

JEAN VENGUA

On Work

I am Henry Miller. What a relief. I go walking naked down to the mailbox with my pushcart. No money for me, not today. The ocean below Partington Ridge tips over like a bowl of light to kiss my bald pate, and all my still-functioning parts. Valentine is sleeping, and the Astrologer is babysitting. She—I won't say her name now—the goddess of darkness, SHE, left me a month ago, and I am free! Except for my responsibilities, for which I must always labor, must get to work. So be it. In the afternoon, when the Astrologer is snoring (damn him) I'll gather up my babies, and trundle up the road to visit Emil. We'll drink some wine, and paint for awhile. The babies will paint too! We'll get to the heart of that ochre, the cobalt that's been giving me so much trouble. Jaime de Angulo, where are you now? Up there plowing the heavens, dressed in your ballgown? Salting the alphabet with your curses? Let me join you awhile. I don't feel like a man anymore; I am my mother, and my father's lost lover. I am you. Let's stumble down the hillside, then, and I'll wake the Astrologer. Free of the babies for a few hours, let us get back to the work. Work, work work! Do you hear me, Jaime?