

ELECTRONIC BOOK

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Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 19

return to

Quiet Heroics

January 14 - February 1, 1998

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

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Japa Transformations

January 14, 1998, 3 a.m.

Back to Ireland and moving in. Jet-lagged. I feel like a busy, harassed clerk as I try to sort through this room where our boxes and bags were dumped. But no pain over the ocean, so I shouldn't complain. Hoping soon to enter the peaceful pace of life here "seeing the quiet water, land, and sky from the desk, and maybe making a daily visit to the shed. I'll speak on Sundays and cope with headaches, and of course, I am looking forward to worshiping Radha-Govinda, my Radha-Govinda.

Yesterday it occurred to me that I might gain a high-spirited (good fighting) attitude toward returning next life. I should take courage that whatever suffering I will inevitably have to meet will be buffered by a revived Krishna consciousness. Krishna promises that. Discovering our spiritual life is a worthwhile adventure, and we shouldn't deprecate it. Suffering comes along with the material body, but to find Krishna through that suffering and to increase surrender "I do look forward to that. I await more mercy.

* * *

Dreamt someone was trying to find out from me whether I thought Queen Kunti was absolute or relative. I was talking about it as if I were splitting hairs. In a second dream, I fought with a Godbrother, who was determined to kill me by any means. I managed to ask someone to intervene and to stop the deadly fight, but my Godbrother's face was full of bitterness.

* * *

9:20 a.m.

During my walk through splashing rain, I saw a rainbow in the sky. I heard the devotees were denied entrance into this year's St. Patrick's Day parade because their presentation was not theatrical enough and it was too disorganized "women walking along with prams, so-called devotees in the back wearing boots, pushing each other and fooling around. The devotees appealed the decision and are being reconsidered, provided they have a well-choreographed, flashy presentation.

I also heard that during the Christmas book distribution marathon, the *sankirtana* boys were ripped out of their vans by rioters in Derry during a day when many vans and stores were burned to the ground. The devotees say burly, hooded men tore them out of their seats and threw them out of the van. After that, they don't know what happened except that a few minutes later, those same hooded men were lying on their backs unconscious. The devotees then got back into their vans and raced out of Derry. The only other detail they recall was that as they were pulled from the vans, a little old lady carrying an umbrella stepped forward and protested, "Leave them alone! They're monks."

This morning I saw a swan standing with its neck fully extended "graceful. Everything fresh, and I want to breathe in deep, both with my lungs and with my eyes. I'd like my soul to breathe in deeply too. relax and write.

* * *

10:26 a.m.

Syamananda made my breakfast this morning. I spoke with him after I had eaten. I told him we have to approach Srila Prabhupada's books differently than other books. We shouldn't look for a "new" presentation, but be open to hearing the same words again. We are renewed each time we hear the same truth submissively, because we have not fully realized it from our previous reading. He agreed and quoted a purport that says confidential knowledge means to be fully absorbed in Krishna. If we're not fully absorbed . . . We both said that it's not wrong to advise those who are troubled to read and chant with attention as a solution to their problems.

* * *

What You Need
& Well, you needn't go in a
Rowboat to Inis rath but you want to.
You needn't be TP and climb the hierarchy
but maybe you need to.

* * *

Maybe I need to be alone,
to hear the music
in the trees, which I also need.
What do I need besides
sliding into a watery death
on this peaceful lake
rough now with wind?
I need only the chanting and
to hear from Prabhupada,
perhaps a little more time
to preach . . .

* * *

Stars sprinkled through the
heavens. Listen awhile.
He's rowing across the
chilly strait blue ripples

* * *

and green shiny sunshine on
grass water rain I
was out and rainbow
came.

* * *

Don't need sex "us monks "
celibate is best and
we have our fun
and games
and work for life
rich men's sons who don't
work the grind
but play in garden
parks.

* * *

I needn't preach *so* much
but take first for myself "
to work on that.

* * *

We're economical, see?
Have learned best is less
learned in our bones
the moans . . .

* * *

Seeking my way near this lake,
The will of God "to follow "
is our way, fellows in
transcendental camp
our tents pitched on
borrowed land.

* * *

Thin barbed wire on fence
no cows in sight
alone in clear
circumference. "

* * *

One reason I was eager to return to Inis rath as quickly as possible was to remove myself from the circle of those who were treating me like guru. I honor the relationship, but it's very difficult for me to respond on the level that most people want. Some, of

course, approach me with love, and that's meaningful for both of us, but some gawk, and there's no real personal love from them. It's hard, therefore, for me to respond to them with personal love. I was reminded of this again when I was out on my first walk here. On returning from the land's border, a car leaving Geaglum pulled up slowly, and I saw it was a few devotees I had never met. The driver leaned out of the car, eager to see who I was, and the others looked keen too. It's as if they were saying, "Yes, it's him, it's Satsvarupa Maharaja!" Then they folded their hands in *pranamas*, still looking like sightseers, and I could only be formal in return. When they had seen what they wanted, they drove off.

* * *

2:36 p.m.

Better write while I can. I don't know how much time I have before the head fog tightens. If I have time, I'll try to tell the story of what I have lost along the way.

The inferior nature, Srila Prabhupada says, is not actually inferior, but we fail to use it rightly in the Lord's service.

The lake has flooded its usual boundaries. The water creeps slowly down to the shed. Three men were in a car as I came out of the house. "Don't get out," I said quickly "the driver was just opening the door, but I thought he was going to get out to offer obeisances. When I said it, the other man laughed.

Use the assets of material life for self-realization, not sense gratification. Introspection, Srila Prabhupada recommends in text 11 of *Light of the Bhagavata*. Be as calm and grave as the ocean. Use your energy for introspection. Are we linking our lives and all that we do with them to Krishna in loving devotional service? Ask that question. If we are not, are we at least working toward it?

The duty-free shop in Trinidad had a nice Sheaffer pen (black with a pen guard) that I cannot get elsewhere, but it was 4 a.m. and the store was closed. We were on our way to Guyana.

* * *

Opening Intimations, In The Shed
& I'm tired
and alive
and I hope not too old
to have hope
and to create a new best Krishna consciousness in my life "shouldn't I be getting better and better in my surrender?

What got lost? Violins should be playing.
Just *imagine* how things used to be "but now Krishna is here and
I'm still just a little
snot, I mean,
a shining star apex part-
servant
trying to find myself

and the world.
I tell you, this is going to
come in these weeks
if He pleases
and I get in touch. "

* * *

There Is Hope
& That's the problem when it gets dark in this shed: I don't feel like writing anymore.
Oh, go tell your mama. I heard she's dead and you
died all in a flash
over the ocean.

* * *

I heard once you start serious Krishna consciousness,
it's just a matter of time
before you go back to your eternal home.
But Krishna
wants to see
how fast we take
those few feeble steps
toward Him
first.

* * *

There was a time
I returned from travels and said
leave me to this crowded room
although I can't find all I want so early.
This was an interval
between two points
like
heaven and earth.
"It's January," said the boy, and we laughed.

* * *

It's January '98, 98 Olds '98 "
I'm hearing you, I'm
hearing.

* * *

I'm not sure where to go now
but to that over-flooded meadow
no paintings by me and no horn blown
my mouth
won't hold
and anyway
he looks pretty good for
60.

* * *

Open the wound
and stuff it with
words so rough
don't soothe
smooth over
with superior knowledge.
God is with us a
Friend and I am
your friend only in this sense:
I can't prevent suffering but
can point to Krishna in your life.

* * *

I recall in my big coat
what it's like here in
a moment of reflection the
flowing with it.

* * *

Fogging window tiny drops become
a . . .
I return to pet the dog
he probably forgot me or never knew
me yet made a small effort to walk over and receive the petting over his long face, the
slightly scabby eyes and collie
snout.
"You remember me? I thought maybe
you were dead."

* * *

We both live a little longer, haunches
bouncing, his, as he

streaks through the meadow to the ducks
under the lower rung
of the fence.

* * *

Go and do better just a milli-
inch in *japa* or is it
so ingrained that you rush
through the rounds always mechanical
with no way to stop?
That milli-inch

* * *

not so hopeless as to drop the enterprise and to head for the pub. No, a brother
reminds, there's hope in a day like today. "

* * *

I received *An Interrupted Life: The Diary of Etty Hillesum*, written from 1941 - 43. Etty is described as "the adult counterpart to Anne Frank." She died at Auschwitz in 1943, at the age of twenty-nine. The preface describes her as an outward person who engaged in intellectual life, enjoying herself, but she was at home in her inner life in the privacy of self-reflection. "She could easily be seen as one of the scores of over-sensitive, slightly neurasthenic young women from a cultivated and coddling *milieu*." With her genius for introspection, however, she converted those symptoms into significance. "The diary is a continuous, animated dialogue with herself, a constant drive toward her own truth."

As I read these sentences, they immediately sounded a chord in me about what I'm trying to do. I know I'm easily open to the criticism of being *too* self-reflective, too greedy to be alone, too coddled, but these faults can be resolved if in my alone time I actually practice Krishna conscious inwardness honestly.

Of Etty it says, "She knew how to follow subtle movements of her feelings and how to question and criticize herself. Even in states of extreme distress, she retained an unerring sense of emotional portion, a kind of perfect inward pitch." She followed a Jungian psychoanalyst who later became her guru. "Because she believed in him, Spier became her 'task,' the person against whom she tested and questioned herself, the occasion of her struggle and growth." At *least* that much could also be said of my relationship with Srila Prabhupada. The preface claims that the thread of Etty's own experience led her to a breakthrough in spiritual realization. "By winding her way through her own psyche to the point of self or conciliation, she had come to a place where she could feel the hidden harmony of the world. . . . Her ideas and her compassion had become so completely incarnated in herself that she needed almost nothing else for a sense of fulfillment."

After reading the preface, I started in on her diary. She immediately tells of her relationship with Spier, her therapist, and how he became her lover (he had sex with many of his female patients). That was a turn-off. Later, after that period, I found her quiet heroism as she wrote of her stay at an interim prison camp on her way to Auschwitz. She lived in that camp of her own free will, and always remained cheerful, helping others up until she was sent to Auschwitz.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty

The Man Who Lost Something

Active Imagination Episode #1

The character who lost something is not a character in Erskine (also known as Skinny) Caldwell's autobiography; he is in mine. A character. His head hurts, and he can't remember things. Imagine therapist Junior Hines helping him to remember:

Jr: Go with that feeling.

Sats: Which?

Jr: That you lost something. Allow a person to appear who has that feeling. Where is he? What's happening?

Sats: My head hurts a little, Jr. No right-eye pain, but the fog is setting in. That is inhibiting me.

Jr: You don't want to try right now?

Sats: Maybe we could start, but I'll have to add more later.

Jr: Sure. Go ahead, then.

Sats: Okay. I think of Ella Fitzgerald singing "maybe that could open the piece "

* * *

A-tisket a-tasket

A green and yellow basket,

I wrote a letter to my love

And on the way I dropped it.

(skip)

I dropped it, I dropped it

A little girlie picked it up

And took it to the market . . .

* * *

Sats: Lost, oh lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again! Lost something in youth, lost youth itself. Sentimental? I refuse to be afraid of that. Try for honesty.

I lost my integrity. Maybe when people began to honor me and I accepted the honor, I lost the purity of my serving spirit. The acceptance of privileges and honors in ISKCON "my seeking those privileges "only increased until I had to accept the honor of being one of the eleven super-gurus, and with that the corruption.

Jr: What corruption?

Sats: I can't say. I'm already feeling the resistance. Where is that character who is supposed to be the stand-in for me? *He* is supposed to have lost something. Let me tell *his* story and make up symbolic incidents to explain it. But enough. We'll have to find him in the next session. The pressure is increasing in my head. You and I, Junior, in the setting of your cozy office (or is it my room?), can fade into the background, then occasionally reappear, like Sukadeva Gosvami and Maharaja Pariksit, the narrators within the narration of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

January 15, 12:28 a.m.

Reading while writing, or writing while reading. It all depends on accepting that this life is but one in an endless series. Saw a book called *The Transmigration Controversy*, but I don't want to study the controversy. I just want to accept it as given by *sastra* and to not doubt. I have a right to find simple acceptance; I have earned it, or at least received that mercy. I read this morning in the *Bhagavatam*: "When one becomes intelligent he takes to *nirvrtti-marga*, the path of liberation, and thus instead of rotating within this material world, he returns home, back to Godhead. This is necessary." (*Bhag.* 6.1.4, purport)

I like my resolve to live both with the repetition of my life and the repetition I find in my reading. I plan to pause when I notice the repetition, hold my mind on it, and read the passage carefully. This morning, as soon as I saw the translation to *brahmāṇḍa brahmīte*, I skipped it. But it's *good* for me to read how the souls wander, how a fortunate soul receives the mercy of guru and Krishna. I won't find that information anywhere except in Prabhupada's books. Don't just read, but hear the meaning. Think about checking cross-references to find more emphasis on his points. Enrich your life.

In his purport to Bg. 9.25, Srila Prabhupada writes that people have no information about the sublime spiritual planets where Krishna and Visnu live. Therefore, they fall down. The Krishna consciousness movement is trying to give the knowledge "that by simply chanting the Hare Krishna mantra one can become perfect in this life and go back home, back to Godhead."

Bg. 2.22: "As a person puts on new garments, giving up the old ones, the soul similarly accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones."

* * *

4:40 a.m.

How lovely radha and Govinda are this morning with Their dark brown, gold-trimmed dresses. They also wear black woolen shawls. I would prefer smaller crowns, or a Vrajalike turban would be best. I'm hearing a lot about Vrndavana through Srila Prabhupada's *The Nectar of Devotion* lectures, which he gave in the *dhama* and other places. He said that living in Vrndavana is advantageous, and that we can live there in essence by meditating on the *dhama*. We should never commit offenses there. I am not sure I am capable of that. If one *could* live carefully while in Vrndavana and see Krishna in His land (His land is nondifferent from Himself), one could go back to Godhead at the end of this life.

Yes, it's true. But here I am, feeling firm commitment to remain in Ireland. If I can increase my feelings of separation from Vrndavana and hear about the value of residing there, I will be blessed.

Srila Prabhupada in his books, in his *murti* "I don't have to fear him. He won't hurt me except to break my attachments and to bring me to full surrender. That's not punishment but love. The fire of ordeal "we will all have to pass through it if we wish to reach a more permanent happiness, and if we want to live in Vrndavana. In essence, Vrndavana is the place where everyone works only to please Krishna, where they love Him as the all-in-all.

* * *

Buttress, dear friend. Words will come in a free-write and I don't have to fry them for breakfast. Someone told me I was nonviolent because I don't mention people's names in writing. For example, I say it was X. who shoved B. as they talked, and that it was r. who didn't take the one doing the shoving seriously. He also said, "If he shoved me, I'd shove him back." Sr, who is a Dubliner, added, "Like a New Yorker." She talks heavy, but we don't have to take her seriously either.

I can mention turnips, and the fellow with the ponytail and the pony who walks across the fields and keeps to himself. I know nothing about him.

I looked at more of Etty's diary, because she was a holocaust victim and a writer who lived on the inward path, regardless of how difficult her outward path was. God was someone she felt in her innermost self, but she didn't follow scripture. What can I gain from her writing? Will her example of becoming fearless and detached be of help?

Safety only at Prabhupada's feet, which deliver us the *parampara*. What he says I know comes directly from Krishna. These are the authorities I trust. And of course, I try to take care of myself. I am wearing three pairs of socks just in case.

We free-writers went to nonviolent Saranga-kunda and there sat down to hear the learned Swami speak. We did not offend him because we had created him. We gave fake names to one another: "Skinny" was the leader. Skinny jumped into the *kunda*. The man who lost something (who shall remain nameless) thought he might find it at the bottom of the *kunda*. He grabbed his snorkel and mask, and took a look. Was he searching for the wreck of a TWA plane? No, he must have lost a piece of himself while he was reading the newspapers or thinking thoughts like, "What's the use?" When he remembered Maharaja Pariksit, he felt better.

At the Aer Lingus ticket counter, a man with an afro wearing a large leather belt was lifting suitcases onto the conveyer belt. He didn't have to lift them far, but he had to do it again and again if he wanted to get paid. I wonder how much he makes? The ticket agents get more, of course, because they have to operate the computers and be friendly to the customers. The luggage lifter gets to be silent. I saw that.

Radha-Govinda, I said I hardly knew Ya, but now is my chance to know You better. Ireland provides that much asylum.

Oh, why did I gobble that painkiller so quickly last night? Was it because of the dream of the delayed *yajna*? They kept bringing me the wrong ingredients. Brahmananda said it had to begin at 6:25 because the boys' parents would be attending,

but I couldn't begin until it was ready. I awoke with a headache. Before I knew it, I downed an Esgic in the dark and went back to bed, the pain subdued.

* * *

Chilly this morning and my toes feel it in the walking boots. Carried to Russia, to Niranjana Swami, Caitanya-candrodaya, the Ukraine . . . then back to concentration on the holy name. The collie still standing waiting outside the house when I return.

* * *

10 a.m.

A Vaisnava is already peaceful in the shelter and "trance of ecstasy" that is his Krishna consciousness, but he's troubled that most people are bound for hell as a result of their sinful acts. He's always thinking how to save them, and he makes plans to do so. Convincing people of Krishna consciousness is a difficult task.

A little reading in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and my eyes grow as heavy as the subject. Sukadeva doesn't reply at once that devotional service is the answer. He tests his disciple and recommends atonement.

* * *

12:20 noon

So many great artists and diarists, or not so great ones, and so many Vaisnavas, some *prakṛta-bhaktas* "all preachers great and small, planets, stars, nebulae orbiting in inner space. Countless Vaikunthas and an unlimited Krishnaloka. I am in there somewhere. And you, and the others: "Yourself, Myself, and all these men" (and women, stars, algae, beasts, market men, heads of state, sufferers too many to count). Someone rowing a boat from Inis rath to Geaglum. I asked the TP how goes the temple. He said, "Still ticking along."

What's my point?

Fault point, gold point, Greenpoint, Greenville Mansions.

What's yer reason?

K.C.

Oh, K.C., I hear that all the time. You Hare Krishnas are not theatrical enough, but I'm no self-pitying Narcissus.

Y-r-Toys-r-Us.

You are teasing us

I think

therefore

I am

made in God's image

oh, gawd "they say

and

don't know Him.

* * *

2:58 p.m.

The beautiful nature pictures from the Far East in *Light of the Bhagavata*. I relish the wise sayings. The devotee is not agitated by sex the way the ocean is not agitated by storms. The rain beats off the mountains, which remain steady like devotees in adverse conditions.

We're back here with here-ness, getting through the day. Still sleeping heavily at nap times and lying awake at night because of the jet lag. It takes awhile to recover.

No one's book can enlighten me or inform me or teach me art. I can learn it only from my spiritual master, by me.

The chestnuts I collected before I left here are sitting on the narrow windowsill in the shed. Jagged, ragged cloud bottoms against the light, golden-rayed clouds in today's blue sky. In the season after the rains, the creatures are beautiful, like transcendentalists, in health and outlook.

* * *

When You Go Alone
(In the shed, under a dark sky)
& When I am alone I have
no memory but whatever I read
in the morning while
someone slammed a door
and my eyes were bright with ideas

* * *

I'm back in rainy Eire
back in the shed
singing and dancing in head
knowing the most wonderful thing.

* * *

Someone said (in my mind)
maybe you lost something because
you offended devotees
or the holy name and no one
will tell you because
you won't let them.
It's that simple.
What now? Am I
shut out?

* * *

No, not shut out
except by myself
as I build a wall
around my house and prepare
a solitary desk.
My ramparts, my
Reasons. Mert went
back and forth
never sure, but
dancing in the waters of life. "

* * *

Improvisers Mean
& Improvise means you start
out with each other listening true with
esoteric ears. Public says, "Baloney!"
I say, "Art.
Epiphany," and intend it
to be something free
connected to Krishna
(isn't everything?).

* * *

The lake flooded looks
gentle water spilled onto
green weeds half submerged
and trees but the people are
okay. "

* * *

3:25 p.m.

Listen to the rain pattering on the roof of the shed. Hear the dog barking hoarsely.
Picture of Radha and Krishna scotch-taped to the wall here was left alone while I was
traveling. Listen to the rain. Feel the heat and the cold. Droplets hanging on the
windowpane slowly run down.

Thought of devotees I initiated who don't write "Subala, Ambarisa. They were so
young and fresh when I met them, and both of them insisted I initiate them. They used to
make so many sacrifices to see me, like hitchhiking to Southern Europe when I was
there. Subala even hitchhiked the year he had his leg in a cast. Now one is occupied with
a wife and making money, and the other with the Krishna consciousness of his *yatra*
"what the preachers say to do. That guru who initiated them seems far away.

* * *

From One Life to The Next
& As for me, it all comes from
contact with the Swami but what we
were before "we hurt each
other with words: "You jerk
you imitating Kerouac?"
It gets darker by the minute in this shed.

* * *

They're all dumb
to KC despite
devotees pushing it in airports
and despite the obvious light
of truth.

* * *

I'm dumb to Krishnaloka
and to "I'm not this body,"
think only, "Give us rain
and a new day."

* * *

O master, you tell me in
the writing you left: death
comes to all to
me. If you who are the
wisest of all, also
succumbed to it, or
demonstrated it,
why would I think
I'm exempt?

* * *

Do I expect a swan-
carrier bed, no incense
please
and to break out of this mold
of all I have been in this life "
even when I'm filled up
with it now?

* * *

Do I expect such a dramatic
Rescue? Naw, I'll just go on
with the same last poems
they can't interpret.
Some *utsaha-mayi* devotee "
how about Bhakta X? "can
announce, "He died perfect, thinking
of Krishna, an excellent example."

* * *

But I'll know the truth
that I clung to the lotus feet
of my spiritual master
that I merely
held on. "

* * *

4:10 a.m.

Stand outside the shed. Suddenly the rusty croak-alarm of a quail, and three of them lift slowly from a hidden place in the pasture. remember? It was just before December when I used to stand outside the shed before returning to the house late in the afternoons. It's the middle of winter now. Does the weather affect our moods? Is that why they drink so much alcohol in this land? I don't know.

I do know that you can see rain on the individual grass blades if you look at them close enough. Has this narrow, marshy path been crushed into existence only by *my* feet? How is it possible? I live so much inside a small sect, and even within the sect I'm isolated. I don't have enough significance to trod out a path. In the preface to Volume Five of Merton's diaries, it says he was of two minds, not satisfied even when he received his abbot's permission to live in the hermitage. He used the word *absurd* a lot, a buzzword of the 1960s. I'm not Merton, although there are similarities, and I want to be more positive than he seemed to feel about the life I am choosing, although I cannot deny the duality I feel.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

A sinner is forced to commit sins by habit; even punishment and atonement cannot rescue him.

Oh boy, teach me about *jnana* next. Yes, and then I'll be able to cap the whole thing off by concluding that *bhakti* is the best method for everything "*kecit kevalaya bhaktya*. It is the only process that destroys material desires by replacing them with ardent desire for Krishna's service. The next verse has a long, technical purport.

Open O of my mouth, yawn away as evening darkens into night. Living with such cycles, but no longer on the merry-go-round of material life. O Krishna, please help me to serve You.

He just wanted to give me a letter upon my arrival, so he wrote whatever came to mind, desperately, about his own enterprises, admittedly selfish, and handed it over. Then he was sorry that my reply seemed to misunderstand him. That's an interaction. Craving intimacy. Answers are in the books, but we need the flesh-and-guts exchange too.

January 16, 12:20 a.m.

Kecit kevalaya. Big endeavor it is to ready a house for me in Wicklow. It makes me question why I am doing it. Can I back out now? Probably not. M. predicts I'll get restless alone, but we both know I need it, crave it. As soon as I renounce my aloneness and begin to travel again, I soon feel the pressure on health and temperament becoming intolerable. "You've made your bed, now lie in it," or so the saying goes. This is what you want, so face it and yourself.

Kecit kevalaya. We cannot rid ourselves of material desires by atoning for past sins. If we square the account through karma or *jnana*, we will not be able to remain free. We need *bhakti* "active, flowing, devotional service.

Krishna consciousness is a great science analyzing karma in four stages of ripening and manifesting. Nondevotees, even nondevotee philosophers or poets, cannot understand this point. They tend to not believe what they cannot see, and in that denial, choose self-importance over universal truth. Then they are carried away on the waves of material nature and left to fight the threefold miseries alone. They lose all at death.

* * *

Gross people, people who are like beasts, and the beasts of pain, suffering, falsity, violence, intoxication, illicit sex "I shy away from all of them. I don't even want to hear about them. But ISKCON's adventures also sometimes turn me away. Still, I don't want to live out a romance of solitude. I have to learn to affirm reality for myself. How to please Srila Prabhupada in the life I am leading? I need to feel that my contribution is acceptable to him.

In his purport to *kecit kevalaya*, Srila Jiva Gosvami discusses the different divisions of *bhakti*. One, he says, flows incessantly; another flows intermittently. He further divides intermittent *bhakti* into three categories, the last two of which are "Devotional service in which there is no spontaneous love but one likes the constitutional position of serving," and, "A slight glimpse of devotional service." I seem to be an intermittent *bhakta* at best. The roots of material desires are uprooted even by this intermittent *bhakti*, so there is no need to perform separate atonement. It is like the first rays of the sun dissipating the fog: "If one has even a slight relationship with devotional service, all the fog of his sinful life is immediately vanquished." (*Bhag.* 6.1.15, purport)

* * *

5:02 a.m.

The operator sure is sore. He wants to write the story of the man (or boy) who lost something, but doesn't want to subject it to criticism. He doesn't want anyone to hurt his feelings or dampen his enthusiasm. He feels his flow is already feeble enough, what with this impending head fog and his waning powers, so he does not need any additional bashing from those who don't or can't really understand that he is already doing the best he can.

A tender plant, eh?

He's Henry Higgins imported from England, or Henry Katz imported from a dream. Stevie rogers, too, an expert athlete "the one he admired for his pitching arm and good style, even when he was losing the game. Stevie rogers was miles better than this tender plant could ever dream of being.

Oh, be searing, not tender. That's from Donald Hall.

Gee whiz, they have a pet farm where if you hug the animals, you'll become one in your next life. You'll become *dirty* and forget Krishna. reluctantly, our parents buy dogs for their children. Hare Krishna.

I know, the reader wants to know what's going on, but I can't attend to that right now.

Did I think once I got back here I would be more inspired, ready to romance my solitude? Did I forget that it *rains* here? Or that there are disciples who write trouble-filled letters? Did I forget the struggle, once alone, to convince myself that I am doing the right thing with my life?

