

Pada-yātrā

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

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Pada-yātrā

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Foreword

I have not read this book by Satsvaroopar Bejammer, but I expect it will be good. He's an old hand at this stuff. I heard his premise was to follow Bhaktimārga Swami's example, who's walking across Canada chanting sixty-four rounds a day to celebrate His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's centennial (1896–1996).

I wish him well, of course, even though I'm a professor of Indology and can't accept *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as Vedic evidence. Still, I'm with Sats despite my empiricism. He asked me to write this foreword to give his book prestige (material).

The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has been called a cult in some countries. I don't agree with that. The Hare Kṛṣṇas I know are decent folks, living according to ancient Indian mythology.

So, here is my foreword and I say go forward at your own risk. But heck, what's wrong with a little culture?

Professor Abstractor Degree
Sam Loose College
Permitto, Cicily
Ordango (Italy too)

Inauguration Speech (by a Godbrother)

I have been asked to speak a few words on the occasion of Satsvarūpa Mahārāja's beginning his personal *pada-yātrā* in honor of the Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial. At the risk of appearing bold, I would like to remind Satsvarūpa of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's advice that we should always live in Vṛndāvana, if not physically, at least in the mind. While my Godbrother walks and writes each day, therefore, I pray on behalf of all the devotees in ISKCON and our Gauḍīya-sampradāya that he not stray from the *rūpānuga*'s path. I pray that his words will always strictly follow the conclusions of the Six Gosvāmīs and our Śrīla Prabhupāda. May he not deviate even an inch from their thoughts and nectarean conclusions.

I must admit that I thought it a bit odd when I first heard that my Godbrother wanted to make his *pada-yātrā* solo. Usually, a *pada-yātrā* is an occasion for many devotees to walk together, associate, worship the Deities, and to preach. Most *pada-yātrās* are accompanied by tumultuous *kīrtana* and impressive evening

programs in the towns and villages. Satsvarūpa has assured me, however, that he can create similar scenarios, real and fictive, in his writing. I had not known that this was possible, but at least let me express my good wishes for this venture and my concern that he not turn the walk into a too-solitary *bhajana*. Aren't those who always want to be alone frustrated or impersonal? Most devotees prefer to live always with devotees and to preach in numbers. Oh well, I guess we're all different, right?

I know my Godbrother has been a practicing writer for a number of years now. He has been so absorbed in his practice that he hasn't seemed so open to suggestions from others. Well, the humble spirit of a Vaiṣṇava will always prevail. It is a Vaiṣṇava's nature to consider himself a fool before others, especially his superiors, and to be open to good advice.

As members of ISKCON and followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we all recognize the ultimate authority of our Governing Body Commission in all matters of management and spirituality. I know my Godbrother recognizes this too. Therefore, my final request is that he always keep in mind the GBC resolutions and try to carry them out regardless of what he is doing.

Enough said. Let us all accompany Satsvarūpa on the first mile of his walk. We need a good photo for *Hare Kṛṣṇa World*. Since there are other devotees present with big projects, I hope Satsvarūpa will be sympathetic, as we walk this first mile together, to their causes and pleas for money. Their projects are worthy as they attempt to construct temples, distribute books, and create propaganda to counteract the demons. I'm sure that while Mahārāja is on this *pada-yātrā* receiving

donations and pledges, he will wish to keep all these worthy projects in mind and give liberally to them.

Now that we have offered this verbal send-off and are approaching the end of the first mile, let's all call a hearty "Hari *haribol!* ISKCON *pada-yātrā*, *kī jaya!* Prabhupāda Centennial, *kī jaya!* Transcendental book distribution, *kī jaya!* Māyāpur temple construction, *kī jaya!* Food-for-Life, *kī jaya!*"

Week One

July 14, 1996

Mentally handicapped people tend to look alike. Is that like saying Orientals or black people or Hare Kṛṣṇas all look alike? I saw a retarded girl on the boat yesterday with her parents. She has such karma. Seated nearer to us was a beautiful young woman—different karma. The retarded person may have been beautiful in her past life.

Last night I dreamt I was carrying thirteen million dollars sewn into my clothes. It was stolen money and I was carrying it for ISKCON. I was to turn it over to ISKCON authorities as soon as possible. I'd never steal in waking life. Does such a dream mean I've stolen in the past? Have I stolen something in this life in the name of loyalty to the institution? We must be loyal to Prabhupāda, but we also have to be scrupulously honest and responsible. In the dream, stealing was approved. Is that how Joyce's words can be applied?

"This is what he said: I will tell you what I will do and what I will not do. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe whether it calls itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: And I will try to express

myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile and cunning.” (*A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*)

Śrīla Prabhupāda told me not to sign a check to be handed to Mr. Payne unless I was satisfied. Don’t go with the crowd if you are not convinced that the crowd is going in the right direction. Don’t do it even when someone says, “This is what Śrīla Prabhupāda wants.” Don’t share the mistake.

But to oppose error or misdirection and to preserve integrity, an artist permits himself only “arms of cunning, exile, and silence.”

What does he mean? Jokingly, a brother said, “Are you still going to live as you have been doing—in cunning, exile, and silence?”

These are first thoughts on today’s walk. I responded to my alarm clock at midnight and crawled out of my blue tent.

“What! You’re living in a blue tent?!”

Sure, because Richard Hugo says, “You owe reality nothing and the truth about your feelings everything.” Therefore, my tent is blue.

Pada-yātrā is an art form a

kiwi fruit

pulled from the waiter’s pocket on a ferry. They were cold—straight from the fridge, and they were a gift.

We gave him a book. He said, “I read a lot.” He had never been to a temple, although he had already read *Bhagavad-gītā* (couldn’t pronounce it though), *Śrī Isopaniṣad*, and *Path of Perfection*. He already had a few

concepts. Keeps quotes from the books posted above the cash register.

Now the walk. Start with your motives instead of your left foot. How deep can you go?

I did not eat a pie yesterday at 5 P.M. It's to my credit that I felt full and abstained.

Still, I dreamt I carried thirteen million dollars—a robber. I told Śaunaka and set up the rendezvous to turn it over. Didn't realize the implications, felt no guilt. Until later. Then I thought of karma.

"Hey, where are you going?" Will the mayor of Auckland meet you? Did you cut the ribbon?

Smoke

the peace pipe?

Śrīla Prabhupāda says a pure devotee has no material interests and material nature can no longer cause him suffering. A pure devotee constantly chants and hears the Lord's glories. Yes.

O Harvard

O pre-Colombian Aztecs

Bemoaned

O beach in Brownsville, Texas right near the Gulf,

I saw a hippie there selling T-shirts with slogans. Here are some of mine:

Pada-yātrā Spree

Alone Walk

Bejammers Sails

I'm Tired Of Reasoning

Beyond Cold Logic

Please Be My Friend

T-shirt Men,

dear readers,
visit the Kṛṣṇa conscious temple near you. Is this the
truth of my heart?

Is it?

A devotee told me he disagrees with local policy.
Surely that policy presents a simple formula, and it's
not the whole teaching of the department he dispar-
ages. Still, I uphold his right to disagree, then I retract
like a turtle and find myself, if I still have a self

and give up the roles of
peace-maker among my children and
receiver of adulation
seeker of literary excellence.

Maṇi-karṇa, jewel-eared. These are root words of a
deity in Vārāṇasī. They can mean that Lord Śiva
decorates his ears with the names of Lord Rāma.

O you who are dying (not cloth), quote more *śāstra*
and be not afraid.

A pure devotee becomes detached from eating,
mating, sleeping, and fearing so he can chant in any
situation. Śrīla Prabhupāda wants us to attain pure de-
votion not by imitating *paramahamsas*, but by following
the rules and living in the society of devotees.

But I experienced fear of
Dogma
and Dogmatists,
and those who rule and who
focus their powerful (ruthless?) logic
and argument
on me.

But this is no Inquisition. Galileo I am not. They
showed him the instruments of torture and he was
afraid. He recanted before they applied the screws.

Retract, submit, admit you made a mistake, although you were only trying to break new ground.

Cover ground by walking with the pen. In the morning you can expect a good burst, three versts, two meters, eight miles, then a harvest bonus. Let it out, the ink, the walking, the words.

I am not alone. I was with all those people on the ferry yesterday—guys and snuggling girls, the retarded girl, the obese, the wide-eyed ice cream man who sold little (he was the aspiring Vedāntist, the Kṛṣṇaite who liked to read), and hundreds of pretty young Germans and Irish and British—all were with me.

Not alone, no, but I have a Kṛṣṇa-centered tale to tell and so appear alone after a festival where people filled the temple room. There were so many people they had to announce, “Men, please leave room for the women to breathe on their side of the temple room during *kīrtana*. Don’t squeeze them all into a corner.” (Implication: “They are as good as their brothers and should be given room to stand.”) No, not alone.

Still, alone with the rooks who live in the chimney despite their raucous songs. If I mention them too often, you’ll know I’m not moving, but crediting the pen flowing back and forth across the page, the trains of thought going forward and back in time, as my difficult walk.

It’s a walk for peace
for life on the wild side
to campaign for Clinton, Dole, for
troubles in North Ireland,

“Back to square one,” and the U.S. President is offended that the man he sent was rejected by the

Unionist as pro-Irish. Pātrī told me that in the kitchen yesterday. Then he blessed me to retract (a turtle) and relax after the intense weeks of lectures and meetings.

So I walk, talk,
of Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa,
Lord Caitanya

although they left no marker of His visit to Benares.

He was there, though. He sat beneath a banyan tree and people still call that place Vatana after Him. There is a tomb of Vallabhācārya in Benares, but no monument to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Fellow seated, playing odes to Caitanyadeva's visit to Benares. He did tremendous preaching there. He met Prakāśānanda's challenge, and a previous time He spent speaking only to Tapana Miśra and Candrasekhara Ācārya. That's what this picture is about.



Joyce wrote, “Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead . . . to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.”

Then, father and son, will you preach in various spots, pubs and parks, halls and auditoriums, using a Mouse amp to project your voice as you lecture on transmigration and other topics?

I will,

I will,

and I'll walk and talk.

No bull except the one that pulls the bullock cart?

And I will stay out when it rains. This is a real *pada-yātrā*

of the imagination,

no blisters except those on the fingers of the right hand where it grips the pen.

I told that devotee who complained that he had a right to freedom of expression, but I let him know how a brother felt when he was attacked. It's good to know these things so we can become offenseless.

Peace. We are not alone.

I'm surely not. Sometimes I feel like I have a police escort with this blue and black ink, and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa puts me in touch with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Their entourage

and countless billions

of stars in outer space.

Not alone, but a tiny integer

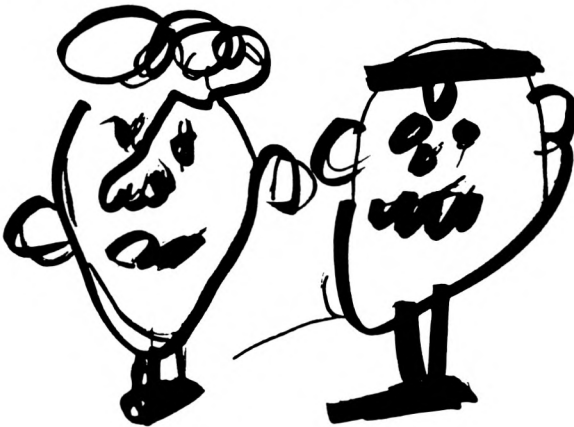
related to others.

Surely not alone.

Someone removed stains from my *kurtā* and sewed on a loose button. This house has a host, this pen

(Sheaffer) a maker. The Seiko ticks, the bone and sinew from nature are raw sometimes.

I walk
and speak
and pray
in context,
impelled by a deep river where flows an apparent
haphazard mixture of truth-reaching words.
Oh, my soul
I have no slippers.
I'm not really irreverent.
I'm reforming.
I'll *be* reforming
because I want to go back to Godhead.
Love of God comes by offering
the deepest volition of self—
surrender in action. It's a long haul.



I heard the BBC crew went to Inis Rath and met one devotee from Latvia and another from Brazil. What's the point of a North Irish TV station hearing from

such people? Then they heard that all the Northerners were living in the south. They came down and were enthralled to hear the old stories they were seeking—of boyhood and youth, of grief and conversion, all from North Irish Hare Kṛṣṇas.



4 A.M.

I hear Prabhupāda via tape talking to devotees on his own walk in Germany. He says something my brain finds hard to logically accept. He says there is no objection to transmigration. He asks you what “they” say. You speak up for the agnostics, but you know they will never be satisfied by whatever *śāstra* or guru says. Therefore, you can’t play devil’s advocate for long. Your own brain is the devil, but you just want to accept whatever guru and *śāstra* says.

My own disciples sometimes say that it’s too much to accept *me* in an absolute way. They need to be assured that sometimes they don’t need to measure up exactly to what I say. They want to keep their own opinions.

Okay.

But Śrīla Prabhupāda says only a damned fool will disagree with his guru. I was on that German walk. I said, “Transmigration is not proved by Kṛṣṇa’s example that as a boy grows into a youth and a youth grows into a man, so the self reappears in the next body. It is only an analogy and analogies don’t prove truth.”

“Why don’t you accept?” Prabhupāda asked.

Because a person can perceive that he’s growing old, but he can’t perceive that he takes another body. We have no memory or perception of dying and being reborn.

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied with another analogy. (“Yes,” I hear that voice in my head start up: “Indian philosophy loves analogies.”) In a dream you think you are in a different body and you perceive fear. Sometimes you are so afraid that you wake up. Is this not proof that you have perception of the body changing? Prabhupāda spoke with emotion and I felt myself dropping the role of skeptic and becoming submissive. Yes, he is right.

But my mind didn’t drop out entirely. Did I actually think he proved one analogy by giving another? The dream perception is certainly an experience and does add to the Lord’s argument, but it is still not proof that we die and are reborn with the same self. It is only proof that when we sleep, the same self accepts different subtle identities for awhile. The dream state does not prove transmigration. Prabhupāda seemed to say that it was enough.

It doesn’t matter, though, because I do accept it. I accept it because he said it, and not because of the example itself.

Perhaps Prabhupāda wants me to surrender to what he says and to follow Kṛṣṇa's orders. He may want me to take whatever examples help. Well, that much I can do. I don't really have to prove that *I* have no power to perceive the truth of what they say. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, "Many, many lives both you and I have had. I can remember all of them, but you cannot."

On those walks we got befuddled at our half-playing, half-being skeptics, and half (yes, three halves) submitting to guru. We simply wanted to please him because we loved him. We wanted his grace.

Not that we were pure. Our impurities were later exposed when we were allowed to take a guru's power on ourselves. Some of us went berserk when faced with apparently unlimited power. I went wrong too, but in a different way.

Now people wonder whether we served Śrīla Prabhupāda so that one day we could have the power he exerted over us to exert over others. I don't know that it was true of everyone, although Śrutakīrti Prabhu once reported that Prabhupāda said of one disciple, "He is waiting for the old man to die so that he can take disciples."

What kind of talk is this for 4 in the morning? I don't know, but sometimes it comes out when I hear my master speak. That German walk continues with a question: "If we could remember our past lives, would we not go mad from the misery of *samsāra*?"

Prabhupāda agreed, but added that we could go mad not only from remembering our past lives but from remembering *these* lives before we came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He said it would make us shudder. We should be grateful to Kṛṣṇa for saving us from hell.

That's something to which I can relate. Even though a nondevotee says I copped out, I couldn't face material reality, couldn't perfect my art in the "real" world, I know it's all illusion. I want eternal truth. Prabhupāda is giving me that—true religion beyond what I no longer believed in, beyond the traditional Catholicism that James Joyce kicked out decades ago.

Grateful, I shudder.

