks.
His blacks are electrified by subtle shimmering ripples. You see?
Yes, that's quite clear.
But how do you come to judge with such certainty?
Simple enough.
I look, I analyse and I state my opinion.
- And yours?
- On Tony?
I like Tony a lot but this exhibition...
I don't know.
I find it... misty. That's it.
Misty. You know what a friend said recently?
I'm anxious to learn.
He said when it's misty, you can't see much.
A rather superficial point of view.
Simplistic, even.
- Mine is sharper, more...
- Trendy.
Yes.
It's to see colour
in bands of non-colour.
To see more than black in black.
To see non-white.
Jean-Etienne,
have you heard of the zzee?
- The tzuh?
- No, the zzee.
The zzee?
A new movement you don't know?
Yes, I've heard of it, but...
Isn't it Japanese?
Not at all.
Zzee is cutting edge.
Avant-garde anti-vrit?
Not at all.
It's what a scythe does.
Zzee cuts the crap.
It eliminates what you don't need,
useless weeds,
parasites...
Everything.
Yes, I see.
I'll be going, then.
I've a meeting.
I'll be in touch, Magda.
Thanks for introducing Mr...
Dauber.
Dauber.
Dauber. Like Gardener,
Mason...
or Berk.
But...
Why did you lay into him?
You know very well why.
He was a pretentious pain.
But you hacked him down.
I'm sorry I came.
Come on, I'm abducting you.
- Dauber, honestly!
- Dauber is honest.
Dauber will take you to dinner
then Dauber will show you
his still life.
It's you, old son!
Back sooner than I expected.
- Lucky I got stuck in.
- Fine work. Well done!
The essentials are done.
I can see that.
I found some traditional rose bushes.
- With bluish flowers.
- Good.
I'll plant them
somewhere else I know you'll like.
Tidier, isn't it?
Now they just have to grow.
It's the same inside.
I was on their case, though.
Especially the electrician.
- Deruzeau's better.
- But you said...
I said I didn't like him.
But if you can afford it,
he's the best.
Once I'd ruffled his feathers,
the Italian did a fair job.
Not Deruzeau-quality, but fair.
See that?
This T-splitter means
I can use three hoses.
It was a feat getting it
plumbed in the right spot.
But...
I got enough rockets on the railways
to know how to dish them out.
Come and see.
It'll look smashing.
I like it sharp.
- You could hang some paintings.
- You'd spoil it.
Can't I hang mine?
Of course. It's your house.
But...
Good morning.
Ma'am.
It smells of fresh paint.
- Are the bedrooms up there?
- Yes, they are.
You've patched things up.
That's not my wife. At her age?
I invited her for a few days.
We'll see.
Yes. We'll see.
- Fancy a beer?
- No, water.
Yes, you're right.
The pilgrimage to Royan?
We were caught
in such a downpour...
- And the sea?
- Don't worry, it's still there.
You couldn't see it for fog,
but you could smell it.
Salt, shells, seaweed...
you breathe them all in.
Then we got back on the bus,
did a head count and came home.
That's good.
I know, I'm late.
At least 3 hours late.
I wanted to hoe the spuds early doors
but the surs high now.
- Who's criticising you?
- Me. I am.
Me. It's my son-in-law.
The jerk or the other?
Be nice, he's family too.
Now he's unemployed.
That's why I'm late.
My daughter called in tears,
"Guy's lost his job!"
Great start to the day.
He'll find another.
Do you never watch telly?
Jobs are like tigers.
An endangered species.
If he's willing and able
to turn his hand...
He's totally unwilling and unable.
Supermarket guard was his zenith.
Have a drink to perk you up.
He only just made guard.
There was an exam...
That's a low trick!
You may laugh...
This is wine.
- You're giving me wine.
- No. Very good wine.
An Angelus '82
from the cellar.
My father liked to live.
It is good.
Oh, after all...
You paint outdoors now.
Well?
I've problems enough.
A painter needs the honest eye
and opinion of the public,
of friends...
I know nothing.
