In his "Note on the Translation of 'Father's Butterflies'" Dmitri Nabokov addresses the problem of much-needed expertise that has risen in deciphering Nabokov's unpublished papers: "Five initial sheets were typed by Véra Nabokov many years ago on our old Russian-language Adler, through whose ribbons many Nabokov works had passed. The remaining, handwritten material is not altogether legible. In many places the text proved impervious even to the most expert eyes <Emphasis added>. The problem was eventually resolved [analyzing] the illegible portions with the help of the Library's sophisticated equipment, in a way that allowed one to peek under the refractory palimpsest's edges, and to identify with considerable confidence what was on the layers beneath." (Nabokov's Butterflies: Unpublished and Uncollected writings, ed. by Boyd, Pyle, Nabokov. Beacon Press, 2000: 199). Parts of the archival materials in the Vladimir Nabokov papers at the Library of Congress, especially those pertaining to The Gift (1935-1937), pose numerous puzzles to the researcher who will need, quoting D. Nabokov, to "tug a remaining weed from the densest thickets." By briefly outlining the textological riddles and demonstrating examples of my analysis of The Gift manuscript, I will argue that a thorough, scrupulous examination of this document enhances our understanding of how a creative genius functions and helps to illuminate some of the densest parts of already known work. My talk will include a description of the archival state of Nabokov's collection based on deciphering the illegible elements and categorization of the invariants and stylistic choices that Nabokov turned down. I will also suggest some basic principles of literary commentary and structure for a future variorum edition of Nabokov's The Gift.