Then he said that he had heard in northern countries where there is constant night in winter, the people commit suicide.

Yes, a disciple said, Sweden has the highest suicide rate.

Prabhupāda said it's horrible to live always with night.

Again my mind balked. That's not true! How could suicide in Sweden be linked to the movements of the sun? But Prabhupāda said it, so I have come to accept it.

This is what I mean. How do I know what to accept and what to understand in a particular context? Sometimes he spoke casually, or he was giving an example not to be taken as an absolute statement. Prabhupāda used everything and anything to fuel his praise of Kṛṣṇa. He used anything that worked. He even quoted the *Aquarian Gospels* once.

The abiding principle is faith and not logical proof. We want the conviction and faith and experience that Kṛṣṇa is truth personified, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

It is still dark outside, but I hope it will be light enough by 5 to walk. Even if it rains I will go. I am not afraid to face the obstacles. I have the holy name.

9 A.M., In hut in Uddhava's backyard

We are walking just as the tomatoes walk up the vine and the bugs walk up the wall and a reader makes progress through a book's pages. The sun marching through the sky from horizon to zenith to horizon measures this walk.

Śrīla Prabhupāda talking to Professor Durckheim. The professor says that at his *āśrama*, if after a week the students are still sleeping soundly and regularly, he thinks something is wrong. He wants to upset them, to get them thinking, especially of those moments when they were desperate and faced death. He thinks at those times one becomes spiritually revived and develops a sense of something beyond the self that is a higher power.

"That is self-realization," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, but he didn't approve of all the professor said. He meant, "That to which you are referring as transcendental to the body—that is self-realization. It's discussed not in what you are saying but in *Bhagavad-gītā*."

I was there for those talks, but I have forgotten so many details.

Sometimes you work for yourself, sometimes for the recognition of others, and become a success. I'm a success when I'm recognized as a lecturer and guru. These roles define and shape me. I don't exist unless others recognize me according to this identity.

Is that true? But then when I come to write, am I striving for something? Can I come alone here and not pretend that I am something that I am not? They think I'm the answer man. Sometimes I am, but it's not my whole identity. I am not the doer.

Henri Nouwen, a Christian, gives the example which for him is the highest: of Jesus Christ. Mark's gospel describes Jesus in the middle of events where he was performing miracles and the nondevotees were demanding more. His disciples were also impatient. Mark writes that long before dawn, Jesus went to pray in a lonely place. Simon and a disciple went after him, but he said, "Let's go to another town because I want to preach. That is why I have come [into the world]."

We have to go alone sometimes. Jesus went alone to get in touch with his Father and to affirm that he was under His power. Jesus asserts this repeatedly in the gospel of John: "I don't speak on my own, but for the Father. I do His will, not my own." In prayer, Jesus got that affirmation. Then he could go forth for more preaching. In a tiny, tiny way, that's what I am asking for myself.

This *pada-yātrā* is meant to be such prayer, something unto myself. This is the best part of my life and I can share it later. I tell you, my disciples, that you will not see me, but you will still get the best part of me. If you shape me as you would have me, a lecturer, a guru, then you will not get what you need. To others I act with cunning, silence, and exile. This is my contribution.

The *brāhmaṇa* in Benares who had seen Lord Caitanya was convinced that He was the Supreme

Person. He loved Lord Caitanya and the ecstasy of His chanting and dancing. He spoke up for the Lord to Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who was scornful. He called Lord Caitanya a pretender and a sentimentalist. The *brāhmaṇa* was aggrieved and ran away from Prakāśānanda. He went to Lord Caitanya and told him what had happened. He said that Prakāśānanda could not even utter the word “Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.”

“Yes,” Lord Caitanya replied, “that’s because he is an offender.” Offenders cannot chant. Kṛṣṇa’s name is Kṛṣṇa. The nondevotees cannot enter the mystery.

Can *I* enter the mystery? As I write, the faces of those I have known come to mind. Most of them are still alive. They come to mind and then fade. I love them, even though I seek solitude. Be free. I am no dancing bear on a chain. Be free.

So we will stay and work in this camp, or travel on behalf of it, and return here. May the camp be a happy one so that we don’t feel driven away to search out a new place. No more do we wish to wander into the lights glancing off the mirrored ceiling of McDonald’s. No more will we listen to the tunes of the nondevotee singers and seek pure expression from them—from those who are not exclusively dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. This is our home. It cannot be dull. Don’t let it be so.

Going alone on this walk is approved by the Commission on Human Rights. There are other examples of *parikramas* and *pada-yātrās*, and in 1996, this Centennial year, it is popular to dedicate a walk to His Divine Grace. The walks get good publicity. An obscure walk would serve no preaching purpose. Therefore, I walked the miles early this morning,

hardly noticing anything—a fatigue march. I also chanted my quota. I saw no beasts other than sheep on the road, and no people. I did see the hills and the sky covered by gloom, although it was clearing in places.

But as I said, it was a fatigue march and I eventually grew tired. I squatted down and fantasized as my body sought rest. Did you know that my life is rich in fantasies and that some of them are colored with the sweetness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? The conclusion of all of them is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, but some of them bear a special hue. I fantasize that I actually worship Kṛṣṇa with my whole heart. I fantasize that I truly understand my dependence on the Supreme. Imagine really knowing that you are the servant of the servant. And I imagine all these things while I'm there at the Alamo or joining an automotive club in Ireland or England. The one in England is for owners of American motorhomes. They get together and sing American country tunes and hoist the confederate flag. Oh, don't worry, we just pay our membership fees in case our van breaks down and leave it at that.

I saw a hawk descending and felt the fear of the rabbit or mouse it was seeking. I felt the fear and thought of how I will invent new ways to enter Kṛṣṇa consciousness without losing track of the old. It is unfortunate, my shortcomings in spiritual life, but I know I will improve. I know that every time we leave town before dawn and find a lonely path where we can chant and pray. The mood continues throughout the day. It's when I feel most myself. Until I die and call out to Kṛṣṇa in truth.

I seem to often defend my vocation. I feel the pressure of Prabhupāda's order to go out and preach, and sometimes I think writing is not preaching. Preaching is, of course, the greatest act of compassion. I was pleased, therefore, when a friend said that it was compassionate to reveal my inner thoughts. Nouwen expresses a similar sentiment in his book where he discusses what it means to care.

The caring friend makes it clear that regardless of what happens in the external world, all that matters is that we are present for each other. In fact, being available to one another matters more than pain, illness, or even death.

It is remarkable how much consolation and hope we can receive from authors who, while offering no answers to life's questions, have the courage to articulate the truth of their lives in all honesty and directness. . . . Many of us who have read their works have found new strength to pursue our own search. Their courage to enter so deeply into human suffering and to become present to their own pain gave them the power to speak healing words.

—*Out of Solitude*

Nouwen advocates that we learn to care when we discover our own humanness. If we offer people cures or advice without feeling their pain, we will be acting artificially and won't be of help. I particularly liked his emphasis that our humanness is discovered when we are alone: "But in solitude, our heart can slowly take off its many protective devices and can grow so wide and deep that nothing human is strange to it."

3 P.M.

Let him walk alone this afternoon with your two cents fresh in his head. He doesn't need the latest. Let him get to his own roots now.

What does it mean to remove layers? To say you agree with one side and you agree with the other—that you can see both sides because you can feel the hurt of both. You know it's all relative, but there's something deeper, something human going on, which can be used for something more. Will you go through it and find out what it means?

I don't know, because I am not that woman trimming her flowers, and I am not a *gurukula* kid. As the sages say, however, we cannot avoid the reality of others, nor shut them out. Like that man at his computer in Belgium. I can't ignore his struggle. He is human and I am human and we need to touch each other's humanness. Therefore, be there with them. Solitude does not mean seeing only your own life as blessed and everything else as frustrated and distracting. They are not here, all those faces, but in my solitude I let them in. I think of them. When I am alone I think of sharing something private that might help.

The bullocks are walking without me switching them on this walk in the heat of an Irish afternoon. "If the governments of the world do not accept us as we are, we cannot water down the teachings," he said. The other fellow said, "Don't you see? We are not watering them down." I will not mediate this conflict, but I feel for both of them. Let me go on not needing to forever prove that I am right. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Look! The *pada-yātrīs* are approaching a fence of thorns. I am too lazy to settle down to more fatigue walking. I am too filled with events to be calm and to see what else is in me today. Moreover, I'm ready to ingest something new. In the last place we visited (Belgium), I picked up some books in the gift shop—*Śrīla Prabhupāda and His Disciples in Germany*, *The Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana*—and I'll be dipping into them even while we march. O Kṛṣṇa, this seems to be who I am. Will You accept me?

In a Zen story, a professor went to see a master to learn about Zen. The master poured him tea and kept pouring until the tea was overflowing the cup. The professor said, "Stop! It's overflowing!" The Zen teacher said, "You want me to teach you Zen, but unless you first empty your mind, how can I do it?"

How do you empty the mind? We say stop the material input and input only Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That's not exactly emptiness.

I walked and the clouds passed. An insect heard me chanting. I plan to stop in a few hours to camp overnight. At that time, after my evening duties, I will speak *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. All glories to the Lord of this wide universe.

I'm interested in the nature of Vaiṣṇava saints. I know by now that I cannot become one of them unless I can give my entire being. We shouldn't be ambitious about that, but serve the spiritual master simply. How we do that is individual.

The pictures reveal how old we have grown. They also reveal that if you harbor a private pet peeve against someone, it won't get you anywhere. Each devotee is doing what he or she does and is thriving in

his or her own way. Whoever is short on virtue is short, and that's that, and whoever has good qualities has them by Kṛṣṇa's grace. We have to go all the way in our own ways. Kṛṣṇa will arrange that we are corrected in one way or another. In *Portrait* Joyce said he wanted unfettered freedom and was willing to make a big mistake, even for eternity. That's nonsense. There is no such thing as unfettered freedom in this world. I don't even desire it—the freedom to go against spiritual authority or to speak blasphemy or any nonsense. I'm looking for my freedom in the course of the flow of Prabhupāda's orders.

I think I have found it. A Godbrother wrote that he talked with other brothers and found each has his own internal life while all are serving Prabhupāda. He wanted to wish me well in my writing career. I wanted to wish him well in his service also.

In the afternoon we saw whales and porpoises jumping in the bay, then stopped at a few bookstores until the chief rounded us up. It was time for *harināma*. After that, we walked some more. We didn't know quite where we were going, but we gathered for an evening program at a *paṇḍāl*. You know all this already from the news reports. I'm just writing it out to let you know I miss you.

Henri Nouwen said (yes, I can't get him out of my head right now so I'll write it down) that misgivings should be seen as Kṛṣṇa testing us (my paraphrase). I don't remember what else he said, but the sky is clearing and guess what? I don't see *my* picture there but Kṛṣṇa. That sky reminds me of my master.

It is almost 4 P.M. I'll have to stop walking soon. Find the liberal application of transcendence by chanting the holy name. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

6 P.M.

Headache. The truth of our lives sometimes hurts. There is pain in this world, and in my case, pain in my head. Green leaves tremble. We have to throw off blankets and critics in the heat. We have to find ourselves so that it all means something. We don't have to write about pain or love but Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, nothing but Kṛṣṇa. We have that choice. There is nothing but God. However, you get sick of persuvial (made-up word) presentations of Him. You want to find your own expression, something real to yourself.

Is this acceptable? Is it bona fide work? "Give up your aversion to the beatniks," wrote WCW to Thomas Merton. "Read the first section of Ginsberg's *Kaddish*."

I suppose so.

Headache, but I will try to stay with the *pada-yātrā*. Did you know that Lokanātha Gosvāmī went to Lord Caitanya and was ordered to go to Vṛndāvana? He met the Lord for only five days, then left because Lord Caitanya told him that if he wanted to give Him happiness, he should go to Vṛndāvana and do the work He was assigning. We give up the Lord's association in order to please Him. Hearing that, I felt a little return of strength and thought maybe I could chant another (mechanical) round. Already I don't feel up to it.

I would rather hear more (Madhu is reading to me), then rest for the night, but I'll see you at midnight on the road again

and I'll

try to make music
never before heard on this planet/ but plain stuff
the simplest barking spewing kindness forth.

Goodnight after a first day out.

July 15

Cover yourself, then find the self beneath the coverings. I admit that what I began in *Journal and Poems* ten years ago was to prove that I am not perfect. I wanted to say it. I also admit that Kṛṣṇa's name is transcendently blissful, nondifferent from His form.

Still I seek loops and shapes, breaths and sighs, and especially to be present with myself and others. I want to be who I am and I want to offer *that* to Kṛṣṇa. I'm alone, but not entirely alone, and I am satisfied with that. I am writing, and although it is solitary work, it is a communal act, or an act for community.

We are all serving. One brother is an up-and-coming GBC man. Another is going back to school. Another is gardening to develop self-sufficiency. Another is expanding the spiritual family by initiating disciples. Others are alienated. O Kṛṣṇa, what does it all mean? The old days are gone and we live in new days now. Who am I inspiring and who is inspiring me? Are our lives good enough? We actually live an underground existence. Where is the pureless perilous peerless work of art?

I remember (don't really) standing in ranks with hundreds of others on the Saratoga's deck while some big-shot admiral addressed us. I think it was summer and we were all in white, subservient, being inspected. It was in the Med, the home of the whores of Italy and Greece. No joy in that. There is no pure joy at all in this world, and we shouldn't expect it. There is only finding Kṛṣṇa and then serving Him.

What drives us forward? We expect to one day receive a little more mercy than we are receiving now. We can only work patiently until that time and remain faithful to our spiritual master.

O Lord, O Kṛṣṇa.

I know a housewife who is enthusiastic to work in her garden. It's a humble project, and no one much cares about it, but I am happy to see her so fulfilled. Sometimes TV crews take pictures. It doesn't matter so much to her. She is satisfied to work with the flowers and to see them live out their seasons. Is it devotional service? Yes, if it's an offering. I try to encourage her.

I feel different as I take this walk. I'm recognizing more what is safe and what is not so safe. I feel more willing to admit that the subject of my writing is the writing itself. I'm also beginning to see that I am writing one continuous book. Although I divide it into smaller ones, the themes are similar. I am always looking for new ways to express myself, but not really looking for new topics within that drive. WCW tried three-line free verse poems and found himself petering out quickly. Then he found a new form, but he had the same thing to say.

Writing isn't easy. I'm always up before the others in the camp and writing, because that's my nature. The fire is burning down to embers.

How far back do I go?

To a time when the Nazis were alive and I was a kid. Not

before that. When

WCW was young I was too.

I lived in my body and

purchased Christmas trees with my father
gardened with

my mother, *"so you'll have something to remember."* She knew

I was lying awake on the bed

no purpose, in the grips of the angst of the young.

I didn't know anything.

Kafka and Kierkegaard had wounded me
stung like stinging insects that
paralyze the velvet ant

with their unhappiness. Did I go out
to the yard at her suggestion?

I don't remember. I stored no memories.

But I recall that I didn't like my father and
that I wanted something
but I didn't know what.

Jazz and drugs and too shy to
make it with women, or you could
say charitably, I was not
that kind of rapist.

Now free of my generation
 but not free of myself.
 If only I could do
 more with it.

Struggling to chant, to actually call down Kṛṣṇa. He doesn't come at my bidding. He wants to see me love more.

Or be reborn
 in another body
 because I'm not perfect.
 Perfect?

Will I join the GBC again next life?

Or perhaps I'll be a pious Indian living on the outside?

How will I come back to Śrīla Prabhupāda next life?
 Will there be another story like the one I lived this time
 to captivate my heart?

Here's a little fiction for you. He goes on his own walk before the PY group starts up. They want people to see them, but in early A.M. (5) he goes out before anyone *can* see him. He's not hurting anyone; he's crying on beads

dry
 a song.