It's a matter of taste.
Seeing the work you put in,
it must be good
but don't ask me why.
Know anyone in supermarkets?
Just the odd checkout girl.
Be serious, please.
Off the top of my head,
no one comes to mind.
But I'll think about it.
Don't worry,
if there's an opening...
Thank you.
It's very good.
But you can't see anything
you're looking at,
apart from the irises, maybe.
The rest...
When I paint outdoors, I paint
what I see, what I imagine,
drawing inspiration
from what's around me.
Yes...
when you look at it.
But it's odd, coming out
to paint what you can't see.
Not at all.
You know Grme?
The painter Grme.
Oh, no.
He came to Barbizon...
- Barbizon?
- It's near Fontainebleau.
Oh yes, Fontainebleau!
Napoleon.
That's right.
Well, just next door in Barbizon,
before the Great War,
this painters' circle
would set up their easels
in the woods.
They were painting trees, rocks,
daubs of light...
But Grme, great specialist
of the Far East and the Middle Ages,
even under the trees,
he painted Moorish palaces,
fountains and mosaics
with great precision.
Why outdoors, then?
He wanted to be with his mates.
I'm the same.
It's to be nearer to you.
It's too late for spuds.
I'll water the courgettes.
You did say your son-in-law
was a guard?
- Yes.
- A big lad, then.
Aye! And he never gives in.
Why sack him?
It's not just him,
they're closing down.
He'll get a handshake.
Nothing.
A tiny one.
How long will that last?
It's a mania.
Closing down all over
and chucking people out.
In my day, finding a job
was as easy as losing one.
These days
if you chuck youngsters out,
they're out for a long time.
Out of everything.
Is he big on sport?
Football!
Never misses a game.
On his arse in front of the telly
with his pastis and cigarettes.
He even supports a club.
- PSG?
- No. OM.
Marseille, his roots.
Born there. Stefanini.
Guy Stefanini.
His only beef is Zidane.
He's obviously a case.
He says, "I'm not convinced
by Zizou's pace."
Now for the courgettes!
Could you fetch my cigarettes?
I left them with my lighter.
- Next to the plates.
- OK, Boss.
Hello.
Jacques-Henri?
Guess.
You've a good ear,
you flashy sod.
Very well.
You too, I hope.
Do you still look after
the Parc des Princes?
Excuse me.
His cigarettes.
Take them.
Hey, Gardener.
Tell Dauber he smokes too much.
Tell him what he needs is a pool.
You can help me persuade him.
OK?
I'll tell him.
Gardener, she said.
And?
- You told her.
- It was the name you chose.
Just between us.
- I'll ask her to forget it.
- Don't ask her anything.
Don't get angry.
- Was that all?
- No.
- Stop smoking and buy a pool.
- A pool?
Gardener!
I have some news for you.
Your son-in-law has to report to
my pal in 2 days' time at 5 o'clock.
What for?
A job.
- Parc des Princes security.
- I don't believe it.
Right up his street!
"Public order's my game," he says.
Smack dab in the middle.
Oh, I'll never forget this, old son.
It only took a phone call.
Now he has to play it smart.
There's one simple principle.
PSG rule, OM don't!
I'll tell him.
Along with the good news.
Tomorrow I'll bring a cauliflower,
a pampered, pest-free cauliflower.
My personal cauliflower.
I'll bring you photos too.
I'll water the courgettes tomorrow.
They can wait.
The son-in-law.
Guy, the one you saved.
With my daughter.
She's pretty.
That's the other son-in-law
with their camper.
He fitted it out himself.
Inside there's a kitchen, beds, electricity, bottled gas...
There's even a loo.
It's incredible.
It's tiny but it's a little home.
What's the sign?
- Akileine.
- What's that?
It curbs foot odour!
He could have chosen better.
He knows someone from the brand.
They signed a contract
to have their advertisement
on the van.
He gets taken for a rep.
That way he saves on camping fees.
He's a sharp one.
That's Padirac.
The caves with the big stalactite.