Yes, I guess I did. In Guyana, I only looked forward to returning here. I thought of it as an almost unattainable paradise. I was already thousands of miles and another month away. But I got through all that, and it's over for another year. I am free to stay here for a whole year if I want (and if the government agrees). Is that good, or am I sinking into the ground?

No, not sinking. It takes too much work to live here for it to be called sinking. This is no vacation. I have to work just to stay alive, to face myself and my proclivities, and to then take them and turn them into *bhakti*.

Ferret pulling at its ring. If you break your own heart, you have to go ahead and serve anyway, tears and all. Krishna says we can attain Him only by devotional service.

* * *

Will I Be
& He's in there and I'm out here.
This is the way I wrote in Pembroke.
There was no fun for me anymore
in games.
I had become a devotee

* * *

In next life I wanna know
will I be covered and unhappy
like a kid nobody wants

to be around
while I wait for a reincarnated Prabhupada
to come and save me again?
Will there be another Kali-
yuga holocaust? Will I be gassed, or
a recalcitrant Nazi
writing poems?

* * *

Will I be a hog or will I
get to hear Monk and 'Trane, Chopin
and Brahms, do my homework
while rotting my teeth on
Clark bars? Will I receive
care packages of
Mary Oliver poems and will M. be
there with his lute?
Will Radha
cast Her sidelong glance of
mercy upon me? And
what about that guru and his
growing entourage?

* * *

I mean, everything could go back to the
beginning, right? Lower species and all "
no joke "
I could discover *Bhagavad-gita* in a
barbershop in Great Kills "
me and Charlie rouse,
deja vu
from a previous life.

* * *

Munching on blues in a
factory, making out (poorly?)
with girls, I'd be another
misfit in this world
thanks to what I have gleaned
of transcendental wisdom.
Better I just go back to Godhead

* * *

I want to wail
to kill no quail
to write in shed
to be a good boy.
I want to be with Swami telling
me to go back to Godhead
as soon as possible
as his Guru Maharaja told him:
Go
Go
on serious chanting
in one lifetime
you and Mr. Nair and
Monk Siddhasvarupa Stevie
you and all those guys
and the unpet pets
just go. "

* * *

8:45 a.m.

Due to jet lag, I awoke after my post-breakfast nap thinking it was still night. My clock said 8:09, and I thought I had just gone to bed an hour ago. When I finally cleared that up in my mind, I stepped outside and saw an orange sun rising over the ridge. The clear sky was reflected in the puddles. I had a good nap "a dream of Prabhupada. We were in India in the home of an Indian man. Things seemed disorganized around Prabhupada, and I had lost my *japa* beads. The only thing I remember of Prabhupada in the dream is that he let me go. I was suffering and disoriented in the company of his other servants. He asked if I was following my schedule. When I said no, he could see I wasn't coping well with the chaos that surrounded him.

Later, another dream of Prabhupada: He was in a jolly mood and announced that he would hold a competition. First there would be two dancers and three singers. Then we would have water fights, with half the devotees on one side and the other half on the other. He noticed me, which made me happy. He wanted the water fight videotaped. We all just laughed, enjoying Prabhupada's treat.

* * *

9:27 a.m.

" . . . if a sinful person engages in the service of a bona fide devotee of the Lord (*tat purusa*) and thus learns how to dedicate his life unto the lotus feet of Krishna, he can become completely purified." (*Bhag.* 6.1.16)

"I am no longer sinful, so I no longer need a spiritual master." False logic. Or, "I am advanced now; my spiritual master only trains neophytes." That's not the Vedic way. Great *acaryas* always remember and serve their eternal spiritual masters. "Devotional

service is necessary not to drive away an insignificant stock of sins but to awaken our dormant love for Krishna."

If by studying *Bhagavad-gita* I even once decide to surrender to Krishna, then I am freed from sinful reactions. *Bhakti* is that powerful. Have I ever surrendered? Am I trying now? It seems so difficult, because He is so far away and unknown. I can surrender by following the directions of *Bhagavad-gita* and the order of my spiritual master (Krishna's representative). I can surrender when I chant Hare Krishna. But the sincerity "that's what counts."

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Some astute reader could go through my EJW volumes and wrap me up as a psychological type. Some people have already done that assessment, but not by reading my books. In the mail, I received a letter from a Godbrother, along with a chapter from a book about the Enneagram. The Enneagram is the method by which psychologists can divide humans according to types. The chapter he sent was on #5, the "hermit" " people who don't like to make contact with the world of flesh and conflict. They devise ways to avoid it. One famous Five is Greta Garbo. To be redeemed, Fives have to break out of their inwardness and actively make contact with the world. Fives should fall in love (they tend to be celibates) and give voice to their passions. I know nothing about the Enneagram and its types. The person who sent this to me felt he too was a Five. I can identify with some of these traits, but not all of them. I suppose the Enneagram must also deal with persons who are mixtures, just as in Ayurveda there are people who are somewhat *vata* and somewhat *pitta*.

Perhaps it's good for me to understand what type I am. That way I won't become arrogant or see my weaknesses as virtues, and I won't try to protect myself from actual improvement. If I thought there were ways, even those which go against my grain, by which I could become a better devotee, I should want to hear of them. But I have a resistance to swallowing someone's speculation. They might be wrong.

Nevertheless, I'm recording all this here so as not to deny that I saw some of a Five's traits in myself, both the unpleasant ones and the typical ones.

* * *

12:10 noon

Took my third Esgic of the week and caught and subdued the right-eye pain. I tend to feel guilty about taking painkillers. I wonder why? Because I don't feel that it's morally inferior to relieve pain. Naturopath doctors claim all evil springs from allopathy, yet I can't get relief from their so-called morally superior remedies. Now it's just a matter of my figuring out how many I can take before I get an adverse reaction (rebound headache). I have come to appreciate pain relief as compassionate. It reminds me of the statue in the Boston Common where chemical pain-killing is personified as two angels.

Anyway, right now I have limited myself to three Esgics a week regardless of how many headaches come. When I have reached my quota, then I accept an afternoon of pain, low consciousness, bed rest, and a mind that does little but concentrate on the

pain's center. When I still have something left of my quota, why should I endure all that? What to speak of the loss of time? It may come to pass that later in my life I will again be forced to give up pain relief, but for now I have not crossed the boundary that prevents me from accepting pain as my natural state. In other words, I'm not so heroic when it comes to pain.

* * *

Song For the Un-Wounded
& I came out here to *do* something, like look
at the water or be quietly heroic, to "boast
of weakness" (St. Paul).
O Krishna, I opted for
no pain
although I cannot always
make that choice.
Now that I chose a painless day,
where is my offering? Don't you know
that Krishna wants only my love?

* * *

How to give it? I sigh, exhale,
encourage endorphins to work,
Reach for chemical relief,
O Krishna, but I am Your servant
even though I can't mean it
with all my heart
just yet.

* * *

In the rainy season roads are overgrown
weeds high even
trees
and travellers
can't see . . . just like a Brahma
forgets he's the eternal servant of
our Supreme Lord Krishna.

* * *

These truths you'll find nowhere else.

* * *

A lion roaring, wounded: "I
speak and preach so often I tell my
fellow preachers unless we can
heal [by words] we're not truthful
to the mission of Jesus."

* * *

Rough and salty
wounded/ sweet men/
strong enough open
enough to sing our
gut bucket.
Krishna, I'm under the influence of
my master but
weighed down now
by age and health and cynical
thoughts. I don't expect too much.
Please rescue us. "

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty Episode #2

A man lost something along the way. He was a cultist, a Hare Krishna, and a pure, enthusiastic worker. They praised him, the people. He became corrupt when he read a book (blame it on the poets or a woman like his mother, or on dreams, ghosts, brothers who betrayed him, apostates, the anti-cultists of America and Dole for inviting them to lunch) "O blame,

blame

Jr: What did he lose?

Sats: I told you, a green and yellow basket.

Jr: What was in the basket?

Sats: Sandwiches, on Monk's bread. A dirty razor, a Popsicle-stick raft (down the gutter it went), and a children's quarrel.

Jr: Before you sail off on that raft, could you tell me what you are feeling?

Sats: Like Stuart Little ("Atta mouse!") riding his little boat around the lake. He feels he had youth, health, and especially faith in this movement. He actually believed that if we would only all be true to it, we would see Krishna consciousness become a force to be reckoned with in this lifetime. We would have our hands full with hundreds of new devotees, for example. I'm talking about the initiating years, when he was Gurupada. But he didn't know that he'd already lost his own integrity. That's the stereotypical story, of course, but maybe there's another story within this one, one that tells of someone who has lost something. It's been expressed in the wounded growls of Archie Shepp.

Jr: You mean you're searching for your own song, of course.

Sats: Yes. Something got lost; the thing went off track. I'm afraid to tell a story that I don't *really* believe but may tell because it sounds symbolical "like, "Don't you see, Buddy, that you lost your own soul?"

I don't want to know and feel *that*. And I don't.

Certainly I lost my health and my drive to preach. That's obvious. And not only me. I don't believe in love, or live in ISKCON, as I used to. JagadiSa left, yet another blow. After the reform of '86, the reformers took the high seats. Another loss. When that happened, I quit and said I would never give my heart to it again. But still I preach, although I have since lost even more conviction in the institution. But with all those critics shaking the ISKCON tree, I want to defend it.

I still avoid all those leaders who want me to do and be something I'm not, something I never was. I no longer have the gut courage and attachment to this movement. That's obvious too. But just because it's obvious doesn't mean it's unimportant. I just told you I have lost my faith and working identity in our institution. I'm not attacking it, but when I lost my own identity as its defender, then what was left for me to do? I was neither an enthusiastic critic nor an enthusiastic supporter. Nothing enthuses me now but my own lonely way and the disciples who see what I am saying as a contribution to ISKCON, which is, after all, my home. *That's* what got lost. Still, I am working each day to find it again.

Jr: It's good you're getting it out. More?

Sats: No. Maybe later.

* * *

Paid For This

& Cold out here, but I'm free to move, me

the spirit. "Do as you like," Krishna told Arjuna. That's the difference between a living entity and a stone. A living entity comes voluntarily to God.

* * *

A noise like thunder, I'm shocked by combined freshness and scuttle and scutter.

This is the way "I know I keep saying that.

The rainy season gives a metaphor

of the temporary "a rainbow without

strings, how Rama and Krishna appear in this world

without attachment to it.

* * *

"I think I understand," said a bemused

audience. "He was not anchored

enough to a recently read *sastra*."

Pariksit dasa selling shoes?

Funny furrowed smile "

what do they expect? One

said, "You look at me so
penetrating and harsh, as if
you were disgusted with
me." Not true!

* * *

Now there's no one for me to look at
harshly or
otherwise, and I wait
for the strength of calm to face
my suffering and to write the story
of some kind of spiritual road.

* * *

Squalling animal rights groups,
white saucers, women, gays
cultists too, Rwanda
an obsession, Bosnia,
Ascension
"Get me outta here," said
K. when he'd come all the
way to Kumbha-mela and
found Swamiji wasn't there
just wise-guy gangster *sannyasis*.
I would have said that too.
We have a hair-raising history.
No wonder you think you lost something.

* * *

Back to the basics of holy names
as I walk with
quiet heroics.
A familiar melody
under these looming white clouds. "

* * *

4:20 p.m.

It's getting lighter in the evenings. Irish winters are rarely harsh, although there are some chilly days like today. I can hear a cow lowing in the distance. A protest? Above Inis rath, like a dirigible, a gray-powder cloud. Beautiful It's just hanging there, fixed. Nothing seems to be moving except time. Cattails half submerged. The water's reflection carries half-trees from shore, then half the sky. Can I feel because of it? More birds

singing here in wintertime than there would be in North America. Hey, don't call me a Five. I am touching this earth and searching for my love for Krishna. That's all I am.

January 17, 12:15 a.m.

Thought of *return to Quiet Heroics* as a good title for this book. It refers to my returning from the demanding tour to facing myself in solitude. I need and want to be alone, but it's never easy. Even staying alone requires courage. "Quiet heroics" also refers to my attempt to ration out medication and to live with the domination of pain.

But last night I looked up *heroic* in the dictionary. A hero, it said, is a person of great courage, especially in fighting. *Heroic* is probably too great a word to refer to my little endeavors. How can I call myself a hero?

Okay, I'm no hero, so there's no need for readers to misinterpret what I'm saying. Still, within my little world, I must show courage and a warrior's determination. I am not on vacation; I am living out a vocation. No indulgence or whimsy allowed. I simply have to transform my weakness into a virtue in Krishna consciousness.

Okay, I can live with the title. Granted, I'm no Ajax or Achilles or Bhisma or Arjuna. I'm no Casper Milquetoast or Mr. Peepers or even an Elmer Gantry travesty. Just be honest, live a good life dedicated to Krishna's pleasure, and sort things out. Make your life heroic by not giving up on it easily despite the inevitable difficulties. Keep up your hope.

* * *

Dreamt Baladeva suggested I do some huge, passionate writing project, a biography of ISKCON. The book was also to include solutions to our problems. Baladeva and others were beginning to interview the devotees.

* * *

Happy Tribesman
& The man in the moon danced he
pranced, was serious, stuck in a classroom
chalk dust toasts
and tenure tears "he had to
mark students' prayers in red ink
for hours. He ate quietly at restaurants
tired or sex conquests
and wound up in Manhattan.

* * *

That's not *my* story "he's a character
who lost something "one of many. My story is
different. I lived in New York City earlier,
then when I was 26 joined the Swami.

Life was easygoing, and we rarely fought
the cops. Peaceful, we were,
and not deterred in giving out
nama and books and
prasadam.

* * *

Now we have to provide for the people
who joined us. It's like that "
Rules and love and *sastra*
a nice life
even when it's tough
we read and plan to make our happiness
serving the Lord.
We live in this world a little while
before going on to eternity.

* * *

Happy tribesman, teaching seminars, Krishna
conscious themes, little men and women
in attendance, all hoping to smoke the pipe
of peace (our version) "eat
milk sweet *prasada*, praise others.

* * *

This is our life "then a heavy note arrives
and we accept it
continue to live in the freshness
and do our homework
for when we come back
next life.

* * *

Yes, Krishna is better than
Unknown Love.
He's a cowherd
loved by *parisads*
Radha and the grass,
land
water
everyone
in Vrndavana.

* * *

Why mention our banging drum
as if it has any significance?
O Krishna
Krishna
the drum in Your world
signals only the finale before You
start another sport
beyond all religion
as God of *prema*. "

* * *

5:15 p.m.

We're about to hear a very old story, one told by the sages in other *Puranas*. It's about Ajamila. Please listen to it again. The story is set in Kanyakubja (modern Kanauj, wherever that is). It's as serious as hell.

There *is* no *eternal* hell, but there's judgment. What does Father Rohr think, that everyone goes to heaven? He can't say for sure because the Bible doesn't explain such things clearly. No matter how brilliant and liberated he is "and he is good, humane, psychologically fit, spiritual, and humorous "he can't know much absolute science because the tradition he's in doesn't supply it. He does amplify wonderfully on what he has, though.

And us? Do we sit stupidly on our treasure? Misuse it?

It's hard to give it out because people see it as sectarian. "Pure devotional service is very rare."

This Ajamila story will illustrate the superb effectiveness of chanting the holy name. Ajamila was "freed from the hands of the Yamadutas simply because of chanting the holy name of Narayana." This will prove Sukadeva's statement, *kecit kevalaya bhaktya*, that *bhakti* removes all sinful desires and reactions.

Srila Prabhupada states that illicit sex is the beginning of abominable life and that we don't endorse sin, although we want to be merciful toward sinners. We want to help them stop sinning.

* * *

9:05 a.m.

Drive yourself out of your recovering head. And if you don't have pain, boot up and go out for a walk. Chant the last two of your minimum sixteen rounds out there. Grinding this morning.

This morning, the speech of Catholic priest Richard Rohr is echoing in my head. A Godbrother sent me a few of his tapes. He's brilliant at bashing the misconceptions of centuries of wrong-headed Christianity, but what's behind the fireworks and humor? What is his understanding of God? Clearly his tradition does not give him much to go on. Listening to him I felt assured and grateful and drawn to Lord Krishna, the Supreme

Personality of Godhead "Krishna as a playful person. Who could understand Him like this except one who has submitted himself to a spiritual master who himself knows Krishna? Krishna is the origin, all-knowing, more human than any of us, yet without the flaws of human life. To the Christians, who are also monotheists, Krishna is at best one of the many gods of Hinduism. They just don't get it. Jesus didn't mention playful Krishna, so they cannot accept Him. Jesus taught only about the Father, and they seem to feel free to speculate on what that means. Rohr said the three great monotheistic religions of the world all recognized Abraham of the Old Testament as their founder. Then he named those religions: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. But what I've heard of those religions, their monotheism rises at best to a very holy, unreachable, unnamable All-father of no known pastimes, the one whose name should not even be written.

All right. I see the silhouettes of birds sitting on a telephone wire and the winter silhouettes of trees. Heavy, gray clouds pressing down everywhere. A car with two devotees passes me on its way off this land. O Krishna, please let me remember You in everything I see, playful Lord.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Shift over to halberd, sir. read this on the screen. So many technical orders being given in workplace jargon. Nobody knows what they mean but the people who work with them. remember "the gun," "the chopper" "tools used by the Park Department workers?

The way and the truth of Krishna consciousness in insider language: "Take *prasadam*," "take *darSana*," and be sure to use devotee-ese and all the Prabhupada-isms you can think of. We get "fried" or "toasted," we "bloop" or else we are "in ecstasy."

O you pedant at a desk, why don't you see some action? I'm afraid of the ache. I have to resort to these tactics and call down the heavenly muse. rohr spoke all about Christianity and how to purify it back to what it was.

I'm clever for sixty. I'm tall, cute, witty, rhymey, and roomy. I mean, I have a lot to say. In *parampara*. It's important I don't judge my own writing too harshly, but let it go, let it pass through the system. All amen and Krishna prayers. We have just completed the Christmas marathon, and now we are preparing for the Mayapur festival. Until then, we all plan to survive the bitter winter. I am scheduled to read *Caitanya-caritamrta* tomorrow in the unvarnished, wooden-floored temple room. That's a cozy place with its wood stove. You can see the flames through the stove door, and of course, you can see Radha-Govinda. I'll speak about how Lord Caitanya saved Vasudeva, the leper. I don't plan to cancel.

How are ya, man?

Okay.

You look great.

Do I? Mmm, you look pretty good too. But we're two toasted birds, our flesh hanging onto our bones for a little while longer. It will take less than a lightning flash before this life is over. Go to Krishna, those who are lucky (*maha-bhaga*).

Why do I write if nothing is permanent?

Nothing is permanent, that's true. Not even the hairdo my mother used to call "a permanent." Or Permanent Life Insurance. Permaculture. A long lasting freeze "what do they call that? "permafrost. Where did Jagai go? Who found the secret of St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh"? Give us a report. Whatever happened to . . . I'm almost ready to tell you the next episode of the man who lost something.

* * *

12:09 p.m.

Oh nine, clear your mind. Your genius, your love, an artist boasts. The boathouse sits, a pile of bricks ordered and structured to form a house for a few hundred years at most. Then time disassembles it.

Fog rolling into this head. We define the day by the sky "cloudy, bright, optimistic, sad, gray, depressed. The sky matters to humans. Of course, if you have work to help you transcend the sky, then it doesn't matter, does it? A Krishna conscious person must learn to tolerate in order to love Krishna steadily.

* * *

1:15 p.m.

Pony-tailed man ringing the bell for someone to send a boat. Sweet rice for dessert. Privileged character listening to a preacher say we have to give up the controlling mentality and discover that we are fallen, imperfect beings. When we pray, he says, it first brings up the beast in us, our hate of others, etc. I don't find that happens to me. Mainly I get bored or restless, with nothing participating but enough to keep the motor running. Or is something else happening? Broken self admitted.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Read *Krishna* book as our book, be loyal to it, and pray to be drawn to it. As we say, it's our Bible, our Gospel. God is revealed in the fullest way in the Tenth Canto, of which *Krishna* book is a summary study. We should live and die for the opportunity to know this Krishna. It takes great sincerity and prayer to understand God as He is.

Krishna book contains parable and analogies to spiritual life drawn from scenes in nature. Srila Prabhupada recorded all these separately in the 1950s for the religious conference in Japan. He called this collection *Light of the Bhagavata*. I heard it for the first time and I am hearing it again now "honoring it.

Krishna appears with His cowherd friends in the forest of Vrndavana. The seasons change, and the *gopis* wait for Krishna to return home in the evenings. After His departure for Mathura and His long absence from Vrndavana, they almost give up their lives, but they never forget Him. rather, they live on in *vipralambha*, loving separation. Krishna is absolute, so He is present in the *gopis'* *bhava* and remembrance of His *lila*.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty

Episode #3

Lost? But I don't want to go back. I don't even want to dwell on the past. Now I have a medical excuse. God reigneth.

The man who lost something asked at the Literary Bureau for Mr. Gogol. Was it his overcoat or his nose that was missing? His integrity?

I think he simply lost his youth. They waited in the waiting room to find out. Eventually the receptionist asked, "What is it you have lost?" and they each overheard the other's story. Occasionally they spoke among themselves. "You lost a ring?"

"You lost a son?"

I lost nothing I can specifically remember, but I feel loss. Perhaps I lost the purpose of my life. But not really. I'm still serving my master, aren't I? And the religious or *sankirtana* movement still exists. But I have this feeling.

Once inside the doctor's office, he (Hank Mobile is his name this time) opens his mouth wide and the doctor examines his teeth.

"Yes, you have lost all but four teeth. I hereby confirm it."

"But that's not what I came for. I already knew *that*. I know you can supply false teeth, add artificial limbs, but what about vague things, parts of the spirit?"

"We can talk about it if you are willing to do trance work," the doctor says. "It's easy. I'll ask you, 'Say you're in a room, or, if you prefer, you have descended to the ocean floor in diving gear. It's calm there, and blue. Say your life is laid out on the ocean floor. You discover it as you would discover a sunken ship. You can see everything clearly in the greenish light. You have time while you breathe deeply of the oxygen in your tank. Go aboard and look around. Keep your mind cool. Go into the cabins if you like. Go to where you lost that most valuable piece of your spirit, and try to retrieve it.'"

"What if I can't remember what it looks like, what it even is? Maybe I never had it in the first place. Can I still find it on this sunken ship?"

"Yes. But you said you lost something."

"I'm distracted "I can't think . . . Donald Duck . . . I see a wet comic book, a hidden treasure to some. Oh, something shameful about my past. I don't want to see *that* stuff."

"You may have to before you will be able to remember that valuable thing you left there."

"When the ship sank "I think of words like 'self' and 'soul.' On the ship there are only dead objects . . . and embarrassments (also dead)."

"Maybe there is something alive there too," suggests the doctor.

Hank Mobile imagined he was looking for sunken treasure, but it seemed to require deeper meditation or a gift of mercy. He didn't feel he could attain it just by looking around with his ordinary eyes under water.

"Is it a geiger counter, a divining rod, you want?"

"No, I just have to know. Anyway, I am not one for great revelations in life. Maybe it won't be as definite as finding a single thing."

"Or it could," suggests the doctor. "It doesn't have to be an actual memory. It could be something in symbolical form."

"The table with Srila Prabhupada's books set up in a college hallway or front lobby "I see that. Almost everyone is rushing past. Do they need to make money here,

the *sankirtana* devotees? No, they are simply traveling around in vans.
A *brahmacari* will have to go out and do the pick if the books don't sell. No problem.
A *sannyasi* stays back to read."

Oxygen disappearing and still I have no answer.

The sky still gray above the water.

And thus Hank emerged from the doctor's office after a "thank you." He didn't want the doctor to think he had wasted either of their time. Hank told the doctor that his visit had been "interesting." Maybe there *was* nothing he could put his finger on. Maybe he already knew what he had lost "his youth, his health, his bold idealism, and the intense feeling that his mission was to preach. Perhaps he had lost his belief in bringing people to ISKCON. That youthful faith. Maybe he already knows what he has lost, and now he simply has to learn how to cope with it.

Or *is* it something else?

* * *

Clowning Around, Looking For The Lost Treasure
& Young they were, so that's
what you can examine, *elan*.
This much I said I didn't know
for sure. He sure is funny,
a lurching friend with an
unusually fat belly, a clown.

* * *

Clown or not, it's a sad story
put to music. The
funny part of it is, a man is simple
in one sense
and if you don't let him get angry
paranoiac or turn the whole thing into
something ugly, out of hand completely
you don't have to worry.
You'll make it.

* * *

There's no hell eternal
although you'll have to endure
the hot iron bar or whatever it is
you brought on yourself.
You brought it on
although you can back out now.

* * *

This is the story:
He thought he lost something sure
enough, went diving for it. A laugh.

* * *

It's gone, Shepherd,
kind shepherd Prabhupada
gone to Vaikuntha-Krishnaloka.
The resident palace has now been infiltrated
by students and Vraja-babas and
who knows what else? And I am
exiled by choice.

* * *

I have to laugh at the seal
in the zoo, diving
into the wreck.

* * *

Hank has to sing it alone:
"Hey, Hank, is *this* it
(holding up key)"?
"Hey, Hank," they jeer,
"what about that magazine
or the time you peed
in a cup?
Hey, Hank, when you and I
were young, Maggie "
Hank, try this on for size . . . "
He wants to leave this immobile
unfriendly scene, this fun house
of the wax museum come alive
wants to not even care:
"It wasn't my idea to make
a big deal about something lost."

* * *

He goes outside and hums a tune
(Hare Krishna) and
looks forward to some minnow
of a dream. "

* * *

4 p.m.

I told you there were plenty of birds here, even in winter, and there's plenty of rain. The leaves on the ground are always wet, and the grass is always green.

The Western model doesn't always fit the Vedic one, that's for sure. What to do about that I'm not always certain. Can't always reject the Western, but neither should I offhandedly reject the Vedic. Make a hybrid sometimes.

* * *

5:25 p.m.

M. due to arrive so we can memorize verses together. I hope to keep them within me until I flow out of this body at death, a storehouse of remembrances, a necklace of Sanskrit *Slokas* to wear. They are transcendental against the other things that threaten to flow through me.

January 18, 1:17 a.m.

This is the day I hope to go to the temple to perform, to speak on *Caitanya-caritamṛta*. I am being careful; I slept an extra hour, because I was awake so often during the night. Preserve thy delicate self so you can make it to the lecture.

All right, I'm ready (or not) to speak of Vasudeva, of whom we know little. For example, we don't know how he contracted leprosy. There are other characters in the *Caitanya-caritamṛta* who got their leprosy by offending Vaisnavas. Vasudeva's healing is reminiscent of Jesus' ministry. Lord Caitanya had His own purpose.

