

from African masks and pre-classical Greek art. His work has the immediate appeal of the familiar—it's beautiful but ultimately decorative.

Secrest is at her best when she rescues Modigliani from his own myth as the bohemian drunk, the doomed genius. This she does by showing that Modigliani's tuberculosis, with its manic spasms, was responsible for both his antics and his esoteric thinking: "Authors have marveled at the contrast between the confidence and control of Modigliani the artist versus the chaos of his personal life and concluded that there is no connection. I have suggested that his life-long, losing battle with tuberculosis was one aspect of his art's covert subject matter and that the psychic scars he endured found a kind of sublimation in the expression of his mystical and philosophical beliefs."

Particularly fascinating is Secrest's presentation of the ocean of forgeries to bear Modigliani's name. The man who traded drawings for drinks unintentionally inspired a vast industry of fakes (see "Reclaiming Modigliani," September 2006), adding another irony to his story: a posthumous, bogus career for a gifted but limited artist. —*Alfred A. Mac Adam*

'All of Me Is Waiting for You'

My Faraway One: Selected Letters of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz: Volume One, 1915–1933

Edited by Sarah Greenough

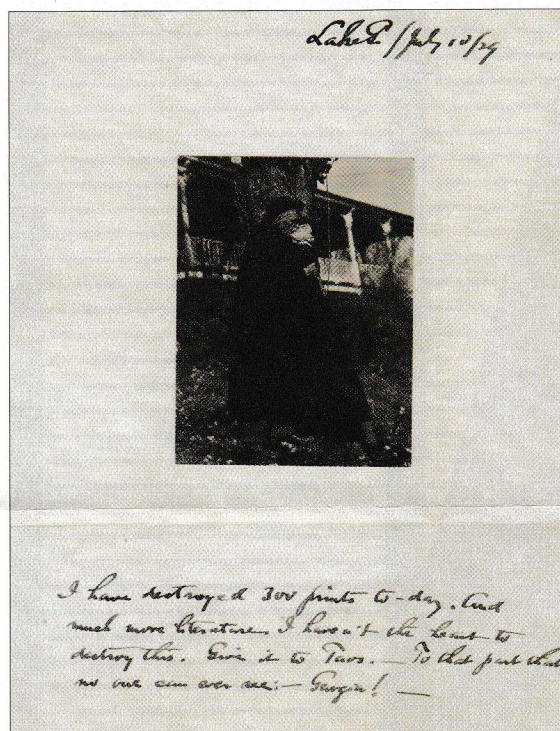
Yale University Press, 832 pages, \$39.95

Gorgia O'Keeffe was a secretive woman. Her many biographers (including me) have spent hours in libraries reading her correspondence, but despite their efforts there was always an aspect of her life that seemed unknowable—until now. Along with the bulk of her correspondence, the thousands of letters that O'Keeffe exchanged with her mentor and husband Alfred Stieglitz were left to Yale's Beinecke Library. These intimate documents were sealed to all but a few scholars until 20 years after her death in 1986.

Many of those letters are now available in *My Faraway One*, selected, annotated, and edited by Sarah Greenough and published by Yale University Press. Senior curator and head of the department of photographs at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., Greenough is a leading Stieglitz scholar. She was told by O'Keeffe in 1981 to make the book "beautiful" and "honest." She has done both.

Dozens of these letters were published previously, but this volume brings us the missing pieces in the jigsaw puzzle of O'Keeffe's life. A big hole in it was the true nature of her relationship with Stieglitz. Here, for the first time, we have graphic revelations of their sexual passion (for example, Fluffy being their name for her sex, Little Man for his).

Knowledge of the couple's steamy prose lends fresh potency to O'Keeffe's sensuous oil paintings and Stieglitz's nude photographs of her. On May 16, 1922, while vacationing alone at York Beach, Maine, O'Keeffe wrote to Stieglitz, "Dearest I love you—I am on my back—wanting to be spread wide apart—waiting for you—to die with the sense



Anonymous, Portrait of Georgia O'Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz Kissing at Lake George, 1929.

of you—the pleasure of you—the sensuousness of you touching the sensuousness of me—All my body—all of me is waiting for you to touch the center of me with the center of you." O'Keeffe goes on to describe the sensations of mutual orgasm and the aching and yearning that she feels for it. In letter after letter, she writes of her love for Stieglitz, and so, when his womanizing drives her away, one can scarcely help feeling great sympathy. On August 22, 1926, she tells him that she could not make his bed before leaving because she was unsure of who would be sleeping in it with him. But she sheds only one tear.

Despite the love that Stieglitz expresses in his letters to her, his habits do not change. O'Keeffe insulates herself through travel. Her letters retain a surprising devotion and passion, even as Stieglitz falls in love with Dorothy Norman.

As O'Keeffe spent more time in New Mexico, she wrote to Stieglitz describing the color and character of the place. From her friend Marie Garland's ranch at Alcalde, New Mexico, on May 8, 1931, she writes, "I guess you know by now that I am glad I am here and that I like it so much that it seems a bit ridiculous. . . . The wind just roars through the cottonwood trees—They are big and old and soft gray only beginning to turn green." Stieglitz relayed news of their friends and family back East. Their letters remain loving, if less passionate, as their relationship changes. Volume one concludes on December 31, 1933.

Much is revealed in Stieglitz's letters, but even more in O'Keeffe's. Her frank accounts of her feelings at every stage, her touching attempts to comprehend her relationship with Stieglitz, her creativity, and her place in the world are a revelation. —*Hunter Drohojowska-Philp*