The wife felt cold
at the bottom of the cave.
We were shivering.
That old dear was ill
on the way back.
We thought she was dead.
- Thought?
- She wasn't moving.
Reboutot listened to her heart...
Nothing.
Reboutot's no clown,
he's got his first-aid badge.
Did she pull through?
I don't know.
On these excursions,
you don't say
or they'd lose custom.
There.
I'll let you watch the rest.
All Royan, as you'll see.
It starts in the coach.
The firemen are all there.
They sleep and they sing.
Sometimes they get drunk.
And the beach.
Never-ending!
You press this button for the next
and this to go back.
I'll be going.
- Gardener's great.
- Don't call him that.
You again!
Run along home, you idiot.
Go on!
Batavia for Miss Magda.
Call her Magda.
On the estate,
I call everyone Mr or Miss.
Except the railwaymen.
That's not bad.
It's a pleasure to behold.
All it needs is folk.
Cats, dogs, birds...
Can't you paint folk?
Don't get me worked up!
I can paint anything... in my way.
Yes, in your way.
But it's still a pleasure to behold.
You said that.
Why is it a pleasure?
You're the teacher, you tell me.
I've no desire to explain it.
It's something you feel.
Specialists explain.
It's the heart that feels.
And this makes me feel nothing.
Why all the fuss, then?
Because it's been commissioned.
I've made a piece of furniture.
How can I explain painting?
Painting that moves me,
makes me cry,
makes me joyful...
It's far beyond my capacities.
Unattainable.
It's fine as it is.
You've already sold it.
You're right. It's fine if I sell.
You should open a gallery.
Go on, choose one.
No, I haven't the money.
As a gift!
I can't accept.
- Pay me in vegetables.
- You're joking!
It'd take a lorry-load of veg
to pay for one.
Here, for your home.
No, no.
No, I can't.
You don't like it.
Where'd you get that from?
Do I like it? Yes.
I know a bit,
I've watched you work.
But the wife hasn't.
How could she appreciate it?
And they wouldn't go
with what we have.
We're more classical.
A horse painted on velvet,
Mont St Michel,
Lisou's childhood drawings...
No, it'd clash.
Look at the room it takes.
It'd be pretentious.
I'd get called Picasso.
No, its place is here.
Or with folks who buy,
who...
who...
Something wrong?
Sit down.
It's my plumbing.
The odd squall.
- I'll get some water.
- It soon goes.
I've got my medical on Wednesday.
Annual check-up,
courtesy of the railways.
They come in a coach
with everything aboard.
Doctors, nurses, equipment...
beakers for your pee,
social security forms...
But major breakdowns
is what they're good at.
Lungs, heart...
The eyes, if you ask.
I'm going to ask.
My sight's getting worse
and my old glasses are scratched.
That's better.
- I'll go home.
- Wait, I'll pay you.
Pay me next week
for two weeks.
No, no, wait.
It could've waited, though.
It's more for the wife,
she prepares the envelopes:
Holidays, clothes,
presents for the children...
Say hello to Miss Magda.
Just Magda, I said.
I'll even say good-bye.
Why good-bye?
I'm driving her to the train.
A few days at her sister's.
Her sister!
A few days is nothing.
I should say good-bye...
No, don't worry.
I'll tell her.
Right.
I'm ready.
- Gardener's going already?
- Yes, he's a bit peaky.
And don't call him that.
Say good-bye from me.
Shall we go?
Yes.
You shall catch your train.
Carole! My love.
What a surprise!
I had to come.
Have you lost my phone number?
That doesn't mean
I don't think of you. Often.
Let me introduce Charles.
Charles, my dad.
Hey.
Nice car.
Come on, let's have a drink.
- You know I saw your mother?
- She said.
Sit down.
- Here, love.
- No.
Did you say we should divorce?
What's she been telling you now?
I said it was silly living together
if you row all the time.
- I don't want a divorce.
- Why make it hard?
Maybe it's best not to bother
your friend with this.
He'll soon be family.
Because...