* * *

4:38 a.m.

Radha-Govinda are here. While dressing Them in the morning, I listen to a recording of *Vidagdha-madhava*. Purnamasi brings radha and Krishna together. She is Yogamaya. Someone speaks about how Srimati Radharani and Abhimanyu are ill-matched.

Nutrition facts on a bottle of Dannon Natural spring water: no calories, no fat, and almost no sodium. What use is it, then? Look at the small print. We all know that pure water is good for you, right? And *gayatris* are essential too. Take into yourself only those things that are pure, even if they seem to re-emerge in a mix.

Madhu is sleeping in. Probably stayed up late playing music.

Those days when we read holy books and chanted our rounds in Vrndavana "it felt clandestine. Yes, I remember.

I have a tiny pimple on my lip. I am admitting the things at hand.

The Tuscarora Creek was renamed "Yamuna," although it freezes over. If they want to think of it like that, great. It's a new place, Gita-Nagari, with new servants of Radha-Damodara. Held no classes in the cabin when I was there. My poor head. But I painted squirrels on Bristol board on the porch. Baladeva said the cabin was fine, but it ought to be floated down the creek a few miles so it can be more out of reach of visitors. I gave

my association (as we say) to the devotees who work on the Press while I was there. We had a meeting, and some non-Press devotees crashed it. I spoke for all of them, reading from my writings and giving the general outlay of the Press in case any of the "extras" who attended want to help. In one way or another, I ask them to help print these books, which can be a source of nutrition for ISKCON devotees.

* * *

Clear Science
& This is my time to praise the Supreme Lord
Krishna with perfect knowledge.

* * *

Krishna! The *Vidagdha-madhava* was written in India under a tree.
Lord Caitanya asked, "What are you
writing, Rupa?"
Rupa Gosvami had received the Lord's
special mercy.

* * *

This world is sad, ruthless
but the spiritual world is
beyond anxiety.
Here we want to fix-heal
to give up anger
but
there's that other world too "the
world He points to
Srila Prabhupada says
Jesus-Buddha-Krishna never said
this is the place we can stay
and be happy.

* * *

Q-tips
pure water, the truth is
emanating out a pipe
a smoke
a cloudy sky "I'm going
over there by rowboat
blessed forms
only a few know the great secret
the inner sanctum.

* * *

Caitanya-caritamṛta tells us Lord Caitanya tells us
Swami tells us, we sit
and hear and think how to apply
Bless me Lord I'm not
perfect but I know
perfect knowledge.

* * *

Lord Caitanya gave us the import
put
bureau
words
spiritualized dic
the
Man said I go
to worship God
science clear
Krishna.

* * *

That's it/ that's it
then come back to salvage day
in holy way
free awhile
and you pay. "

* * *

I had a dream that I was in a crowded place, like Grand Central Station. I glanced up and saw a man dressed in a suit and tie walking alone. It seemed he had just dropped his parents at the station. Everyone seemed sad. My sister was with me, and I reminded her, "remember in *Catcher in the rye* how Holden used to see such scenes and get emotionally involved in them? We should feel for such people, even the stupid ones." I wanted to tell her that so she would remain compassionate. When I awoke, I thought that if I really want to help people, I should preach.

* * *

10:22 a.m.

Class on the leper, Vasudeva. I fell into the trap of answering questions on humility. Felt like I strayed off the *sastra's* conclusion (always chant Hare Krishna) by trying to think of more liberal ways to apply it. Then I got back on track.

Told Fergus, "No more videos of my lectures." Gave Radha-Govinda to be polished by a disciple. I will do it myself in the future. Letter from a teenager shows he has plenty of doubts in Krishna consciousness. He tells me what he wants to do for a living, that he likes pop music, etc. None of it includes Krishna consciousness. I wish him well, although I know the outcome.

The morning gone, and now I hope to settle down. People write me, "My life is like this," "I'm doing that." What do they expect me to say? Fix it for them with words of wisdom and practical advice?

* * *

Had a dream that I was in the military, but off duty. Many of us were traveling by train, not in our uniforms, but in casual denims. Somehow I feel myself different from everyone. I had the feeling after the dream that this represented another life that could possibly be, and that even before we recognize that we're devotees, we may have to live out a time of alienation and uncertainty. I pray to meet Krishna, to meet Krishna's devotees, as quickly as possible in my next life. There is no other solace.

* * *

1:50 p.m.

Soft rain. Man with a wheelbarrow. I want to be a writer of beautiful moments, of life itself, a writer who can move people and help them, who can glorify God honestly through my suffering, my ordinariness, my mixed modes.

Yes, the rain is soft. Everything gray, both sky and water. The sky is vast, the water deep. Neither is friendly today "too cold. A pampered person within and without knows neither deep sadness nor deep joy. He just doesn't know.

In gratitude (*guru-daksina*), a disciple preaches to give others the gift his guru gave him. Someone asked, "Can you preach beyond your level of gratitude?" Yes, yes. You have to at the beginning, or else how can you build your own thankfulness? I speak confidently, but sigh when I am alone. I want to console others.

Hey, Nonny blackbird with your thin, orange beak, are you looking for worms on such a day? You stab those helpless creatures who have that low karma, and you have low karma yourself. Without understanding the laws of karma and transmigration, nothing seems to make sense.

Syamananda said we learn humility by reading *sastra*. I added, "Yes, it's *vidyana*, and we simply have to accept it." Faith in the powerful action of reading the word of God, absorbing it. It was the best thing that was said all day. Hare Krishna, *nirantara-nama*, makes us humble. Hanuman fights humbly, a *brahmana* is humble in a different way, a *grhastha* too. We spoke about it all the way down to the quay. Don't expect honor; offer it to others. We really are lower than a blade of grass.

* * *

12:12 p.m.

Ajamila called out for his son, Narayana, and that saved him. The three Yamadutas appeared to get him for his sins, but simultaneously the Visnudutas arrived. Ajamila had chanted the name of their Master. His anxious chanting is considered by the *Bhagavatam* commentators as inoffensive.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

The rain has soaked some places in the shed. It is beating down on the roof, and the heater just conked out. I see the Chinese paintings in *Light of the Bhagavata*, then look up and see that same type of scene out the window "the flat marshland, a swollen strait, the silhouette of an island, that oriental mist. In rubber pants I walked past four devotees and shielded myself with the umbrella. Not even a greeting on a day like today. Just wanted to get out here.

"The moon appears to move in the clouds," says *Light of the Bhagavata*, "just as the *jiva* appears to move in his bodily designation." The true self is actually beyond the body, nation, and other illusions. He remains active in the liberated state.

Heat steaming up the windows. Coat and hat start to feel too warm. The devotee is compared to a dancing peacock. When is the last time you danced for joy in *sankirtana*? Not morose, but feeling light because the Hare Krishna mantra turns on your blissful spiritual nature? Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna "have you lost something? Or perhaps you have just become honest enough to say you had never found it.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty

Episode #4

Lost. Last. Lottie. I lost my father. Good things too: I lost sorrow and hunger and dying in a pre-devotee state. I lost searching and facing sorrows that drove other artists, my teachers like Rilke and Nietzsche, crazy. I lost bad habits.

But then I became a devotee, rose higher and higher, and lost something along the way. *Was* it hope? I already asked that.

And there's no one to blame. Health and youth *had* to go. Now if only I can hold these feelings in, cry tears for them, and wait for the transformation of God's grace. That's why a devotee has to be *dhira*. We don't only have to tolerate the weather. And besides being tolerant, we have to learn not to judge or condemn. Hold our own wounds in peace.

I heard a Catholic preacher say that. He doesn't like to be labeled "New Age," but he's into "healing." The woundedness of Christ "he preaches about that. Says life is half sad and half good, and what can we do but accept it all as God's mercy?

Sam Hamwitch. I lost my memory and love . . . became a cripple. Maybe I even aged earlier than I would have. I was feeling the weight of gravity pulling me down early in my life.

Lost.

One pepper.

One idea that

we're all a happy family

in a worldwide commune

filled with only the best people

all dedicated to spreading Krishna consciousness,

happy working together.

We are deep and spiritual, aren't we?

Do I now basically tolerate the institutional life?

That same Catholic preacher said, "Church is a source of good and also of much disappointment." We are wounded by our Church, but if we can refrain from accusing, from becoming negative, from losing faith, we will be transformed by God. If we blame ISKCON or certain of its leaders, we will wind up becoming that which we hate. Don't let it drag you down.

So there's this boy, Acorn Smith, the reincarnation of . . .

No, Hank Mobile is still alive. They went on vacation on a shelf.

Oh boy, I'm too tired. Maybe I have lost the ability to think straight.

I know I have lost both my suspenders and straitjacket, the rules (not the four), the rigid way. I have come to like applesauce. When I give up fear of censure by the GBC for what I am saying, that will be a gain.

Yeah, some losses are good. It means I am releasing ballast from my gas balloon, and that will only free me to float higher. Get rid of what you don't need.

Hank thought devotees should only be a certain way. Now he's settling for what and who he sees. "See, don't think."

Don't shrink either. Do dreams scare you because they seem to be a preview of a future life? Well, be brave, spirit soul, and try to remember Krishna now, indelibly, so you can be with Him in that future you think you see. (I haven't lost hold on the important aspects of Vaisnava doctrine.)

And I haven't given up.

* * *

Swing For Krishna

& A rainy day and soggy page "don't smear

it 'cause you are just a man in a coat with

poor circulation, although,

"You look great."

* * *

You'll just have to be one of those people

who are happy. rhythm and

blues, the syncopated rhythms

of life, of changes

of sardonic birthday greetings

while visions of skeletons dance
and no desire to
sentimentalize.

* * *

Heard they won't let Hare Krishnas
in the Paddy Day parade because
they don't dance in regular rows
don't dress normal with
eyes right
in good rows even
to show a happy birth
and death.

* * *

But we gotta dance!
Seriously. We need to
swing the way the
dancers do
because God in head, body,
gut-heart "He's
the best dancer
and even outdoes Siva's *pralaya*
the Lord
who danced on
Kaliya. Who bled?
I found a long quill feather, picked
it up but it was stained with
blood so put it down where I
found it on earth in rainy North Ireland
under helicopters
circling.

* * *

Sing love Krishna "we have a right but
we Krishnas not allowed
because we don't dress in ironed clothes
wear our *tilaka* smeared
women heavenly and unwrinkled
but prams too old and
some of us are just too
individual and not magic
enough for the theater.

O Krishna, every day
we give You our breath. "

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Still raining and dark. M. is probably playing melodeon and rehearsing his songs to submit to the St. Paddy's Day Parade Board. I'm cooling off. A big, old yellow jacket buzzing around in here. The Sunday feast is held at 3 p.m. at the temple; my feast is here. No energy for painting. I'm glad enough to write and read and get through each day.

Srila Prabhupada was heavy in his last purports to *Madhya* 7 on the need to preach if we want to please Krishna. Lord Caitanya asked Vasudeva always to chant and preach. We can't escape the message. Don't try to avoid its import.

* * *

From Ireland, With Krishna's Love
& Old bee in shed
salute last life.
Now Mr. Blue I ask you.

* * *

When the heater conked out you
had ten minutes to write something
to Ireland-America mother
and ask if you are dead I
can *maybe* get the papers
and if you are alive I wish you
eternal verity in Christ
and Mary.

* * *

As for me, Mom, remember
T. Monk I heard in
my room in Avalon?
You don't? really?
You remember, uh, Sommerset
Maugham or Andre Kostelanetz "
so many memories?

* * *

Hey, Mom, chant Hare Krishna, will you?

I know you don't like to hear it, but
I'm giving you a blessing, performing
an act of *Sraddha* or *pinda* "
it's like a novena.

* * *

Midnight Mass
'round midnight
the monk plays in Hare Krishna
ghetto *dhotis*
wouldn't recognize me
no teeth now, and you?
Big stars
loves God. "

* * *

Crisscross
& Crisscross, this
could be our theme song.
I'll narrate the pictures or
sing, "Here we go!"
O giggling but shy *celas*
of my master.

* * *

You will groove or not.
You'll say, "We didn't
pay for this. Our guru now a deejay?!"

* * *

They don't know these references
old-time man in Bermuda shorts
an identity crisis?
Where's your *danda*?

* * *

You mean that plaid stick?

* * *

Oh boy, I'll report you to

the liberals pipe and scoot
boil and shuffle

* * *

this has got to be beyond
the *parampara's* limit.

* * *

No, I wouldn't do that to you.
We walked on border
of Radha-kunda like Swami
with BSST when he told him to "Print
books"
like these/ pictures
Rain
my private life
is private. But crisscross
from Vedic
to what we are.

* * *

The solemn hour
expired "no smile
on *my* face, although I forget
all *maya*
and turn to God.
Swami, I am with you still. "

* * *

4 p.m.

Gentle rain constant all day. Be grateful, I told devotees. Someone said, "But if you're not grateful enough, you might preach beyond your realization." A tricky question; he was trying to warn us of something. Anyway, be grateful. Krishna is very kind. Try to see how even the dark brings a reason for gratitude. See that through Krishna conscious *siddhanta*.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

Letters. A young man is about to enter the world. I can't advise him. He doesn't really want spiritual talk. That's all I'm here for.

Tell a woman without a husband that she's doing the best she can. Her daughters go to an all-girls' Catholic school, and now she has time to read the *Bhagavatam*. She said she liked the "scientific presentation" in *From Copper to Touchstone*, then added, "I like free-writing books also." Well, I would hope so, because I'm not much into making scientific presentations. I prefer to say what I see "the sky darkening, and at any minute now, I'll close the curtains. It's like closing the stage on another day. God, God is both creator and audience, controller and playwright. I only foolishly assume I am doing anything myself.

January 19, 12:10 a.m.

The Yamadutas asked, "Who are you? Are you *siddha-sattamas* (the best of the perfect)?" Why should the Visnudutas arrive at the deathbed of a sinful man?

No one wants to suffer much in the body or be denied his basic necessities. People want to be convinced their endeavors are worthy. They want to be in touch with their masters, and, if they are devotees, with the Supreme, but often they are also afraid they might lose prestige from such contact.

Anyway, the pure servants of the Supreme Lord resemble His appearance in Vaikuntha. They think of the Lord constantly and always serve Him with love. "Similarly, one who learns the faithful service of Lord Krishna through the Krishna consciousness movement will always remain in Vaikunthaloka and have nothing to do with the material world." (*Bhag.* 6.1.36, purport)

Ajamila was not a suitable candidate for hell. It all seems so unreal "the arrival of the four-armed persons, discussing the life of this sinner-devotee with the Yamadutas. The truth is, we are very tiny and very ignorant. We see so little. Therefore, we simply have to operate on faith. After all these years of dedicating our lives to Krishna consciousness, you'd think we'd be experienced in the "mysteries" (*rahasyam*) of God and His kingdom. That doesn't seem to be so true. Perhaps it's because the world is constantly closing in on us and exerting its pressure. The scene of the Yamadutas and the Visnudutas discussing Ajamila on his deathbed is not a myth. It actually took place.

And this from Prabhupada: "One who has not surrendered to Krishna does not know the true principle of religion, otherwise he would have surrendered." (*Bhag.* 6.1.38, purport)

* * *

In a dream I was a member of the Berkeley temple, and from what I could see, I was quite a character. At one point, we were marching through the streets, chanting, and when a devotee leaned over to tell me something, I slapped him. The devotee was charmed by my action "he thought it was spontaneous and real.

The rest of the dream was spent trying to approach the Deities in the temple in time for *mangala-arati*. Everything was chaos and disorganization around me, and I had many things to do before I could take *darSana*. When I finally wanted to get dressed to go before the Deities, Madhu brought in gray clothes instead of my usual saffron. Then there were so many side rooms and corridors that I couldn't find the exact path that led to

the *darSana* area. I felt the press of time, and my energy was high, preparing to chant again as I approached the altar, if ever I could find my way there.

I liked this dream. In it I felt lively and spontaneous in my behavior, and I flowed with the events rather than feeling anxiety over them. Although I was somewhat confused, at least I was flowing like rapids toward the waterfall of Krishna conscious chanting, Deity worship, and *sankirtana* with the devotees.

* * *

4:44 a.m.

Be a devotee. Vasudeva the leper felt intense separation from Lord Caitanya, and that drew the Lord to him. He embraced the leper, which cured his leprosy, and when Vasudeva worried that he might become proud to have been delivered by Lord Caitanya, the Lord advised him to always chant Hare Krishna and preach. This would keep him humble and would attract Krishna to him.

Devotees are not doing the same kind of preaching, most of them, that they were doing in the '70s and '80s. Many have moved out of the temples or have taken up services which contain less outreach potential. We may say, "Whatever I am doing is connected to preaching and is, therefore, a kind of preaching." That's true, but only if we consciously make it so. And we can judge by the results. A preacher does not have to be aggressive; he simply wishes to please the Lord and is willing to do so by sharing Krishna consciousness in some way or another. It's not only front-line work that counts.

* * *

Manu expressed regret that I'll be moving to Wicklow and spending more time there than at Inis rath. Then he wrote another letter saying he hopes it will be exhilarating for me at Wicklow. He thinks maybe living there will be like living on a writing retreat. He looks forward to this new phase of my life. I feel hopeful too.

* * *

Brilliant Corner
& Krishna a young cowherd boy "
our voices sound thin in Vrndavana.
This was the
year we lived there long
enough to see white blossoms on top of the trees
exactly like those described
in *Vidagdha-madhava*.

* * *

We were happy, dizzy sometimes
the world seems to tilt when you taste
the harshness of Vrndavana

in your mind.

* * *

Vrndavana is a brilliant corner
where you turn at Bhakti-
vedanta Swami Marg, at the corner of
your room, your mind and
see *hari-nama*
face to face.

* * *

I ask you,
brother, are you content
to stay below? "

* * *

In Pants of Pink
& This is . . . me. In
pants of pink
I dress Radha and Govinda
in lovely pattern (blue tack "the
pujari's secret wires).

* * *

I'm a *pujari*
informal

* * *

a writer, less formal, writing for Krishna with the
habit of nuns
and priests lecturing, "Brothers and sisters
become enlightened
in sorrow-joy."

* * *

I am irresponsible
he says
I say it's okay to sing
for the Lord
in flowing measure

any moment it can stop
heart attack! Krishna Bang
and our orbit changes
although we appear
to have passed in peace. "

* * *

9:50 a.m.

It's so cold today that my fingers sting. More puddles than usual on the road, especially near the boundaries of our land. A car filled with devotees passes me on the narrow road, reminding me that I seek more privacy. If pain comes today, will I suffer through it without the pill? What's the logic?

This morning I read a few sections aloud to Madhu from the introduction to the fifth volume of Merton's biography. So many of the points expressed things I also contend with "doubts whether solitude is an indulgence, whether I'm using it to the best advantage, whether I write too much, whether I write in the best way, and on and on. When I finished reading. I had nothing to add. Then Madhu said, "You can know you're not crazy." No, I'm not alone in this struggle to do what's best.

There are times in Merton's diary when he says he is often being smashed. There are other times he says he is dancing in his head. He also wrote pieces that revealed the confident, spiritual instructor. Most of those were pulled from the diary and published separately. But only now that we are seeing the entire diary do we see the real man behind the scenes. Is it useful to know that your spiritual director isn't really as confident as he seems? That's a question that some people like to ask.

Tilaka (the dog) sees me walking on the back paths but ignores me. right now there are clouds of varying colors "the long, thin ones close to the horizon have a top layer of pink undershot with blue-gray. Other clouds look like blotches of *Syama* blue-gray.

The muddy horseshoe tracks suddenly remind me of a dream I had this morning in which I was carefully steering an old horse and cart. It seemed so real, that dream. I didn't know what I was doing, but lived by intuition. The horse was obedient to my signals. The fact that it was an old, tame horse made me think it was a symbol for my body.

* * *

10:50 a.m.

Some devotees here have been told of my upcoming move to Wicklow and have accepted it. Manu even said he thought it would be exciting to think of his spiritual master in such a situation. The few who have responded have not looked upon it as a defeat for me or as neglect of them.

I experience a continual embarrassment in writing whenever I say "disciples" or even talk about my relationship with them. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati says that one who declares himself guru is actually *goru* (cow). I know how that feels. And this cow has a pack of dogs after it, too. Still, this cow doesn't die. The vultures can wait a little longer. Protected from curses, I try my best.

Back to the question ISani asked after class yesterday: "How do you practice humility?" Lord Caitanya said we should always chant Hare Krishna. Don't take the nicer apple, but live simply. Don't be a big shot; don't accept honor . . . I groped. I don't know how to "practice" humility if you're not actually humble. Syamananda dasa came to the rescue by reminding us that hearing from the *sastras* on humility will help us to become humble. Yes, because submissive hearing produces *vijnana*.

* * *

2:17 p.m.

I followed my active morning schedule until 9:30 a.m. Then a twinge came up behind my right eye. I slept for an hour, and it went down. Then it came up again. After eating lunch, it went down. After a post-nap lunch, it came up again. It looks like it's here to stay for the rest of the day. I won't go to the shed or write another poem. I probably won't read either. Is this "quiet heroics"?

January 20

In a dream, Paramananda dasa said to me, "You ought to break that *danda* and go ride on the subways and sing."

* * *

8:45 a.m.

After almost twenty hours, my headache has gone down. Now out for a walk, only to discover that the pain hasn't really disappeared. It was wishful thinking. But I'm glad I'm out here anyway. There's frost on the ground, and the puddles are frozen white, hollow underneath. The pretty winter sun is yellow at the bottom of stacks of horizon clouds.

I'm trying not to be upset that my schedule has been ruined by pain again. Let me just flow with this day, with whatever I am able to do. Maybe my main accomplishment today will be to chant my rounds. Perhaps I can't expect more. Face it: pain is part of life. Let me respond to that life with Krishna consciousness.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Still recovering. The soul is aloof from all this. Pain makes me feel so fragile, so sensitive "I can't even tolerate loud noises around me, or bad news, intrusions, extra letters . . .

Talked with Lalita-manjari, who is on her way to Vrndavana. I asked her to get me clothes, crowns, turbans, and jewelry for Radha-Govinda "oh, and a new blanket for Srila Prabhupada. It will be another way for me to remember Vrndavana.

Horse and coach, words

and broach

cheap jewelry I don't like

for Radha and Krishna. I like simple

but elegant

clothes "suitable for a boy and girl from Vraja. Govinda is an innocent boy; Radha, the most devoted and qualified of all His devotees. O Krishna who is dressed as a cowherd boy, please immerse me in the mood of Your service.

Noon now. Fat ravens in bare trees, with green ivy climbing its way up their trunks. I don't plan to go out to the shed today. Hare Krishna.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

I feel well enough to go out to the shed, but don't have enough "oomph" to brave the elements. Everything requires energy. I've had pain for so many hours now that I don't want to do anything that would encourage it to return.

In yourself, not in *sastra*.

"In the . . . by the way, interim," he said . . . "I can't remember the word." I remember that lecture, and the noise the children were making while he lectured in the rear courtyard of the Radha-Damodara temple in 1972. Acyutananda Swami was reading aloud from *The Nectar of Devotion*, where Prabhupada was explaining how Krishna consciousness is auspicious for the whole world. "A Krishna conscious boy is able to give up all bad habits "naked dance, smoking, drinking "even if he's not well educated materially, whereas even a highly educated person cannot give up basic sinful acts." Lord Caitanya made it simple: *harer nama eva kevalam*.

* * *

Making the Changes, No Ghosts
& Did you hear who died? Did
you hear we have to work overtime?
Crime. Bar your windows. At least
we had a place to work, a
city-field office.
We went out to see clients
wrote them checks, but
who was cheating whom?

* * *

I became a devotee of Krishna. The boss called me in to talk it over. My religion
"there was another just like me
but not
in the Brooklyn office.

My head shaved, I went out to see clients. No one noticed the difference in the dark tenement hallways.

* * *

O Swamiji, I remember these days for you
sad and so sweet
makes me want to cry.
Tender too. But it kept changing, like
an insight that comes between
two lovers
or a gentle, tired touch.

* * *

Swamiji, I can hardly remember anything,
yet you came to me in a dream last night and I
scratched your *murti* and you,
as if you were showing me
that you are one.
I didn't mean to scratch you
but I did.

* * *

I'm in exile from Vrndavana
I can't enter
or the U.S. either "it's just
too much
but am I exiled from the spiritual world?
From ISKCON diplomatics?
Has truth escaped me?
Have I kicked myself out?

* * *

Someone talks about meditation
on modern hurts "wounds to be healed
old and
new
and it occurs to me that I already
have the best healing process
this Krishna consciousness
and I just have to work
at that open window
with Srila Prabhupada behind me
and no ghosts of
tender moments left.

* * *

My crisis quiet
of doubt and lack of taste
but trying to find truth
in everything. "

* * *

4:30 p.m.

Spent maybe half an hour looking through a scholarly book on St. Paul. Disturbing how the author says much of Christ's life is mythology that has been passed on to us. Paul more than Jesus, he says, invented Christianity. The same view applied to Krishna consciousness would . . . not be something I'd want to hear. Our *parampara* preserves the truth and hands it down.

The modern view holds as absurd, it seems, that the dead can be brought back to life and that bodies can fly through the air. Books Christians accept as scripture are shown to be pious fabrication, and the author assures you it's true. So what *is* true? What *actually* happened? We're left not knowing. He simply smashes our simple faith in Jesus and leaves it at that. The author says that Jesus was merely a preacher; it was Paul who made him out to be something more, something much different. It was Paul who created a religion with universal appeal. Thus it is Paul's view that dominates the New Testament. Fortunately, I'm not staking my spiritual life on either the Bible nor on Christ.

I was interested to reflect, however, on the fact that the same scholarly job could be done on the *Vedas* "has been done. This scholar states that the truth of Christ exists in a certain sphere or realm, but that it is not a historical truth "not as Christians have come to know and accept it. He calls Paul "perhaps the world's first romantic poet." He praises Paul for creating a vision of Jesus. Obviously, Paul was possessed with religious genius, vision, and his creating something that inspired faith in so many is both amazing and wonderful. He adds, "I'm just a mortal scholar, so I can't prove it otherwise "but at least I'm proving that it [Christ and Christianity] didn't happen the way the pious believe."

And of course, Paul himself was "created" by people who came after and misrepresented him. All religious authors write with motive and bias. A scholar's job is only to expose this truth. Then he can step aside from it. He doesn't presume to offer a final judgment.

I don't know what to say about this. I'll just say that any outsider can do a job on the guru-disciple relationship, the historicity of any scripture, the truth of God's revelation. We shouldn't follow blindly, but we must trust the spiritual master to lift us beyond the cynics and the doubters. Safety lies only in that.