It's okay if you can really write a sincere cry and not the usual quick fix pretending you are a preacher devotee—your persona.

It's impossible, actually. We always gravitate back to who we really are. I don't have all the answers. SK and

Merton were Christians, but Nouwen says they didn't claim to have all the answers to life.

Do I make that claim? We *do* have the answers, and Śrīla Prabhupāda wants us to give them to others. Plenty of preachers are doing it.

My preaching is a different answer. I want to describe what it's like to be a devotee, what a devotee really feels, his honest heart. Sometimes people wonder who appointed me to do this, but I won't cut myself with that question. I'm doing what makes sense to me.

Do you mean cut yourself to
draw blood? No, I'm no
martyr. I'm gentle. I know
the black wings of death
are closing in, but it's not time yet.
I still have time to awaken
and to draw from life
with my pen and pencils.
I have time to celebrate my fortune.

I looked at some poems in C. D. Wright's *Trembling*. I find it incomprehensible why they write what no one else can understand. I prefer to read it straight than to sort out symbols and obscurity, half sensual and not connected to anything else. I am a plebeian ex-*New York Daily News* reader. I can't make heads nor tails of it.

If I were to live in India I wouldn't have such fresh influences from Western material culture.

Oh, you'd have Indian versions. As Jesus said, "The poor you have always with you."

There would be no Jesus, but Gaṇeśa with his belly and red Hanumān deities, dirt roads and bicycles. Remember that bottle factory and the steam machine sounding all night?

Yeah, I remember. Why?

Because as your mother said, you ought to have something to remember.

Thinking this morning about a Godbrother who denounces my writing. He even found someone who liked my books and filled his ear with criticism. Vaiṣṇavas of the past never wrote like I do. He offered as proof that Prabhupāda burned the papers from his pre-*sannyāsa* life. On and on he went. I'm telling you because it hurt and I want to get it out. Pull it out like an arrow head.

I know I said in one book that critics are good for you even if you don't agree with their points because it's good to know you are not simply being praised.

What I get more than anything is a solid wall of silence. Indifference. If I mention it here it will sound like self-pity. It's not. I heard that when Monet and the Impressionists held their first exhibition, the critics blasted them and Monet said, "Idiots!"

Saroyan said he was hurt when the library listed his book's subject as "nothing", and we know that John Keats might have died from a book review. May Sarton wrote a book about trying to heal herself after being severely criticized in a review where they called her a lesbian.

Writers as much as anyone don't always have such thick skins.

Brother, you put me down. I am sure I have also hurt you in the past. It's such a long history it's impossible to untangle now. I'm sorry about the past.

Hey, are we ready to walk? Where's our hot ginger tea?

Line up for tea, Prabhus. Up and at 'em. It's time to start.

On Vraja-maṇḍala *parikrama* the object is not to preach but to chant and to be purified by the *tīrthas*. A *parikrama* is therefore different from a *pada-yātrā*, which strives for publicity but also features the same long stretches of walking where no one pays you attention. That means you have to have your own purpose in walking. My walk is like that. I have to work not for publicity (publishing), but to chant in the air, to the stars and the four directions.

Questions I am asked during my scouting missions: Is "Scorching the Milk Ocean" on the book review list? Is there a world outside ISKCON, or is it only illusion on all sides? Will we have to meet in the spiritual world? If so, how will we stand each other? Or will we be so transformed that we will naturally love one another? Will there be power trips there?

Can you be just a poet and go back to Godhead?

Prabhu, I don't think so. Even Basho didn't make it. He didn't know God the person, only a vague idea of spirit as something free of the modes (*nirvāṇa*).

Pada-yātrā. Even a solitary walk counts if in your mind you are offering the activity to Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa. Don't worry, I plan to tell the head office about this so they can write it up in their journal.

No one gives a damn. Anyway, it will all be over soon enough. I offer you my humble obeisances.

I couldn't do better.

I ate the one kiwi he gave me. I'm no pig who eats stool and screams when the butcher comes to kill me. This is one hell of a world. No more blue jeans, just *dhotīs*.

As I write this, the alarm suddenly goes off in our van here in the woodlands. It does that by itself. No one even has to break into it.

9:25 A.M.

I knew when I came to write this morning it would be difficult. Everyone would be coming with me this morning and that would make me restless. I'm looking for impressions of right now. Here's one: in our host's bathroom they have a new bottle of baby lotion. It is pink and wrapped in plastic. Here's another: outside, the van door is open. Madhu has gone to Dublin on business, but he must have rushed into the van at the last minute to get the papers. Muddy shoe tracks in the back of the van. Almost looks like someone broke in. But this is a sunny backyard. Neither the host nor his wife are here yet. Oh, isn't that their car parked out front? Maybe they *are* here and I just haven't seen them yet. Anyway, I'm ready to walk.

That old man I noticed this morning chanting his *japa* half asleep—the beads fell out of his hands twice! If he had been walking with our crew he could have felt alive in the outdoors.

Now approach the breakdown, my real subject. I think I may only be able to chip away at it a little at a time. If I make a small confession now, I'll be able to

make another one later in the day, and again even later, until everything has been said. Getting to the heart takes patient work and patient walking. Because if there's an accident, you don't want to break your neck.

Lord Caitanya said He had brought His ecstatic sentiments to Vārāṇasī and now wanted to sell them for whatever price He could get. Otherwise He'd have to carry that heavy load away with Him. Talking like a merchant and a preacher, He wanted to give away His mantras. This is the mission of the worldwide Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

Then Lord Caitanya went to Prayāga, then Mathurā, Viśrāma Ghāt, and the Keśavajī temple. All these places still exist. Prayāga is called Tīrtharāja, the king of *tīrthas*, and it is the place where the Kumbha-melā takes place. I have avoided Kumbha-melā in this lifetime because I can't handle the crowds, but I have been to Mathurā many times. I have bittersweet memories of that. I seem to be restricted in India now. Wherever I go I meet the institution and its expectations—and the controversies.

But I won't dwell on that here. We've lost our innocence, many of us. Neither can we roam outside the institution to seek—what? To be alone? To seek association with other *sādhus*? No.

Alas, alas,
this guy sighs a little.

It is good that our Gurudeva established preaching outside of Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur for those of us who—

I have carved out my life by giving little seminars.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Walking in writing sometimes feels like a forced march. I put a pack on my back and carry the burden.

What's in the pack?

I think it's my karma.

I have no karma? Well, I do have *memories* of having karma and they're a burden too. Perhaps it's self-imposed—guilt, fear, material attachment. The loss of heaven and the pains of hell and all that.

We march joylessly onward, but we have enough faith to sustain us. We are finally becoming human enough that at least we can talk. What a relief.

I remember being in the classroom. My mind easily drifts back to the open window, the hook that opened those tall windows at the top, and the monitor who opened them. A special student was chosen to do it, someone strong enough—and expert enough—to open the windows without breaking the glass. We would all watch.

On rainy days I wore galoshes and left them in the back of the classroom near the wardrobe. They were fastened with clasps that were difficult to manipulate until I got older. It was also difficult to fit my shoes inside the galoshes. Sometimes I had to put my shoes in the galoshes first, then put my shoes on. Taking them off was even worse because the galoshes were so tight around the shoes. I walked to and from school alone, except for the first day. Are these beloved memories?

I remember going to see my spiritual master. Wherever I am I like to play tapes from 1966 and talk of those days. Devotees ask, “How were you able to give up everything so strictly?” It was by the Swami's

power. Later, however, we found out that we had not quite given it up. We still harbored attachments to who we were before we met him. I left behind a valuable stack of jazz records in my apartment. Jazz was still the new thing. I don't wish I had them back, but I think you know what I mean. It's all gone now.

My burden is not so heavy this *pada-yātrā*. I see that now. But each of us is carrying *something*, and perhaps we should unburden ourselves. Jettison the useless stuff.

I'm sure that if I were physically walking, I would think similar thoughts. I wouldn't want to carry too much.

One burden I would probably notice, which isn't so evident now, is that I am envious. Remember how Śivānanda Sena took care of the devotees on their long walk from Bengal to Puri? Even among such exalted devotees bad feelings arose. Śivānanda Sena had to stay behind one time to pay a toll. The devotees went ahead and had to wait for him under a tree. Only he could arrange for their eating and lodging because he was in charge of all that. While waiting, Lord Nityānanda became impatient and cursed Śivānanda and his sons. Then when Śivānanda arrived, Lord Nityānanda kicked him in the chest. As a result, Śivānanda's wife became upset and so did his nephew.

If I walked, I would probably also feel the inconvenience and blame it on others: "Why is that guy singing like that? Look, he's showing off."

An even heavier burden would be my own sense of being practically a nondevotee. Neither would I see the purpose of all the walking in sun and rain. I'd

prefer to chant by myself. I would feel I was on a forced march.

O dear reader,

am I dragging you on a forced march too? Of course, you can quit, even if I keep walking. No one is forcing you to stay. I am not the master of this *pada-yātrā*. I'm only talking to myself.

Dogs growl and the heavens open upon us. At least it's rain and not the offal of Dvidida Gorilla or another demon. Oh, kill them, please, dear Balarāma, these demons of material desires.

Are you sure there is no water?

Yes, I just checked.

Did you bring your beadbag?

Yes. Then you can chant as you walk. I forgot a few other vital things. I hope you brought the sandwiches. No? They reminded you too much of your childhood?

They make good biscuits and scones here. The march moves on. I forgot to bring poetry and pillows, and I forgot to bring the immortal plant. I did not bow down to *tulasī* early this morning and I didn't remember to change my money for when we cross the border. I was not able to overcome fear and sex desire, so I have brought those things along. I have, however, not read the newspaper in months. I don't know what's happening in the world. I only know Hare Kṛṣṇa. That's all I have.

Yes, we smile like angels, some of us, happy that at least we're abstaining from participation in the worst, and happy to be under our master's protection.

I don't lament. I am with them in this beautiful land of *śuddha-sattva*.

I mean, at least we're hearing about it and wishing we could live there.

Do we have to be perfect before we can aspire? Before we can breathe?

I cannot be perfect. If that's the criterion, I might as well die now.

A guy wrote to criticize the temple for using milk from slaughtered cows. He suggested that we not offer such opulent milk preparations to the Deities. He said that Kṛṣṇa would be more pleased if we didn't support cow slaughter.

He's right that we should care for our own cows and use their milk, but in the absence of that, Prabhupāda used milk from the *karmī* markets and called it the best use of a bad bargain. He offered it to Kṛṣṇa and taught the world how to use the cow's milk without killing the cow.

Again, we are not perfect, but still we have to live.

I hope that's not offensive to say. We're not criminals or villains or even saints. We're not even Caruso singers or anything but Hare Kṛṣṇa roundabouts,

me a direct, retired poet
and ex-general

a non-cunning resident of Ireland. My home state in this body is New York, New York, the same Staten Island which Paul Blackburn mentions in his poems about gulls.

Now I'm on *pada-yātrā* and away from all that. It's years behind me and I'm trying to chant.

Harump galoop
the musicians toot

kasboom taboo
 the bellows view.
 Garee tafoo the eastern
 waves
 Hare Kṛṣṇa
 a movement not yet recognized
 but for love of God
 these saints of sweet tree-nomy
 see the morning as good.
 Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa.

2:30 P.M.

A chap came by and asked me if I was interested in a management position with the *pada-yātrā*. No, I'm not.

"Yes, I know it involves politics, but it's for the master's movement. Someone has to take care of all these devotees."

Yes, and good luck.

*They're singing songs of love
 but not for me*

my way is charted
 to *walk* with

this group, the author recommitted me. I want to walk with you lads.

When the Reverend said he was a bit cheered up, we knew he was an old-timer and had been invited again to take part in the nitty-gritties of leadership. For example, someone needed to handle the money. Someone had to deal with the legal registration of Pada-yātrā, Inc. There was also the question of who was the supreme in-charge. I know this is worse than boring, but I'm trying to give an honest news report. I can't leave this part out.

Now, if this report were to one day be worth some literary equity, who would get the money from it? These questions are urgent. For example, what if someone dies while they're walking? What if someone wants to sue?

Do you think these questions are not spiritual? You say you just want to chant and hear, but to neglect even one of these items could wipe out *all* the chanting and hearing. All it takes is one soured member to begin litigation against us.

Still, this old fellow bows down and out. We like him for that, but if the truth is to out, he cannot walk with us. He's already neither here nor there. He is too old, or let's say feeble, fragile—too mental may be the right word—to take part fully in anything that requires regular, steady work.

But we did want to cheer him up, so we patted him on the back after lunch.

It sure is hot.

We each have our machines by which we do things. This *pada-yātrā* requires a human heart. That's the machine non-plus ultra. A heart and a liver, a pancreas and some digestive tubes—all of that—some feet to respond to the heart's mighty pounding.

Yes, someone could die on this *pada-yātrā*. If they did, it would be due to machine failure. Each step is a small journey of a soul in a machine.

My machine is growing older, wearing down, sagging. It's a skin-covered bag of bones. Although the blood flows through my veins, it wouldn't be that hard to let it out. The soul is the runner behind the scenes of gross and subtle existence. Beyond that is Supersoul.

All music comes from the soul's celebration. The soul is the driver. The soul is the *ātmā*. The *Upaniṣads* say that whatever you like, your enjoyment is based on the liking of the self. It's not the wife we enjoy but the self-satisfaction. It's not the pie's taste we enjoy but the self who thinks he's satisfied.

Aye, that's the rub. The self is in illusion. He thinks the source of happiness and distress is found in matter. But it's a dream.

This is one reason dreams fascinate me: they resemble the entire illusion. We are not this machine, although we have identified ourselves with it. We walk and worry only about the machine. Lost souls all.

Since chanting can deliver us from our dream state, that's the purpose of *pada-yātrā*. Any walking member will remove illusion by chanting Kṛṣṇa's names. That's how it works. We are in touch with the Supreme when we chant His names. He dances on our tongues and removes illusion. We see ourselves as we actually are.

This doctrine is not new to any of us, so why are we speaking about anything, walking anywhere, that does not remind us of these truths? Simply pray in the sunlight. Let the nature of the transcendentalist take hold of you as if for the first time. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

It really is hot, so we're taking a break to drink water. Our machines are overheated and the bullocks are also tired. They are foaming a little at the mouth.

Waiting for the man to catch up with us. He went to town to pick up the mail. I won't answer it all right away, even though the letters come from dear ones, because I don't want to become distracted from this walking. Give it two weeks of attentive time and feel

yourself becoming transformed. I feel it already and it's only the second day. No distractions. Because even if you remain physically on *pada-yātrā* but your mind goes elsewhere, then the whole thing is ruined. I want to chant and live simply.

6 P.M.

Well, the mail arrived. There was a Communications dispatch about a real Swami who is walking across Canada—the second largest country in the world. The dispatch contained a photo of him with the Premier of B.C. just before he began his walk in April, and another photo of him with his feet in a basin of water after a hard day's walk. He stays at the homes of congregational members and is walking for peace and Kṛṣṇa conscious values. He wants people to focus on God.

“You must have some connection with Mādhavendra Purī,” said the *brāhmaṇa* to Lord Caitanya. He was a Sanodiyā *brāhmaṇa*. Mādhavendra Purī was the first to express the ecstasy of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *bhāva*. Those who came after him knew each other by these symptoms. Lord Caitanya embraced that *brāhmaṇa* and asked him to cook. Social considerations of low birth are not important, but love of Kṛṣṇa is. The *brāhmaṇa* was happy to serve the Lord.

Then comes that important verse. My Godbrother Garuḍa Prabhu is so fond of it, and it was he who pointed out its importance to me: “A devotee's behavior establishes the true purpose of religious principles.” (Cc. *Madhya* 17.185) Śrīla Prabhupāda discusses *mahājanas* in his purport. You have scriptures and

buildings and perfect books and money, but religion is shown through a devotee's behavior.

