

an excerpt of

CORRESPONDENCE: PABLO PICASSO, GERTRUDE STEIN. Edited by Laurence Madeline and translated by Lorna Scott Fox. Oxford: Seagull Books, 2008. 390 pp. \$29.95.

Reviewed by Linda Simon

Perhaps the single most iconic image of Gertrude Stein and Pablo Picasso is this: they are sitting knee to knee in Picasso's studio, the young American writer and the younger Spanish painter. They are talking, Stein wrote in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, about everything: love, death, dogs, art—everything. Over the subsequent years, Stein's brother Leo came and decisively left; Toklas joined Stein as her lifelong companion; Picasso's amorous liaisons included Fernande Olivier, Eva Gouel, and Olga Kokhlova, each of whom was embraced, with more or less affection, by Stein. Artists and writers swirled around them—but still, for years, they sat knee to knee, confidants, certain that they understood one another despite the lack of a common language . . .