* * *

6:10 p.m.

Spending time with pain is like living in a netherworld; when it's over, you return to your normal, human life. Reading again. Alone now to figure out my life. I want to read not as a fool, not mechanically, not always fighting doubts, but seeking the way. O Krishna, please allow me to enter the realm of submissive hearing and to stay away from

the academic, historical investigation, as in that book on Paul. I pray for Your mercy and wait for it.

January 21, 12:15 a.m.

Still thinking about that book on Paul. The doubts he raised and the aspersions he cast on Paul "that he "invented" Christianity out of a mad (the author compared Paul to William Blake) romantic imagination, how he tore apart the Christian scripture with the weapon of "superior academic scrutiny" and "historical research" "those doubts are like eating forbidden fruit for a religionist. Let me put it aside now. We have to fight hard for faith in this world, and associating with such iconoclasts doesn't help. Back to the *Bhagavatam*. It is not my duty to battle what mundane scholars have to say "we have our own scholars to deal with that "but to find my own natural faith and to live in it.

Lord Narayana is in charge of everything. Those covered by the modes of nature cannot see Him as the Supreme Cause behind all activities. In the Third Canto, Srila Prabhupada writes that devotees are not bewildered by the apparently contradictory activities of the Lord, but if they become doubtful due to associating with agnostics, then they also are condemned. We must fight doubt with knowledge, with logic, and especially with submission to *sastra* and the *acaryas*. We also fight it with our need to believe. (Of course, that's exactly the point such scholars make: we need to believe, and therefore someone like this inventor Paul was able to deceive us. Still, there is truth to our need to believe and truth to Krishna's reciprocation with His devotees.)

Lord Narayana is the transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Brahma-samhita* states that Lord Krishna is the original Personality of Godhead, the *iSvara-paramah*. Yes, we accept *Brahma-samhita* (that authorized *tantra*), which Lord Caitanya discovered and praised. We accept Krishna, His *Bhagavad-gita*. We pray for a drop of mercy, for faith. A grain of faithfulness is worth tons of faithlessness.

Speaking of witnesses to a person's sinful activities, the Yamadutas (those awkward-looking persons whose hair stands on end and who carry ropes) list the sun, the sky, air, the demigods, the moon, the directions, and the Supersoul Himself. Witnesses observe us throughout our lives. Then we are judged and sent wherever it is we belong in our next lives. There are no hidden activities in this world. Those who are sinners go to the hellish planets. Thus the Yamadutas reply to the Visnudutas' challenge: "On what basis do you punish people, and why are you punishing Ajamila? Do you punish *everyone*?" The Yamadutas say that candidates for punishment are confirmed by the many witnesses as those who have deviated from *dharma*. All karmic actors can be punished according to their sins.

Srila Prabhupada was once challenged by a Christian professor on this point. The professor didn't know where to find the witnesses by which the soul would be convicted. Prabhupada thought the man ignorant. Where are the witnesses? Where *aren't* the witnesses? And didn't the professor know of the Supersoul within each living entity's heart?

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Radha-Govinda are wearing purple with silver trim today. Beautiful. I like others to see Them because They are so beautiful. While I dress Them, I listen to Their pastimes on tape, how They first meet, how when Krishna hears Her name He loses His composure. Radha hears the flute and is equally stricken. Purnamasi and others arrange for Them to come together. This is nectar, and it can transport us above those who would quibble and doubt the Lord's existence. Feel the taste. Be transformed into a person who can relish *rasa*. The beauty and truth of the *bhakti* path is self-evident.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty

Episode #5

Hank, Hank Mobile under the gas lamp. His neck has a crick in it if he turns to the left. He's meditating (he'd like to think) on loss.

Los Angeles?

No, write a list of things you have lost:

(1) Yesterday's pain.

(2) A little false ego.

(3) Things "I can't remember where I put them.

(4) A passport in 1990, when it was stolen from our car in front of the Brooklyn temple.

(5) The respect of my family and friends when I became a devotee.

(6) My virginity and innocence, and not just me, but everyone I know.

Now let's pause in this list and continue the story:

There is one big thing "an irreparable, irreversible loss "suffered by Berryman's Henry. I can't claim *that* great a loss. I have lost things, for example, I wish I never had.

So, Hank, are you still writing all this down under that gaslight? Is your friend still making porridge in the adjoining kitchenette?

Hank doesn't want to lose this chance too, so he has gone on writing. He makes no claims. He knows only that he becomes sleepier as the day wears on and he exerts himself. He remembers a speech, made from a balcony? We were ISKCON's gurus then, and we would sometimes sit in a row in summer at the back of Prabhupada's palace at New Vrindaban. What a farce. I told the history of Srila Prabhupada's movement. "You're a historian," a GBC Godbrother once told me. We each outdid the others, had our own followers, complimented one another, allowed one another to taste honor.

Never again. That is something I have definitely lost "left it behind. No more will I play those games.

I'll defy. I'll

Refuse.

Or so I say. Am I that much more intelligent? That much more daring?

Yes. Big words but true.

Now Hank gets off his high horse. He feels he has *found* what has been lost "to be an individual and speak up for truth. To have a personal identity not tied to a crowd, even an elite one, and even if they say, "We know what Prabhupada wants. Unless you do as

we say, you cannot experience his grace." Hank has broken through that, or at least he is trying. He is looking for real freedom and real integrity. The *Bhagavatam* assures him that to serve from the platform of freedom is the main pivot point.

"I have discovered freedom," Hank says to himself.

Loss. Sounds like the name of a girl "Louise, Lorrie, Lorraine. Laura. Annie-Laurie, she's the da da da da da Laura . . . and she's only a name.

I lost my Laura, Lorraine. Louise. Louise. Louise Campesi and Louise Hall, Louise Bougan. All these names were once scratched into a book, and it seems important to say so.

"We want a substantial Krishna conscious piece," said the man who matters.

Okay, I just want to tell you that we lost our fear that we could only preach exactly as the conservatives said, saying (always and only), "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Prabhupada says, *Bhagavad-gita* says, go out there and preach (and don't forget to make money while you're doing it)."

Now: start from where you are at and surrender everything to Krishna.

* * *

Remember the story outside this story? Sats and Junior (the analyst) are discussing loss. Sats wants to let 'er rip. Junior says, "Hmm." Are they getting somewhere?

"More lists," Junior suggests.

Sats backs off. Better Hank does the writing.

Bus tickets, memories of girls. I lost my thrill on blueberry hill,
but I *found* the hill.

I found what
was lost.

That's the theme.

* * *

9 a.m.

Much warmer today. Big fat puddles lie calm and span the whole road. I didn't notice it at first, but our neighbor farmer is out here walking up the same hill I am using to chant my rounds. I clammed up when I saw him. Thoughts lead back to the promise of reading more about the Yamadutas and the Visnudutas and the power of the holy name. The holy name and these shiny puddles. I can chant and receive the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. It's all reality. It's simply a matter of who you accept as authority. Do I want to accept the authority of a mundane scholar? No, I accept Prabhupada and Vyasa. It's simple, really.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

I see a little duck in the water near shore, amid the weeds, and now another further downstream. Ducks move with a little nod of their necks; I can see it clearly because I see only their silhouettes. The sky all gray, clouds in piles and layers. That's how we like it here in Lough Erne, what we live with. You *get* to like it, even if you don't at first.

The happiness of devotional service is far greater than Brahman happiness, which is only imagined liberation. Those who fail to actually worship the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, must return to this world to find something else to do. Srila Prabhupada again and again said that if the *jagat* is false and impersonal, and Brahman is happiness and truth, then why do people return to the *jagat* to open schools and hospitals? It's because they haven't realized Brahman in full.

Satisfied with your little progress? No, and yes. "God is satisfied only when His devotees take all sorts of risks to propagate His glories." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, 17) It's the duty of saints and sages to enlighten fallen souls. Srila Prabhupada compares the students to dancing peacocks. May we continue to dance.

"To attain liberation, one must be completely purified of perverted forms of desire. A living being cannot snuff out desires, and to practice artificially erasing the actions of desire is more dangerous than the act of desires themselves. All desires should be reformed and directed toward spiritual activities; otherwise those same desires will repeatedly manifest themselves in different varieties of material enjoyment, thus conditioning the living beings perpetually in material bondage." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, 18)

* * *

Maze Enter, Find Krishna
& Writing in my shed gray day I
need to remember
what it was like when I let go. I
don't think
I do.

Just that it is refreshing to dovetail my tale. Me in secret
launched a missile wanted to be the best fellow actually.

Heard a priest lecture "you have to leave your town and learn something. Well I'm sixty years old and have been around so much that my almost-ten-year-old passport (with additional pages) is already filled with stamps. I now want to sit among the rushes.

* * *

This talking about self. Talk about another.

That's violence, they say. I got no choice. Mr. Abercrombie went on a gig to sell paintings; his car fell apart. He donned saffron and became TP of the most famous preaching center in the world. Forty people a day attended his class. He joked and shouted.

Get the idea?

* * *

They were an angry bunch. I don't know all their names, but one at a time they came forward and said things like

Wow
Gee
new new
all is included
hold the wound (as
Christ did).

* * *

A Krishna conscious entry said *Jaya* Nrsimha
I'm preaching to young
get-'em-in-the-fold types.

* * *

He sought the theme. It
was a worm came out in rain
what's the story? I showed
a guy, a brother, what I lived,
but could he understand the story
behind my drawing?

* * *

Those forty people wanted
straight Krishna consciousness so how can this
stuff satisfy? I am not
sure. They signaled to each other.
Glory to God
and the teachings of the master
Krishna will pull you by the coat
or the *Sikha*
what do you know?
Start again
enter the maze. Find Krishna, go through.
Do you love me and me
you?

* * *

Episodes beliefs doctrines
festering danger
festering society
so don't waste precious time or you won't advance.

* * *

I want solo peace but
substantial Krishna consciousness
at every step
want to know what Srila Prabhupada
says now about
me. "

* * *

4 p.m.

No ducks in sight. Just moving clouds over the island, rushing from right to left. Young people make you forget things. Walk back. Squashy earth reminds me of Collnocopague. So much nicer now to be quietly up-front about what I'm doing. Live among devotees but with a Krishna conscious identity and aloneness because that's what I am.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

The Yamadutas explain that Yamaraja can see into everyone's heart and can therefore justly award them a next life. People act according to the three modes of nature. How they respond within the modes determines their future. If they respond in ignorance, they will take on an ignorant existence. We all need Vedic light. Otherwise we're interested only in the present body. That is nothing more than animal life.

January 22, 12:20 a.m.

If "everything belongs," then I can't stop a headache from coming or blame anyone when it does. Neither should I resent the pain. It's mine, and I can learn to accept it.

Dreamt we had to work at a miserable but competitive menial job. We grabbed people's newspapers as they came flying by on the train and wrote our names on them in order to get credit for our work. We were paid by how many papers had our initials on them. One of my brother's followers was writing my brother's initials on the papers. That was cheating. And there were so many of them that my brother made the most money. I hoped to get a better job.

Let's look at the Yamaduta-Visnuduta dialogue now. The Yamadutas were explaining how they choose those to punish.

We used to accept Prabhupada's (Vedic, Vaisnava) explanation of reality regardless of whether it contradicted material science. Nowadays, some devotees tend to be more sophisticated. But we each have the responsibility to maintain confidence and trust in the spiritual master. Don't misuse the human form of life by searching after untruth. People think they can use their bodies to gain happiness. Actually, we *all* thought that until we contacted Srila Prabhupada. He kindly instructed us "how to act obediently and then gradually return home, back to Godhead, where [we] can attain an eternal, peaceful life

of bliss and knowledge." Concepts of obedience and even striving for eternal life may not be "in" nowadays "it's more fashionable to talk of the kind of spirituality that makes us better people *now*, that teaches us what to do with our pain and sorrow. People tend to think of obedience as too child-like and dependent, as if it leaves us open to exploitation by unqualified priests and a heartless institution. Ignore that trend. Be obedient. This life is short and the goal is worth attaining.

Srila Prabhupada writes that no one can help us but Krishna: "The soul must work alone. Although he tries to create society, friendship and love, no one will be able to help him but Krishna, the Supreme Lord. Therefore, his only concern should be how to satisfy Krishna. That is also what Krishna wants." (*Bhag.* 6.1.50, purport)

Ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram "although I'm struggling hard in this ocean of birth and death, there is no way I can save myself. "If you, O Krishna, beloved son of Nanda, kindly pick me up and fix me as one of the particles of dust at Your lotus feet, that will save me."

We are each responsible for our own lives.

If an individual becomes a pure devotee of Krishna, only then he's delivered from *samsara*.

This is truth. O mind, clear yourself of drowse and over-familiarity.

Wonderful verses ""A true *yogi* observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. . . . For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me" (*Bg.* 6.29 - 30)

A devotee "cannot bear to live for a moment without seeing the Lord within himself."

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Literary passion. But I am not only or even ultimately a writer. It is just what I do, what has come to me as a result of past desires and activities. My eternal identity might not even be writerly. For now, I work at this trade and find it rewarding. Lord knows who I am and what I may be like when I am free of all material affinity, free of gross and subtle coverings.

But for now it is such a pleasure to see books written and published. May they help devotees in their individual attempts to practice Krishna consciousness. It is how I have come to respond to Srila Prabhupada's order to encourage devotees, to give them shelter, to tell everyone I meet about Krishna. The desire to do so lives deep within my heart, and to share with them what I love seems most natural.

I was reluctant to rise at midnight this morning because I thought I'd have a better chance of avoiding a headache later if I got more rest. I doubt that's true though. Headaches have been coming by 10 a.m. these days, and I can't seem to stop it with an hour or so more rest at midnight. My midnight rising is the best time I have for reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. As a matter of fact, the entire day from midnight to headache time is the best time I have. There is little time left over after the pain subsides. Best I don't cheat myself of those early hours.

* * *

For The Creator "Our Creative Joy
& Flowing joy of creation "
God touches us and wants
us to dance
for Him
in thanks and to serve
His mission
of rescuing the downtrodden.

* * *

Serious, I don't read newspapers
my friend sleeps in and I'm glad
for quiet time
and for breakfast.

* * *

The *rasika* readers with
thin voices, me and two friends
in a peeling-wall house
no thieves present
while we read and share
hope that Prabhupada will
contain us.
And I ink a page,
a melody painter. "

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty
Episode #6

Come forward and meet the Unconscious. Hey, big bear, wake up!

Don't trifle with me, I'm the collected unconscious, the archetype of all races and stuff beyond your mere surface ego. I could drive you crazy with bloody violent myth, scare you out of your wits. You'd think you'd gone crazy and they might put you in the booby hatch. You'd lose your sanity.

So *that's* what I lost? Climbed up the stairs, seeing sunlight through the tenement window, and decided, "I will tell the truth." Buzzed Murray's door, but only his wife was home, busty Amy. She let me in, me, the skinny guest. I drank a cup of herbal tea. She told me something, then added, "But this is just gossip. Maybe you don't want to hear it [since I was a philosophical writer]."

"No," I said, "gossip is my goddess." I praised her husband, whom I admired, and asked her to encourage him. I had no plans to romance her. Then I left like some undernourished character in a Dostoevsky novel. (Don't say Stavrogin or whatever his name is. I've lost that memory.)

I continued, corrupted too. Joined the movement, developed pure ideals, but they became corrupted. The movement lost its purity. That's the basic theme of loss I have been exploring. Aside from that, I play with the concept of loss and think that maybe there's a loss that is more unconscious, more than what I have already admitted. "You are a hairy loss," said Kerouac to Ginsberg.

* * *

Loss Fagan, a left-handed pitcher for the St. Louis Browns. Loss of weight. Brain loss. Loss of interest. Without a compass, we are lost. *We* would be lost, except we have our guru-guide.

Participate in the feelings and see what comes. I lost a good chance to be a stronger kind of preacher, forced to drop out because of headaches. That headache syndrome seems to have come from deep within myself, but did I bring it on to sabotage my role of active GBC preacher? I no longer think so, but in any case, I cannot go against its influence in my life.

Lost the gremlin. Told him, "Get lost!"

Yeah, get lost. Go fly a kite. Take a long walk off a short pier.

Lost in the unconscious. Lost in the strobe lights of the dance hall, last we saw him, poor *brahmacari* (with material desires). Lost his locks (hair). Lost his girl. Lost his hair and teeth.

The loss factor of a lost generation. The lost expedition that never returned. Some saga of a lost plane in the fog, hijacked by a UFO.

The Lost Continent (Atlantis).

Lost my purity "that's the main thing. Lost it and didn't know how it happened.

You lose or *misplace* something because (a) you didn't value it highly; and (b) your brain is not such a great computer, so you don't know where you put it.

"I lost my money," he said, and it seemed like a stupid blunder. How could you lose something you valued? Well, you lose youth, don't you?

Eleanor Roosevelt and Jackie Kennedy lost their husbands. Donald Hall lost Jane Kenyon. What about Jane? *She* lost her life to leukemia.

God, Krishna, You are the one who causes loss or gain; it is You who makes it permanent or open to rediscovery. As Hari, You take away. Why have You removed my attachments? What kindness! You removed my attachment to sex and drugs. That was a wonderful loss, and I am grateful to this day. If You could only take away my indifference to chanting, my tendency to find fault, my inability to love You fully "if only You could give me Yourself.

From the Bible: The lamb that was lost is found, and the shepherd rejoices. The prodigal son returns. Although one soul was lost, the Supreme Lord is pleased to receive him back into the kingdom of God. If we are poor and lose something, we are usually happy to regain it. Narada lost the vision of the Lord after having attained it because Krishna wanted to increase his hankering. There was a reason.

These things weigh on me, writes Hank Mobile. A vague sense of loss and a sorrow that whatever was lost cannot be recovered. Don't know what to do, how to live with such a loss.

* * *

6:00 a.m.

M. lets out a big sigh with each sip of his tea. I don't like that sound, but I won't begrudge him for doing it. Plenty about me others probably don't like either.

I get to be alone today with the barking dog. Maybe I'll have to lie in bed propped up with extra pillows and won't be able to chant nicely or to read, but at least I got my time in this morning. I want to listen to Prabhupada's *Nectar of Devotion* talks. Happiness in Krishna consciousness is beyond the science of material yoga. It is love of God.

* * *

10:02 a.m.

Can you immerse yourself, or at least put your toe into the *Bhagavatam*? Into Krishna consciousness? Some birds out there singing as if it were spring. The dog bounds to the tree, growling in his throat, wishing to catch them. How many years now have I been watching him do that? Maybe two. Then he races off toward the boathouse and under the barbed wire fence. Lassie! Come home! Remember the heart-tugging cry of the child for that TV dog star? Tilaka reminds me of Lassie. But Tilaka's no hero. He just barks at night to keep us awake and protected, eats *prasadam* handouts from ISani, and keeps a respectful distance without being unfriendly. Tilaka never barks at devotees. Hare Krishna.

* * *

12:10 noon

Alone. Lunch will be left on the tin trunk in the cold hallway. I'll pick it up. Still listening to the Richard Rohr tape, waiting for him to finish. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and Srila Prabhupada are better, but this has a place today too. The big clouds pushing tall in the sky. Silver and gray, with white behind them. Those are the main sky colors here more than blue. Pitch black at night, unless the moon is full and bright.

See God in everything and everyone, little creatures, and see Him *now* in this moment "or you can't see Him at all, Rohr says. See Him as the holy presence even in people of other religions. Rohr talks on and on, gathering steam for the homestretch of his ninety-minute-plus talk.

Fog has entered my head. May not be able to go to shed after lunch; we'll see.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

No shed for me today, but I feel up to reading the *Bhagavatam* for awhile.

I heard a Godbrother lecturing at length on Jesus Christ on Christmas Day, using "the Christian scriptures" as if they were equal to Vedic scriptures. Srila Prabhupada never spoke so elaborately on Christ. He kept it simple "straight from his books. If we rely on the Bible, maybe it's not the same . . . This reminds me that it's best to stick to what he taught and how he taught it. This probably sounds ironic coming from me, as if I'm a

bastion of conservatism, especially since I am constantly experimenting with the writing process, with American idiom, with poetic voice, with bop prosody, and with other things. So who am I to say anything? I also quote Thoreau or Merton "but not as *sastra*. Neither do I experiment with the message. Anyway, we all know that not everything we hear in this world is going to be authentic or at the deepest level of truth.

The Yamadutas say that once we have come under the modes of material nature, it's very difficult to free ourselves. We are like silkworms in a cocoon. We can only escape with the help of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His representative. It is our natural tendency to serve, but under illusion we serve material concepts such as socialism or other causes. Only when we are trained to understand that we are Krishna dasa are we safe.

* * *

Teaching The People of The World

& I'm staying back in my room "safe. Where is my daring? Can't even walk out to shed for the fog in my head.

* * *

Building

up pressure of monotony
to where we are crying for a big sound
to bring us relief
come on . . .
come on . . . give love a chance
or whatever it is I want to say.

* * *

I want to say "Freedom for everybody"
and "Bring happiness to the people" "tell
us the words of a song you would sing.

* * *

A caterwauling it may be
a horse neighing and rearing
it's a wail getting through, as Burton Green
said, "We had to break through this capitalistic
egg."
Somebody else said it's ugly
harsh
I turn up the volume.

* * *

I believe in my basic sincerity.
The truth is neither simple nor easy
and when I return to the
love theme I know I mean it,
I hear the overall coherency
of what I propound. "

* * *

I'll Walk With You For That
& Take a serene theme and go with it never
mind imperfections. Be the "spirit
line" in a Navaho rug . . .
but when your own master speaks
try to represent him right.

* * *

When you chant Hare Krishna mantra there's no alteration
in *those* lines.
Your voice is crying you
one old headachy man

* * *

looking for a good sky and
good news from God
the Creator, Narayana, and beyond, the
inner form of Truth is Krishna known
only to His dearmost.

* * *

We *want* to accept God's plan somehow
that He *has* a plan
and we want to sing His holy name
again and again
with grace and surrender
and the freedom to move
with those thirty-two syllables, walking
more than back and
forth in a room.

* * *

We are a generation of the unripe
growing toward the eternal. "

* * *

5:45 p.m.

I want to pray to God but don't know how. I can chant and read, and of course I do, but right now those two seem difficult for me. Even while I'm doing them, my mind is running on and on, living in the intellect and not in the heart. So I have come to this page hoping to feel something.

Prayer is good when you put your body into a submissive posture "on your knees or something. O Krishna, please guide me. I don't want to hear from yet another preacher, or another religion, another form of You. I want to know You as You are, beautiful Krishna. Can I be with You even though I don't know You fully? I feel like I am always waiting, passing time, to hear the answer to that question. In the meantime, I don't seem to be doing whatever it is that is needed to reach You. There is no path open to me right now except patience.

Dear Krishna, I am Yours. I want no other influences in my life. So many people have their angle on the way to wisdom and peace and love of God and service and on and on. They all have words, and sometimes no words. They all have techniques and traditions, rules and disciplines. I have chosen this *marga*.

But now . . .

All right, just be quiet, finish out this page, then chant a round. It's almost time to dress Radha-Govinda in Their night outfits. What else can I do while I'm waiting to join the eternal *parisads*? My Swami mentions only preaching as the inner way to please the Lord.

January 23, 12:17 a.m.

Nowhere else is it taught so clearly that suffering is caused by association (piously or impiously) with material nature, and that our real work in human life is to extricate ourselves so that we don't have to accept another gross material body. We want to uncover our spiritual body and return to the spiritual world. This attainment is possible when we revive our dormant Krishna consciousness (*janma karma ca me divyam*). Please don't lose focus on essential doctrine. These are the vital facts of existence.

Another fact: it is easy to become attracted by *maya*. Just look at Ajamila. He was exposed only once to the sight of a drunken *Sudra* embracing a prostitute, and he spent the rest of his life pursuing illusion. Such sights are common nowadays, and they are just as provocative for *brahmacaris* (or anyone else). By strictly following the regulative principles and chanting the Hare Krishna mantra, we can protect ourselves.

Ajamila tried to control himself by remembering the Sastric instructions, "But because of the force of cupid within his heart, he failed to control his mind."

(*Bhag.* 6.1.62) To avoid falldown, we have to be "especially under the protection of the Supreme Personality of Godhead through devotional service."

The Yamadutas were convinced that Ajamila was a culprit who failed to undergo atonement within his lifetime. And it was almost true.

* * *

Astral Travel

& I thought I was tired and should sleep after fourteen rounds, but I didn't know.

* * *

Could I astral travel? Move from left to right in some other space?

I want to see what Krishna consciousness actually is. Does it mean trotting out the *parampara* message and printing it in a Hare Krishna newspaper that such-and-such devotee did

a program of astral music and wowed
the punk mayor of Nevil
Nebraska
and was given a *prasadam*
medal for his synthetic-
music is that
what it means?
And isn't sleep *tamo-guna*?

* * *

Because a better student never strays
is strict under the grip of his young
ISKCON guru
who tells him no nonsense
no astral travel don't even
notice your dreams
and laugh at yourself "
get a whole audience
to laugh at you "
you neophyte.

* * *

O Krishna, I haven't forgotten
the lessons I learned so well
now I dance and play my flute
under a cold sliver
of EkadaSi moon to a beat
that's not as tragic

as it could be
but one which has an elegant bounce.

* * *

O Krishna. "

* * *

Relax And Spiritualize
& The truth is beyond mere nice-
guy vibrations. Please play *kirtana*
direct, with voice on top
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
We want that sort of
romance with the Absolute

* * *

and don't think you can't have
it "pears, apples, bananas,
sugar-free sweets,
yogurt "don't think you can't have fun
in Krishna consciousness "you *can*,
but to please Krishna
Himself.

* * *

Do you see Him in this earthly dance?
Is there a music a sound
like Tong! or *Om*!?
"Yes," he said, "that's Hare Krishna."

* * *

"Don't follow me into
this house this is my place
where going in I want to
close the door."
Eyebrows raised?

* * *

Don't worry and don't put me

on.
I'm serious ironic
not the truth you're
used to but we do know
Krishna is God of all.

* * *

The *Bhagavad-gita* is the scripture
par excellence ABC
God is bluish
aura is gold
I'll teach you if you hear it submissively
next week. "

* * *

8:28 a.m.

This morning there is so much fog that it's still dark at this hour. Birds as many as springtime happily chirping, throttling, throating, and a dampness I can't call rain. Mist is a better word. Walking through all this thinking of many things. That old idea surfacing that I might actually rise to the occasion near the end of my life "now or whenever that is "and do something I have never done before, something wonderful for Krishna. How unlikely that seems now. I'm still searching for my quiet, heroic way. Is this it? Am I living it now, or am I living a mistake? What else can I do but what I am doing? What about my writing and this long-term commitment to EJW? Should I be doing otherwise? But what?

