

On Failure

Aesop Rock

I was thinking about Van Gogh recently
I was never really a huge fan of his paintings but I wouldn't say I actively disliked them either
It's just never been my thing
I found myself thinking about a specific Van Gogh painting which I've since learned is called "Landscape with Snow"
I looked it up to see if it still looked as I remembered and it pretty much did

But this time, I decided I liked it
Oh, my God
I can't explain why

This all led me to Van Gogh's Wikipedia page
I wanted to find out if history considered him primarily a landscape, portrait, or still-life painter
He did them all
I browsed the page and didn't really find my answer
But I did come across the following sentence

"Van Gogh was unsuccessful during his lifetime and was considered a madman and a failure."

Damn. Damn. I mean, I kinda knew that much about him
Wild life, wasn't famous until after he died, etc
But even considering all that, I kept going back to that sentence

Van Gogh started painting at 27
And only worked for about 9 years before committing suicide
And while that's not that long
He did make around 900 paintings and 1000 drawings

I guess I say all that to say this
As a guy who recently decided he somewhat likes a single painting by Vincent Van Gogh for reasons I can't quite describe, it does make me sad to see a man with mental health issues and a passion for art summed up as an "unsuccessful madman failure"
Even if he was in fact financially unsuccessful, and kind of a madman

A failure? I dunno
I kinda like that "Landscape with Snow", and I'm glad he painted it