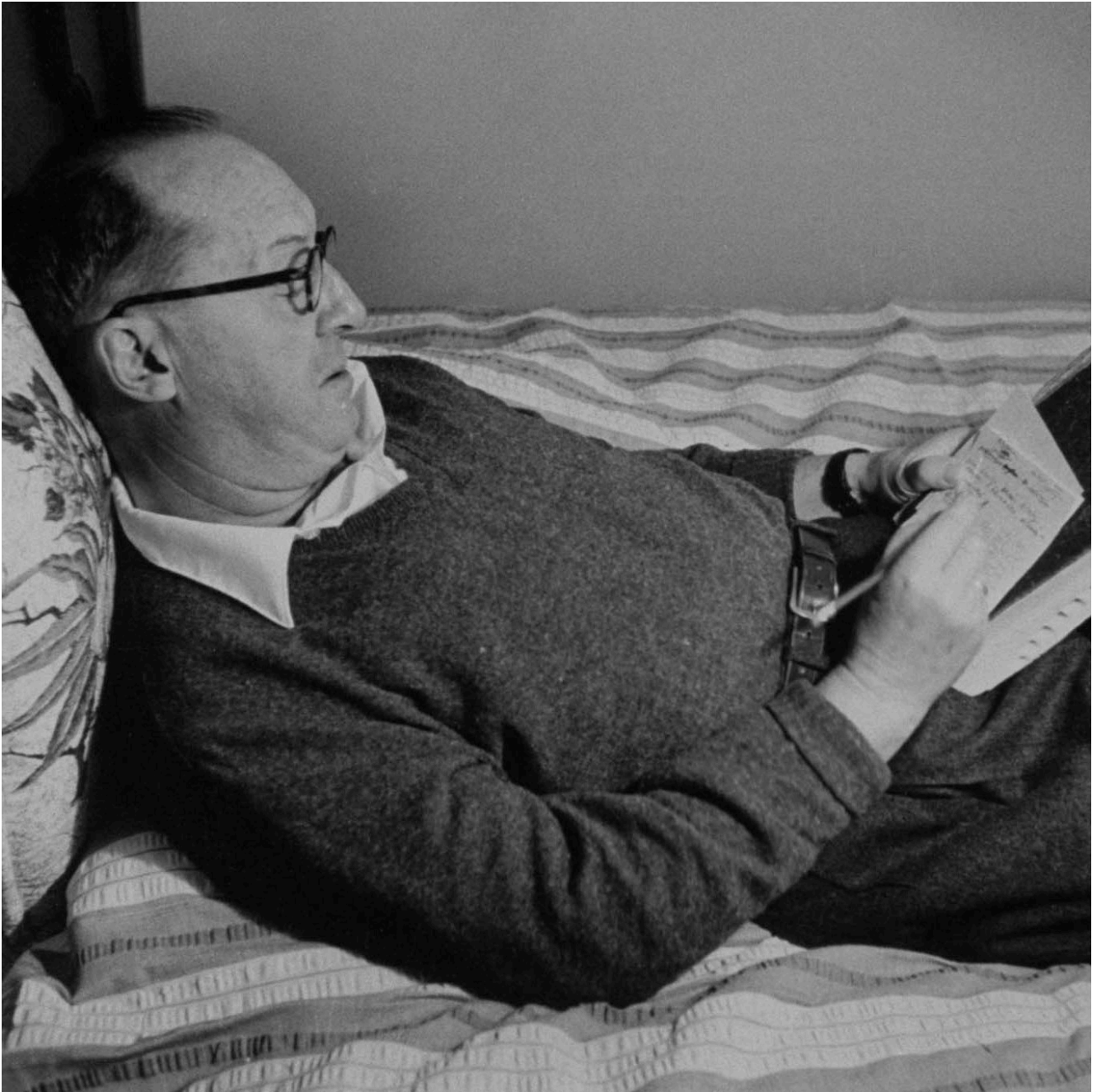


OUCH! NABOKOV'S POLISH



"I have rewritten – often several times – every word I have ever published," Vladimir Nabokov says in his book, *Strong Opinions*. I can't resist the thought that this is a piece of Nabokovian extravaganza. Not every word, surely? Still, it's quite an eye-opener that some of the smoothest writing in modern literature should be so much less spontaneous – and so much harder work – than it looks. It's a lesson to young writers not to throw away that first draft in frustration. If you rewrite every word – several times – it might turn into

another *Lolita*.