Actually, these are healthy thoughts, and I let them pass through me so that I can measure them against the status quo for further deliberation. If anything, I want to let Krishna know that I am always open to His direction, ready to change if necessary.

I dreamt last night that I kept cutting back on my commitments to devotees until our relationship shrank to almost no contact. One devotee then wrote that as far as she was concerned, a permanent death had occurred in our relationship. I woke up thinking of the person in the dream and wondering whether this was meant to be taken literally or what. This morning I heard Prabhupada lecturing in Vrndavana on *The Nectar of Devotion*. He said a pure devotee sees Krishna everywhere and wants to give Krishna to everyone. He wants to "turn the bewildered face of the conditioned soul." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said he was willing to give up all his properties in India if he could help just one person become a pure devotee of Krishna.

* * *

10:17 a.m.

We can't expect to know things only by experience. For example, the benefits of the holy name are known through the *sastra*, as are the glories of the Lord and the nature of His eternal *dhama*. And sacred books must be heard in disciplic succession.

Will the Hare Krishna movement become the panacea for all the world's ills? Can this form of God consciousness be taught above all others? Are such ideas utopian? The difficulty is that ISKCON doesn't have the strength to conduct even its own affairs in a way that inspires its members. I mean, ISKCON leadership, government, temple management "and the public has such little interest in what ISKCON offers. The intelligentsia tends to regard ISKCON as a fundamentalist religion with objectionable practices regarding women and sexuality, and a narrow-minded interpretation of the Hindu scriptures. They also consider us anti-intellectual, which I suppose goes along with their belief that we are fundamentalists. ISKCON has no adequate system by which to educate its children, no plan to help its householders in business, no medical plan or old-age security. Its members speak of "*varnaSrama-dhama*" as the way to cure social ills, but the ills remain and the *dharma* unimplemented. I'm not writing this down to record my own point of view; this is a mixture of what I assume the public thinks of us as well as a commonly held negative view of what many ISKCON devotees think of the movement.

Me? I don't know. It's Kali-yuga, and I don't want to judge. I served ISKCON for twenty-five years and tried to make it a better place. Now I regard these issues as tar babies, not meant for me to work at. I expend my energy in a direct transfusion into the self and into readers by writing what's happening to one person and his attempt to . . .

to be honest,

to find solace in the most basic transcendental acts "hearing, chanting the holy name, reading the scripture on a daily basis.

I know I am no great practitioner of a contemplative path, no avid reader or chanter. I expend my energy in expressing that.

Devotees will come later and improve things because Krishna ensures it. Times will improve. Or maybe they won't. But we'll each be judged by God and be forced to face our limits, our failures, and our successes.

The strait is calm and the day remains a misty gray. Quiet and warm, this fourth weekend in January.

My thoughts were provoked this morning as I read that the Visnudutas criticized how the Yamadutas were miscarrying justice. Srila Prabhupada: "When a Vaisnava sees mismanagement in the government, he feels great compassion in his heart and tries his best to purify the situation by spreading the Hare Krishna movement." (*Bhag.* 6.2.3, purport) I appreciated Srila Prabhupada's compassion in that statement and how much he acted on it during his life. But I was forced to ask myself what we followers are doing to live up to his ideal.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Pieces of other people's wisdom circulating in my head. Kierkegaard says a follower doesn't simply tag along under the protection of a master (or a mother or husband). Only when we are left to walk on our own is our ability to follow tested. I have also spoken of that regarding new freedom after the spiritual master's disappearance. I'm not a rascal if I try to be myself while simultaneously following him. Still, what that freedom actually

means and how it becomes pure *bhakti* "that takes time to figure out. We cannot abandon his books and orders in the search.

In the material world, people also struggle with finding themselves. Horace Silver, a jazz musician, said he listened to Bud and Monk, and played his own music so he especially sounded like Bud. Then he discovered that even so, he sounded different than Bud; he sounded like himself. Then he set aside the music of his idols and began to develop his own sound. Another artist said something similar, that she doesn't listen to other masters although she loves and admires them. Because if you listen, you'll become like them, whereas the artist wants to become him or herself. Richard Rohr roaring out his wisdom about forgiveness and everything else. Jesus didn't hold it against his followers that they ran out on him. He didn't even mention it to them later.

Quiet rain.

As I write, stout Arjuna dasa walks by for the third or fourth time. He wrote me a letter saying that at first he couldn't get into my poems. He said he couldn't think of me while singing *Guruvastakam*. Then he read *Pictures From the Bhagavad-gita and Other Poems* and found an entrance.

Mary Oliver's wisdom "the passionate embrace of nature and mysteries. Of course, she is not carrying the doctrine of the *Vedas* or even of Christianity. She's a poet, and poets don't unite sensation with doctrine. rather, she unites with nature and then finds the words to describe it. She spins a web. On the back of her book, the publishers say she "enchants us, casts a spell, and is very good company. Thank God we have her. She doesn't write of trash but of the beautiful and awful intuitions, that nature gives a human being, a special human being."

Soon ISani will open the outer door and drop off a hot lunch for me. I won't see her. She'll place it there on the battered trunk that holds my private edition books. Food on top of writings. A writer moves on his belly.

* * *

2:20 p.m.

We linger in material household life despite its mud and pinpricks, hoping to have our senses gratified. Despite the difficulties, we don't even aspire to change our position. Better to give up that society for the society of Krishna in the spiritual world. Here I am in *sannyasa* life, glad to be free of householder strife "but do I have Krishna's intimate association? Not yet. Is there a false position I have to give up in order to go higher? The problem doesn't seem to be something external. *Sannyasa* is the last step. After that, there's only death.

The torrents of rain are breaking over the partition walls. This is compared to those who break the Vedic principles. (The lake is inching toward the shed; hope it doesn't flood.) Follow the standard directions of the *Vedas*, or at least the four rules we each accepted at initiation. But Vedic ways are generally overrun in this age by atheistic philosophers. They attack *sastra* as inauthentic. We fight back and refuse to be flooded by doubt. We are on the higher ground of discipleship.

"The path of the *Vedas* does not accord with any principle devoid of an eternal relation with God, attainment of His devotional service and culminating in transcendental love for Him." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, 20, purport)

Brahmanas shouldn't try to take the position of *ksatriyas* or *vaiSyas* but should guide them in spiritual cultivation. They should travel and disseminate Vedic knowledge.

Travel . . . and here I am getting a house, with a stove and a roof and a desk and a chair. Planning not to go out. Won't I feel I am avoiding the duty of a *sannyasi* there? Am I actually retiring? Once I'm there, I'll be committed to stay. Talk this over with M., who is easing me into Wicklow.

I go over these things again and again "my conscience, I guess. But there is truth to what he will say: "Don't you know you *can't* travel? That your body doesn't let you?" Live with the facts.

* * *

Paying Easy Dues

& There's me by the Chinese shed, the river rising, I'm
painting on scrolls and paying my dues
in a more
mellow way these days.

* * *

Got bored in the middle of the day
talking to a bushy-eyed boy
and figuring out
how not to complain.

* * *

Everyday blues just right
sages find paths live
with everyone's wisdom
but sick of it too
because I want to find out
how to follow my master and my own heart
together.

* * *

Paying dues easily enough
but sometimes it's like that an
easy life suddenly thunderstruck
by that water that's creeping up to
the back door.

* * *

Krishna, You rain and
Reign
and rein me in back
to Your path and up the hill
despite my complaining, "I can't see!
I can't taste!"

* * *

Rain streaks windows.
Cranes on mud banks,
floods over fields
and rolling water
Real nature
and purports of the transcendental
place where Krishna and His
cowherd friends live eternally.

* * *

Chestnuts on sill near
pens in jar, paints
I haven't touched
"no energy"
but my Lord,
You'll be so good
You *are* so good
to me. "

* * *

The Promise
& It's getting cold in here/ so warm it up
with a promise you can get it.
You gonna get it.

* * *

Your mamma told you that
and you told a
man you're a devotee of Krishna
although you're all alone want to be
told
you're right.

Do you want the *Lord* to say you're
a good tootin'
devotee and one of the best?

* * *

Knots in wood on
desk look back at me it's
not so easy this life
the trials you suffered
to get where you are.
Because
what's next?
We know only that Krishna
Krishna is the summit
past ego and walls
and the man who knows what he
thinks
he wants.

* * *

Strive to chant
and was I okay in
Trinidad? Was I laughable
in Guyana? Was I cool
Restrictive, bloomin'
in Gita-Nagari and Baltimore?
Where am I
coming on coming
on
and
did I tell the truth
when I stated that The Promise Krishna
makes is
good?

* * *

We have to hold our end
we have to *give* our end
because
Krishna is summit is
truth I'm
Running out
deeper

deeper and I don't have any
truth deeper than I
know.

* * *

I am only a man of regular proportions
trying to come back to Krishna and Radha.

* * *

Way overboard
Rap on knuckles if
it comes to that
details from the
semantics
Krishna love
Krishna's love.
That's all. "

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty
Episode #7
Loss. Loss. Loss alas.
The Pilot pen got lost
twenty years ago
my shoulders.
My good looks
the passion for a certain woman, call it love, cupid's arrow.
So you're glad some things got lost.

* * *

Lost caution to behave or how would you enter your writing so fearlessly? Lost
respect, lost fear of the long-arm committee chasing and cornering me. I've got my
replies, my rights.

* * *

Lost the sharpest pain I used to have, and moles burned off, lost shame and the cause
of shame.

* * *

That drive to do those sixty-four-rounds-a-day retreats "lost that too, and the
gumption to do another motor tour
the passion to phone someone or to get involved
in all kinds of wild and hairy preaching.
Chason Jason
Hines said
I can't do it better than this.
"Be serious," his sister said.
"We are counting on you," said some disciples.
So he went to his secretary's room and said, "Maybe I should not lose." We want to be
winners.
"Yeah, but this is a win-win situation," the secretary said.
I was thinking maybe I should not allow that thing to be lost, that hope of reform and
of giving myself to others, of being on ISKCON's front line or at least the second. Why
take my name off? Maybe I'm too notorious. Maybe it *should* be lost.
Sink into the marsh, die on your feet while writing an epic of a lost continent,
lost language, a
fantasy,
and be
a genius.

* * *

Maybe I'm too bookish.
Oh, damn your doubts!

* * *

In this way, Hank Mobile let loose some spleen. I saw him in tow. He's isolated on an
isthmus with no one to help. He cuts off his phone and cancels his e-mail account. He
pushes the fan mail next to the hate mail and plays flute player in the pit.
Pity him?
No, he chose this.
Man, this is just a spliced poem now. We better start something new.
As you like.
Junior and Sats watched this video report live. "It seems as if the whole thing is used
up," said Sats. "It's just running crazy now, like it's finished but still spinning its final
revolutions."
Junior added, "We don't want to force it if there's no more to it. Maybe you're just not
made for Active Imagination. I usually get more coherent results from my clients after
seven sessions."
Oh, sigh. Maybe I'll get a last-minute enlightenment, like a monk who has stayed
twenty years in the monastery and on the day he decides to quit, he finds it.
What?
What he lost.
So let me keep going, just making the best of it.

Okay?
Okay.

* * *

3:45 p.m.

The water is only a few yards from the shed. I'm not worried. At least Manu's house is high and dry. Handsome clumps of green grass. The blades lie down flat, and the raindrops look silvery. The trees, I told you, have no leaves, but they're wrapped with bandages of green ivy. Fresh black turds on the path near the shed. Maybe Tilaka or a fox.

* * *

5:24 p.m.

World governments should support the Hare Krishna movement. Srila Prabhupada said it and defended it no matter what "they" thought. Can I defend it? Not in the same way. I do believe, however, that Krishna consciousness is best.

I read many of Donald Hall's autobiographical stanzas in his new book, *The Old Life*. It gives me a view of a different kind of existence "anecdotes, literary life, family, and nothing about God. Even if I read a God-fearing (or God-loving "rare) person, I come home to my spiritual master and to radha and Krishna.

Don't betray the faith of those who take shelter in you. That is "extremely sinful." (*Bhag.* 6.2.6, purport)

Now the glorification of the holy name begins in the speech of the Visnudutas. They tell the Yamas, "You judged Ajamila externally." He chanted the holy name of Narayana in a helpless condition. "Even though he did not chant purely, he chanted without offense, and therefore he is now pure and eligible for liberation." (*Bhag.* 6.2.7)

January 24, 12:15 a.m.

It might be possible to discover something yet undiscovered "a cave under the earth, the shoes of Amelia Earhart, a new continent, new stars. Or something tiny that could cure a disease. Similarly, we could uncover a part of ourselves that has so far lain dormant, but which would contribute something worthwhile to our personhood. We could discover our lost Krishna consciousness, our desire to love Krishna and to render Him loving service.

Such discoveries tend to come more to field workers and research scientists than to the ordinary people. Why? Because they are spending all their time working on the problems. Similarly, practicing devotees who show real interest in improving their *sadhana* and in fanning their love of God are more likely to find success than those who are not. Even if ordinary people come across a moment of serendipity, they are unlikely to notice it; they just aren't tuned in.

What did I notice while reading the Bhaktivedanta purport today? I noticed that Ajamila didn't chant with offenses. He had committed sins, yes, but when he called out, "Narayana!" he called in love. Granted, he was calling his son and not the Supreme

Lord, but he didn't chant as a way to counteract his sins, as a pious act. My chanting . . . goes on. Can it improve? Can I discover a whole city under the earth? While chanting I accidentally . . .

Now read the claims for the holy name. That ex-*sannyasi* accused me of blaspheming and minimizing the holy name when I spoke of the *sastra's* claims of wonderful results. My use of the word *claim* means I theoretically accept what the *sastra* says, but I haven't discovered it yet for myself. It is a kind of minimizing the holy name in that I have to admit I have not realized its glories. It's actually a scandal.

He said, "If you haven't realized the holy nectar of the holy name, why do you act as guru?" Answer this challenge. I did not answer his open letter, which he also posted on a bulletin board in his community.

The claims include:

1. Sinful men become purified by chanting the holy name only once. "Although ritualistic atonement may free one from sinful reactions, it does not awaken devotional service, unlike the chanting of the Lord's names, which reminds one of the Lord's fame, qualities, attributes, pastimes and paraphernalia." (*Bhag.* 6.2.11)

2. My poor chanting doesn't seem to remind me of the Lord. *Why* is that? rather, I remember other things or make plans for service. I have to chant, it seems, with devotion and attention before I can remember Krishna.

I admit that I haven't realized so many things about Krishna consciousness. Such admittance creates a strain in my credibility. I mean, I have been going on for years without direct experience of Krishna. I shouldn't become skeptical about it. Because I have to admit that I am experiencing *something*. Better to be positive, affirmative. It's true: I experience Krishna's mercy in that I can stay on His path. I prefer this life of attempting to practice *bhakti* over non-Krishna conscious life. I *like* to live as a devotee. That itself is an experience of satisfaction, and self-satisfaction on this path is a step toward Krishna consciousness. I feel peaceful, I like myself and my writing (despite whatever dissatisfactions I express).

One could say these good results or decent levels of consciousness in myself are not caused by my practice of Krishna consciousness, but I say they are. If I can pray, that is a Krishna conscious experience. I am drawn to prayer and contemplation, and I am drawn to my long-term (life after life) commitment to discovering true and pure Krishna consciousness.

I could be saying everything is absurd, like a mundane existentialist. rather, I assign value to Krishna consciousness in my life. That's an act of my tiny free will. I choose to follow this path; every day I make that choice.

Am I engaged in the Lord's loving service? Yes, in a preliminary way (*vaidhi*). Is that an ordinary thing? Not according to *sastra*.

In the purport to Queen Kunti's prayer on *akincana gocarah*, Srila Prabhupada says the glories of the Lord, the claims for hearing them, are not exaggerated, but there's a quality to the chanting and the hearing. A self-satisfied materialist cannot chant with the quality of a person who calls on the Lord in helplessness. remember this important point, and try to absorb it into your life. We are helpless to improve our chanting.

Unfortunately, I may have also lost the hope and even the desire to improve my chanting. I just do it at the level of which I am capable (not wanting to provoke

headaches by too much endeavor) and think, "If Krishna wants to be merciful, He will be merciful. What is the use in imploring Him?" My lack of entreaty doesn't seem good. No fresh grief over shortcomings?

Bhag. 1.8.26 states that if we are after material improvement, we cannot approach Krishna sincerely. Krishna is "the property of the materially impoverished." Therefore, our success depends on the quality of our feeling. We must first give up the hope of material happiness and decrease our fever. "Grossly illusioned persons are quite unfit for entrance into the Kingdom of God."

* * *

I'm Just Glad I'm Free
& Listening
listen, a lonely boy
happy days
Got my secretary to go over notes "
"Hey, what's this? return
my stapler!"
Do we have to live forever
in a land of horizontal
Rain? I mean, where's
the sun?

* * *

Everything is temporary
and you got KC
so why complain?

* * *

He's let alone and they can't
drag him out no way
he's got a medical excuse
although in wartime
army docs try to decide
"You're *in*."

* * *

Nama's power
be true to it
to *hari-nama*
(I gave that name
to a brilliant boy Harer-nama
whose ears stuck out

like mine.
A Hari-nama of Santa Fe
once came to Boston and
influenced me with his
hip-skinny voice:
"You don't chant right and you're
too proud. Only three chickpeas per man
for breakfast."
Yes, I'm glad I'm free.

* * *

Ajamila was good to
chant lucky me too
did fourteen in a burst
no sleep, no love,
same walk
same beat
of heart in Krishna chant
and two to go.

* * *

Trouble ahead in next life
but we'll resume KC
where we left it
said the unwise
philosopher with legs crossed
thank you. "

* * *

5:12 a.m.

I'm listening to him. He says that Krishna consciousness is the most important thing. He tells the story of Narada and the cobbler, and explains Jiva Gosvami's point that unless we accept the inconceivable power of the Supreme Lord we cannot . . .

This is important for me because I often have doubts, pesky doubts. I mean, I believe what Krishna and the *acaryas* say, but doubts haunt me. So the story of the cobbler is instructive, as Prabhupada says it is, and this time he adds details I haven't heard before. For example, he says that Narayana actually gave Narada a needle to take back to show them "that I was taking an elephant and passing it through the eye of the needle from this side to that side." He says the cobbler's faith was not blind.

I thought of a doubt: One could say that the fact that an oak tree is potentially within an acorn doesn't prove that God put it there.

Well, then who put it there?

The atheists say no one. It's wonderful, but no one had to cause it. The Vaisnavas are always saying some person is behind everything, but they can't show us where that person is. We theists argue back. Yes, we. I'm on the side of the theists.

Lord Narayana said the cobbler would be liberated in this very lifetime, but the *brahmana* would have to wait many births. Narada was astonished. How is that, Sir? He called Narayana "Sir."

* * *

Please pay close attention to each thing the Visnudutas say about the power of the holy name, and speak tomorrow on the opening verses of Chapter Eight of *Madhya-lila* (a great chapter). The Lord meets Ramananda Raya, and they have great talks about Krishna consciousness "from copper to touchstone. I hope I can go to the island and that I won't have a headache. I could prepare a little more, but basically I know what to say and can only wait for inspiration to come as I lecture.

* * *

"The clouds of autumn are white, for they do not carry any water. Similarly, a retired man, being freed from all responsibility of family affairs (namely, maintaining the home, wife and children) and taking completely to Krishna consciousness, becomes freed from all anxieties and looks as white as clouds in autumn. Sometimes in autumn the falls come down from the top of the hill to supply clean water, and sometimes they stop. Similarly, sometimes great saintly persons distribute clear knowledge, and sometimes they are silent." (*Krishna*, p. 210)

When I asked Prabhupada what it meant that the sages are sometimes silent, he said, "They are not obliged."

So be happy
be white and light,
Retired from worldly duties.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

As I walked toward the outer limit of the devotees' land, I saw two swans quite close. They were at the extreme edge of a small finger of the lake, near the shore. They noticed me and headed gracefully out into the water. At a further finger, I saw another pair of swans, who ignored me.

Pink reflection in the lake. Finally after what seems like a week of solid gray, the sky is beginning to turn blue.

Of course, it's good to be alive, and I especially feel it on a morning like this. rohr reminds us that we have to "do our homework" early in life (learn to let go) so that at the end we can die without bitterness and pain.

* * *

11:28 a.m.

I advised a man who fell down to self-abuse that he read every day and chant with attention. I felt like a wise elder when I said it. But no one with a material body should assume they are safe, even if they are old. Purity depends on Krishna's mercy. We have to beg Him to enter our lives. Find your center of need and implore Him from there.

Hearing Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana speak of the special potency there. They get up early, and by four o'clock they're having *mangala-arati*, then go to bathe in the Yamuna and visit various temples. This is what Vrndavana is for. He said it doesn't take high education or money to live in Vrndavana with devotion, and he encourages us to take advantage of our opportunity. Immediately I thought of catching the next plane out. But I didn't and probably won't, not now. The reality of Vrndavana isn't as simple for me as rising early, visiting temples, and bathing in the Yamuna. I mean, that's all you *have* to do, but I couldn't live there so simply, not in this movement. I've already gone over this a million times. Still, I would like to cultivate the Vrndavana mood even here.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Here is Krishna and Baladeva in Vrndavana after the rainy season. Madame Li Yun Sheng has painted a scene with sparse vegetation, perhaps resembling a scene in China. But Krishna is there, painted a dark gray hue, and a white Balarama, both with golden auras. They display in the material world "His personal pastimes at Vrndavana, the replica of the Krishnaloka planet in the spiritual sky." Lord Caitanya and His six *gosvami* followers excavated the holy places of Lord Krishna's pastimes which had become "lost from view."

Writing this in the shed. Saw the floor plan of the Wicklow house. It's coming along slowly. Who can live there to enjoy the desk, the bed, the art room? Who will allow me that privilege? And if He does, for how long? And how well will I use my time there? Will I be happy?

In the spiritual sky there are varieties of pleasure. They are one in the absolute sense, because they are composed of eternity, bliss, and knowledge. But they are varied to suit the Lord's pleasure. In the material world we try to enjoy destructible varieties and simply suffer. Our eternal, dormant love for the Lord is covered by the mode of ignorance. Love of Krishna can be revived by hearing of Him with a purified heart. I want this. I want to be free of *maya*.

* * *

Postmodern Blues

& Now, now, no

history. Or so they say.

What may be called postmodern brings a

"profound distrust of all meta-narratives."

* * *

Well, I must have Krishna consciousness as my main course
and an ethos of seeing the Lord everywhere.
And for the special original form and
lila
we have Krishna, Caitanya.
So summon the people
to *kirtana* in the
open hall of a Hindu temple in
Trinidad
while the drummer struts on Diwali
parade grounds past blazing Afro spirits
playing pan drums.

* * *

I prefer the straight *kirtana*
with the ching-ching-*ching* of *karatalas*
and a Bengali drum.
I even prefer an ordinary lecture which
can set someone dozing with boredom
or put off those who are confused, who
think we are Hindus, who don't know about
karma, reincarnation, or Krishna as
God.
Because I know
some few will wake up in
their wooden folding chairs
and say, "Hey!" "

* * *

3:15 p.m.
Raven flaps by
the window was clear
talking of Vrndavana.
"When are you planning to go?"
he asks. I ask him. He says, "I
don't have enough desire yet."

We scribble our woes and trust in our Krishna conscious upbringing. One Catholic priest says if we were born into the Church, we ought to return to it. But don't they also convert? Anyway, I was born into the Catholic religion, but didn't start practicing it until I was twenty-six years old and had met Srila Prabhupada. It was he who gave me my first faith. ISKCON is now my mother church, she who blessed me and who hurt me "I have been wounded by the one I love.

* * *

Chanting The Mantra Life After Life
& This is real? They look around is
this truth? The rasp the
drum rolls. The elephant in the
water bathes on land
and in water the croc attacks.
An elephant prays? But just hear
how he prays:
"O Lord in past life
I learned a mantra . . . "

* * *

O Krishna, I too learned a mantra
and chanted it in the bathtub
please allow me to remember it
in my next life although they may
tell me to shut up that
chanting.

* * *

And I pray to approach
Prabhupada "
a real guru not
a tinsel-garlanded joke
of a guru
but a real-jawed guru
is this a dream?

* * *

Loving God is a simple thing
and he tricks us into chanting
only thirty-two syllables without
change no
additions or subtractions
except the One.

* * *

Loving God is natural
he said because
He's all-attractive
but I'm covered. I have heard
it all a million times

and still I believe it I
don't care if you don't
I have no other hope. "

* * *

3:55 p.m.

From the shed I can see across the whole field into the next field where that English devotee's horse is standing. He's a big, black fellow, with a swayback and a white sort of *tilaka* on his face. He's checking me out too. I can just barely see Manu's house on the hill. As I round the bend around the stripped blackberry bush, I suddenly come across a huge heron. It takes off like a prehistoric beast, its slow, gray, angular bones gradually lifting it into the air. It circles and finds another heron, and together they flap off "like death? Like life after death? Where did they go?

* * *

5:21 p.m.

This is my piano. This is my study. We will be here awhile.

Oh, you and your words. Go *beyond* words.

That's not possible for a writer. But I can go beyond certain forms of expression such as false ego and self-defense, and I can certainly bypass the urge to reach for an effect. Be certain, be who you are, be an instrument for Krishna consciousness in a way that people will want to take it.

Writing is communication. Some suggest a writer go beyond that too. It will still *be* communication, but the writer will not make communication his or her primary aim. Make the primary aim to praise God, really, from the heart, not for the reader. That's an ideal "to be a truly God conscious, God-intoxicated writer.

Getting darker by the minute. Nature's night curtain is descending.

January 25, 2:50 a.m.

Up late. I missed the midnight hour because I wanted to stock up on sleep so I'd have less chance of a headache canceling my big deal lecture. I plan to improvise and speak of the outside *brahmanas* who didn't understand Lord Caitanya and Ramananda raya's embrace. They were ritualists who missed the spontaneous love.

Dear audience, ask yourself how you live outside the nectar of Krishna consciousness. We each have our way of maintaining our outsider status. Perhaps we don't accept that everyone is a potential devotee. Perhaps we are stuck on rules and lose heart when we are pushed to act more spontaneously, from the heart. Perhaps we are offenders to the *dhama*. Because something is wrong: only insiders are allowed to hear and chant purely. No one is barring us, but we are somehow blocking our own path to the intimate company of Lord Caitanya and Lord Krishna. Do we wish to remain an outsider to that love?

* * *

The Winding Way
& Under a desk lamp writing for
dear life finding truths we need
each person with own voice
and all that.