The camp is quiet. The ladies are in a separate area but protected. No one is killing animals. We are trying not to even kill the mosquitoes. *Ahimsā*.

July 16

Did you know that Daniel Defoe read a brief account about a shipwrecked person and wrote his whole *Robinson Crusoe* based on that? He even wrote it in the first person. I'm following one Godbrother's walk across Canada and creating my own. Maybe that's not right.

Or why not?

Why not make a grand story by one who sat on his duff but walked with his pen?

Anyway, I know this is a corny metaphor of a walk that never was. Really, it's about freedom. I want freedom.

In any case, I am committing myself. I have no other way. This is what I am.

I read that the real Swami in Canada walked despite weather conditions. "He celebrated by constant song and prayer." Not a quitter. Can I do that? Take the trek. They ask spiritual questions and I ought to respond, but in this way, this way.

That Swami says no terrain is too tough. Dig deep, my friend, and tell us what you see.



Imagine a big tent, white inside, an Indian generator running and *chaukidars* with sticks and shotguns to guard the American money belts. There are fluorescent tubes buzzing and now a moth has gone up and singed itself against the bulb. You hear it burn itself to a crisp. One living being dead.

So Friday, my man Friday
wakes up at midnight and looks
around. He likes that hour because
in a pilgrimage crowd most people
are asleep then.

Which means he'd really like
to walk alone and so
his dream spirit does.

I don't need to pay for a cart and ox and all that
just to walk by myself. If I know the country well . . . but
am I cheating? Did I really walk or did I sometimes
hitchhike or ride a four-speed, comfy jeep to take you

over jungle tracts. Sanātana left prison and didn't announce, "I'm on *pada-yātrā*, everybody." Rather, he walked all the way to Vārāṇasī to see his Lord. Everyone walks. No big deal that one should point himself out as a walker.

In Satya-yuga everyone meditated.

On higher planets everyone
flies.

Here everybody blows their nose
and finally expires.

And some exceptional persons are
mahājānas to lead others.

Why don't I think more particularly of my Prabhu-pāda? Why do I want only my *own* Swami? Sometimes I think I've said enough about that, but then I realize I need to say more, always more. I don't know why that is. Maybe it's like art—you rub a piece of paper against an embossed piece of brass and the paper takes on the design. That's the art and it can be something simple, but it speaks to others because it was made from honesty. If it speaks to you, it will usually speak to others. The Swami's orders are not esoteric, they say, but when we take them to heart and try to fulfill ourselves through them, they become esoteric to us.

Swami, speak to me,
hold me up,
teach me.

You attracted me and I came
alive, young again, spiritually.

You fed me then and you feed me
now. I claim no
independence.

I need you.

But I have *this* work.

I have this work

and it's important because it brings me to you. They say Thoreau was an "inspector of snow storms." Can we say that watching the progress of the seasons wasn't enough? From it he produced his *Walden* and it was honest.

Here's an excerpt from a poem by Ron Padgett called "Talking to Vladimir Mayakovsky":

"You've got to admit," Mayakovsky
was saying, "that this is a pretty good
way to write a poem."
"Yes," I said, "the momentum
is sustained by our walking forward,
the desolate landscape seeps into every word,
and you are free to say anything you want."
"That's because we're inside the poem,"
he said, "not outside . . ."
"that's why my poems were so big:
there is more room *inside*."

I remember Marcuso, a word. I recall my Mama and the jazz on the phonograph in the attic. I remember when my Dad pulled out a fold-out photo from *Playboy*. He did it to show me he knew I kept a stash of such magazines. I was shocked. We never spoke about it.

Those guys who say
Vaiṣṇavas never wrote like this . . .
Augustine left only generalized
confessions—maybe he stole some
fruit from a garden and felt good

about it. I don't want to get into
so much. Even if it helps?

Be cool and happy and always
refrain from things that
are not KC.
But mainly be
obedient
and forthright
clean and
nonoffensive
Godly and favorable toward Kṛṣṇa
as true as any human being can be.

So writes Fatigue Boots in the life that's left to him
in remaining taper of the light he shares with moths
and his faith in history, both separating him by a thin
membrane of karma from being one of a billion
Indians in his next life with no privileges to write books
although true to the Lord. If

this is what it takes to be happy . . .

The air is so still. It's warm. We could turn off the
lights and open our window. Breathe out softly, the
mahā-mantra on your life air. Yes, I think I will.

4 A.M.

The camp is stirring, I hear them sneezing. I better
get out of here for my pre-walk hike.

Where do you get all your energy?

From the same place you get yours, O Hiraṇ-
yakaśipu.

You still believe in that God *stuff*?

You bet. And you? *You* still believe in the scientists
who have given us nuclear bombs—*those* guys? You still

believe in those philosophers and sordid cheaters, the groppers? You still believe in yourself and the Buddhists who tell you Nothing? Come on, you can do better than that.

Oh, leave them alone. They're lotus-eaters. Don't disturb their minds.

No, we are meant to remind them. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Go deeper.

I remember walking on a boy scout hike. I couldn't understand why we had to keep on walking. I was a stranger to the mission. I didn't even know anyone there. Our hike was led by some hike master, another stranger. We walked all day and now I don't remember it with fondness. I didn't like the feeling of being totally away from whatever love and friendship I did have in the world, alone in the woods with a bunch of people I barely knew. But that's how childhood is—you have to do things you don't want to do, herded together with other people who usually don't want to do it either. Spiritual life is different.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote that the soul wants to get beyond the walls of the universe. He seeks the light. He wants to go to Kṛṣṇa where he'll serve as an individual. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

The main feeling I had during all those group activities was lack of love. If love was there, then you could cooperate. Otherwise, you couldn't understand why you should.

Too many things on the mind. The ISKCON Communication Bulletin is sent to the media every month. In the latest they say that ISKCON was victori-

ous after ten years of fighting it out at the Manor. Another item states that Kīrtanānanda pleaded guilty of racketeering and may get twenty years. I don't understand it. It's all too much. I told the devotees in Belgium that I was traumatized by what I went through when many of my guru Godbrothers fell down. I'm not a scholar or sociologist with qualification to comment on all this, but it happened to me—to us. Who can understand what it means?

Still, I have a simple explanation: if we leave ourselves open to *māyā*, even to pride, then *māyā* will knock us down.

In the meantime, I don't think I have to write everything that comes in the mail or what Swami is or isn't in Ireland or what is distracting me from my mythical walk. The walk is the writing. My energy to continue comes from Kṛṣṇa.

9 A.M.

Tell us about Lord Caitanya. He inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa in this age. He is golden. “Not exactly like your white bodies,” Swamijī said, “but yellow-golden.” Therefore, He is called Gaurāṅga or Gaurasundara. Golden, and very beautiful. Whoever saw Him felt love of God. He had the symptoms of God. People were attracted to His beauty and chanted God's names in earnest.

I remember walking alone before I met Prabhupāda and being afraid. I'm not afraid now. When I would see guys approach me on the street at night, I would look to see if they had women with them. They were usually too absorbed in their women to attack

strangers. Now it's just hot. We're walking in the heat. I'm carrying the Prabhupāda *mūrti* and because the sun was beating directly on his head, I put his silk Swami hat on him, and then placed a shade over him.

This walking is making me roil and boil under the skin of who I am. I feel rage, anger, pettiness, it's true, but something else too. I have the emotions, but I also feel them thrust at me—not really mine. Someone wrote me about a controversy and said, "I'm sorry that my questions disturbed you. I just wanted to know the truth." They said that when they were worthy, maybe I would agree to tell them the truth.

The truth is the party line. Or if that isn't true, or at least the most refined truth, I accept most of it for the sake of solidarity.

Some get p.o'd at me for saying that. They want me to say what *I* think is the truth. But you see, if I speak only what *I* think, that won't make it better. Fifty guys together are no joke. They do adhere to Prabhupāda. And besides all that, I don't want to speak my own truth on relative issues. I have other plans.

Anyway, you already know I'm wearing a hair shirt and how good it will feel when I finally throw it off. I don't want to enjoy in this world—not ice cream, not jazz—because it's all illusion. I clench my teeth and keep marching. I won't give in. One day, however, I will feel Kṛṣṇa's sweet mercy.

You ask, "What good will repression accomplish?" Well, we all quote that at various times. It means, "Let me do what I most feel like doing, even if its connection to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is questionable." Those things aren't always sinful, and often they can be dovetailed, but you have to wonder. For example, one

fellow got the chance to enter top management, so he did, although others were sorry since he had often spoken against such positions. But he took the chance because he said it was his nature. What would repression have accomplished? Maybe he will be a more enlightened manager than the rest of us because it's his nature. Who knows?

I want to add, however, that sometimes repression is useful. There are some things that *should* be repressed. You have to keep your hands at your side and not touch the opposite sex. You have to watch your tongue and not commit offenses. And don't overeat either. Uncontrolled lust will ruin you and you'll only live to be sorry. It's that repression that sometimes makes devotees sing a little lopsided in the sun when they're walking on *pada-yātrā*. They're balmy from the hot sun.

Five more minutes of air time. Then who do you think you are, the president of the U.S.? He's under scrutiny in a sexual harassment case and he's implicated in the Whitewater scandal. He said when he was only a governor he'd already been through so much brutal scrutiny. A politician's life is like that—high pressure—but they just have to keep going. That's the nature of the job.

I also read that they elected a pro-Hindu Prime Minister in India, but he and his group lasted only a week.

Don't tell us of the torture and burials alive and suffering the youth gangs are causing in American cities. We live in a world of dull injustice and we each have our own worm history. God save us. I want to cry out to Kṛṣṇa, but to give more than a dry recital of *śāstra*. *Śāstra* is perfect, I know, but I have to live it. Reading

or even quoting it is never enough. Sometimes we have to scream it out.

2:45 P.M.

I said I wouldn't open letters, but I opened one from a woman who was my disciple in 1978. I wrote about her in *Litany* and admitted my wrongs. She read the page I wrote about her and wrote back to tell me that I committed a much deeper wrong than the one to which I admitted. I was, after all, GBC and guru. I should have looked to the bottom of things regarding the things she was accused of. I should have discovered her actual mistakes and innocence. She felt those under my authority were wrong and I did nothing to stop them. It stung to hear it and to feel it again.

Now I am walking away with that on my mind. I thought of sending a copy of her letter to a few God-brothers who knew about the wrongs. I even thought of asking them to help me face my mistakes. Am I supposed to do something now that I am not already doing?

But I didn't send her letter and I'm walking alone with it.

Another man wrote that he no longer plans to be an official celibate in his religion. He's homosexual. He discusses monks and how they don't form intimacies with the people they counsel. I couldn't quite understand his point, which was coming from a Christian point of view (he quoted from books that said Christ felt the soul and the flesh would rise together for eternity, and that Christian teachings on the soul's immortality and the body's temporality are Platonic and pagan, not actually Christian).

It's a fact we *sannyāsīs* don't want to get too close to the people we counsel if it means that passions and lust are aroused. That doesn't mean, however, that we are incapable of feeling for people in a spiritual way. The Gosvāmīs were certainly capable, but they didn't give skin love. They helped the people become devotees. Why does intimacy always have to mean sexuality? That's nothing more than wanting selfish pleasure from a relationship. This man wants to express his love for another man and he equates such closeness with physical intimacy. If a *sannyāsī* doesn't go for that, no one should write him off as cold, especially if his love for Kṛṣṇa is "hot."

A pure devotee knows the spiritual body of the spiritual Lord. He calls out in separation. In the highest stages his love is transformed from self-centered to Kṛṣṇa-centered and he shivers and cries in ecstasy. None of this is related to sexual passion.

Before a devotee can reach that stage, he has to subdue lust, anger, and fear. He holds them in. Or he uses them in Kṛṣṇa's service. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura said that he would use lust, anger, greed, and fear in his spiritual life. There's nothing higher than pleasing Kṛṣṇa.

So I thought to ask a Godbrother about that first letter—the second one I absorbed and then responded to myself. But that first letter: "Look, this woman disciple says I stood by while others raped her. She actually used that example. She said that while I did not join in on the attack, I stood by and permitted them to harm her. Then afterwards I handed her her undies and told her, "Oh well, it wasn't so bad, you know." What do you think of that? O brother, will you

exonerate me or will you help me to face the guilt of my mistake? Or is the movement so “off” that whoever is in charge will have to commit such mistakes and later pay for them with pain?

She said that the devotees did not help her when she was in need, and some of them even attacked her daughter. Immature devotees do horrible things sometimes, yet claim to be better than others. When we hear from these victims, we cringe. It’s difficult to admit to the full extent of it all.

Yet we tried, we tried . . . We had to raise money to run the communities. I did like being worshiped. It was pleasant to the ego. Otherwise, I might have been able to see more carefully what an ego trip it was and how we were hurting others. And there were just too many people to manage. The standard of right was determined by who won the most *lakṣmī*. It was Prabhupāda we were trying to please, wasn’t it? Yes, it would help to be able to talk through all this with someone who went through it too.

It’s so hot I can barely stand it. Let me open the door. I’m in the hut in Uddhava’s backyard. It’s nice in the morning, but there’s no window and it becomes an oven by this time of day. I promised myself I wouldn’t answer mail, but I looked at those two. They interrupted my mood here, but what is my writing anyway? I write of people. Or is the writing only a flight to the desert to be alone with God and to pray for everyone?

All imitations. I’m not the old man who admits he’s a homosexual or the girl who has now grown older with her huge file of ISKCON’s misdeeds tucked under

her arm. I am who I am. I have even committed misdeeds against myself. Try to figure that one out. I want to. I play an old man's literary game, imagining I'm walking on *pada-yātrā* and that people are like dolls I can move by writing in words. At least I chant when I walk over the hills.

Lord Caitanya went to the twelve Vṛndāvana forests. Which reminded me of another letter: a man wrote to tell me that he demanded his wife meet him on Vraja-maṇḍala *parikrama* and she didn't. But she should have; she must *surrender* to him.

I sympathize with both of them. (She wrote me her side.) They are both my disciples. He added, "You don't know what a razor heart the woman has. She must come to Vraja and surrender to me."

I backed out of that one. I should drive the last nails in the coffin of my career as a marriage counselor? I've given it up. I can't solve anything anyway. If I don't make claims to authority, then I'm not actually standing back while the organization or the people themselves create suffering. I said I can't help because I can't.

That's why I'm on this *pada-yātrā* by myself. I didn't promise anyone I would take care of them if they followed me out onto the road. I don't promise that they'll go to heaven, or if they don't come, to hell. I'm just walking by myself and the rest is other people's business.

When Lord Caitanya walked through the Vṛndāvana forests the cows followed Him and licked His body. He felt waves of ecstatic love because He is the original

Kṛṣṇa and the cows remembered Him. The cowherd men could not keep the cows from following Lord Caitanya. The deer came too. This is a brief description of His Vṛndāvana visit, but I am so low and fallen that it doesn't seem to be softening my heart. I think of Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's line where he says that even the stones melt when they hear Lord Caitanya's pastimes. My heart is harder than stone. Therefore, his words were spoken for me. When Lord Caitanya walked in the forest, the cows followed Him. Chant to understand.

July 17

Midnight

Troubled. Read Cc., but have too much on my mind to pay close attention. Lord Caitanya went to a hill and asked the people if there were any Deities there.

“Yes, in a cave there are a mother and father with well-built bodies, and a beautiful child curved in three places.” The Lord excavated the cave and offered His obeisances to Nanda, Yaśodā, and child Kṛṣṇa. Then He went to Śeṣaśāyī and offered respects to Lakṣmī. He recited the *Bhāgavatam* verse where the *gopīs* cry when they think of Kṛṣṇa roaming the forest and hurting His tender feet on the thorns. A sensitive reader would feel something; my distraction became obvious even to me. What is it?