Yes. We're getting married.
I came to tell you. And to say
we'd be glad if you came.
Very kind.
- What do you do?
- I'm in real estate.
- How old are you?
- Almost your age.
I love your daughter.
I don't doubt it.
What about you?
Me? As Charles says,
I'm lucky to have fallen
for a man like him.
He has experience, he knows life
and what he wants.
We've been married 25 years.
How will you be in 25 years?
If you want my blessing...
I don't want anything.
It was just to let you know.
That's done.
And I'm sorry I came.
Come, Charles.
Sir.
You'll never change.
What a fool!
How's it going?
OK, old rascal?
Terrific.
They made me a belt to measure.
A big bandage.
Free, though.
A hernia coming, they reckon.
The wife alerted them.
She remembered I had a similar
plumbing problem ten years ago.
But for that,
they'd have opened me up.
At the time, young Le Louarn
fiddled around with me
and got me farting again.
- Tea?
- No, no...
No more tea, no more stimulants,
no starch, no game...
I've a list as long as your arm.
And kippers?
He didn't say.
I wasn't about to ask.
Right...
Have you kept an eye on it?
- On what?
- The garden. Watering, slugs...
No, I didn't think.
Something wrong?
Nothing. My daughter came.
Were you pleased?
Not for long. We fought.
- Five or six cans...
- You're not listening.
- It's more important...
- I am listening.
She talked about you and her mother.
No, she wasn't alone.
She was with some guy.
- 30 years older.
- Like you and Miss Magda.
No, they're going to marry.
How would you have reacted?
I can't let a kid walk all over me.
Maybe, but...

decide which you love best,
your daughter or your pride.
I see you got a card too.
"I hope we'll see the artist,"
the widow said.
I don't know him.
I wouldn't forget Poileau.
- He must have been ribbed.
- Yes.
- Poileau pony...
- Don't.
Don't mock the dead.
But it's true, on his wedding day,
when the priest said,
"Juliette Benard, do you take
Georges Poileau to be your husband..."
one kid shouted "shirt".
Poileau shirt!
Everyone fell about.
You have to come.
It's tempting.
If you don't,
you'll alienate half the locals.
That's the widow.
So good of you to come.
He'd have been so pleased.
My condolences.
He's in here.
Thank you.
That's the mayor.
My duties
prevent me from attending
our friend's funeral,
so I'll just say a few words.
We'll miss you, my dear Poileau.
Your sudden, unexpected demise
both saddened and dismayed us,
Poileau.
You set an example of courage.
You fought the illness
and never gave in, Poileau.
You died as discreetly as you lived,
Poileau.
It weighs a bloody ton.
Loading it into the wheelbarrow,
I really felt it.
But it's so handsome,
it's won'th it.
- Got your bandage on?
It's a bother,
but I'll get used to it.
I watched you with the leeks.
Your stomach seemed cramped.
No, it takes effort to make a hernia.
Ren Le Louarn explained that
when I had my first.
It came from the rails,
A few of us would hump
All you need on your crew
is one or two slackers,
you feel the effort.
Ren looked after me
like a champion.
- Why not see him?
- He's retired. His niece took over.
Their family's got the gift,
it happens.
But the niece
can't hold a candle to Ren.
The old man was the best,
better than the lot of them.
Only he died.
Hard luck!
"Fitness doesn't last forever."
- Bardagaud said that.
- Who's Bardagaud?
You've seen him!
And he made you laugh.
He'd zip down the hill on his bike
going, "Ding-ding!"
- Oh, him.
- Yes, him!
He's dead too.
Run over by a car.
Didn't he signal with his right arm
to turn left?
That's him.
So it was bound to happen.
Maybe.
No fool, mind.
He could teach folk a thing or two.
We uneducated folk
were proud of him.
At rallies,
when some dandy stymied the delegate,
we'd all look to Bardagaud.
He'd soon send him ducking for cover.
He could have been an MP
but he was shy.
Shy and kind.
That doesn't work on the hustings.
That's for sure.