* * *

How to be a sweet devotee of the Lord?
How to be a fighter for Him
stay close to Prabhupada,
speak to our own people
and yet beyond them?

* * *

Marshmallows I'm made
of and hard rocks, semen,
blood, those arteries that
squeeze and then go wide
to cause pain because my
brain is convinced
I am this body.

* * *

My Lord, please visit me
in this chest and bones
especially when I die
and before my millions
of words
notes, and tunes run
out
this is the way
I seek
You.

* * *

Way "Tao "*marga* "path
is it dark is it winding?
The path is narrow but
when Lord Caitanya walked He
didn't go from point A to point B
but in ecstasy
going nowhere except

toward Himself.

* * *

In my own case we go left
and right not out of ecstasy
but out of confusion and there
seems to be no other way
but this winding Krishna conscious
path. Where are His
lotus feet? "

* * *

4:33 a.m.

Radha-Govinda in a pink and green peacock dress with gold trim and *mukut*.
The *cadar* is peach and pink. Radha causes Krishna to become bewildered. He and
Madhumangala have gone to a hill to pick roses. They want to make ink in order to write
Her a love letter. But they meet Radha and ViSakha there and Krishna overhears Her
description of Her great love for Him. Then Jatila arrives and interrupts the scene.
Hearing this, I lose the sense of time and place and travel to where Rupa Gosvami
describes these events.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty
Episode #8

My clock is Swiss and I'm too tired to proceed. rest, then. But first tell us what you
lost.

Lord Caitanya lost the way. He mistook the Ganges for the Yamuna because Lord
Nityananda tricked Him.

But wherever He was, that was the Yamuna because He lives always in Vrndavana.
How can we say He is ever lost?

We are lost in material darkness, lost to our connection to Krishna.

A lost body looks for his soul. A lost soul looks for his loving connection to Krishna.
But he's covered by *tamo-guna*, and he forgets Krishna. rather, he puts his searching
energy into looking for the car keys he dropped in the dust of the parking lot.
How *else* will he get home?

"O noble *gopi*, whose face is whitened with age" "a verse spoken to Purnamasi " "we
have lost the desire to hear *raganuga* topics from him."

Some say we have lost the best thing, but they have different opinions as to what that
is.

Our train derailed, and a Flying Dutchman lost his ship. It floats over the sea with no
respite.

It's good to be a little lost "until you are found. Then it's not so good. If you know every step of the way and think you're always progressing, if you have *no* sense of loss, that's not a sign of inner depth.

* * *

The speaker at the lectern says, "Brothers and sisters," and tells us we missed out on Christ; get him back right now from this evangelist.

This from the Pukka Pad Shorty Club at Pickwick Arms. They are glad to be under Krishna's shelter. Simply chant Hare Krishna and everything will be all right, they say, and they are right. Remember Krishna at the time of death when everything else will be tested. Lose your physical life to gain eternity, bliss, and knowledge in the spiritual world.

By the way, I have also lost my Social Security card, although I remember the number.

I'm sorry, Active Imagination Advocate, but I can no longer maintain a simple, continuous narrative of a person who has lost something. I can't even stay awake. I flit. So I leave you with this thread. My teeth are false and falling out. Tears of tired fall from my eyes.

Sats met Junior in the hall. Junior suggested Ericksonian trance work. Junior opened a can of cold Sprite. "That's not good for you," said Sats. "Besides, you should offer all your food and drink to Krishna." They sat together in Junior's office and decided to seriously serialize this story once and for all, and not to put anyone on.

Then Mrs. Sharma entered and announced a twenty-four-hour *yajna* at her house. They agreed to attend and lost their place.

* * *

I dreamt I was in a temple with many of my Godbrothers and Godsisters. Prabhupada was nearby, but we weren't able to see to him. Perhaps he wasn't feeling well. I walked up behind Jayadvaita Maharaja and began to cry. I tried to speak to him, but was constantly interrupted by my heaving sobs. What I finally said was, "It would be nice if you and I could see Srila Prabhupada like the time we saw him in Mayapur. If only we had a question to ask him about BTG, but we don't." I decided to chant *japa* in order to ease my separation. Then the dream ended abruptly.

* * *

10:42 a.m.

Outsiders and insiders, to be continued next week. What makes us outsiders? They listed *aparadha*, mechanical service, disobeying the spiritual master. Yes. We are outsiders. We must wait for the invitation to be included in the inner group.

"May we think that everyone is a devotee (insider)?" someone asked. I fielded questions. It bordered a bit on the academic. Who is willing to speak from his own heart and deficiencies? I'm an outsider, but hope to become an insider. "What about eagerness for one's self becoming an insider and eagerness for others to get the mercy "are these

two contradictory?" Questions as we walked down to the quay. A small deer off by itself. Talking, talking.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

I don't want to hate or be hurt. Brothers and sisters, the best criticism of the bad is the practice of a better way. All these mottoes by Richard Rohr. To the Catholics, telling them to love God and Jesus and to not expend energy in hating others ""Don't be a deconstructionist who can only tear down. That's what the Scribes and Pharisees do." My lecture this morning was simpler, going over the points. Maybe it helped someone.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

When the Lord enters the forest "again a stark Chinese landscape, and there He is with a lone peacock, one cow, on an isolated plateau high in the mountains. Is that Govardhana of five thousand years ago? Maybe. Krishna, Syama, sits on a little grass mat. I have nothing of which to complain in this vision of Krishna where flowers weep in ecstasy and waterfalls flow with gladness.

They sit in the cave with Sri Krishna during a rainfall. He shares His fruits with them. In the spiritual world, souls maintain their separate identities in order to freely reciprocate with Krishna in love. They actually enjoy with Him. They offer Krishna a piece of *sandeSa*, or perhaps something warm, brought from home.

Sunshine through this window "let it glance. The strait overflowing. I told Arjuna, "Don't run away from one city to another, but surrender here." A sentiment. He thanked me. I'd like to help, but I can't come up with such a constant flow of new words of inspiration to fuel them. They must each run on their own steam.

* * *

Keep On Trying

& Krishna, I'm reading *Light of the Bhagavata*
and the pictures are about to run into bulls and cows
trees, leafy vines
waterfalls "all as a Chinese artist depicts.

* * *

Krishna, I draw pictures of You too
but mine are so poor
as am I
but Krishna, I strike out straight ahead and continue
these melodies
this art
and say it's enough for me

as if I don't care for eternity and
anyway I know I won't go
for more than seventy or eighty
after that it will be pathetic
to keep blowing
this horn.

* * *

What was new becomes old
these zesty *sutras*, prayers to You, springing-froms,
after yet another winter
but I don't plan to give up
my hope to surrender to
You, to surrender
my love "
if I can only be that lucky.

* * *

If it hurts I will thank You "

* * *

3:25 p.m.

The feast should be well on now, with seconds coming. Or maybe it was served out late. Whoever serves receives special mercy if they don't resent it (and if they get a plate later). Filling the belly "it can be disgusting, if you think about it. Polished human animals want nothing more than to eat and mate nicely. Krishna is kind to us; He has given us *prasadam* to control our own polished tongues.

Deconstructionism. Wise guys. Ironic. Looking for a joke. A witty perception. The poor humanity. He made sure he filled *his* belly, though, didn't he? Who is exempt "some starving Nature Cure fellow following dietetic righteousness? No, not even him. Let us see healthy Krishna conscious workers honoring *prasadam* and then using the energy they derive for pure and worthy service.

I mention the feast because they are there and I am not. I chose to stay here "they didn't say I couldn't come. Bright sunshine and birds twittering.

* * *

Romance At The Time of Death
& My romance is a castle in Spain . . . with devotees in Spain.
The sweet house by the Arroyo,
the night under the cypress tree
the woman with flashing
Catalan eyes, the romance

of the guru illustrating his point
by shoving coins across a table
in the pre-dawn while his disciples sat
at his feet then saw him off on
his travels to Italy or wherever.
Fifteen minutes after leaving the guru
accidentally crunched a rabbit
and has felt bad
ever since.

* * *

O sweet deer, stop
and hear that horn "that
profoundly beautiful sound "
while Yamaraja catches you in a daze
of past loves long forgotten
and your life without God
and everything lost.

* * *

In a dream my Swami walked into a room
and didn't disown me.
I stayed awake through his lecture
or if I dozed I struggled awake
went out in a vans
for him and
door to door.

* * *

Look out at the drink today and pause.
Remember when we used to chant loudly
and lecture to friends?
Blast 'em and smash 'em
and laugh at the world's fools,
never once thinking one of them
was us?

* * *

My romance with guru and Krishna
is like a castle in
Spain; it seems it cannot last but
the lyrics always bring Krishna to mind.

We hurt and have hurt and have
had no choice but to write a letter
to a friend . . .

* * *

Dear master,
no *sutras* I know can
let me forget you "
but whatever I remember,
has been your mercy. "

* * *

Last bright sunlight on my friendly wooden shed. Maybe an author's life could become so quiet that his imagination would finally break loose and he would be able to tell some wildly imaginative story, like Don Quixote, something that went on forever. Or he'd keep convincing himself to stick with what's in front of him, the thorns of the bush, his toes cold in the boots, the dog barking, the sun glinting on flooded waters, the trees submerged to their ankles.

* * *

6:12 p.m.

This will serve as my Night Notes. Who am I? Sometimes I get annoyed at my diarist persona. I want to give people more than diary. But it seems I have to *go through* the diary expression to give more. I shouldn't be ashamed of it. I needn't, for example, be ashamed that I attended a community college, that my parents rose up out of the working class as first-generation Americans. No, I shouldn't be ashamed of my natural work. Krishna consciousness is never ordinary no matter what form it takes.

Anyway, tonight let me bring myself to the *Bhagavatam*. I *should* have more discipline. I forgive myself for what I am, but I also remind myself to do better. It's difficult to read the same *sastra* over and over because it doesn't lend itself to a casual relationship. If we try to read too casually, we'll lose interest. Then we'll be forced to face the grind of our discipline or give it up.

Ashamed? Yes, to repeat the same nagging points. The editor would like to see less presence of my gremlin-critic. It would be better if I could just write and accept what I have written, accept myself as I am.

In the meantime, I pray to rise at midnight and to get in a session with Ajamila. remember, when you're pursuing basic Krishna consciousness, then your writing will have something important to say. Like that first simple prose you typed in your apartment on First Street after hearing the Swami's lectures "summaries of what he'd spoken but in my own words. I want to write for myself and to express the Krishna consciousness that touches me, that makes me feel alive as the current actually passes through me "Prabhupada said this, he wrote that, etc.

January 26, 12:12 a.m.

It's heroic, I think, to face and then deal with spiritual poverty. The topic of spiritual poverty is an issue that should concern any preacher or lover of God. But it's a quiet heroism because it is work that must be done within one's own soul. It is a private fight to find our heart in Krishna consciousness, and few people can even see the battlefield.

It is also heroic, in the face of spiritual poverty, to maintain hope and spiritual aspiration. I'm no hero, but I do know what I want to become. I know where the battle lines have been drawn, and what else can I do but fight? Let me equip myself honorably and not desert, a coward.

* * *

Remember, these Sixth Canto chapters on Ajamila and the holy name are all an elaboration on the *kecit kevalaya bhaktya* verse. Sukadeva Gosvami is proving that what atonement cannot achieve (freedom from sinful reactions and the desire to commit sins) can be attained by chanting the holy name of Lord Hari even once.

Not only will we attain freedom (liberation) when we render loving service to the Personality of Godhead, but we will become purified when we chant and hear in any state. Attentive chanting is most effective, but even *nama-bhasa* will bring benefit. Even *nama-aparadha* can help us. There is no other way in this age but to face this truth. Dear mind, please do not abuse this great facility you have been given. Do not remain cynical, but accept the austerity and the pleasure of chanting. "The *tapasya* of chanting and glorifying . . . the Lord is a very easy purifying process by which everyone can be happy." (*Bhag.* 6.2.12, purport)

Thinking about my dream life. One simple explanation is that my dreams show that my spiritual life remains superficial or that I have layers of relative fear and desire. That's why these images show up in my mental movies and why I don't dream of blissful devotional service to Krishna. I am suffering. "As long as one has a material body one is understood to be impure. In such an impure, material condition, one cannot enjoy a truly blissful spiritual life."

The Yamadutas remind me of my gremlins. They have an authorized role; they come to punish the sinner, the one who doesn't serve Krishna in love, but who serves his own sinful desires.

However much the Yamas know that the devotional service *I* do under the direction of my spiritual master is valid, I often wonder why I can see the Yamas at work. Where are those beautiful Vaikuntha men with their deep voices and gremlin-subduing powers? They appear when I read the *Bhagavatam* and quote Vyasadeva and Srila Prabhupada. I also have the power, my own free will, to allow the Visnudutas to enter my heart and to save me both from the wrath of gremlins and the curse of my sinful reactions.

If we are chanting the holy name, we must already be free from the duality of delusion "if not completely, then to some extent. "If one remembers Krishna, Narayana, at the time of death, one is certainly eligible to return home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 6.2.13, purport)

I should practice. You should too. Practice while you are alive and well. Our dreams probably indicate where our life and experience has led us so far. Therefore, practice chanting so that at least by the end of life, we will be able to remember Krishna.

"One who chants the holy name of the Lord is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly (to indicate something else), jokingly, for musical entertainment, or even neglectfully. This is accepted by all the learned scholars of the scriptures." (*Bhag.* 6.2.14)

* * *

4:20 a.m.

Radha and Krishna, young and innocent, are attracted to one another in *purva-raga*. This is described in *Vidagdha-madhava*. Purnamasi, Madhumangala, ViSakha, and Lalita "the cast of characters. This is no rough man's adventure. Vrndavana is soft and delicate, and we have to be pure to appreciate it. I play the tape of our reading while I dress the Deities. I feel fortunate to be able to do this in the morning and again at night.

Krishna consciousness is all recreation, Srila Prabhupada said. Bring your counter-argument and say, "No, Swamiji, on this point it is not pleasant." It's not pleasant to have to see the ISKCON gurus fall and then be dissatisfied with their replacements.

But that is not the Krishna conscious system; it is the misuse of the system.

Nevertheless, it's what we have in our society. If the ideals I describe are not our actual reality, then what good are they?

We have to find the ideal essence. We have to live in reality which is not merely composed of our latest superficial dealings. ISKCON also has inner meaning. She is our mother, one could say, our mother "church." We have surrendered to her and will not leave even when she hurts us or she acts wrongly. We will not stay focused on such outer things but find the simple inner truth: ISKCON is still Prabhupada's movement, and he wants us both to live within it and to preach Krishna consciousness from it. Even if our hearts are heavy, even if we and others are faulty.

* * *

Another dream about Prabhupada. This time I wrote him a letter containing my confession of failings and also a report on how I feel the movement is faring. He returned the letter with his signature to let me know he had read it.

* * *

5:50 a.m.

Yeah, yeah, Mary Oliver, I can do it too, except you say god (small "g") is only an idea and you'd prefer a god with shoulders and a spine. Little do you know.

But I'll leave you alone. You are doing fine as a hard-working, refined, and successful poet. May you go to the heaven of your aspiration with the mockingbirds and cherries and snakes and dogs and days at Great Pond, and may you see there Shelley, the poet whom you love. We are each rewarded according to our desire.

Write often, I tell myself, and Mary, may I learn from you how you string words in grace and praise (of nature). May I go beyond your nature consciousness to praise Krishna from whom comes all the varied things of this world.

* * *

8:15 a.m.

Frost everywhere. That little inlet where I saw the swans yesterday has a thin layer of ice now. The walkway is still brown, and the murky sky is reflected in the water.

* * *

9:35 a.m.

Chanting frees one from sin. The Visnudutas state that as a fact. That's why the Yamadutas cannot legally arrest Ajamila. Practice in life and you'll be able to remember to chant at death. It sounds almost like a mechanical formula, but I believe it.

Ajamila witnessed his own salvation and heard that it was due to his chanting "Narayana." He had been freed from sin and given an extension of life. Now he wanted to praise the Supreme Lord. Then the Visnudutas disappeared. "In the mood of separation, glorification of the Lord is very intense."

Ajamila expressed his regrets for his misspent life. regretting past sinful acts helps one advance in spiritual life. Ajamila recalled the saintly association he had been given earlier in his life and felt gratitude. By the influence of that association, he had been inspired to name his son Narayana. Ajamila's happiness was mixed with regret, and that bittersweet feeling gave him the determination not to fall down again. Furthermore, he now wanted to become "a merciful, well-wishing friend to all living entities." Srila Prabhupada: "One should come to Krishna consciousness to release one's self and also to release others." (*Bhag.* 6.2.36, purport)

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty

Episode #9

The frost is frosty. It provides a white topping to grass and hay bales, but not as white as a blanket of snow. The figure looks out at a vista he finds soothing, almost mesmerizing "the lake strait between Geaglum and Inis rath.

Mesmer? Tick-tock, slow
clock in this room.

Enthusiasm regularly wanes then comes up again. Circadian rhythm? What is lost will be found, will

come in with the sea
and recedes in twice-a-day cycles of low and high tide
and with every incoming wave and undertow.

With every breath
in and out.

Lost and found by His grace.

* * *

Sometimes I don't have the energy to care about loss. If you were to press me to care at a time like that, I might make a joke about it. Loss Boss, I found the Floss. At other times, as the A.I. Advocate noted, I do feel loss deeply. It's a little vague, but usually it is related to my passing years in ISKCON and a dying out of idealism. Maybe I'm just getting old.

Lost idealism is especially painful. One wants to cry, but something blocks that release. I'm afraid it might be self-pity. I didn't achieve love of Krishna, and ISKCON also disappointed me. Was I cheated? And even more, did I fail others? Let me open to *that*.

Sun comes through so this frost will melt. I see the flash of oars on the other side as a rowboater starts the quick trip from there to here. I also feel an early twinge of pain. How beautiful this scene, how peaceful. I may have lost something, but what I have now has incredible value.

* * *

12:05 noon

Rohr asks fellow Catholics, "Why would someone want to join a church of fifty-year-old complainers?" He criticizes both left and right wings, says we should be patient, accept the good, the woundedness, etc. "jargon, love, set the example, much good there . . . I have to find my own expression from our great Vedic tradition.

Interrupted. Madhu just back from Belfast. We talked about the slow progress on the Wicklow house. Now I have forgotten what I was going to say about rohr and how it can be applied to ISKCON. Basically, we need to find our commitment, find what we love and what keeps us in the movement, and speak on that. There is no point in discussing superficial reforms or anti-ISKCON complaints, or saying, "Everything is great with the GBC just as it is." Neither reform nor preserve the status quo if the energy is to hate and criticize others. Better to concentrate first on the reasons why we're all in this together. Search for personal authenticity, and share it with others.

* * *

3:43 p.m.

It was cold this morning, but now it's sunny and warm. The earth is still rigid. The mud firms up overnight. A free pen sent as a sample from Viking Office Supply. We joke at their attempt to suggest that this pen reveals a totally new concept, "combining the ease of a fountain pen with a rolling ball tip." Looks like the same old thing to me.

Light of the Bhagavata says the cows chewed their cud. reminds me of *ruminate*, the method of going over *sastra* in a loving but repeated way. Chew on it, savor it.

We just bought some yogurt from a company that brags on its label that they exist not only for profit but to protect the earth. Their yogurt is organic, meaning they grow organic crops to feed the cows, and thus show their concern for the planet. But what about the cows? Verse 27 in *Light of the Bhagavata* is a manifesto for cow protection: " . . . those who are anxious to cultivate the human spirit must turn their attention first

toward the question of cow protection." *Brahmanas* especially need good brains, and for that they need cow's milk.

Light of the Bhagavata #28,

I remember, offers wonderful praise of the beauty of nature. Devotees use the temporary creation in the service of the Lord. "It is in fact the temporary picture of the eternal creation."

* * *

The Temporary World Is A Picture of The Eternal
& Krishna, please be with me
as I carouse pa
Rouse and live
within a heartbeat
shake my pen so hard it
splashes the page.

* * *

What? Where's the Krishna conscious
Recreation? We want only to serve
Krishna with whatever we have
and not pay attention *so* much
to how to make it relevant to
a tricky, sophisticated mind.
We just have to get there
and adjust.
There's no way to tell you
how hard how
easy
that is.

* * *

What did he say and how to apply it?
He says clean dishes
sell books *Do* "life
is not don't
it's do
Do fight
Do serve Me
and little do we seem to understand our master
sometimes "that hard-hitting compassion
to force us
to save ourselves at death.

* * *

Don't you cry
little baby
you're in Krishna consciousness
the summertime
of love. "

* * *

3:30 p.m.

I ought to go back to the house soon and have a last meeting with my disciple before she flies off to Vrndavana. I'll tell her I don't like to use blue tack on Radha-Govinda. Is there any way around it? I want to love Them, but there is nothing she can purchase or send as *maha-prasadam* from Vrndavana that will turn me into a pure devotee. Does she have any philosophical questions?

Ajamila alone with regrets. He no longer sees the ugly nor the beautiful persons who were in his room just a few moments ago. Was it a dream? He feels the Lord's separation and begins to pray. He was saved by the holy name. That much he understands. He'll live out his remaining years in Hardwar. Prayer is hard work.

Is the calm water creased by a duck? Are they really going to leave me alone? Don't make fun of the sincere efforts of others, even if such efforts resemble the sparrow's attempt to empty the ocean by carrying water in her beak.

* * *

And The Blues Will Pass

& The man didn't hear too well when he grew older, but these days, people often live so long they get cancer or Alzheimer's. Could be me.

* * *

We singing along
in the feeling that life is a dry sort
of hurt
but we can all move along and make
something of it.
For me I sometimes feel "
I can't put it into words "that I am
going nowhere. Do you know what
I mean?

* * *

If I attend a lecture by some
learned preacher of my cult will I

feel better?
Or perhaps I should simply work harder.
I mean, work up a sweat,
take a risk?
No, calm down and accept
your lot. This is a
short-lived
dance. "

* * *

5 p.m.

I saw Lalita-manjari off on her trip to Vrndavana. I'm looking now at the brick boathouse with the gingerbread trim on the eaves. I have no intention of traveling to Vrndavana just now. A swan passes "a herald of peace? A good omen? The dark evenings are over. From now on it will be getting lighter and lighter.

* * *

6:30 p.m., Night Notes

May Krishna be with you, may the demons be pacified, and may *bhakti-yoga* reign over all.

January 27, 12:15 a.m.

"Simply because I chanted the holy name of the Lord in the association of devotees, my heart is now becoming purified. Therefore, I shall not fall victim again to the false lures of material sense gratification." (*Bhag.* 6.2.38)

The secret of success is to chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* and to always associate with devotees. Don't be contaminated by sinful life. Srila Prabhupada recommends we do as Ajamila did and live in a Visnu temple in a holy place. Although he was now old, Ajamila was a changed man after the Visnudutas rescued him.

"If one worships the Deity in the temple, one's mind will naturally be absorbed in thought of the Lord and His form." (*Bhag.* 6.2.41, purport) After some time, the Visnudutas returned for Ajamila. This time he was ready, so "he regained his original spiritual body . . . appropriate for an associate of the Lord."

Ajamila's story is offered as evidence that chanting frees one from material bondage. ISKCON devotees also provide such evidence: "Many young boys who were addicted to drugs and who had many other bad habits, which they could not give up, abandoned all these . . . and very seriously engaged in chanting the glories of the Lord as soon as they joined the Krishna consciousness movement." (*Bhag.* 6.2.46, purport)

Even hearing the Ajamila narration has the potency to bring us back to Godhead. "Therefore, if one faithfully and inoffensively chants the holy name of the Lord, where is the doubt that he will return back to Godhead?" (*Bhag.* 6.2.49) Our devotional service will grow little by little, like a fig tree yielding fruit.

* * *

Krishna Was My Master When

& Early mornings were not so early "6 or 7 a.m. "but we'd gather in the storefront,

"Softly," Swamiji would say,

and he would allow a boy to pump the harmonium with its one note only

because that's all he knew how to play.

That drone and mixtures of our strange minds,

Swamiji's resolute purpose,

our break for freedom.

We were looking for the transforming high. He encouraged us, "Bring your musical instruments and join us," "It is *only* recreation."

Even the saxophone was allowed to play along.

But so few came.

So few.

* * *

Constant kirtana with drone.

O Lord, this day under the

puddle of desk lamp light,

there's a small circle where

I can write bird marks in

black ink and seek Your

beautiful form. Let the doves fly up.

Let me chant over and over

me with Swamiji,

me joining, reaching, him sustaining,

guiding

just how far I could

express my own.

* * *

I don't remember those days

except that they were good

and I'm still seeking them

for that youthful excess

of spirit.

I must have life

or how can I plod on

and on? "

* * *

8:30 a.m.

I was thinking of how I would not be able to find a lonely walk in Vrndavana "too many pilgrims and residents. Of course, most of them are up to something sublime, walking to temples or chanting, but I like to walk alone.

Then thinking of Hare Krishna Village in Medallago. I hope they're keeping up the buildings there. Imagine someone living there and considering it a *dhama*.

Think of the MVT development in Vrndavana. Somebody keeps a house there and chants Hare Krishna just to know he's in the *dhama*. Even if he doesn't go to the temple.

There's a story circulating about Maharaja Pariksit trying to find the place where he wouldn't be attacked by the snake-bird. His fate arrived anyway. So in Vrndavana, when death comes, we can know that is the best place to meet him. Our being can be grounded there, and the *dhama* provides a safety net even though it's beyond our comprehension. I can't imagine that Ireland is a *dhama* of the same quality, but I yearn for Vrndavana, and through the transcendence of yearning, I can live within its sacred space.

* * *

12:02 p.m.

Say this without self-pity and say it clearly: I can't live more than a semi-invalid life. I can't go out "to meetings, on trips, or anywhere else. Yes, I'm facing budding pain, and today is a day I have to meet it straight on: I cannot take a pill since I have already used up my quota.

I used to be afraid of what Godbrothers, especially GBC men and their committees, might think about my semi-invalid condition. But that's a dead issue. It doesn't matter what they think. This is my condition.

* * *

Dusk Dialogue

& I can't be so sensitive with an ink
blotch on the back of my hand.

Mud solid.

I walked with Madhu and told him of
minor disappointments I'm feeling.

* * *

Therapy "art and music for,
absorption in that to forget
troubles? But what are troubles?

I guess it's the death question and all.

* * *

Talk of the years we are spending away
from the fray while wanting approval and
breakthrough to Krishna's love.
Can I have everything?

* * *

Can I live alone on an island
and yet miss the point "those who
give all to Krishna?