It is several things. I’m thinking about the letter from the monk who said he wanted to give up his celibacy to recognize his homosexuality as a valid, human, spiritual expression.

I’m also thinking of the letter from the woman who accused me of being an impotent, uncaring leader who went along with power-hungry Godbrothers.

The monk's letter reminds me how disappointed I become when people give up their vows. Just because you feel an urge to do something doesn't mean you should do it. This correspondent mentioned the "weaker brother"—an expression referring to the stronger brother's duty not to set a poor example for those who are weaker. Then he said he had a right to live his own life. He can't live forever as an example to others if it's not honest.

That reminds me of my *pada-yātrā* theme. It's a description of endurance despite blisters, other drives, occasional forgetfulness of the goal. When I doubt the point of this writing, I think endurance.

In her book, *Pictures of Childhood*, Alice Miller writes:

Franz Kafka once noted in his diary that a writer must cling to his desk "by his teeth" in order to avoid the madness that would overtake him if he stopped writing. I suppose the same could be said of every creative activity that somehow permits us to come to grips with the demons of our past, to give form to the chaos within us, and thereby to master our anxiety.

Miller said she began to deal with her own anxiety by drawing. She found that writing didn't actually help her contact her anxiety, so she tried drawing. She was able to connect with her inner child, the seat of her anxiety, by drawing, but she found that her inner child lacked the language to express the pain. Therefore, she allowed the child to speak through the colors.

In my writing, I too seek healing. I don't want to become another disenfranchised monk, thinking I have outgrown my vows. The "weaker brothers and sisters" are my disciples and they are real people. I too am a

weaker son who needs to follow his guru—weaker, because I'm always in need of revitalization. I find it in self-honesty.

I want to pray as I write. Prayer does not mean only restating sâstric maxims. Rather, it requires that we focus on our purpose when we pray. Prayer is not a journey of the imagination but of the heart. There's no point pretending. The prayer journey has to be real and it has to be personal. Maybe that's why Alice Miller's words appealed to me—her inner child found language through the medium of color.

I find my language not so much through writing itself but through improvisation. I continually search for and find what's new in myself by experimenting and playing with the old. I give myself over to the understanding of the moment because it seems to follow its own laws and to elude supervision or censorship. As soon as I attempt to give it direction, to reflect, to work more slowly, I interfere with my own process of discovery and my progress is impeded. The end result may look technically proficient, but I find it boring because it does not speak my deepest language.

Miller describes how she drew inspiration from the great artists by sometimes trying to copy their paintings. Then she realized she was missing the point. "It was as though I was searching for encouragement from an accomplice, not from a master of the craft." The great artists had to be springboards into her own mind and emotions; she did not need to imitate them. She describes how Turner, Goya, and Cezanne became accomplished masters, then felt they had to go beyond what they were doing to discover new

expression. Often they were criticized, but they broke new ground. She concludes that art requires courage.

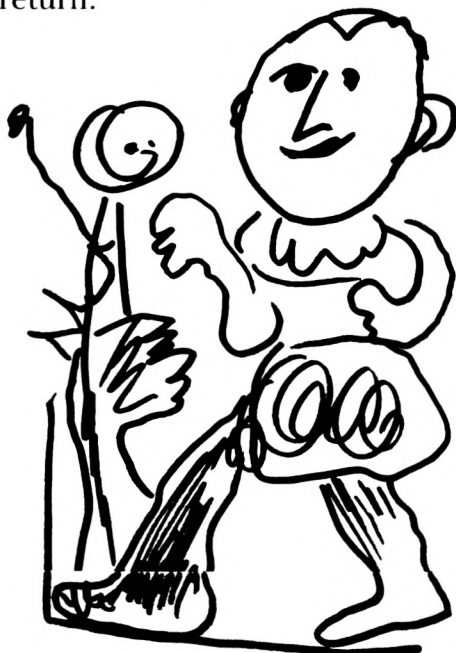
Actually, art requires more than courage. “Perhaps it is more accurate to say that art has to do with *need* and not with accomplishment, for artists often have no choice but to risk being ostracized, scorned, and rejected for articulating their own truths. At stake is the survival of one’s authentic self, and in this regard there is no alternative but to try to survive.”

We are often imprisoned in the cage of our own abilities and routines. We think routine equals security. If we are to find our own language, we need to break free again and again. Otherwise, our articulation will not remain constantly real and personal. It will not remain prayer.

I don’t know what all this means to me in practical terms. I seem to think I can only take small steps at any one time. I play with words, “raid the inarticulate” when I write, and become more and more willing to express pain if that’s what’s needed. Sex and the monk. That topic. The monk claims most religious renunciates are paranoiac about sex and don’t appreciate that the body can express love. I don’t accept that. Okay, but what am I and where am I actually at? That is the question I want to answer by springboarding from his challenge.

I answer letters and claim they interrupt me. Nouwen writes: “A few years ago I met an old professor at the University of Notre Dame. Looking back on his long life of teaching, he said with a funny twinkle in his eyes: ‘I’ve always been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until slowly I discovered that the interruptions were my work.’”

“That is the great conversion in our life: to recognize and believe that the many unexpected events are not just disturbing interruptions of our project, but the way in which God molds our hearts and prepares us for His return.”



I am walking, I am walking, and the words come:

SICC, Dr. Alexander, queer, stubbly beard, Madeline and her golden mean, mother, father, Father Hicks, Murray, Kowit, Eliot, Anna, Saratoga, Navy, Med, whores, pot, writing, Doris growing older, “LSD is God,” casts on legs after jumping out the window.

Enough of that. Now words post-summer of '66:

Swami, mind screaming dirt, Mr. Rice, welfare office, fear on Suffolk Street, marijuana my vocation, and writing, skinny, scrawly, poems, The Truth, Van

Gogh, jazz, Ayler, Marion Brown—"Trane . . . friends,
loneliness . . .

then

Swami

new life

red beads

Caitanya

storefront—Rāya-rāma, Kīrtanānanda, Hayagrīva

now me,

Satsvarūpa,

the mantra

the name.

I left it all behind—the writings destroyed

the

past life.

Went to the Swami and I see him now. I'm still going
to him again and again

O Swami, O Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa

I thought of you in Avalon

and read your *Easy Journey*

and wanted to be true forever.

Is it possible? You were true to your guru and you
preached with enthusiasm on his behalf. How valid is
my life?

3:40 A.M.

I liked what I expressed this morning. I was talking
about free-writing and prayer, and although I didn't
actually do it in that session, I asserted my right to be
honest, to face pain, and to discover my self through
improvisation.

In practical terms, that means I have to stop worry-
ing about how my writing will look when it is published.

I have to stop making official statements, and instead fill my page with colors and words and not a single imitation, even of myself.

Answering a little mail is a good way to be on *pada-yātrā*. It shows I'm in touch with the world. I just have to be careful that I don't think the world begins and ends with what's in the mail pack. It shouldn't make me avoid the actual walk.

That word queer popped out of my pen earlier. Had a temporary office job once, and at the end of the day, a man would want to put on my coat. Later I understood. He asked to stay over at my apartment, but I was able to avoid him. Kṛṣṇa protected me during those lost years.

But how much longer would He have protected me from corruption and death? I moved from apartment to apartment with my books and records, then began to leave them behind or sell them for food or smoke.

That life is behind me now. I have to keep telling myself that when those memories come up. Did you know that right now, a Godbrother has come to Ireland where I am walking? I didn't invite him here because I would have to arrange and worry where he would stay, how he would eat, whether he would want to be part of our camp, and I can only hope he understands should he ever read this. I wish him well.

Someone sent me a book on contemplatives called *In The Silence of Solitude: Contemporary Witnesses of The Desert*. When we face ourselves, it's what they used to call facing the desert, or the emptiness, or whatever you prefer to call it when you look at yourself in the

silence. You turn off some of the outside noise and listen. It's not only the past that comes up, but who you are. If you are a devotee, then when that happens, you turn toward God. You pray the *mahā-mantra*. Then you change. You hear Kṛṣṇa's gentle voice uplifting your faith. Your ego reduces naturally.

The priest who compiled this book (Eugene Romano) said that Christ was wrung of all respect when he hung on the cross, but he had God in his heart. You have to have faith. Others will scorn your attempts to find God. They may not even like your service. I find that true because my writing service resembles so closely an ego trip. But that's not the whole picture. It's entering the desert on a *pada-yātrā*, fictional or otherwise.

Oh, get off the self, the bloody self, and those memories that hurt. Alice Miller says no, stay with them. Why am I so poor at this prayer, Kṛṣṇa? How can I find You? What is the inner calling of my soul? May my folly become wisdom.

I get headaches and the long walks are tiring, so I'm going to take a shorter walk today and return to this backyard to chant, chant, chant. I want to hear the holy name uttered by my own tongue chanting.

In his introduction, Romano describes his hermitage in New Jersey. He defends the monk against the American work ethic that makes us think that unless we're doing something active, we're worthless and selfish. His monks each have a hermitage, but they also live in community.

"Prayer is the bread of the hermit's life . . . The sacred scriptures are the lungs of a hermit's daily

prayer—he does not live without them. Reading, pondering and praying the scriptures become the bread of the word, complementing the nourishment one receives from the bread of the Eucharist. . . . if you live according to my word, you are truly my disciple; then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

When I read this I thought, “That’s it. What’s a *pada-yātrā* into the desert unless you read scripture?” Read and ponder and pray. We say *śravaṇam kīrtanam* leads to *viśṇoḥ-smaraṇam*.

8:55 A.M.

Received word that B.M. Swami has walked 3,200 kilometers on a projected 8,500 kilometer walk. His goal is to reach St. John, Newfoundland. As he walks, he tells people about Kṛṣṇa. He was interviewed for national television, and walks mostly alone or with one or two people to accompany him. He chants sixty-four rounds a day.

I wondered if he was writing a journal. Maybe he is too busy living and will write it all down in retrospect. Not everyone feels a compulsion to record.

I told you I was reading that book on hermits. In the back of my mind I thought that in another birth or in some other circumstances, I would be inclined to that kind of life.

But no, I don’t think so. At least not now. I have to face that I am something else and also *why* I am something else.

I have multiple interests. I cannot read and pray *all* day. I like to draw and write poetry, which already sets

me aside from the single-minded, adoring, submissive prayer-maker they depict.

And I don't live in no honeycomb. So forget it, and forget the past too. I am beginning to flinch when I play with word associations. I know what's going to come up on my radar screen. From honeycomb to . . .

Our pasts are shameful. Honeycomb—milk and honey. That's safe.

We have imbibed enough junk and slop in this one lifetime that we can barely stand it now.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. I walked in the cool, pleasant sunshine before our hosts arrived to do their gardening. Chanted one round. Then I went in and bowed to the *tulasīs* in their house. They have about six large *tulasīs* in big flower pots. Each *tulasī* has a name written on the pot in Sanskrit with a poetic translation like, "One who is dear to Kṛṣṇa . . . " I bow down to the plant, again sensing that I'm a low, mundane creature. At least I have a little feeling for Śrīla Prabhupāda as a person, so I closed the shade before I left his room so that the bright sunshine would not fall on his head.

After breakfast I slept and dreamt of a man who hooked me with a fish hook when I walked past him. I said aloud, "My disciples will kill you." People looked up when I made that threat, but no disciples appeared to defend me. Each time I walked past he hooked me again, usually on the arm or around the elbow. In the dreams you often don't feel pain, but this hurt. I managed to call the police, but they were more sympathetic to him. They called it a minor offense.

As B.M. Swami is walking, so I am walking through ideas. As I walk I imagine I am being pulled along on a trolley. I am writing nonstop. A disciple pulls the trolley and I keep writing across country. Everything I've written so far on this *pada-yātrā* is coming out like ticker-tape. I just hope the national television station doesn't get hold of it. They might not understand.

Lord Caitanya went to Bhadravana and Keśi-tīrtha. I can't remember all the places because I don't know Vṛndāvana at all. The *rāsa-sthalis*. Neither do I like to learn from *paṇḍas*, who include hearsay in their stories. I like to think that when Kṛṣṇa was with His mother, He was *present* with her, not thinking of something else. That's the way Prabhupāda presented it.

Lord Caitanya went to all the places where Kṛṣṇa played as a cowherd boy until His mother called Him for lunch. At Mathurā so many people gathered that the Lord left and went to Āmli-talā. You can still go there today. There's a Gaudiya Math temple there now. The old tree is still there. It may not always be—I cannot say how old it is. The Lord chanted alone at Āmli-talā until noon, then went elsewhere to greet the people and to preach the Name's glories.

O golden-skinned Lord Caitanya, You went to Vṛndāvana and rolled on the ground, thinking of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. His devotees thought it was dangerous; they were worried He would injure His body. I'm sure it was frightening to see the Lord throwing Himself into the river, rolling on thorns, falling unconscious in the forest. The two *brāhmaṇas* who accompanied Him

were in constant anxiety and decided they should take Him away from Vṛndāvana as soon as possible.

Although these pastimes are briefly described, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes that the Lord's pastimes and the symptoms He displayed in Vṛndāvana were so numerous that Ananta-śeṣa with His thousand heads could not possibly describe them all, even if He spoke until the end of time.

And I think I have something important to write from my little pea-brain, impure self? Your *pada-yātrā*: what is it compared to, the Lord's ecstatic wandering in the forests and *ghāṭs* and ponds of Vṛndāvana? He wouldn't step on Govardhana Hill because He considered it nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa, but He wanted to see Gopāl Rāya on the hill. Therefore, the Deity devised a scheme to come down from the hill on the plea of a Muslim attack. The Lord fulfills all desires.

I'm barely a devotee. Kṛṣṇa doesn't fulfill all my desires because they're not always good for me. We aspiring devotees have to be patient. Eventually, we will learn to desire only to serve our spiritual master for his satisfaction. This is my record of trying to do that.

Walking in my imagination. I dream of one day chanting better and calling out. Pray the *mahā-mantra*. Hare Kṛṣṇa. We have miles to walk before the deepest truth will come out.

4 P.M.

Facing who I am, although I cannot seem to change. I don't have much attraction to the holy name, but I will never stop chanting. I love it, actually. I am also a loner. I love that too, although solitude has its own

difficulties. Lord Caitanya's way is easy because He helps the most fallen. Lord Caitanya is magnanimous because He freely distributed love of God. Chanting is easy, yet when we dedicate our lives to it, when we try to make it *ātma-nivedanam*, we discover the difficulties.

Writing whatever I like—without having to meet editorial standards or the needs of the agents, literary critics, or even the Godbrothers—is easy. Or is it?

Not really. It leaves me on my own. I become unsure that I am satisfying my spiritual master.

Still, I would have it no other way. This *is* my way, my service.

Someone runs a restaurant in La Jolla, California; someone is a temple president or a temple commander; someone else is a *pūjārī* at the Manor—and people who work under them complain about them. They too doubt. Everyone worries about money and morality. Or some do. A writer is no different.

B.M. Swami is almost always alone, although he usually has at least one person with him. I'm sure that one person helps him from becoming afraid in the lonely vastness of Canada. B.M. Swami looks plucky and tall, a Canadian. He must have plotted out his route. Maybe he knows the country well from his days on *saṅkīrtana*.

Does he walk along highways with cars zooming by? The devotees in Lord Caitanya's time also walked thousands of miles. Sanātana walked alone. Lord Caitanya walked with two assistants. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja uses the phrase, "Walking and walking." They walked to get from Bengal to Vṛndāvana, and He walked all the way down to Cape Comorin. He didn't hop a bus

or even ride a donkey. He walked on His lotus feet. He gave His *darśana* as He went.