At his funeral, the delegate said
he was the honour
of the working class.
See?
The honour of the working class.
What better accolade?
There is none better.
Fortunately he didn't suffer.
He just went.
Some hang on for years
but it's best to go just like that.
"Good-bye, all!"
You get to heaven feeling good.
Growing old must be boring.
You believe in heaven?
I believe and I don't.
I think we become food for maggots.
That's good for fishermen.
Does it hurt?
It's nothing.
- No way.
- Sorry.
It won't rain tomorrow either.
- How do you know?
- I just know. You'll see.
You keep your weather secrets.
You don't say what you see
when you paint.
I look at the shadows
that turn blue-black
in late afternoon.
It means summer's fading.
You can see autumn coming.
You see further than me.
In August
the blues are sharp,
the shadows line the trees,
the lines are clear.
I'm listening but I don't get it all.
To make a landscape
more alive, more whole,
you look upon it as a child,
as Bonnard said,
without naming things.
- Your pumpkin gives me an idea.
- Oh?
I'll paint the garden,
all its vegetables,
giant-sized, like Botero's.
What do you say?
- We'll see.
- Wouldrt you like that?
Recognition of your know-how.
Yes.
When you say big...
how big?
For instance, a radish.
You can see the transparency,
the subtlety.
People don't know what they eat.
Their memory needs jogging.
Here.
It costs nothing to try,
at least once.
And if you like it?
Soon you're a wet rag,
like Rmi Pontazer,
the antiques dealer.
Five minutes to find the lock
with his key.
He looked like
he'd caught myxomatosis.
No fear! If there's no first time,
there's no second time.
You can stuff painting.
Stuff it.
I'm sick of standing for hours
in front of a painting
like a cow in front of a train.
I feel old and tough as an old boot.
I should have studied medicine
and been a chemist.
Or a psychiatrist.
Looking into others' heads
to avoid looking into your own.
And you?
What job would you have liked?
Gardener.
There's nothing I'd do better
or like better.
Instead, it was the railways.
Not at the top, either.
Years of ballast...
in all weathers,
whether raining, snowing...
or absolutely freezing.
The worst was working nights
in tunnels.
Clear the track!
Believe me, you're shit scared.
It's odd to have Sunday
in midweek.
I'm not at ease.
Live for today.
These vegetables are a mistake.
A dumb idea.
Restaurant painting!
Vegetarian, to boot.
It's your fault.
Me?
Yes. You should've told me.
You should have said, "You're on the wrong track."
I'll go back to nudes.
"Woman".
And her...
Magda.
"I'm at my sister's."
Sister my arse!
I know who her sister is.
Some stupid, lousy
so-called photographer.
Jean-Etienne Berk!
They were sleeping together
but I thought it was over.
Huh!
He's a whining, snivelling leech
who's got her all trussed up.
Miss Magda prefers you, though.
Just Magda!
Maybe, but she's busy shagging
the lounge lizard.
It's not love.
I'm no kid.
No fear.
What does love mean anyway?
You need some air
instead of smoking poison
in your molehill.
Come on, shake a leg.
Up we get!
- I'll catch my death.
- It'll do you good.
I think I've done too many beans.
Too many carrots too.
Too many tomatoes.
Too many of everything.
- You'll make preserves.
- Sure. Preserves.
I'll ask the neighbour.
- You can give her half.
- She can have all of it.
How could she accept?
She has her pride.
Nothing has any value
to you Parisians.
To be frank,
you've too much land.
Miss Magda was right.
Magda.
A pool would take up
a good part of it.
Less to maintain.
A pool!
Here, look at these courgettes.
Are they lovely?
Like fingers growing.
Gardener, some days you
and your courgettes annoy me,
especially at sundown.
You told me it wouldn't rain.
I said tomorrow.
I didn't mention tonight.
Come on, faster!
Hang in there, you idiot!
- Isn't it a beauty?
- Brand new?
Bought yesterday.
I don't know much but it looks good.
A stunner.
Seen the panniers?