* * *

I redeem myself. Because after all,
Krishna, I *do* love You. I *chant* Your
name and live like a monk
truly. I do want to work in *this*
world and make art
to flow toward You, but
no, to be myself I can't be a *gopi-manjari*
just now, or a prow-sitter,
an ISKCON dike-buster.
Not now.
But whatever I am,
You are the center. "

* * *

6:30 p.m., Night Notes

I had vise head pressure and couldn't follow my usual schedule. Felt I couldn't read either. I hope I'll get another chance tomorrow, at midnight. Try to read, to read and write what's right. Lord, forgive my offenses. Give me another chance. I wish to be a pure devotee.

January 28, 12:12 a.m.

"Who is the Boss? Is there more than one?" The Yamadutas, almost in anger, asked their master. They had thought there was only one controller over all others, and they had assumed that was Yamaraja. Then why had the Visnudutas overruled them?

Yamaraja was pleased to hear Narayana's holy name uttered in his domain. Yamaraja said, "You have accepted me as the supreme, but I am not. Above me is the one supreme master and controller. Like the two threads, horizontal and vertical, of which a quilt is manufactured, Lord Visnu is situated as the vertical and horizontal cause of the cosmic situation." (*Bhag.* 6.3.12, purport)

* * *

The head reasons, but the heart? Can the heart be wrong? The head may say "correctly" that it's best to read only *sastra*. The heart may say that's not possible. The heart says he needs to fulfill other interests "and then to bring them to Krishna and offer them as service "to make an offering of the whole self.

There is a *Bhagavad-gita* purport where Srila Prabhupada encourages one to render Krishna service through all sorts of activities. Then he qualifies it and says that such an offering cannot be whimsical. It must be approved by the spiritual master.

Here's the example of doing what we thought was right and then finding we were wrong: the Yamas attempted to arrest Ajamila. Whether something is actually right or wrong is decided by higher authority. We can't go around doing whatever we want and think we are always correct, because our senses and our ability to judge such things are so limited. rather, we must learn to operate as a servant under a master's understanding.

In other words, we may choose to practice *karma-yoga*, but Krishna may wish us to practice a purer form of *bhakti*. Krishna is often kind enough to show us His will, that He is the controller, that He is above the "system" we have managed to figure out. Can we offer Krishna work according to our tendency? Yes, but it has to be pleasing to Him "to *Him*, the actual Krishna. If we aren't seeing Him clearly, He may choose to adjust our vision. As servants, we must learn to surrender to those adjustments.

The Supreme Lord controls all, the way the driver of a bullock cart controls the bulls by placing ropes in their noses.

Yamaraja told the Yamadutas that he and the other demigods were free of passion and ignorance. "Nevertheless, although we are in the mode of goodness, we cannot understand the activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What, then, is to be said of others, who, under illusion, merely speculate to know God?" (*Bhag.* 6.3.14 - 15) Only the transcendental *bhaktas* can understand Krishna.

* * *

Spirits rejoice
& Prabhupada said to me in effect give
up all you are doing and concentrate only on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Bhagavad-gita*, and ISKCON work if you want to escape birth and death "work to preach.
So I did
for twenty-five, thirty
years and
so I continue.

* * *

But?
Button it's
a little different now
and I'm writing in a yellow pad
for dear life "*my* dear life
I worship Radha-Krishna in a
normal way living in separation

from Vrndavana
and that still
sounds okay.

* * *

Yes, a subway
sounds through so
stand back. Don't
die just yet but don't be late
either
with your sonnets.

* * *

He races through the airport carrying a
box of books.
You mean this is the inner record
of even a straight-faced repeating
parampara "someone repeating *sankirtana* lines?"

* * *

Behind that mask and wig and
hat is a staccato cry
we hope, at least
it's there.

* * *

O wounded beast "
Remember that pig in Vrndavana
four legs tied just like in
Puerto rico? It was *screaming* as we passed
on rickshaw. My brother said,
"Oh, what a shame, and in Vrndavana!"
Muslims. Untouchables.
Our *kirtana* is different.

* * *

O Krishna, the spirit seems to rejoice in
or taste (ghastly) everything
but maintains protocol and right-look behavior
of an ISKCON *sannyasi*. Spirit
churns with crying

sighing
a live rebel with live rebel's need
to be redeemed. See? He doesn't
even dream or sigh like
the regular chapters of a *Gita* overview.
Dreams instead
from a wild center of confusion
that makes sense only
to a child
or a priest.

* * *

These things are difficult for most
of us to understand, but
come on, chant
with us. "

* * *

9:05 a.m.

Living entities cannot ascertain the Lord's real situation. At every moment we act according to the Lord's direction as we hear it dictated in the heart, yet we cannot understand His presence. Yamaraja thus explains the Supreme Lord. He also describes Lord Visnu's order-carriers. Srila Prabhupada assures the members of the Krishna Consciousness Society that "material danger is not meant for devotees." Lord Krishna will protect us. As long as we are in this world, we should preach the cult of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. (*Bhag.* 6.3.18, purport)

Yamaraja says *dharmam tu saksad bhagavata-pranitam*, "real religious principles are enacted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead." And what is it He wants? *Sarva dharman parityajya*: that we should surrender all other duties and give ourselves to His lotus feet. Where can we learn such a thing? From the *mahajanas*. This is rare and difficult knowledge, but if we can understand it, we can go back to Godhead. The understanding of *bhagavata-dharma* begins when we chant the holy name of the Lord.

* * *

10:23 a.m.

On the walk I didn't feel like talking. A curtain of mist was lowering from the sky. I didn't see anyone. Thoughts passed through my mind "no, not deliberately "and I couldn't hear my chanting so well. Now back here. read some *Bhagavatam*. I have to be able to write and not feel it is going to hurt me or break me or test me too hard. I want to give my whole life to this in Krishna's service, and I can't "edit" either my writing or my life.

On the walk I was somewhat absent, groggy, or whatever. I was not really fully alive, not hearing the mantras I was uttering, not feeling despair or joy. Nor was I living up to

the *yukta-vairagya* concept which sustains me. Just walking along low level. I have to tell you that, because if I think it's not worthy, I might later decide that something else is unworthy, and then something else, and then what would I write?

A few minutes ago I read a few pages in *Econoline Preacher*. We were in Spain when I wrote that, and much of the book is about travel and the various effects that had on my schedule. I felt as I was reading that I was holding my wrist to check my pulse. Hare Krishna. Because if I am not entirely or exclusively or purely absorbed in Krishna consciousness, then what does Krishna consciousness mean to me other than what I am actually living?

* * *

"Bop priest." What did Merton say? He felt that being a writer interested in the world's great artists, even those outside the Catholic Church, and trying to reconcile world misery, politics, etc., was part of his vocation. He didn't think he was in *maya* if he was interested in such things. He admitted that other monks went about their spiritual lives in different ways, but acknowledged that this was his way: "Literature, contemplation, solitude, Latin America-Asia, Zen, Islam, etc. "all these combine in my life. It would be madness to make a 'monasticism' by simply excluding them. I would be less a monk. Others have their own, I have mine." (*Journal*, July 10, 1964)

Do I have the courage to live out *my* convictions? I'm certainly not absorbed in the ISKCON situation with all its e-mail conferences. I don't think that's my mission. I can't do it anymore. Don't *want* to do it anymore. Neither do I live on a straight and narrow path of only Vedic intake and output. Krishna, please make things clear to me. Give me my daily bread of *bhakti*, and allow me to use whatever interests I pursue in Your service. I truly want that. I wish to be the boy in the back who gets called to the front, the boy the master doesn't forget. My place can be menial, I don't mind, but let me sing my tunes for Your pleasure and express my faith in ways that make sense to me.

Krishna, You protect Your devotees from danger. That doesn't mean I won't die; it means I will remember You when I do. I know You will save me.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

Didn't make eye contact with fifteen-year-old Madhava dasa as I left the house "I looked at him, but he hadn't looked at me yet. I didn't linger. We seem to have little in common, although we both like to write. It's painful for me to know what he'll probably have to go through, what his parents will feel. But Krishna will protect him too. He makes me wonder, though, whether I too will have to return to another life, born of devotee parents, and go through the same sourness that now grips him. I hope not, and pray to be more grateful now. I'm sorry I'm not ecstatic to read and chant, but let me be deeply grateful to have the opportunity to do so at all, to have been rescued.

Calm, cool lake at end of January. A rare sight: an old boat, powered with an outboard engine, making rapid progress, a black and white dog in the prow. O Lord, O energy,

O
engine.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna . . .

* * *

2:57 p.m.

Don't be disappointed, Srila Prabhupada writes. Your muddy life will become clear when you voluntarily take to devotional service.

Then why are we disappointed and so unclear? Is it because our own service is not yet voluntary enough? The *gopis* of Vrndavana demonstrate the highest stage of yoga, but it's too cheap to make a show of their transcendental ecstasies. Be serious and work from where we're actually at now.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty

Episode #10

Imagine we're at a banquet with a hundred people attending. I speak first, "Please be calm. I am no longer obliged to write on the loss theme."

Okay. They're relieved. Just no cynicism or ultra-irony, no sophisticated poet stuff.

So, peace and love come as chaos "the result of separation from union. The material energy picks us up by the scruff of the neck and with tremendous energy. We try to laugh, wondering why we are screaming. Do we want to work harder for our Krishna consciousness? Or do we just want to watch others work?"

An exorcism of the soul, we suggest what we all will have to go through.

* * *

Oh, turn the heat off. This is no sweat lodge, no purifying Senoi bath. But since we're here, let's beat our bodies with virtues.

I know, you conservatives can't stand it. You think this is utter madness and not open communication. But let me assure you, I am not interested in deconstruction.

* * *

We have been brave to trust despite the blood. Lord, look at all these people who have suffered to be holy.

* * *

The A.I. Advocate entered and said, "This is madness. Everything is being strewn about!"

Yes, but we can make something of it. Just watch. Exorcism is essential to sanity.

But the A.I. Advocate wanted to touch base with a more normal form of reality, such as playing a melody or doing a representational painting.

Hindemith came out of the blue and knocked on the shed door. I pretended not to hear. Like the crickets in the tropics and the frogs at night. I'm still seeing my way clear.

My life was jarring. Not only mine. We went through bad times together. Do we get a gold medal (for our foreheads)?

Since we went through Purgatory, do we get heaven?

And why did we have to go, anyway,
through someone *else's* trip? I'd have preferred to go through my own.

Yes, my own response to Krishna consciousness, straight from the master. He wanted that.

January 29, 12:15 a.m.

Good to be here, certainly. Behind the persona who calculates how much pain he'll have to suffer and how well he'll spend his time is the helpless one who recognizes that he is not in control. He recognizes Krishna's mercy and lives with the ocean's swells and calm.

The *sastra* gives evidence that by chanting the holy name of the Lord we are liberated from material miseries even if we do not chant completely inoffensively. That is what the Ajamila narration is all about. "It is to be concluded that with a strong vow one should chant the holy name of the Lord "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare "for thus one will certainly be delivered from the clutches of *maya* by the grace of Krishna." (*Bhag.* 6.3.24, purport)

"Even if in the beginning one chants the Hare Krishna mantra with offenses, one will become free from such offenses by chanting again and again." (*Bhag.* 6.3.24, purport paraphrasing *Padma Purana, nama parade yuktanam . . .*) *Harer nama eva kevalam.*

Keep your spectacles clean and your digestion too. Get some exercise and take care of your heart. Keep your stress low and take a B-complex vitamin. Most importantly, chant the holy names, you fool. (I call you "fool" because I love you and because you *are* foolish not to have learned this lesson by now, not to have embraced the holy name or to have cried for your own purification.)

The sages who are not devotees of the Lord engage in various programs of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksa* (which yield only temporary happiness). They cannot know the secret, confidential religious system.

"Srla Jiva Gosvami sankirtana is sufficient for the perfection of life, the *arcana*, or worship of the Deity in the temple, must continue in order that the devotees may stay clean and pure." (*Bhag.* 6.3.25, purport)

Dear Lord, I ask You to please be with me as You desire. From my point of view, I ask that I may continue worshiping Radha-Govinda and Srla Prabhupada, and that I may continue chanting Hare Krishna. May I not disgrace at least my basic duties in relation to the devotees who look to me with trust.

Devotees don't merely make a show of religious attendance. Nondevotees may ostentatiously attend a church or *mandira*, but "they are thinking of something else." They may still be punishable by Yamaraja. Even if a devotee commits sins by accident or because of former habits, however, he is excused.

I want to read these statements for the relief they bring to my mind. I won't have to go to hell. It is important to escape that fate. Higher than that is serving Krishna under any condition simply because you love Him.

"*Paramahamsas* are exalted persons who have no taste for material enjoyment and who drink the honey at the Lord's lotus feet. My dear servants, bring to me for punishment only persons who are adverse to the taste of that honey . . ." (*Bhag.* 6.3.28)

Am I an outsider or an insider? Am I free of the Yamadutas? Do I taste that honey? What *am* I tasting?

* * *

If You Believe In Me
& Yes, I remember being alone in
the room and they used to speak-
sing to me, smoke-
filled John Young and Tommy,
me happy and trapped, the Navy
still ahead.

* * *

Now Krishna trumpets and I'm
steering being steered
saved from old habits.

* * *

Old Swami stern master
tasks given
and no rebellion.
But still
I am who I am.

* * *

I had only a paper moon.
The changes "nobody knew
for sure what was happening
how we found freedom
within a fence.
The Swami built a high wall
around his disciples
to keep out Mayavadis.

* * *

We have been so righteous
thinking we are best as
we walked beaches Juhu

Venice
saying
we know we know.

* * *

But *you* knew, Srila Prabhupada,
you knew which of us
tin soldiers were fearful
laybacks
and which were soon to
quit you, paper disciples
with vibrato.

* * *

But Prabhupada,
your Krishna is nice
real nice. "

* * *

3:15 a.m.

Dreamt of a dog that kept trying to fasten his jaws on my wrist, my hand, and other parts of my body. He never quite managed. I made too many maneuvers to resist him. Now that I'm awake, that dog reminds me of material desires trying to gain an upper hand and me resisting them. If I was in an another environment, it would be much harder to resist my desires, especially if I had no engaging work or spiritual association. Krishna has been kind to me in this life.

* * *

9:24 a.m.

Don't intentionally commit sins on the strength of chanting. Yamaraja asks forgiveness for the offenses committed by his servants.

Didn't talk or write on my walk today. I don't always have to make comments. If you can sing *kirtana*, do it, but if you're only going to express more half-hearted guilt over petty desires, fear of excesses, then why bother?

Ink marks of shame. The Yamas got in line with their master and, no joke, placed their palms together in supplication, asking to be forgiven. Here Sukadeva interjects a point to emphasize the power and auspiciousness of *sankirtana*. Srila Prabhupada again quotes the *Padma Purana* verse, which is crucial and relevant to me: *Namaparadha yuktanam*. His paraphrase: "Even if one chants the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* offensively, one can avoid offenses by continuously chanting without deviation. One who becomes accustomed to this practice will always remain in a pure transcendental position, untouchable by sinful reactions." (*Bhag.* 6.3.32, purport)

What is the dynamic? We have to know there is no other way. Whatever else we try in the name of religion or meditation will not have effect in this age. There is no other way in this age but to call on the holy name. The holy name is so purifying (*tivrena bhakti-yogena*) that even if we chant it with offense, we receive benefit. By repeatedly chanting, the disease of ignorance will be destroyed. Then we will be able to enter the clearing stage. We should never lose hope or reject even the mechanical chanting we do each day. Better times are ahead. Do we want Krishna consciousness? Then simply chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. "A devotee's duty is to chant the Hare Krishna mantra. One may sometimes chant with offenses and sometimes without offense, but if one seriously adopts this process he will achieve perfection." (*Bhag.* 6.3.33, purport)

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Able to sail into the writing even when you haven't prepared a starting point? That's called improvisation. The new kayak is being plied by a man using an oar with flat blades whittled on each end. One end is painted fluorescent pink and the other fluorescent green. I want to see into that man's Krishna conscious heart as easily as I look into the dictionary to define a word. Therefore I have *sastra*.

I have been hearing Bhurijana Prabhu's talks on the *Bhagavatam's* First Canto, Chapter Seven. There Krishna appears for the first time in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* as Arjuna's chariot driver. There He is, protecting His devotee, giving him intelligence. Bhurijana says Sukadeva Gosvami is creating the impetus in us to become attracted to Krishna and to surrender to Him, because He is so wonderful.

How can we develop faith and conviction? Sometimes going to the usual sources of mercy doesn't seem to help. We don't approach them in the right way. We need to hear with submission and to be favored by Krishna in the heart. There's that Tenth Canto verse *athapi te deva . . .* unless we are favored by the Lord we cannot understand Him. And the *Upanisad* verse confirms it: *nayam atma pravacanena labhya*, Krishna only gives mercy to those whom He chooses. Then *yasya deve para bhaktir*: only if we approach Him with faith in guru and Krishna will He reveal the Vedic truth. Follow guru. He gives and the Lord gives. Show sincerity. Don't rest on past laurels of what you did in the '70s or '80s. We want to see what you can do now to serve. regular hearing and chanting is necessary. Be disciplined about that, even if you cannot be spontaneous.

* * *

Swami low-level you
are grateful you have no pain today
and are already thinking
you could do much more.

* * *

Swami, do you remember Guyana and how

you were nervous in that country
thinking of riots and a detained
exit? Do you remember the headaches there and
how hot it was, how you had to play guru
you spoke to Madhu
decided how to get through it honorably?
What was most on your mind?

* * *

On my mind was this place where
I could write and be at peace
where I could look out this window
and the day would be mine
to use as I liked.
But Swami, can you get this
airship off the ground?

* * *

What does he mean, "Can you get this off the ground"? He means, "Can you pray, can you love Krishna, can you go deep?"

* * *

3 p.m.

The mendicant illustrated in verse 32 of *Light of the Bhagavata* is a Buddhist. His robes are flowing Far-Eastern, and they are red. His begging bowl, his long earlobes, the stark Chinese landscape "but he too is free of family responsibilities and resembles a white cloud. Srila Prabhupada says the system is topsy-turvy in Kali-yuga. "Thus the so-called *sannyasis* try to construct another home in the name of *sannyasa-aSrama* and glide down into all sorts of luxury at the expense of others . . . transcendental frauds." Spare me from that in my Wicklow cottage. Courage to say it.

" . . . unless the *sannyasi* is freed from all cares and anxieties, like a white cloud, it is difficult for him to do any good for society."

The *acarya* is like the waterfall who sometimes flows and sometimes does not, as the circumstance requires. It is not possible to purchase him to recite *rasa-lila*. Sometimes he is silent.

Silent. Says only what it best, what is honest, what he has realized. Says what his spiritual master has taught him.

* * *

Love?
& Mr. Henry is spinning around in his
head, dizzy. Doesn't want to be in

love, doesn't want to be straining . . .
Love?
Oh, for Krishna, but he can't
expect
so much.

* * *

Gentle rain, three days
without a headache
a big deal.

* * *

Henry just doesn't desire it "
the full revelation of God
where He shows He is there he
loves He exists in all "
these things Henry
knows well
but doesn't seem to wake up to see
the wonders Krishna sends.

* * *

Where is Dhruva's lamentation "
"I just want You
I don't want broken
bits of glass!"?

* * *

The love he wants to come into
although Henry is not worthy
not worthy
no flinches or twitches
no left-side juicy omens
no eightfold *sattvikas*.

* * *

Just school-boy calm
waterfalls, white clouds
sannyasi in a protected sphere
not with red robes but
Red beads

and the cry-call of
Krishna's flute I
place in His hand without
shaking my
dear *murti*
delicate Boy. "

* * *

3 p.m.

Little fish in ponds that are being evaporated by the sun are like people who don't understand that their days are numbered: "Not caring for the nearing day of their death, [they] become absorbed in the so-called enjoyment of family life . . . " Don't miss that point. Keep your needs simple.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty
Episode #11

The rowers go over to see the island. The active imagination, can it be done even when the light grows dim and it's cold?

A man loves God. I want to be that man. But I heard it costs a lot. I heard if you just chant the Hare Krishna mantra, it will eventually come. I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings.

Love's a big word.

* * *

Lenny Silverberg mused and laughed, got high on his recreational drug which he could barely afford. Made a living selling . . .

The Hare Krishnas, I heard, live on that island. How do they make their money? Ah, here comes my bus.

* * *

So the devotee was praying in the shed. Tried different methods. Now he reads a little *sastra* and writes. Yes, he will try in writing.

But love, I mean, *prema*, is Krishna's prerogative "to bestow if He wishes. If we don't even *believe* in Him, how can we expect Him to shower us with love?

"Oh well," the supplicant said, "I read of those who love Him, and their prayers are helpful." Sometimes they pass down a prayer that's been said by previous devotees. The Hamsa-guhya prayers are like that.

The class listens intensely to Professor Satsfer's lecture, but suddenly there seems an end to what he has to say. The students turn off their minds and judge, and he is rated by how many stars his performance is worth.

He drones on anyway. What else can he do? He knows (thought) that this is no toe-tapping entertainment.

Hmm, pensive man, we did come for a good time too "is that wrong?

The conflict builds, maybe a higher, exalted conflict with God. Wailing to Him "those were hysterical times "they poured out the injustice of what was happening to their people. They witnessed it in a naked way.

* * *

"Had we known," the president said, "we would not have let the group play before the assembly." Are they attacking us? Is this a veiled criticism of our napalm bombs, riot, choking out lives of the people?

Not providing any moral or spiritual direction?

I mean *I* could scream too,

"but what's the use? We all know it's unfathomable and there is no God in heaven . . .

"

So stated the embarrassed State Department officials
in a dream "just
a dream, or as soft-armed mommy used to say,
"It's only a movie."

* * *

Cow bells. Vrndavana.

Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We didn't expect things to get so out of hand, but since when was anything in *our* control, right?

Is this what they mean by deconstruction?

A duck searches through weeds.

O Lord, I attest to my need to come before You as I am, complete with pain and confusion, the peace and the storm, the spiral of cycles. If only I can be forever engaged in Your devotional service. O Krishna, Hare

Krishna.

I suffer from lack of intention.

But I don't want to.

January 30, 12:12 a.m.

The trees "save the trees! He is burning them all down.

Start to read a new chapter (*Bhag.* 6.4). I don't like the see-through quality of this paper; I prefer Prabhupada's deluxe editions. Daksa was born from Pramaloca, by the semen of all the Pracetas. Don't try to figure it out. Old Daksa whom we grew to dislike earlier is now reciting the Hamsa-guhya prayers.

* * *

The earth was covered by trees. It can be cleared for agriculture. The Pracetas became angry to see the earth overrun with trees, but Srila Prabhupada says preachers should remain tolerant. Soma is the maintainer of trees and herbs throughout the universe. He came to ask the Pracetas to stop their wholesale tree burning.

* * *

"We have many tendencies in this material world, but in human life one is meant to learn how to curb those tendencies." A *brahmana* has to remind you not to eat cow's flesh, not to smoke cigarettes, not to . . . To always follow our material tendencies means we could wind up a cannibal enjoying human flesh. Like Mrgari the hunter we could one day find ourselves asking, "What's wrong with half-killing animals? It brings me pleasure." We could wind up committing amazing sins and then facing the reaction.

* * *

8:50 a.m.

Fixed myself, Prabhupada, and Radha-Govinda a cold breakfast with plenty of yogurt, three pieces of fruit, and some dried figs. As I sankirtana party to face the opposition. When they returned to the temple, Prabhupada would remind them of what he wanted. Who could resist and still claim to be his disciple? Of course, my mind made its usual rationalizations: I go out by writing books. I can't do otherwise because of my health, etc. Nevertheless, I honored Prabhupada's statements along with my breakfast.

* * *

9:15 a.m.

I read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to reconfirm the basic facts taught by Vedic knowledge. For example, in a purport Srila Prabhupada quotes *iSvara sarva bhutanam hrdeSarjuna* . . . and I nod acceptance: Yes, the Supreme Lord is in the hearts of all living beings. This won't be confirmed in any other literature. The most exalted literature I might read, say of the Christian tradition, does not supply this simple fact except vaguely, and often tinged with impersonalism. Only the *Vedas* assure us that the Supreme God is present in every creature's heart in a localized form.

Daksa recited the Hamsa Guhya prayers. He said the conditioned souls cannot see the Supreme Lord; He is not within the purview of their material vision, and they cannot consider any reality beyond what they see. Srila Prabhupada writes, "One may understand him or not, but nevertheless He is existing in His own spiritual potency." (*Bhag.* 6.4.23, purport) Daksa offers the Supreme Lord obeisances even though he cannot see Him.

Is this demand lurking in me ""Why can't I see Krishna?" So here I read that the inability to see God is common to all *jivas*. Ordinary citizens or workers cannot see the king. (Kafka plays upon this in a perversely agnostic way in *The Castle* "examining why the Supreme would be unseen, and what are His ill motives toward the people, if He exists at all.)

Because we can understand many physical laws and circumstances, we become proud and say, "If God exists, how come I can't see Him too?" But Daksa and pious persons offer obeisances to the unseen and unlimited whom we cannot understand. There is plenty of Sastric information about His existence and nature, and we can reason in His favor and ultimately come to know at least a little of His energies and qualities.

In the state of complete purity, "One's material vision and the memories of the mind, which manifests names and forms, are vanquished. Only in such a trance is the Supreme Personality of Godhead revealed." (*Bhag.* 6.4.26)

* * *

10:15 a.m.

See the swan, see the wake it leaves, how calm and cold. How far away. It all comes from Krishna. We must enter Krishna consciousness.

Dog barking. The paper arrived yesterday "I mean, the 150 gm drawing sheets. I used the first one by making a drawing in tan and brown tempera "a strong-armed, long-haired man with a ladder. A simple illustration, non-abstract. I liked it. He is a herald of the many drawings to come if I will simply allow my hand to move. I have to do whatever comes in order to get to the nice things from the ocean of milk.

Drink water, make penance, bide your time, make the most of it.

Swami, do you still love me?

Swami, can you rescue me?

Swami, leave me alone to my own devices.

* * *

O master-Swami, Prabhupada,
this little swami you made in 1972
is still yours, if you'll accept him.
Please allow me to serve you
although I am an outcast.

* * *

11:58 a.m.

Krishna, Krishna. I read some writers to springboard. I need only Krishna and His words and devotees. But I seem to need to keep moving a little bit away in order to see my need to come back. Sound strange?