I am writing this while walking in a hut. There are different things in the room—books by others, the careful sentences by essayists reaching for a final effect, careful dialogue. One author said he wrote the last sentence fifty times.

I would never do that. If I lived out in the world, it's likely I would have hungered to make it in the big league. I would have done what was asked because I would want to be accepted. I would rewrite, submit myself to tough-minded editors or agents, and beg. Like a dog. Or maybe as a result of my natural tendencies, I would have been the starving, garret-type writer, hoping for posthumous fame, a martyr to art. I might have even met a girl who believed in me the way Nora believed in James Joyce.

But Nora didn't love him as an artist. She accepted him as a man and that's why he loved her.

Thank God I avoided all that. I have been shaped differently by my spiritual master's mercy. He told me to take *sannyāsa* and not to be bothered with family life. He instructed me to dedicate my life to preaching. Now I'm getting older.

I can hear Madhu in the van because he has moved it to a new position in the backyard. I think he is ready to do the interior work. He loves that kind of work, and I love my work. All of it is *guru-sevā*.

July 18

I dreamt I rented an apartment but had very little money. Another devotee and I collected on the street, and I asked if I could use the money for my expenses. Then a Godbrother came to talk to my partner. He wanted to hear about our *saṅkīrtana* stories. When the storytelling was over, my Godbrother turned his attention toward me. He said I looked shabby. I knew it was true. He left and I remained on my own to deal with my money problems.

Don't ask me what it all means.

I did wake up on time. I felt heavy and sorrowful, as if I were sharing the world's sorrow.

Heard stories of Lokanātha Gosvāmī last night. Lord Caitanya wanted him to stay and find the lost sites where Kṛṣṇa had His pastimes. He did his best, although he always hankered for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's direct *darśana*. He worshiped his Rādhā-Vinoda Deity, grew old, eventually entrusted his work to Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs, and remained alone to do *bhajana* at Keśi Ghāṭ.

I wonder how much time B.M. Swami has for reading since he averages 40–60 km a day. He said, “Simple life and the holy name are the real solution”—not technology, which just creates more problems.



Simple life. When you chant and walk so much, I suppose, your life does become simplified. Or when you write all day. That can allow me to become simple too. Reading, writing, chanting.

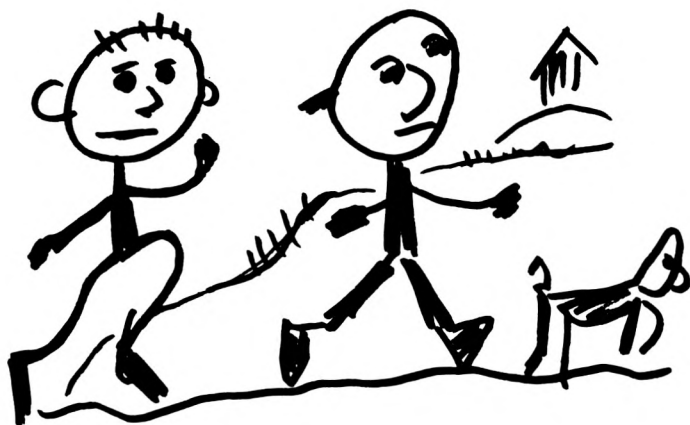
Just read some verses from Cc. about Lord Caitanya at Āmli-talā. The people thought Kṛṣṇa was again appearing in Vṛndāvana, dancing on Kāliya’s heads. It

was an illusion—a fisherman with his light on the river. Then someone said that Lord Caitanya was Kṛṣṇa, because He was a *sannyāsī*. *Oṃ namo nārāyaṇa*.

Lord Caitanya cried out, “Viṣṇu! Viṣṇu!” A living being can never become equal to God. That’s an absurd proposal. God is always full of transcendental bliss, whereas we conditioned souls are a treasure house of tribulation.

While reading this my mind went off to the latest news that arrived in the mail of a marriage break-up. Both my disciples. The husband has hardened his position and cannot seem to compromise or hear anything else. I can’t get involved. I don’t know who is right. I can’t bring them together as if I were a King Solomon. Still, when I try to read of Lord Caitanya speaking at Āmli-talā, the news clouds my mind.

O peace-maker, read the scripture and offer simple advice. It doesn’t matter because they will do what they will do regardless of what I say. Therefore, don’t let it divert you from hearing and chanting.



The people told Lord Caitanya that He was not an ordinary *jīva*. “You are like Kṛṣṇa in every respect.” You are Vrajendra-nandana. Your characteristics cannot be concealed (just because You have appeared as a *sannyāsī*).

“Apart from seeing You, whoever listens to Your holy name is made mad with ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa and is able to deliver the three worlds. Simply by hearing Your holy name, dog-eaters become holy saints.” (Cc. *Madhya* 18.123–24)

Hayfever. Woods teeming with wild life. I saw deer yesterday. They can’t see me as well as I can see them. When they actually ascertain I am nearby, one screeches a warning—a loud, piercing cry—and they flee. I saw them on my walk. Walking is a primal act.

Listen to the body, they say. One physical therapist told an amputee, “I don’t listen to the body, I listen to the spirit.”

Yeah, I wish I to could too. Spirit is more than parrot recitation.

Spirit speaks, inspired
by God. Tell us the
story of Govinda in your
heart.

Oh, I can’t.

I have to
keep walking
writing
reading.

I don’t want to reach back into my sordid past. Let me recall a time I was Kṛṣṇa conscious.

I am now. I was just chanting.
 I was just walking the sands of Vṛndāvana. Singing
 the *maṅgala-ārati* song.
 I was willing to serve to
 write a poem
 in Vṛndāvana.
 When I was KC?
 I used myself to serve others.
 I don't know. I don't know.
 I don't want to get distracted.
 A time I was KC?
 When I came before my spiritual master and heard
 from him
 when I entered the *kathā*.
 KC: does it always mean something explicit?
 Lord Caitanya told Lokanātha, "Stay in Vṛndāvana
 and find the lost places." They couldn't use maps or
 dig with spades.
 Oh, if He had told me to write what comes and to
 discover Kṛṣṇa in *that* wild land . . .
 He told Mukunda, "Be a doctor in the world and
 you, Raghunandana, and you, Narahari, stay with
 devotees in the temple."
 Each devotee has a different way.
 You, Sats, write all day and find Kṛṣṇa there. That is
 your work.
 Pray.
 Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana,
 the soul in the conditioned state, the need
 to approach You through *bhakti*.

I am setting an example but
nobody follows me,
said the snail.
They just step on my shell.

I am fortunate and duty-bound (sigh)
to preach the KC epithets.
I am a soul,
a soul. SOUL. A tiny
single part of God. Kṛṣṇa,
please let me be a better chanter and
please let me serve You.

3:45 A.M.

My Canon typewriter says, “All features built right in.” Can it produce a baby? Can it help you even an inch in gaining *bhakti*?

Well, it can serve. Or you can serve with it. It can type “Kṛṣṇa” and “Caitanya” as many times as you like.

Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and write. Then walk. They’re ringing the wake-up bell. Time for *maṅgala-ārati* and ginger tea. It’s colder today, at least so far. That must mean the sky is clear.

I chanted eight whispered rounds with the lights out. Now I see light coming through from the sky. O Kṛṣṇa.

O Kṛṣṇa, I want to be part of the procession that sings, dances, and works for You. Lord Caitanya said He was a *jīva* and a *jīva* can never be God. They then accepted that the Māyāvādī point wasn’t right, but added that Lord Caitanya was not a *sannyāsī*. They saw by His characteristics that He was the Supreme Person.

Just by chanting His names the entire universe becomes mad.

I find myself letting go, allowing impish disbelieving sub-persons to come to life. Is that my inner teenager? How can I make my rudest sub-persons devotees? Maybe it's not possible and I will never be fully integrated. Therefore, I can't give them much rein. The strict devotee part of me who believes in Kṛṣṇa and holds his spiritual master in utmost reverence, who is afraid of him and his displeasure—that person is in charge of this ship. Even when the teenager feels his oats, I can't let him sing too loudly, although I can't seem to ignore him altogether. He is the voice in me who reminds me not to accept everything blindly. He wants to know *why*. He is not really challenging the validity of Kṛṣṇa consciousness itself, but of blind, dogmatic acceptance.

For example, when Prabhupāda says that people on the sun planet have glowing bodies and that their collective effulgence is the blaze we see from the sun, I think, "Hmm." I'm willing to accept it, but I don't want to be uptight about it either. I mean, it's not that I disbelieve it and believe the material scientists over Prabhupāda, but I don't want to be afraid to admit that it's hard for me to imagine it quite like that. But when I try to speculate on how it's *not* true, I can't deny it. Śrīla Prabhupāda was right when he described Dr. Frog. We try to measure God by the tiny experience of our ten-foot well.

So in the end we have to accept *śāstra*, although certain things in *śāstra* seem to require some explanation.

Anyway, I just wanted to let you know that some of the people accompanying me on this *pada-yātrā* are

young like that teenager, and I have to give them voice from time to time to write an honest record. After all, we're out here in the wilderness and no one else is around as we walk. It won't hurt to let a few sub-persons out for exercise. This is not the Marines.

More mail. More than once we have been shown that in a pinch, Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees don't always act better than meat-eaters. Devotees tell how they experienced some terrible crisis and while the devotees let them down, the nondevotees were sympathetic and helpful. This especially happens when there is something shameful involved in the devotee's life.

One devotee told me how her husband raped their daughter. When other devotees heard about it, they kept their distance from both daughter and mother, but nondevotee friends embraced them and solaced them.

We have to face it—we're not always the greatest, most compassionate human beings, even though we read the *Bhāgavatam*. We ought to be better than we are, often. Prabhupāda said we should be gold with aroma. We have the gold of being in line with the Vedic scriptures, but we haven't always taken the time to actually improve ourselves. It means we may not have taken what we have heard to heart. Otherwise, we would see Kṛṣṇa in every living entity's heart and care for them.

Yet that one factor is a redeeming one: we are developing love for Kṛṣṇa and we chant His holy name. We practice *sādhana* and accept Śrīla Prabhupāda as mentor. We Hare Kṛṣṇas, these are my people, despite all our shortcomings.

Oh boy, hayfever attack. It's caused by the clear, sunny days we've been enjoying. Yesterday there were many large gnats in the air before the sun made it too hot for them. I can see out the skylight and down into the yard the Prabhupāda Centennial garden and the "Pride of India" tree growing. It's not a very big tree yet, just a sapling. These plants are like people, living out their life spans. It's the most amazing thing that we can see the plants go through their cycle and still think we will never die.

The morning bell is still clanging. Everyone up! I hear some grumbles that it's too cold out this morning to take a shower—there's no hot water. I was brave and already took mine.

"Hare Kṛṣṇa! We will be walking to Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu today after we round the bend into the Thunder Bay area of Ontario. There will be a group to meet us there. We need volunteers to cut up pineapples, and someone to go to the market to beg food. We need volunteers to do the laundry. And who will be distributing books? Let's have a show of hands. Let's go."

While all the commotion was going on at the *pada-yātrā* camp, and after they finished reading the daily spiritual news and washing and combing and cooking and chasing after the baby, I took the opportunity to go out for a solitary walk. It was a short one. I needed to be alone to chant. The air is cool and we have to live as long as we can. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

9 A.M.

He woke up with a headache and took a pill, but began his *pada-yātrā* late this morning. Everyone had already gathered. Someone handed him a page from Cc. with this quote from the *Bhāgavatam*:

To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.

—*Bhāg.* 3.33.6

“Yes,” he said, “this is a very important verse for us.” But he did not say more than that because this was not the time to lecture but the time to walk. He walked and waited for the pain to go down. He hoped it would. They told him of the osteopath in town who had relieved many *brāhmaṇas* of their pains in one twenty-minute session, but in order to see him he would have to abandon the *pada-yātrā* and take a different route. He didn’t want to do that. Besides, he didn’t have much faith in such cures.

He decided to keep walking. He remembered how Śrīla Prabhupāda had written that hearing is more important than thinking in this age. Of course, he didn’t mean that we should stop intelligent thought, but it’s difficult to meditate silently on God, and we definitely should not waste our time in speculation on Him. Better to hear from authorized sources the sound coming down in disciplic succession. He has

been spending his lifetime doing that and wishes he had made more progress.

Others tell him, "That's all right. It's okay not to have a higher taste provided you keep on trying and you honestly admit your low state to others."

Yes, be humble. Still, he wishes it were otherwise. He wishes he could chant so much that he would never want to stop. He wishes he could lose his curiosity for how people express themselves in this world. He wishes he could be permanently satisfied.

Earlier this morning he had found a carton on the porch which his secretary had put there in his perpetual shifting of boxes and possessions. It contained books he had not seen in a year. He picked through them and found about half a dozen books that interested him. *Last Conversations of Therese of Lisieux*, her autobiography, Merton's *Jonah*, and a book on writing called *Walking On Alligators*. He flipped through the books for five minutes, then put them back in the carton. He always does that—looks and then puts them back.

Returned to thinking of Lokanātha Gosvāmī in Vṛndāvana uncovering the lost pastime places. It was difficult work, I'm sure. When he heard that Lord Caitanya had gone to South India, he decided to leave his work temporarily to find Him, but their paths did not cross. His search became almost a distraction from his work. When he returned to Vṛndāvana he heard that he had just missed Lord Caitanya's visit to Vṛndāvana. Again he set out to find the Lord. Then Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in his dream and told him to return to Vṛndāvana and to his work.

Then we hear that Lokanātha wanted to worship a Deity, and Kṛṣṇa Himself appeared to Him in Deity form. He became absorbed in worshipping his Rādhā-Vinoda *mūrti*.

At first I thought, “Will that become another distraction from the excavation work?” But it seems that Rādhā-Vinoda helped him directly in his work by pointing out the lost places. It’s not possible to do the kind of work Lokanātha was engaged in without divine intervention.

Writing is similar. To write of Kṛṣṇa, to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa on paper, you need the Lord’s special mercy and blessings. Otherwise, you wander here and there seeking something “spiritual,” something novel, something to improve your writing art, and not finding the heart.

Come on, come on, get on with the walk. This walking is not a diversion but the method to reach inside. My spiritual guide is in my heart. Do I want to submit to him, or would I prefer to do my own thing and offer it as I like?

“To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.”

Well, I have done all those things. I must be eligible. I can perform the *yajña*, as Śrīla Prabhupāda once said. I can light the sacrificial fire and chant the

mantras. And I can chant the holy name and write an honest rendition of what it is like to walk for Kṛṣṇa.

Only a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava knows another Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava's heart. The mood is specific between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, and especially among Lord Caitanya and His followers. It's even more specific between guru and disciple—Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his disciples, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and his disciples, and our Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers. It's a narrow road we are walking.

What will we have to read to understand this specific mood except our spiritual master's books (which we have already read many, many times) and the books of his direct disciples? Lots of scripture and philosophy, and as yet only a few plays, a handful of poems, memoirs, and essays from his disciples. More will come. His disciples are shy and don't like to speak of themselves. They speak as strong as hell, however, on philosophical topics.

I'm a little different. I am a spewing volcano of whatever wants to come—spaghetti sauce, nectar, memories, and hope. Don't knock it. I come from Little Napoli and the Bronx, Staten Island and Manhattan. I went through the tunnel of love and who should laugh at my expense? I'm not trailing any clouds of glory, although I'm trailing the rhythms of Poe and others.

I told one man that I used to accompany my mother to the movies during W.W. II when I was six or seven. In the dark movie house I hung onto the soft flesh of her arm. He commented that my mother watched Hollywood love films (while her husband was away) and didn't seem to notice that she had a boy who

craved her love right next to her. He wanted to know if I got the love I needed.

Will Kṛṣṇa give it to me now? Do I have to first conduct more research before I can return it?