Railway issue.
You won't get wet in that.
- Yes, but...
- Please.
- In that case...
- I've several.
That's a stinker!
"City for wealth, country for health."
Bardagaud said that.
If that's what Bardagaud said...
Three drops of rain
and you're out.
What did the doctor say?
He looked down my throat,
took my blood pressure and 30 euros.
The young one?
He always says it's nothing.
Shame old Dr Derival
moved to Bordeaux.
He'd always spot it.
He'd size you up,
check your tongue and pulse,
a scribble and he was gone.
At least you were ill.
I'm off into the rose bushes.
Greenfly, son.
The flame-thrower!
Tomorrow I'm off to Paris.
I was going to suggest
a fishing trip.
The wife's helping the children
move house.
She'll be away 3 days.
We could cast a line.
When I get back, I'd love to.
I'm your man.
All fishes beware!
Just one in particular.
Fishing is a fight with one fish.
What, Moby Dick?
A carp.
One big enough to scare a man.
You don't look so good.
Not really.
The stomach? Your hernia?
I don't believe in that.
I'll take you home.
- What about the bike?
- I'll see to it.
Can you get up?
Yes...
But not alone.
Lean on me.
That's better.
I get these shooting pains
in my guts.
Dear me, it's like being kicked
by a horse.
I'm bunged up again.
That's why
I don't think it's a hernia.
For long?
Since Sunday.
I'm used to it being a week.
That's too long.
You can't always help it.
It works then it doesn't...
What do you do?
I'm taking unblocker.
Not a dickie bird.
You have a temperature?
I don't like sticking that in my...
Under the tongue, then.
- Very hygienic!
- Dip it in alcohol.
The latest thing is,
my stomach has gone all hard.
Hard in what way?
A bit like a football.
Now and again it feels
like I'm being stabbed.
Right. You can sleep here.
You told me the wife wasrt home.
I'm talking like you now!
"The wife".
You have to find out what's wrong.
Tomorrow I'm taking you to Paris.
- I've got no things.
- We'll pick them up.
I've a specialist friend,
a professor.
He's no horse doctor!
He'll take a closer look
with scans and x-rays.
He has a big corkscrew!
Straight there and back.
I should say no
but I haven't the strength.
We'll warn Lisou,
her mother often calls.
That's beautiful. Nabucco.
You like opera?
Blow me down!
Well, it is your turn!
When I laugh, it rips me apart.
Right, I'll call my pal.
We'll even go tonight.
Right away.
We'll have to get my things.
How many are driving at once?
We'll soon have one up our arse.
Last thing I need!
You're no better.
We make a right pair.
So you live here.
  - You like it?
  - Yes, it's nice.
You'll be fine here.
I sleep like a log.
That's a good sign.
Recognise her?
You've seen her.
Oh? Who is it?
Magda.
Five years ago.
That was a good period.
That's my wife 20 years ago.
  - You still love her?
  - Yes.
I think so.
I'll fetch some sheets.
  - Tell me...
  - Yes.
Can I ask you something crazy?
If it doesn't upset you...
I don't want to be a bother.
But if you could...
Go on.
I'd like you to paint
the things I love.
What, for instance?
You know my tastes.
Not fancy or anything...
just a bit of colour so I remember.
I'll try.
Right... goodnight, Gardener.
Goodnight, Dauber.
All these cars!
Last time I came it wasn't this bad.
  - When was that?
- 20 years back.
On the way to Algeria.
You went to Algeria?
The wife's Kabyle.
A Kabyle from Kabylia.
Well, she was born there.
Then she came to France.
Suburbs of Marseille.
- How did you meet your wife?
- At a dance.
We met because neither of us dance.
What were you both doing
at a dance, then?
A railway ball, south-west region.
She cleaned the passenger trains.
A hell of a schedule.
I was on ballast morning till night,
she'd often start at midnight
or even later.
It must have its advantages.
We had two daughters, mind you.
Did you like Algeria?
It's very sandy.
It's quite a trip, though.