So calm, although I see a few ripples starting. Up and down "my tides can be tracked on graphs. At midnight I'm usually a little grumpy, but then I read until the light turns on. By then, I turn gladly to *japa*. Then I feel the intense disappointment of the reality of my chanting, the lack of love. I prove I can plod through it. After that, I find myself looking forward to doing something creative (reading or writing or painting). From 4:00 to 4:15 a.m. I spend sublime time with radha and Krishna in the Deity worship. Up and down and around the curves. So it moves until I find myself anticipating lunch, if it's not a headache day (in which case everything is different and I face only endurance). At any

time of this up and down twenty-four hours, I can look out the window at the lake and feel the intensity of my solitude closing about me like a curtain. I feel determination then.

Srila Prabhupada said determination includes patience and enthusiasm.

For me, I find patience by laughing at my adjectives: "Overall determination" "sounds like he's determined in his overalls.

Then what? Will I be able to go to the shed this afternoon? That would be nice.

O Lord Hari, I've got this all figured out. I know well how to be embarrassed and shy and ashamed. What a joke. Lord, You are in control of this complex material nature, of me. Even though I am a senior *sannyasi* (see my epaulets?), I am a toad. Only You know me. *They* don't know me and I don't know them. You know I love You.

Ah me. Ah You!

Hey, I'll have to grow up. I'm still an inexperienced feckless kid. Haven't suffered or seen death, haven't had my heart broken by the death of any loved one other than Prabhupada. Perhaps I haven't faced enough opposition. Louis Armstrong was abandoned as a tiny kid in rags, ate out of garbage cans, lived forever more insecure. But he made music. I have my own psychic scars. I want to know You.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Cold shed, fog head. Warm it up. See if you can write your quota without more head pressure closing in. I sometimes feel I need light reading, lighter than *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Today I looked at Sarton's journal, *Encore*, written in her eightieth year. Her cat Pierrot, her friends, her coping "I can't help but feel I'm doing better than she did because her writing contains no mention of God. rather, she mentions her fans, and that she feels good assuring women to love each other with passion. My message is more important than that, but whether I carry it graciously has to be proven. Sarton is at least brave enough to live, as is any eighty-year-old, with the fact that death could come at any moment. It's more obvious when you're that old. She copes, she takes her sleeping pills, she lets out her cat and lets it back in, receives visitors, answers mail. She describes her feelings and her health, and assumes her readers are indulgent friends. She talks to herself and to us. Is this me? Look into the mirror when you are eighty years old (if you live that long), and see your own withered face and body. What will I be saying at that age?

Now to *Light of the Bhagavata*: "People who live [only for sense pleasure] are like little fish in small ponds of water where it's too hot from the sun." They continue to have children or to abort them (as if they could abort their sufferings). We should be seeking "cultivation of the human spirit," which leads to "eternal enjoyment and personal contact with the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna." (LOB #35)

That's my complaint against Sarton: she appears to be absorbed in eating, flowers, her literary career "which is all right if it is linked to *bhakti*. But for whom do we live? Failing to remember Him "what is the purpose in staying alive? A human being should at least strive for *bhakti* and somehow chant His names. But if we have no spiritual master, we have no way of knowing that. That's sad.

In autumn things dry up and vegetation fades. This is compared to the positive symptom of "the gradual disappearance of the materialistic ego," which identifies the soul with the body.

"The ultimate goal of cultivating the human spirit is God realization and surrender unto God with a full sense of His all-pervasive nature." Human life is not just for "mere adjustment of materialistic anomalies," it's for preparing to be promoted to the spiritual world. The Krishna conscious soul can be liberated even while living in the body.

* * *

Link It
& I think I'm such a good guy
in my *etude*. I am in
a house almost always
I don't get out
and I don't even mind
so much
as long as the ink
doesn't
Run out.

* * *

Krishna, even here You are blowing that flute
that song
and it can be connected and written
onto a peony
a Chinese scroll
connected to a cry
and called
yoga.

* * *

But I want to link it artfully
without squeaks or other
strange sounds
first-class

* * *

and only my guru
can help me.
Then I will share it.

* * *

No requirements for those who are willing
just catch it and chant
Hare Krishna in
your role or your hole
where you live
and walk under your walk
my moon
is at Lough Erne.

* * *

To remind you: Krishna sits with His
friends and they all eat lunch
and in Italy in the afternoon
the *sundara-arati* is
often lonely. Whoever you are,
make your offering of
sweetness with
a candle, a piece of fruit,
water "
anything. "

* * *

5:55 p.m., Night Notes

I'm not going to re-read *Soul-Making*. relief. That frees me to return to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* wherein God reveals Himself directly. It's neither myth nor metaphor. Live in faith.

Curtains closed for the night. I did another painting on the new drawing sheets. They're going to be fun; their size alone prompts dramatic work. When you paint on a big surface, the paintings that come can shock you, they're so life-like.

"The Lord may be addressed by various spiritual names, which are inconceivable for the material senses. When will that Supreme Personality of Godhead be pleased with me?" (*Bhag.* 6.4.28)

January 31, 12:15 a.m.

Expert *brahmanas* can bring fire out of wood by chanting mantras, and those who are Krishna conscious can find the Supersoul in the heart. The heart has many material coverings. We have to be eager to be free of the varieties of material life. "May that Supersoul be pleased with me." (*Bhag.* 6.4.28)

See Him under the coverings. Don't think you can enjoy or struggle with material life in many ways and make Krishna a hobby. Purity of heart is to will one thing. This sounds too heroic for me to attain. How dare I claim to pursue even *quiet* heroics? My bravery is to accept a few headaches a week and to stay alone and write, but where is my stark eagerness, the desperation to remove the coverings that separate me from the Lord?

I like the *Bhagavatam's* reference to Krishna as hidden and unknown, yet how it gives us the confidence that He exists and may be addressed by His inconceivable names. Adhoksaja, Ananta, all-attractive Krishna, the all-pervasive "*advaitam acyutam anadi ananta rupam, adyam purana purusam nava-yauvanam ca "nanda-tanuja*" we are the servant of the servant a hundred times removed.

The purport indicates that knowing Krishna is *durvijneyam*, "very difficult to realize." Srila Prabhupada quotes Bg. 7.28, and in this context it does seem difficult: "Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life, completely free of sins and duality "engage in My service with determination. They are very determined, great souls who always chant . . . " (Bg. 9.14) Therefore, Krishna says that hardly one knows Him in truth. Evidence for how difficult it is to get past material impediments. Don't complain that Krishna isn't doing His job to reach us. We got ourselves into this hell. Now if we dally here instead of working for liberation . . .

Sometimes we are told that Lord Caitanya has made it easy for us to escape. That's a relative statement. I mean, it's easy in Kali-yuga compared to what it was in previous ages. Even this easy method, however, is difficult for us now. We are *manda samanda matayoh*.

Srila Prabhupada explains that all material impediments are but energies of the Lord. We can overcome them if we practice devotional service, beginning with *Sravanam kirtanam*. "Easily making his way through these impediments, a devotee comes directly in contact with the Supreme Personality of Godhead." I am reminded of how Narada penetrated into the Lord's presence by transcendental vibration. remember that sign in the window at 26 Second Avenue? It said, "Transcendental sound vibration." Cynics thought it was another '60s spiritual hoax. We thought it sounded groovy. It was as easy as taking LSD.

"Being pleased with the devotees, the Lord turns all his material impediments into spiritual service." Srila Prabhupada is encouraging. It's easy, but we do have to devote our whole lives to the path. Do we agree to do so? We all hanker for happiness. Direct that energy toward pleasing Krishna. Then we can meet Him. But if we're directed elsewhere, what can we expect?

Material activities will only produce material results. Therefore, they "have nothing to do with the real nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 6.4.30) God is not a material creation. "One cannot properly understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead merely by picking expressions from a dictionary." The Lord is beyond material descriptions.

* * *

Wherever You Are
& Did a painting of Radha and Krishna
and now
I want to tell you don't
listen to anyone, be carefree the
man said.
You infect me and I'll give

you a little Krishna conscious wisdom
I picked up (not from
Typhoid Mary).

* * *

Where did I get my Krishna consciousness
my good looks? From the
same place you got your strength,
father.

* * *

Father where did you go?
Why is the page yellow?
Where is Baladeva driving his
truck "in the snow?
Hello

* * *

Come over on the radio I
love you too. Work for
our cause.

* * *

Eerie ear
the world could shake earth
and fall apart just when
I thought I was enjoying myself.

* * *

Practice Krishna consciousness chanting
"O my God!"
Practice O my God
I love to try to chant Your
holy name.
Then wherever we
are in different parts of
ecosystem we'll die
off and come back.

* * *

Hayagriva and Srila Prabhupada meeting on
the street Second Avenue again?
I don't say don't
claim he's got a young body
although it's possible.

* * *

Eerie, sweet, be rid of
taints
impediments
bricks
unless you need them
to build this house in which you can live
forever in surrender
while walking down
that hill. And don't try to get others to
enjoy what you love
but put it out
for Him. "

* * *

8:40 a.m.

Out on my morning walk I kicked a rock off the path and then noticed an unfamiliar tire tread on the back woods path, maybe a motorcycle. On my second lap, I suddenly looked up and saw Andy. I abruptly turned around and walked the other way. That may seem strange, but the alternative was to stop and have an official chat. We have little in common, although I feel well disposed toward him. Even if others see me as aloof, I know I mean no harm.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Love is for Krishna, Srila Prabhupada says. Otherwise, much advertised claims for brotherly or universal (or sexual) love are all nonsense. I like to hear that. I can't realize Krishna's love, but I like the idea. It's romantic.

And even though my own reality is not so romantic but dutiful "the fear of "the loss of heaven and the pains of hell" "I prefer it to any cheap *prakṛta-sahajīya*. Love of God wrings out our material desires. The truth is difficult to face and the work even harder. I've heard that the pain of separation the *gopīs* feel is as real and much more intense as material grief. I'm not up to that high-spirited love. I used to joke, at my own expense, that the symptoms of the *Santa-bhakta* seem to fit me "solitude, not so interested in association with devotees, meditating on the sublime nature of God, not much active service. My romance is to appreciate the spiritual heroes and heroines of the *parakīya*-

rasa or even the intense anxieties of Krishna's parents, but I know I'm not up to feeling those things myself.

Maybe there's another level of love for which I could qualify. I love working with intimate disciples on producing books, for example, but I suppose that's more like satisfaction than love. I don't really know how to distinguish one taste from another so well, and maybe it's not so important for me to do so. I can only be what I am, although I'm trying to be more.

Sometimes I'm happy, sometimes I'm blue. I don't like it when a pen stops working; I like it when it writes smoothly. I like the comforting scratching sound of the pen in my hand in an otherwise quiet room when I can look up at the strait. Life itself "I like that too, and the adventure of writing. I have a strong sense of duty "within twenty-four hours I know I will read and write done and chant my sixteen rounds.

I am writing this after subduing pain with an Esgic. Maybe that has something to do with my mood of admitting that I am seeking peace (a pain-free existence), and that is mixed in with my Krishna conscious goals. Love of God seems like a Mt. Everest I may never climb. I feel grateful even to live on its slopes. There are plenty of people on my level and below, and at least I can write to them.

Nice mention in Sartre's diary of the satisfaction an artist gets to knowing he or she comforts others in the world. She quotes Neruda, who says that the poet's aim is to embody hope for the people, to be one leaf in the great tree of humanity. Neruda says that his reward comes when "a certain coal miner comes out of his work and says to him, 'I have known you for a long time, my brother!' That is the laurel crown of my poetry, that opening in the bleak pampas from which a worker emerges, who has been told often by the wind in the night and the stars of Chile: 'You are not alone, there is a poet whose thoughts are with you in your suffering.'"

* * *

2:35 p.m.

When the sea become calm, you can navigate it. Not that you don't cross the sea at all. This is comparable to a *jiva* quieting his "storms of desire and lust." The *asuras* are engaged in outward activities, and the whole human society is stormy with *ugra-karma*, "but men in the mode of goodness have an introspective mind, and after a regulative struggle of existence they retire at a ripe old age and engage their time in cultivating the human spirit." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, #37)

After the rainy season farmers rebuild walls around paddy fields to conserve water, "just as *yogis* try to use their conserved energy for self-realization." We should spend our limited energies internally, by entering the Lord's internal energy. More rain won't come in this season. Similarly, we cannot expect to receive another human body (too rare) if we misuse this one for sense gratification.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty
Episode # 12
To be.

Offering. I made my offering in the plate they passed down the aisle "in an envelope, so they wouldn't know how much.

He's exploring God and
what can I say?

When he tries to make it came out like he's enlightened
and peaceful
it doesn't work because
of that constant inner struggle.

Then he'll think of beautiful clouds sailing and his own self trying for love
divine

the varying moods
and the musical ink blot

Junior places before him.

"Why the cries of pain? Is it because of the mistreatment and rejection of your people in Russia or elsewhere? Is it the sad disarray of temples?"

Oh, write something ennobling. Why are you so troubled?

"It's modern art," said A.I. Advocate. She seemed resigned, as if her own day wasn't going so well either. Satsfer sat back and thought . . .

"Why don't you take these felt pens and write on this white plastic board about anything you like?" asked A.I. Advocate. "We'll give it a title beforehand, 'Expression.' Would that suit your mood?"

He wondered why they were being condescending, why they were even bothering about him since he wasn't a paying customer. Or was he "was he going to be billed for this?

* * *

Expression. He drew his expression and now reports it through the written medium, although words cannot always capture color, form, or even sound. He drew a handsome man of spirit who was facing his day and his life with reverence. Then he felt the strain of responsibility to love this figure who seemed to be loving Krishna with such trust and integrity. It took effort, but he managed it in the end.

We are ordinary people. after all. We don't have clear enlightenment or know the orderly science of God that tracks transcendence through the descending process. We are gropers. I say this plainly.

Krishna comes home with His cows. I stand on the roof of a house and see the dust raised by the cows' hooves. Gradually, I am able to discern Krishna and the cowherd boys. The scene is indescribably beautiful, and now I know why Krishna's form cannot be seen by *jnanis* and *karmis*. Only *bhaktas* can see Him, because His is a form of love. The mothers are straining forward.

"You really see that?" Junior asks (stupidly).

Yes, I do.

"What about that screaming and conflict and self-striving for God? Is that gone?"

That depends who's asking.

"By the way, have we run out of gas in this shed? It's getting cold."

I'm seeing Krishna and you're bringing this stuff up? Hey, don't interrupt my trance.

Krishna playing the flute. He walks like a maddened young elephant. His beautiful headaddress mocks the sunlight dappled on leaves. *Karnikara* flowers sit behind His ears, and His hair is black "more black than my stumbling words can capture. He brings peace to the heart, because Krishna is coming home, and even in this world we can remember this vision.

I look up but Junior is gone. There is also no A.I. Advocate, and this is no "artist-in-residence" loft. I am alone in the shed examining my handwriting. O Krishna, I love You.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:47 p.m.

M. back from Wicklow. Work on the house down there is slow. I'm satisfied to work up here in a smooth, slow rhythm of days and nights. They had no fuel or heating on the island, so they bought wood from a neighbor and carried it across on the barge. But the barge sank. It took all day to lift and drain it. Now they have brought another load of wood to heat the building. It is very difficult to live in that damp building without heat.

Get ready for rest. I am warm enough over here. The shed is heated by propane. Brought paints back to this room, and five hundred sheets of drawing paper. This is external stuff. The internal is my love for Krishna. The Hare Krishna mantra is rising.

February 1, 12:15 a.m.

It's Krishna in the hearts of the philosophers who causes them to agree or disagree among themselves. When they say there is no God or that *sastra* comes from men, we turn the tables and say, "You're wrong, so wrong." Why, then, should we be bewildered by their arguments? We are Vedic theists, monotheists, the *visnujana*, and want to think of Krishna in Vrndavana. No wishy-washies need apply. "Are you convinced?" Srila Prabhupada once asked, and we still sometimes sit on our eggs, trying to decide how to answer that one.

In his purport to 6.4.31, Srila Prabhupada writes that nondevotee philosophers tend to disagree with one another, but Vaisnavas don't have that difficulty. They do not need to end their sentences in, "I think." rather, they accept *sastra*, or what comes down in disciplic succession. The nondevotee thinkers scorn our "pat" answers, which they consider dogmatic or sectarian. We must defy them, ignore them, even avoid them. Stay true to the *Vedas* and the *acaryas*. Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami says we should not avoid philosophical controversies but should strengthen the mind with logic and the Sastric arguments in favor of *govindam adi-purusam*.

Beyond that, a devotee prefers to glorify Krishna and not wrangle over whether or not He exists. When the challenge comes, we are ready to fight, and we should win, at least within ourselves. Don't be like the Yamadutas who were embarrassed by their ignorance.

"All these speculators are envious of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." They are cast away by Krishna, and sink down into the lower species of life. " . . . because of their offenses the Supreme Lord keeps them always bewildered."

I tend to worry that this is circular reasoning: You can know Krishna if you become His devotee; if you don't love Krishna, then you cannot know Him. Only when you surrender to Him and follow His instructions can you understand the Lord. Srila Prabhupada trained us to understand that there is nothing wrong with this kind of reasoning. It's theistic. To know God, it is not enough to follow your own path. To gain knowledge in any field, we need the initial faith to pursue it. Then we must approach one learned in the field, an authority, and accept his or her system of learning. There are basic assumptions in any field. The same is true for the science of God. The secrets of mechanistic science are not open to those who are uninitiated and untrained. A layman must accept the authority of experts. The science of the Absolute Truth is open to those who wish to study with a bona fide spiritual master representing the *parampara*.

Yes, I like that line of reason. I don't want to remain a *mudha*. I will walk beside Srila Prabhupada and occasionally play the role of the doubting Thomas or the demon, but in my heart, I want to drop that role and become his true student.

* * *

I'll Say Juty
& I am in the light and you are where you are we
are Krishna conscious entities. I don't want to write I
want to read. Come on
and be with me.
Forget Krishna conscious poems
your influences
and just be who you are.

* * *

Or should I say the opposite "
forget who you are and
just give us Krishna consciousness
be a short-order cook "
and throw out a *sutra* a
Sloka
a lecture
on demand?

* * *

This morning I'll tell
inside and out what Lord Caitanya did on
His southern tour when He met
Ramananda.

* * *

Then in boots I'll walk
to the quay and step
into the boat, sit on the pad
Arjuna will have placed there for me.
A mistake is allowed
but open to daylight since we know
no other routine. Walk in
wet woods
where deer strip bark
and near where the barge sunk
on the right side.

* * *

I'm in the GBC meeting
hall in my mind, on the conference seat
we want to improve social order
so sit at computers
or stand on Oslo's streets
or in ratty kitchens
on cold altars
in warm-as-hell Guyana
not worried because Krishna
is taking care of us.
What other improvements are
Required?

* * *

Krishna is the boy judge "
in our hearts those
sometimes cruel passages
with no love to be found.

* * *

At the end JS will come by my
bedside say that's enough jive
now try to think of Krishna
"Juty" I'll say, "Juty."
"Huh? Judy?"
"No, Juty."

* * *

"Oh," he'll say, I think

I know what he's talking about. He needs
Ganges and Yamuna in his mouth
and let's get back
to our lunch.

* * *

Swing Radha-Krishna and send me where
you want I'm old enough to know
and drooling in my porridge
O Justice Department of Dublin
let me stay in your country
where I'll roam
by Supersoul sent
to a quiet place of love. "

* * *

11:25 a.m.

Gave class, came back, couldn't write (too much resistance). Laid down so "it"
wouldn't come. Now?

Doubts are like hungry ghosts: if you let them enter, they'll gnaw at your heart. Don't
foster doubts.

Aside from that, whenever I lecture the same things tend to happen. If I
mention *varnaSrama*, the same devotee will raise his hand and another devotee, also the
same, will counter it. It's like that. That's all right because Srila Prabhupada also says the
same thing, and we have chosen to hear him forever.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

Picture of Krishna playing His flute, with *gopis* who look a bit like geisha girls, in the
Chinese illustration. The full moon is nice. Krishna looks a bit too thin, but who am I to
criticize? If we live under the shelter of Sri Krishna, we will be soothed just as the
cooling rays of the moon soothe the autumn season. " . . . the regular practice of *bhakti-*
yoga will lead the devotee to the plane of intense love for the Lord and that is the single
qualification by which the conditioned soul is allowed to re-enter the eternal life of bliss
in the Kingdom of God." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, #39)

Quiet heroics "I think this book is well named. I have decided not to abandon this
field.

"In the clear autumn sky the twinkling stars appear brighter and brighter, just like a
transcendentalist with clear vision of the purpose of the *Vedas*." (*Light of the*
Bhagavata, #40)

Yes, I'd like to be that way "bright and growing ever brighter. A lone star, yet near
other stars all revolving around our spiritual master and the Supreme Lord.

"He has His eternal two-armed form as Syamasundara and with features exactly like those of the most beautiful young man, and that is the sum and substance of the *Vedas* concerning God." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, #40) The moon is the cynosure among the beautiful stars (over the ocean in the Chinese picture), and Lord Krishna is the central attraction among devotees.

* * *

I've Heard
& How deep is the ocean of love
felt by those pure devotees
who quiver with delight
and who willingly suffer
when Krishna is sometimes
not in sight?

* * *

I don't know what to say about that but I'm
watching a rowboat travel to the
island for the Sunday feast in this
quiet place.

* * *

Krishna, Krishna, Your flute has enchanted
the *gopis*, Your hurried and soft and
deep and calling notes . . . they say even
when the air blows through the holes
it sounds like Your flute-song, and
once Jatila heard it and came
Running to chastise You.

* * *

Sri Krishna I've heard
the flute, the
treat, the sad heart, the
Rough speech. And in the
night when it's quiet . . .
I've also heard the truths that
can save me when I die.
Please help me
remember what I've heard
and so go to You in earnest. "

* * *

I'm A Converter
& I'm a converter
I take what passes and put
it in His service, fix it "
that's all.

* * *

Don't be lost to Him. Does
a mother love her baby's
shoes? No, she loves her child
and we love everything that is
His.

* * *

You have screeched from
Rooftops and that seems
befitting the age
passed. Now we are
showing them we know their
anger
neither cold heartless or
staid.

* * *

May Sarton eats fish at night and
looks at flowers. A priest hears
confessions "not mine.
To whom *do* I confess.

* * *

Tired but brave
but tired. Prunes expired their
"best date" was '96.

* * *

Gopas crazy under the
moon "Bala and
Nitya
happy loose *gopas*

without adults
and I scratch
here home-free. "

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorty
Episode #13
You're on your own.
"I am?"

No, I guess each person is with God. So I begin to prepare notes for a lecture I'll give on Lord Nityananda's Appearance Day.

"Sit down everyone," I'll say, but the blond, German-Irish baby boy will pout, then throw himself on the temple room floor, even when his very nice mom asks him to color with pencils.

I've been spoiled by acerbic critics "or perhaps they prevent me from becoming sentimental "I'm not sure which. I just want to give people a tune they can easily hum.

Krishna! Such sad stuff. Anyway, today is sunny and cold. I will try to take a walk and find that familiar, almost military marching tune to which we can walk until our dying day.

* * *

I was groping like this when a friend appeared at the door
completely with support
and love
and respect. I couldn't go on.

"I'm just eating this up," I said.

I've heard of the "modern artists urge," or what the critics say about it, and I'm confused. Is it a hoax, or what? I'd like to live simply and confidently.

"Silence is good for you," said A.I. Advocate.

You're still here?

"Don't get nasty."

No, I didn't mean it that way. I just wondered whether you still cared enough to see me through this even though I gave up writing about loss. Few people would stand for this mewling around, this breaking down. They prefer orderly seminar presentations followed by exams. But you . . .

* * *

Nevertheless, Krishna conscious lessons need to be imparted. Preachy may not be good, but spaced-out voidism is worse. We want to improve the performance of the Hare Krishnas in this year's St. Paddy's Day parade, Dublin. The Commission barely allowed them to appear, and only after they promised to put on a well-choreographed show depicting a snake who swallows boys and are then released by another boy's magic (the theme of this year's parade is magic).

* * *

The others were interested when I spoke more sanely. I'll try to do that more often. Prabhupada dasa wrote in the recent literary magazine, describing some encounters he had had on the Dublin streets. The best piece in the magazine was, in my opinion, the fragmentary yet somehow complete description by Abhaya dasi of what she saw as she waited in her car on a rainy day in Lisnaskea while her daughter went into a store to buy butter.

* * *

I will open *Bhagavad-gita* in my mind. Seventh chapter says Krishna is in the sound of ether and in the taste of water. The sixth chapter advises we don't eat too much or too little, and don't be lost to Him. A true *yogi* observes everything in Him and sees Him everywhere.

* * *

Got a cut under my nose.

One lady had pinched nerves excruciating pain. I can take a pill for my pain. Please give me relief. Give us something we can manage so we can chant our rounds and read scripture.

* * *

4:07 p.m.

Okay, so my heroics are very quiet. Still, I'm grateful. I want to express that, and even more, I want to mean it. I'm grateful for the soft rain that's falling "the way it tinkles on my coat. I'm grateful I can write and find meaning in everything. I can see thorns and sometimes feel their scratch, and I know that everything belongs. I am trying to assimilate that wisdom and live at least a tiny bit of it. Stay on the track "Bhaktivedanta *marga*. At least in your mind. Follow the rules and regulations strictly. Have a taste for it, and don't desire to deviate, especially from the four rules. Hare Krishna.

Good-bye to *Quiet Heroics*. Say hello tomorrow, February 2, Groundhog's Day, to a new volume. The groundhog is supposed to surface on February 2, look around, and if it sees its shadow, dive back into its hole. That indicates that there will be six more weeks of winter. I don't care how many more weeks there will be, as long as I can love Krishna.

* * *

5:10 p.m., Night Notes

Pukka Pad is getting kind of crazy. That's all right if it's in earnest and not contrived. But don't put your hand all the way around your head just to touch your nose. If by writing "crazy" pages I find a way to write more honestly, or to wrest out of myself a worthy expression "a better way to preach, for example "then I don't mind if it cannot be

published. If it gives me strength and cleans out the cobwebs, that will be worth it in itself. But if it takes me away from simple Krishna consciousness, then there's no point.

I'm still racing to make touchdowns, hit home runs or whatever. Preaching actively. That means to write a lot. Krishna is kind to me. I don't want to travel anywhere or see anyone. I simply want to write them a book.

So face the blank and keep going with both patience and determination. Don't gobble painkillers. My "heroics" are to measure out only two pills a week and face the rest of the week without medication. O indwelling guide, I look for Your mercy.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

There's a little light in the sky, but I should close the curtains now. Devotees down by the boathouse. The collie is yelping as if to underscore the deep peace I feel here. Except for that barking, all is quiet except my mind. Still, we devotees are full of hope and gratitude for the gift our spiritual master has given us: the chance to practice Krishna consciousness.