Another man said to me ten years ago, “The ecstasy has been replaced by responsibility.” He was a temple president at the time. Now he’s on the GBC. I think he gets his ecstasy in a special way now, in the way we call “getting kicks.” We all have to get it one way or another.

*Don't blame it on Elvis
for shakin' his pelvis
shakin' the pelvis has been in style
ever since the River Nile.*

Don't blame it on the long hours you worked as a bagger at Food Farm. Seventy-five cents an hour (before taxes). Don't blame it on the magazines you read or your stern father or even the times in which you lived surrounded by ignorant Catholic priests. Why complain now that no river of love flowed toward me? I loved that “gentle assassin” in the form of LSD and marijuana. It made me see the sky's beautiful blue in ways I had never seen it before. I told Kowit I was going to take it every day for the rest of my life.

Then—

*Every day I got the blues
I got the blues every day.*

The only relief was standing hidden outside on the ship's catwalk, dragging on a joint lit by a wind-proof lighter.

I find you is romancing about old times, dear fellow, right when you is supposed to be walking and chanting

in the desert with your flag held high. Better have *kīrtana*.

What to speak of the person who sees God face-to-face, even those who chant His name are eligible to work their asses off for this movement.

And what reward do they get?

They complain—

You load sixteen tons

and whaddya get

another day older and deeper in debt.

You owe your soul

to the GBC.

Hey, man, you're harping a lot on that lately. What about that quote from Hebrews that your authorities are themselves accountable, so you should not give them the added burden of grief but serve them happily? That's how we can be accountable to God. What about that?

Yeah.

But I can't help it. I don't want this book to be just another pretty face. I want it to be real.

We've walked another fifty kms for that.

Everyone's got to "get off" in one way or another, get relief or pleasure. Some smoke, some drink Coke, others drink beer, but everyone has to blow off at least a little steam during the course of their lives.

And everyone has to work long hours.

We see an inkling, a chink of light in the darkness when we work for Kṛṣṇa. When that chink of light disappears, the devotee is being tested, and to pass the test he has to find his solace in Kṛṣṇa.

I feel I am trying to get as much work done as possible in the time I have remaining to me. This is my life. One Godbrother I know is trying to get a PhD and to influence the academic community before it's too late for him. I find that exciting. It makes me want to come to my writing desk.

I have so many things to say that I drop them on the run the way Kṛṣṇa dropped grains from His tiny hands when He ran to barter with the fruit merchant.

Did you know blackbirds slow down in flight to land? I noticed that yesterday. I also noticed that this house has the last telephone pole in the line. That's because we're in the country. The phone lines reach all over the world and stop here.

There they go again, beating that drum. I don't like those loud *kīrtanas* because they cause permanent hearing loss. Maybe I should start putting cotton in my ears. I prefer the soft chanting of the writing mode—Hare Kṛṣṇa wafting gently to the soul.

We're starting to tire. Hare Kṛṣṇa. The captain will soon signal that we can stop under a tree and drink some water. I feel like I'm foaming at the mouth—over-worked and afraid of death. *Pavarga* and *apavarga*. I will lie down in that cool shade over there and ask for a wet rag for my poor head.

There was something more that I wanted to say about getting your work done before it's too late, but I can't remember what it was. All I want to do right now is take a break. But first I want to reach my limits and then surrender before your eyes.

3:45 P.M., Uddhava's backyard hut

Some literary talk. I have *Broken Vessels*, by Andre Dubus, with foreword by Tobias Wolff. In his foreword, Wolff describes the nature of the autobiographical essay. He says he was curious to read Dubus' essays because he himself has been grappling with the difficulties of writing short stories, which he describes as "years of working behind a mask." He writes:

Of course, the confessional, 'genuine' persona is also a construct of the imagination—every coherent persona is—but it will inevitably take on a different voice and presence than the one we inhabit while telling stories.

The personal essay is different; it demands that we jump in with both our feet, yelling for all we are worth. It doesn't reward authorial discretion, self-effacement, the arts that conceal art. Nor does it reward any of the civic virtues: tact; polish; reasonableness; noble, throat-catching sentiment; correct posture. There are, to be sure, many such writers, and they do very well for themselves, but I have to say they make me see red. I want to reach in and shake them by the jowls until their wisdom and smoothness and certainty crack wide open.

All this parading on the high road has nothing to do with the real possibility of the personal essay, which is to catch oneself in the act of being human. That means a willingness to surrender for a time our pose of unshakable rectitude, and to admit that we are, despite our best intentions, subject to all manner of doubt and weakness and foolish wanting. It requires self-awareness without self-importance, moral rigor without priggishness, and the courage to hang it all on the line. It's a hard thing to do, and this is exactly what Andre Dubus has done here.

Certainly Dubus has written wonderfully and has led a courageous life—he was a Marine, then later, while

helping people in a car accident, was hit by a car and crippled for life—but what I am looking for something neither Wolff nor Dubus display or even mention. I am looking for *more* jumping in with both feet and yelling, more being human, not only in the subject matter, *but in the very way we write our sentences*. These essays are carefully written and polished. If you're going to hang it all out on the line, why not do it *in the writing itself*, in the prose, in the actual sentences (or lack of them)?

Walking again. First raindrops.

Let's hear from someone else. There's a tomboy here, a tommix, an old-timer, a girl born in 1962. They're all here and someone will be chosen to lead the worship.

Someone is teaching how to live in community. Let's listen. He says the same things I would say, and refers his audience to Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports and teachings. Same conclusion too.

Oh, now he is saying something more personal. He's describing his own vision and drawing from Śrīla Prabhupāda's letters for support. His final punch line? We should live in this particular way, in this particular community, and pay our dues. We should follow his vision and do what he says. We should learn to love one another in the way he suggests. *There is no other way.*

Gulp. Where did you say the back door was? I'm starting to feel one of my headaches coming on.

There, I'm out. I am walking the few hundred yards back to the hut where I am staying. Breathe deeply at the diaphragm level. Fill your lungs with air. Relax. Like those tapes: imagine you are lying on a beach. Now

sigh as you breathe out. Warm and heavy. Warm and heavy.

Time to answer the mail.

You want an accurate picture of the walk? How many are on it? Is it just me?

It's hard to say. In a personal essay you jump in with both feet and give a genuine persona, but I prefer to sometimes play. That's how I amuse myself because this is such a long hike and I become exhausted. So sometimes the *pada-yātrā* swells to thirty or forty people and they hold a *bhakti* clinic.

Even as we're walking, a man with a megaphone is giving us the anatomy of a *japa* round. It's too complex for me. I would rather struggle with the actual round. What can he possibly do to help? Let him take care of his own chanting and be quiet.

In Russian they still use both a formal and an informal pronoun for "you." The translator asked me, "In passages where you, Satsvarūpa, are addressing your guru, you use the informal you, but should we change it to 'thou' in the Russian?"

I don't know. We addressed him too informally? But that's all we knew. We never said "thou" to Swamiji and he accepted us as we were while simultaneously beating us into shape. We allowed him to mold us.

As time passed, he became more stern, but still he was loving. It seems that the more stern he got, the more adept we became at hiding in the big institution. Oh, we knew we couldn't hide from Kṛṣṇa, and we couldn't *really* hide from Prabhupāda, especially not an old student like me. Therefore, I spent my time

trying to catch his attention with some service he liked while harboring a secret desire to write creatively. I even began a fictionalized autobiography at the end of 1976 when I was in the guest room in the Amsterdam temple. I never showed it to anyone though. It was too contrived.

If Prabhupāda were physically present now and I went to see him in Bhuvanesvara, and if he asked me what I was doing, I would try to explain free-writing.

But maybe that's not my duty. How I write is my own burden. He would be more interested in the preaching results.

Lord Caitanya converted the Pāṭhāna soldiers. One of them was the king's son. He became a strong devotee and famous in all the holy places. The Lord gave them all spiritual names. Śrīla Prabhupāda says this is proof that *mlecchas* can become Vaiṣṇavas and become spiritualized. Whoever criticizes this process is a fool, even if he calls himself *jagad-guru*.

The two Bengali devotees were trembling to see the soldiers. They were not as brave as the Rājaputa Kṛṣṇa-dāsa or the Sanoḍiyā *brāhmaṇa*. That's all right. I'm like those Bengalis. I tremble whenever I'm in the hands of soldiers or the police. The main thing is never to give up the Lord's service.

The Lord assured the soldiers that the Bengalis were His associates and that they had not plundered Him. He said He had a disease that resembled epilepsy. Actually, every time He thought of Kṛṣṇa He experienced such intense ecstasy that He needed these men to protect Him.

“What ordinary living being can describe the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu? I’ve only indicated the general direction in the form of codes. The pastimes and methods of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are uncommon. Unfortunate is he who cannot believe even after hearing all these things. From beginning to end the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are uncommon. Just hear them with faith and accept them as true and correct. Whoever argues about this is a great fool. He intentionally and personally brings a thunderbolt down upon his head. The pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are an ocean of nectar. Even a drop of this ocean can inundate the whole world with transcendental bliss.” (Cc. *Madhya* 18.224–28)

6:45 P.M.

Goodnight, ace. The *kīrtana* group is singing and jingling and we bid you pleasant dreams.



July 19

Midnight

It is possible that the guru can teach his disciple even after the guru has left this world, but as Prabhupāda said, much depends on the disciple's purity. I feel like a perpetual recruit in Prabhupāda's army. I am recognized for my seniority, but still can't operate the basic controls. The higher realms of *bhakti* are still theoretical because I don't have the basic qualification of devotion to the holy name and surrender to my guru's order.

*"When will that day be mine
when my offenses ceasing
taste for the holy names increasing
when in my heart
will Your mercy shine?"*

When will my service earn me a right to gain Prabhupāda's mercy?

As for me giving others mercy, I can't give what I don't have.

I'm *un poco loco* and I like to play with a fast right hand for all I'm worth.



I do have Prabhupāda's mercy, and I can give that. After all, crazy or not, I'm no longer a bum, no longer married, still listening to voices but trying to correct them and use them in Kṛṣṇa's service. These are my sincere cries of a practicing *sannyāsi* preacher who wants to know who he is, really.

A soul, I know.

but

am I a battleship?

A Potemkin?

How badly do I need to say such words?

Kṛṣṇa says there are three energies, three modes, three miseries. The self does not die, but knows to move from body to body. A sober person is not bewildered. Out of thousands of such souls, few seek perfection. Out of those who attain basic perfection,

few care to know their ultimate purpose in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Few are *kṛṣṇa-tattva-vit*.

In the military dream I had last night, a Godbrother was awarded leadership, but he wasn't qualified. He wasn't a fighter. O brothers, this is the naked truth.

Why not write to that brother and ask, "Did you ever write that honest stuff you wanted to write? I don't mean the stuff you've been writing to defeat atheists, but the pain you felt when your young wife jilted you. Now you wear saffron and you're "too old for that." You look like a preacher-warrior, and you act like one too, touring the world as you do and fighting through your writing."

No, there's no point in my asking.

Betrayal breaks marriages. I try to stay out of it. One husband said, "I'm pretty good friends with Kṛṣṇa, so I warn you, watch out!" As if the Supreme Lord will be his agent to strike down his disobedient wife.

A curse. I'm supposed to take up the big pistol in my left hand and squeeze the trigger at whomever comes into my path.

Not me.

No mistake.



Pada-yātrā allows the devotees to dream in the early mornings according to the modes of nature under which they suffer and their spiritual aspirations which rise like respiration in these sleepers under the big tent. The generator guards the night and a new day is about to begin. We walk for peace, to chant, for Kṛṣṇa, in hope for our remaining days.

The Kṛṣṇa connection. *Kṛṣṇa-prāṇa*, a poem to Him. Kṛṣṇa deer. Kṛṣṇa fix. Kṛṣṇa chanting plan. Kṛṣṇa story. The boredom of the Hare Kṛṣṇas. Their poorly organized, in-need-of-money, full-of-hype, official, e-mailed, beloved institution. The ex-Kṛṣṇa leader sentenced to jail. Kṛṣṇa movement, small, listed as “new,” subject to prejudice. Watered-down presentations of His philosophy. Kṛṣṇa’s birthday, His temple, His Feet, His *prasādam*. His consort. His apostates. And His old, slightly soured (curdled?) old-timers, sagging, claiming they knew the Swami. “It used to be like a family,” they say with regret.

I am writing the word “Kṛṣṇa” in the odd prisms of worldly context. The pure meaning we read in scripture. *Kṛṣṇa-mādhurya*. *Kṛṣṇa-bhāvitā* something. Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirāja, Kāla-Kṛṣṇa dāsa. Kṛṣṇā (Draupadī), Kṛṣṇamāyī. *Kṛṣṇa he*.

Kṛṣṇa’s Janmāṣṭamī. Can I walk until then? No, not with this madness. We would have to recruit the Mad Hatter to be our *saṅkīrtana* leader just to keep you aboard. Please don’t ask us to stay out that long. We are not interested in reaching a certain destination or page quota but in walking for two weeks. This is a timed book.

The *pada-yātrā* sleepers are rising and turning in their dreams. One gets up to pass, and another goes

for a cup of water. I'm writing along with the hundreds of insects attracted to my light.

The farmer next door has a “gun” that goes off at regular intervals to chase animals and crows from his fields. It punctuates the night with its “bang!”. No one can live in peace with that gun going off. Anyway, this world is not meant for peace.

But there is another, *sanātana* world, “another unmanifested nature, which is eternal and transcendental to this . . . It is supreme and is never annihilated. . . . that place from which, having attained it one never returns—that is My Supreme abode.” (Bg. 8.20–21)

Yes, our hope and promise is to last two weeks and to maximize writing, to believe in it.



3:45 A.M.

The *pada-yātrīs* are clearing their throats. Do they want to say something? I had ten or twenty good ideas for a talk, such as reading from Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's songs and other things. We have got to give up this world and find eternity. Live in the present.

"This is not civilization," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, about the places where they work hard for sense gratification. Real civilization is to minimize your wants and to cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Seems impossible to turn back the clock and recapture wasted time, but we can at least claim the present. Lower your expenses, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, finally find pleasure in simple things, such as devotion.

B.M. Swami preached that in his walk across Canada and it attracted attention. He proved that a man can be occupied by walking and singing (praying) God's names. It doesn't take much to entertain yourself.

His preaching is a Kṛṣṇa conscious gesture. No one has to point out that his shoes were manufactured in a factory and that he had a back-up car. That means someone was out there making those items while he was out walking. The whole world works for a living.

His point is that Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed us not to work like dogs or asses. Work is fine, but life is for restraining the senses and discriminating what to eat, when to have sex, how to perform the *tapasya* that will bring you to the goal of life. Clean your heart.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes I feel I can walk all day. Kṛṣṇa conscious words will not desert me and I will be able to get Kṛṣṇa into every sentence. Lord Caitanya did that in His teaching of grammar where everything

was referenced to Kṛṣṇa. I wish to do this in my book. A Kṛṣṇa man free-writes Kṛṣṇa Caitanya into every line. Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa clothes hanging on a line. Kṛṣṇa's rabbits and sheep running in the late July fields. Kṛṣṇa in the line that gets x-ed and the lines that get written over. Don't be afraid of running out of steam because Kṛṣṇa supplies and He is unlimited.

Kṛṣṇa is the truth behind poetics. He is the goal, He is everything, He is all-attractive. This is the proper use of the free-write madness and play: direct it toward Kṛṣṇa.

This *pada-yātrā* is for Him and it is His.

When people asked for the translation of the chant, Prabhupāda said, "No, Kṛṣṇa is a proper noun. That is His name in every language."

If you like, call Him all-attractive, blackish, more beautiful than millions of cupids. The *gopīs* swoon thinking of Him. The boys are mad after Kṛṣṇa. His mother too. All glories to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Wish Walt Whitman had put Kṛṣṇa
in his poems but
almost no one uses His name.