The trip...
the plane...
- I prefer trains.
- Naturally, it's your job.
Once you're in a plane, that's it.
And it moves about.
They're used to it, but me...
I was pouring with sweat.
Up there, I was expecting
to see half the world.
Not a bit!
Clouds everywhere
and the sun up above...
We've an appointment this afternoon.
How do you feel?
You're not tired?
No, I'm all right.
I'll show you something.
Oh? Show me what?
Paintings.
Isn't it lovely?
Go on, look.
Shadows, light...
You know this.
The Raft of the Medusa.
- Tired?
- A little.
Let's sit down.
Oh, look. I know this one.
- It was on the 100-franc note.
- That's right.
"Liberty guiding the people."
We had it on a calendar at home.
We liked it.
But as it changes every year,
we threw it away. Shame.
Let's go. I think you've seen
enough paintings.
Come on.
You'll be fine here.
Too fine.
I doubt my insurance will cover it.
Don't worry about that.
I heard you were here
but I was busy.
Hello.
- Hello.
- Sir.
Our patient?
We'll look after your friend.
All manner of scans and tests.
Evelyne will show you to your room.
This way, sir.
Go on, I'll join you.
He has bowel problems.
He almost fainted yesterday
and I panicked.
Good.
Panic is the mother of safety,
the seed of reason.
Far better than regret,
which can be eternal.
- Very reassuring!
I'll be right there.
- Well?
- I need to talk.
I operated this morning.
Unfortunately...
there was nothing I could do
so I closed.
It's too late.
I'm sorry, I can do nothing.
You mean he's...
I fear so.
How long does he have?
I can't really say, but not long.
Can I see him?
Yes, he woke up a while ago.
He's in his room.
See this?
I've got wires everywhere.
Just like the telly.
Time's already hanging heavy.
But I'm killing it, as they say.
Or else it's killing me.
- What time did they operate?
- Early this morning.
A nurse arrived
with a whole band of pilgrims.
I woke up, the drawer
had been opened and closed.
I can't feel anything, anyway.
So that's OK.
Good.
- I should call your wife.
- No need.
The son-in-law came, he'll do it.
You must have seen him leaving.
I didn't notice.
You wouldn't have recognised him.
He's covered in bandages.
Oh, yes.
But I thought...
he was a patient.
What happened?
Last Saturday, Parc des Princes,
PSG v. OM.
There was a scrap
and he wanted to help
his old friends.
He forgot he was wearing
PSG uniform.
Fifteen of them jumped on him!
The berk!
You can say that again.
I've got good news.
I can leave next week.
That's great. I'll come for you.
Here, I brought you this.
A new moped
calls for a new helmet.
- You shouldn't have.
- Right...
I'll let you get some rest.
- I'll call tomorrow.
- There's no need.
Leave me alone a while.
And the wife will come running
when she hears.
Go on, I've seen enough of you.
And thanks, Dauber.
Bye, Gardener.
Bye.
See you tomorrow.
- You scared me!
- Sorry.
- What brings you here?
- I was just passing.
- Are you well?
- Yes.
- I'm not disturbing you?
- No. But I've a date.
- Oh.
- With Irne.
But I've time.
Is Irne well?
Yes, she's fine.
Why are you laughing?
You don't often ask after others.
Especially Irne.
It was your daughter.
I'd have been on for an hour.
Is she well?
My word!
Yes, she's fine.
Did she tell you?
Of course she did.
I was stupid.
I should have let it slide.
It's her life after all.
What's the difference, anyway?
You're wrong.
What you say counts.
She broke up with him.
Because of me?
Maybe. Who knows?
You don't look well.
- Are you ill?
- No, I'm OK.
Sure?
I'll cancel Irne.
Thanks.
She has lovely eyes.
I didn't lie.
Stop it, it's embarrassing.
- Are you embarrassed?
- No.
- It's true, you have lovely eyes.
- Thank you.
He knows, he's seen plenty.
What colour are your wife's eyes?
- You don't know?
- Hazel, I think.
