

and style of the original book in the translation. With a good translation, you can hear and feel the voice and know right away that you're on sure footing as a reader.

It's easier to note what can be bad about it—a lot of inverted clauses that are mimicking the original syntax, wooden and flat dialogue. When it feels mechanical, it's just not working. Translations can be completely accurate, but not feel like they're "written." They don't feel organic—and a good translation feels organic when you read it.

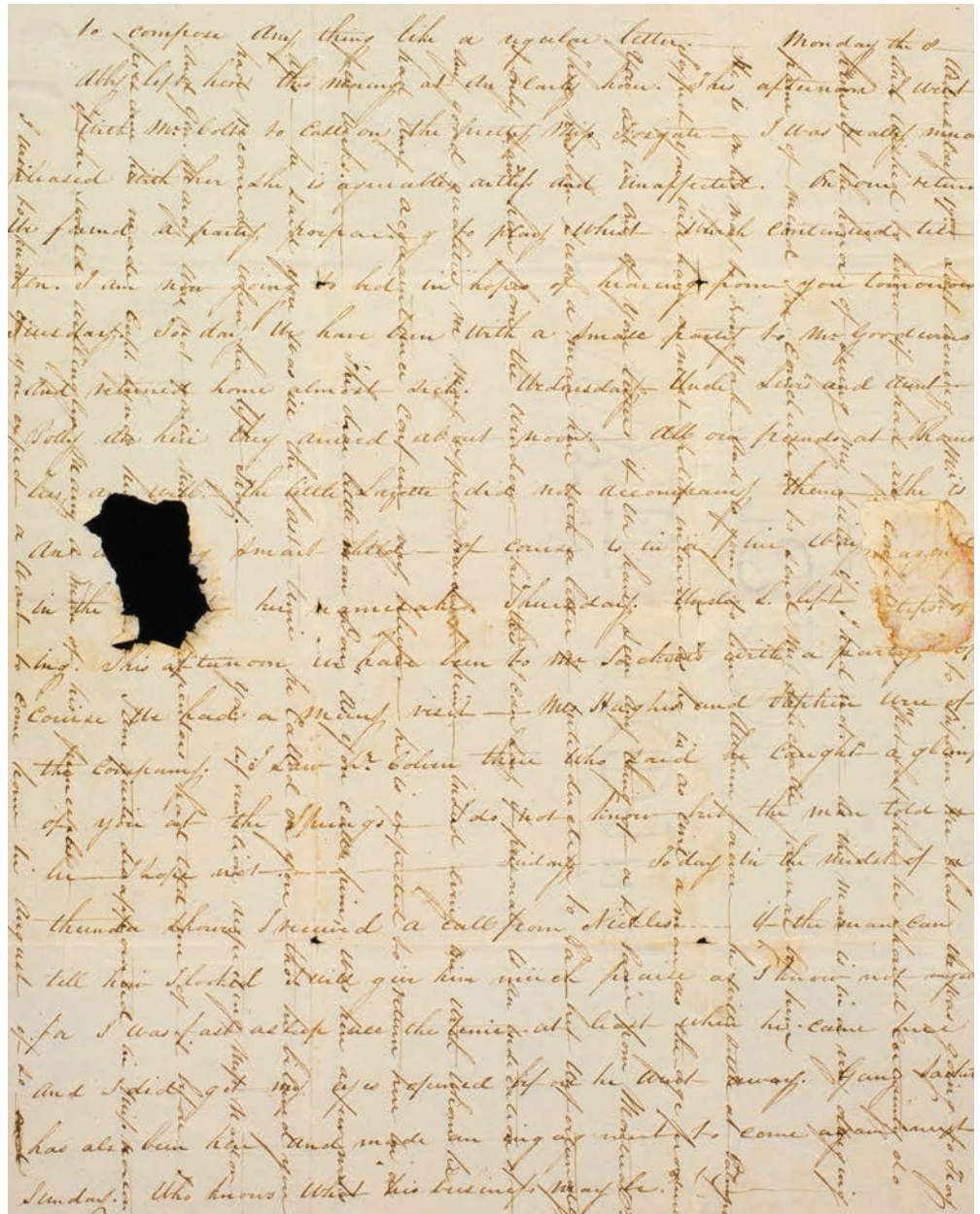
What's ahead for Open Letter?

We've had a lot of authors we've worked on who have won big awards recently, and I think one of these years we're going to have a book that sells 8,000 copies. We're in the right position to be able to do that. It's nothing you can predict. Things just have to lock into place right, and when that happens, it will be really important.

And I think we'll hit more regions of the world. But mostly we'll continue to help train translators through the University, working with students and getting them out into the workforce. A lot of our translators have had success recently, and that's gratifying—getting published, getting grants, awards, and residencies. They're the things you need to do to move from a college graduate who does translations to a career translator whom people automatically go to. A number of them have fallen into that category.

You published *Voices from Chernobyl* by this year's Nobel laureate in literature, Svetlana Alexievich, when you were with Dalkey Archive Press. Any lessons for Open Letter in that?

A Nobel Prize isn't something you can really plan or prepare for. I think if you look for high-quality books from a vast number of voices and areas, you're just going to stumble upon the right one at the right point in time.



FINE LINES: A digital humanities project is bringing together history students and retired volunteers to work with correspondence from the William Henry Seward Papers, like this page from an 1822 letter.

Reading Between the Lines

In an unusual cross-generation archival collaboration, volunteers from the Highlands at Pittsford—a University-based retirement community—and students under the guidance of Thomas Slaughter, the Arthur R. Miller Professor of History, are joining forces to transcribe and annotate family papers from the William Henry Seward Papers. The collection of correspondence, legal papers, diaries, account books, and manuscript records of Abraham

Lincoln's secretary of state was bequeathed to the University by his grandson. Slaughter and his students are creating the Seward Family Digital Archive to provide a searchable public website with materials from Rochester's collection—the University's most frequently cited manuscript collection—the Seward House Museum in Auburn, New York, and a small private collection still held by the family. But reading handwritten script doesn't come

easily to the digital generation. So they're partnering with retired volunteers for whom a letter written in cursive is familiar terrain. A letter from Lazette Miller Worden, sister of Seward's wife, Frances, (above) shows the system of vertical and horizontal writing that correspondents in the period sometimes used "when they had a lot to say, ran out of paper, and wanted to get the letter in the next mail," Slaughter says.

—Kathleen McGarvey