How's it going?
Better.
You patched things up.
Yes. Like you say, I'm patched up.
That's good.
Stop it.
No! I want to walk home.
We're responsible for you.
- Pretend I'm already home.
- We can't take the risk.
Don't worry, I'll see to everything.
I can manage.
I'm glad to be back, though.
Right, I'll let you get some rest.
- You can stay for a coffee.
- Good idea.
With pleasure.
It's OK.
I told you it was classical here.
- Sugar?
- No, thank you.
It's good to be home.
Does it hurt?
Oh, it's all right.
It's natural, after an operation.
We've kept you up.
You need rest.
I'll go.
I'm taking you fishing next week.
You bet.
Not fishing.
- Not in your state.
- I'll watch him.
I'll be going.
I'll see myself out.
Thanks for everything.
It's wonderful.
I'll come and paint this spot.
Wonderful!
Speak quietly
and don't move about.
- Think he's there?
- I don't think,
I know.
It's like Death.
I had time to think about him.
Same as the carp down there...
somewhere.
You know he's there
but don't see him.
Death's the same.
Silent, with a huge mouth that,
onece open,
you fall into unwittingly.
You're dead.
That's all.
I was always making fun of him
at the clinic.
I gave Death a right telling-off.
He went off, bemused.
Not used to folk standing up to him.
But he knows very well
that he always has the last laugh.
There he is.
The old bugger heard me.
Look.
He's nibbling the float.
He's going underneath.
Turn the boat.
Turn the boat.
Turn it, you lump!
- Can I help?
- The landing net.
Put it underneath, gently.
He's ours.
He's ours.
I'll bring him in.
There we are.
Get under him.
There you go.
There.
Go on.
Hell's bells!
How about that, old son!
Wait.
Stay still!
See his eyes?
The way he looks at us.
Just like Death.
Full of nastiness.
Third time I've caught him.
And the last.
Right...
shall we put him back?
Good-bye, old chum.
There.
Will you remember?
The size, the colour...
Yes. I'll do a sketch
when I get back.
Oh, damn!
You'll need a replacement
for your garden.
That can wait.
For my muscles to grow?
Or them to fit a new arse-hole?
It's over for me.
I'll find someone young and strong.
There's plenty of hungry lads
on the estate.
I'll drop in now and then to check.
For the wife, could you...?
Do her portrait, I mean.
Why do you always say "the wife"?
Isn't she yours?
Yes.
Could you?
I'll try, but for the eyes...
I'll help with the colour.
I need a photo.
I'll give you one.
Oh, shit!
Wort you go short?
It's too much for me on my own.
He's asleep?
- He's not here.
- Where is he?
His garden.
That's not sensible.
- Where is it?
- By the railway, near the station.
- The railwaymers allotments.
- I'll go and see him.
The last on the right.
Excuse me...
Can I take him to Nice one last time?
It'd be good, but I can't say.
Thank you.
Hey there! Where are you?
I'm here.
Behind the peas.
You work lying down?
Gardening in bed.
It doesn't pull on the belly.
- And you listen to Mozart.
Mozart, is it?
I didn't know.
The radio keeps me awake.
I drop off when I'm lying down.
Now and then I turn over
and look at the sky.
I won't be going up there.
Oh no. I'd get lost.
Down below, more like...
among the roots,
that's where I know.
For now you're on the ground,
ot under it.
You know,
when your battery's out of juice,
you get used to the idea of fading.
There's nothing you want,
like eating with no appetite.
Why tire yourself out gardening?
Gardening is my life.
Look...
I reckon they're the best vegetables
I've ever grown.
It's like they're glad to see me
lying beside them.
Will you help me up?
Hello.
I'll call in later.
Be brave.
If you could,
I'd like you to paint
the things I love.
Not fancy or anything,
just a bit of colour so I remember.
A word of advice:
Always carry a knife
and a piece of string.
It can be a lifesaver.
Remember that.
Translation - Henry Moon
for TELETOTA
Silk Purse Enterprises, UK