One poet said, "Kṛṣṇa blue" and
another said, "Kṛṣṇa, the blue meany."

They don't know what they are saying.

They like Mirābāi's poems but don't
know who Kṛṣṇa actually is. Prabhupāda
said the *Bhagavad-gītā* was read in America
for hundreds of years but

no one knew

Kṛṣṇa.

I thought of Thoreau

and it's true. He liked Kṛṣṇa's book but didn't know
the speaker,
the goal.

"Do you want me to tell the truth or should I flatter
you?" Śrīla Prabhupāda asked.

The reporter said he wanted the truth.

"Then the moon shot was a waste of time."

O Kṛṣṇa,

please make me worthy.

I don't want to be Prometheus
my entrails eaten by a bird.

I fear You,

love You,

sweet flute-playing Lord.

8:55 A.M., Uddhava's backyard hut

In one of his essays Andre Dubus talks about story-telling. He says that people tend to make fun of mothers who tell stories about their babies, but now he realizes that it's wrong to laugh at them. He realizes that mothers are not talking abstractly about infancy and early childhood. Rather, they are telling stories about their children in such a way that a listener can see and hear, smell and touch a child who is not even in the room.

The mothers were also talking about their motherhood, and to convey those deep emotions and physical and spiritual changes in their lives, they choose what we have always chosen with our friends: they told stories with concrete language, with words that appeal to our senses. We talk abstractly with people whose love or affection or respect we don't want, so we

keep them at bay. We do not tell them any of the stories that are a part of the collection of stories that is our earthly lives.

I was just having a similar feeling myself—that some of the stories I want to tell will have to be abstracted, and yet I don't want to write like that. It's a difficult challenge.

Then something different:

'gaurāṅga' bolite habe pulaka-śarīra

'hari hari' bolite nayane ba'be nīra

“When will that opportune moment come to us when there will be shivering of the body as soon as we chant Lord Gaurāṅga's name? While chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, when will there be tears in the eyes?”
(*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā*, Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura)

Second headache of the day. I don't know what else to tell you.

2:40 P.M.

Tough pain day. Could be worse. I could be suspended in traffic on a bridge, on my way to work in an office or worse. Instead I'm on *pada-yātrā*. I tell the devotees to go on without me. I need to rest under this shade tree and give attention to this pain.

“Hey, Mahārāja, then how will you make up the ground unless you cheat and go by car or bike?”

I never vowed to walk each inch by foot. I said I'd try. You and I will meet in the great by and by.

Or somewhere.

What's your program?

To walk. That's all. When I have to sit it out, disabled, there's nothing much I can do.

Madhu is reading Indradyumna Swami's *Diary of a Traveling Preacher*. He wants to see how they fare at the dangerous border crossing in CIS and how Govinda Mahārāja will talk his way out of the fix by being friñdly with the guards. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I am sitting under a tree trying to calm down. Too much pain.

I had such bubbling ideas for today, but can't carry them through now. Hope they don't dissipate.

I wanted to answer the mail, and whatever I have read so far from the Caribbean countries has shown me that they are walking "for the Centennial" with banners and a cart.

Everybody's doin' it

doin' it

walking down roads to celebrate

His Divine Grace's appearance in this world.

Simple life, simple manner

and people like it. They call us "Haribols" in Trinidad and they love you to walk through their neighborhood in Guyana

and we walk for peace

while I cool it beneath this oak tree awhile,

lying back in the pillowy roots

and soft grass and begging

my head to please calm down.

What's that other story you wanted to tell? Does it come in episodes? Is it true?



Kṛṣṇa provides for us all. That's the theme. I can testify to that. But I won't tell the story now because I'm in the middle of reading another story—how Lord Caitanya met Rūpa Gosvāmī. Rūpa was wise and timed his travel so that he didn't miss Lord Caitanya. Rūpa sent two persons to Purī to find out when Lord Caitanya was going to Vṛndāvana, then Rūpa started out with his brother Anupama and met the Lord when He arrived at Prayāga. That's intelligence and good fortune.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “When Sanātana was relaxing and feeling inclined to retire from his government service, many of the *kāyastha* secretaries became greedy to take his post.” It's interesting that Śrīla Prabhupāda says Sanātana was relaxing. We think of him intently studying the *Bhāgavatam*. We always think of devotees working hard. We don't work hard like asses for *māyā*, but we do work hard for Kṛṣṇa. Here the devotee is mentioned as relaxing. I like that reference. Especially today when I have pain.

Śrīla Prabhupāda couldn't relax, didn't relax. He wanted only to preach. Still, sometimes in Bombay he would sit after his morning walk and breakfast and doze at his seat. You could call that relaxation.

I loved it when he did that. I preferred to see him alone “doing nothing” than lecturing, meeting guests, and so on. I liked it when he was private and domestic. I'd love to see him stay alone all day, then get up at midnight and translate the *Bhāgavatam*.

Prabhupāda, please relieve me from offenses. I am your servant, your dog, and I am suffering in my body.

Sanātana was reluctant to continue to work for the government. “When he resigned, an underworker

named Purandara Khan, who was a *kāyastha*, occupied his post.” O infamous Purandara Khan, you go down in history as the fool who was envious of Sanātana Gosvāmī. You should have followed him and learned *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You might have received a ray of Lord Caitanya’s mercy. Rather, you wanted the post.

6:30 P.M.

Read that Lord Caitanya walked out of His way to Rāmakeli just to be with His devotees because He is so attracted to them. Very nice.

The rooks are coming and going from their chimney nest. That animal-chasing “gun” is sounding off in its scheduled way. I told M. not to work on the van so close to the house because it’s too noisy. *Lokanātha lokera jīvana*.

Lokanātha’s one disciple sings his glories in the *Śrī guru-carāṇa-padma* song we sing daily. It’s personal. I’ll be up if He allows in the morning.



July 20

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the most beautiful person. Yesterday, I began to lose the thread due to pain. Today I want to find it again.

The shoes are lined up. I know most *pada-yātrīs* don't wear shoes, but this is the West. I'm sure B.M. Swami wears good walking shoes.

Oh, we're takin' a walk
and we hope you like it,
we're trying to please and
get your business.
We're mighty glad you chose
our airline. Please come back and
spend more money.
Walking is writing, walk-in writing
walk-in refrigerator
cold *sannyāsī* don't
have sex
but warm hands by
fictional fire in barrel to tell
the story beyond data.
Seek music in harrows

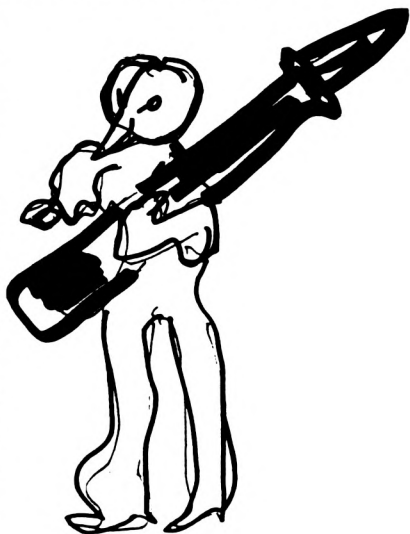
in earth,
smell fibers you
cannot digest
but don't pity me
I—and you—will live a little longer.

You can never get too far out. If you do, the audience will ignore you. I want to preach, of course, but the last lecture I gave I chose a verse where Vyāsa asks Nārada, "Please speak more on your life. Tell me what you did after your spiritual masters left you, having instructed you in the science of self-realization."

I spoke on Nārada's life, Prabhupāda's life, then said we should each inquire into our own lives. Life studies are as important as philosophy itself. No one asked any questions or made any comments. It was as if they didn't notice, understand, or think it important.

Is this man I drew important? He carries a huge pen over his shoulder as if it were a rifle or a mortar gun.

Yes, he lives, even though he has a beak. I could have given him a nose job, but he wanted a beak to prove that he was no ordinary human being. People where he lives don't consider him a freak. They love him because he's a writer and he's not more pretty or handsome than he really is.



We aim to please.
 The writer's life is our
 theme. Please don't get
 bored. Keep reading and find the
 key to the mystery, the door
 to Lord Kṛṣṇa's domain even
 in this humble and diffuse
 setting
 the gem
 of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

Adventures:

A dog barked as we passed.
 No one cared in the newspaper
 office: "Seen one walk, seen
 'em all. We need a *story*."

No gang attacked us.

We prayed to

Lord Nṛsiṃha for peace
 and the protection of our party.

Yes, we know we stir up trouble when we preach
 against cow slaughter and intoxication and anything
 that won't save people at death. Hospitals can't.

The newspapers don't care, but
 at least they interview our

Swami politely, even when they know the editor-in-
 chief won't accept the story. No proselytizing allowed
 and what else
 are we doing?

Snide remarks always
 in this world

to accommodate their readers in this democratic
 state—the lowest common denominator rules.

Obvious truths.

Rhumba.

I don't want to get in trouble, so I have given up all plans to amuse myself. Don't you think that's expected? Be honest

or do something extraordinary
 prove a devotee can have character
 without risking whatever little steadiness you
 have already achieved. Stick to *kīrtana*,
 Prabhupāda's *bhajan*as.

I couldn't write much yesterday because my camp was stormed with headaches, but off the page I thought of writing a sketch of a *pada-yātrī* called Owen, or maybe Notch.

I liked "Notch" best because I derived his name from "Down one notch," the idea of a devotee openly admitting he can't function on the highest level. Maybe he even admits he can't chant sixteen rounds, let's say. Or he can chant, but chooses some other standard he can't keep and says he needs to be knocked down a notch.

But they say (I heard all this from a Swami who was not knocked down a notch) once you go down a notch and you change the instructions Prabhupāda gave you, you ruin everything. I thought to write of a devotee whom most people thought was okay, but who secretly admitted he was down a notch. Did you know he listened to strange music on ear-phones (no one else could hear it)? Everyone thought he was listening to lectures, or at least Aindra's *kīrtanas*. Alas. In this purely fictional account, I will say he was *really* listening to Charlie Mingus.

Then I thought I shouldn't think about creating someone who was stuck outside Vraja-bhāva and I decided not to sketch him. So there is no Notch.



Now here is an important point from this morning's reading. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* we hear that after meeting with Lord Caitanya, Sanātana Gosvāmī “used to discuss *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in an assembly of twenty or thirty learned *brāhmaṇa* scholars.” (Cc. *Madhya* 19.17)

In his Bhaktivedanta purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda gives us Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's commentary on the words *bhāgavata vicāra*, which means “discussion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” He describes all kinds of material, inferior education, which include *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*. Then he says that any literature that

informs us about the spiritual world, spiritual identity, and the soul is called *parā vidyā*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the best form of *parā vidyā*.

Although *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is counted among the *Purāṇas*, it is called the spotless *Purāṇa*. Because it does not discuss anything material, it is liked by transcendental Vaiṣṇava devotees.

. . . *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is Śrīla Vyāsadeva's last mature contribution, and one should read and hear it in an assembly of realized souls while engaging in devotional service. At such a time one can be liberated from all material bondage. This was the course taken by Sanātana Gosvāmī, who retired from government service to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with learned scholars.

Reading this makes me ask why I stopped writing *A Poor Man Reads the Bhāgavatam* in favor of free-writing.

Because it was too confining and therefore too difficult to sustain. I suppose I could get back into it if I decide it's more substantial.

Anyway that's what BSST said about *bhāgavata-vicāra* and it got me thinking.

4:30 A.M.

I just played at letter-answering. It's a serious role, as real as the one I adopt when I come to this page. Tobias Wolff said even the autobiographical writer assumes a persona. I can't think that when I write here I'm dropping all masks, and when I answer a letter I take up the role of teacher or philosophy-speaker. Even if that's true, it's not that one is more or less real than the other. Indeed, when I repeat what Prabhupāda has said to encourage a younger or newer

devotee, that's real. It's me as servant representative of Prabhupāda. I warn them of deviation, I confess that I too have my troubles, but I hint at how they can overcome lust and pride. It's not quite me, yet it's also me.

Thoughts and feelings are elusive. I am clumsy and forget what I wanted to say. I was feeling that if I could jump into the free-writing, I could utter something truthful and it would help someone.

If I don't desert my regular practice, then I'll get to that truth. I'll be like those who execute their duty and feel nothing more. That may be fine for them, but I *need* more. It's not selfish to ask for mercy through prayer.

One young man asked me how to follow an eternal resident of Vṛndāvana, as his spiritual master advised him.

Another gave his opinion on an ISKCON controversy, hoping to draw me into it.

A spiritual daughter said several men want to marry her.

A twelve-year-old *gurukula* boy told me that they spent weeks on the beach in Jagannātha Purī. He wants me to initiate him as soon as possible. I said, "No, not until you pass through puberty and your teenage rebellion. If you still want to be a devotee at eighteen, no problem." He wrote a glib reply in his young boy scrawl: "I will be your disciple until I die."

8:55 A.M., Uddhava's hut

Why is it important to record the exact time, since everything is changing? Entering the hut I think, "Bet-

ter write while I can. It can all change radically soon and then . . . ”

I want to preserve a record of this walk. I'm still only halfway to Australia. I wrote everything that came to mind.

Good thing there are editors. When I wrote a bit of sarcastic, Communist propaganda instead of the straight news in the *Saratoga News*, the lieutenant caught it and gave me a warning. One warning was enough for me. I was just playing around with my college education.

People watch what comes through. They don't want surprises. They also (I hope) don't want to sleep through everything but want something vital, moral, and virtuous.

So about this walk:

We were walking across Cable Creek, across Turtle Creek Boulevard, then Tusca Road, in Vancouver. We also crossed the Yamunā, the Ganges, and Heartbreak Ridge. It had one of those swaying rope bridges. I refused to go over it. You'd have to make out your last will and testament before you dared cross that one. And how would the cow fit? They had to find another route.

Sometimes in the Cc. our heroes don't take the main road for fear of government men. They don't stop at Holiday Inns either because they have no money. They are *bikṣus-tridaṇḍis*.

“Could you live like that?” Yoko asked John after they left Śrīla Prabhupāda's company.

Maybe next life.

Sanātana studied the *Bhāgavatam* with the *brāhmaṇas* and Purandara Khān took his post. The Nawab returned and became angry. He had Sanātana arrested.

Rūpa and Anupama wrote Sanātana a note: “We are going to meet Śrī Caitanya, who is on His way to Vṛndāvana. Get yourself released and join us. I have left 10,000 coins in the grocer’s care. Use it and get released.”

Then they set off and met the Lord, who greeted them with prayers describing Kṛṣṇa’s mercy upon them. They recited *namo mahā vadanyaya* and another prayer from *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, praising the Lord as the Supreme Person who frees the worlds from ignorance.

We shouldn’t be too casual about all this, but should read and savor. If you can’t taste these pastimes, then you can’t stimulate your attachment artificially. You can only be patient and keep reading, chanting, and serving. Be honest.

Sanātana may have felt sorry to be left out of Rūpa’s escape, but everything was perfectly arranged by Kṛṣṇa. We have to see everything in that way. Kṛṣṇa wants us to come to Him. I want to break through the wall of feeling that none of this is vital anymore, that it’s just official religion. I’m afraid, however, that for that wall to come down, I may have to suffer or undergo radical changes. I seem to prefer an easier, more comfortable way. I cannot seem to summon the courage or inspiration necessary to climb to a higher road toward quicker realization. That means I am stuck.

Now Lord Caitanya will instruct Rūpa, but don’t worry, Sanātana, you too will have your turn. The Lord

will spend even more time with you. We each get special treatment.

We use a GE intercom to call from one member to another on this party. It's exactly the same as the ones you see those guys in shopping malls using when they're catching shoplifters or Hare Kṛṣṇa book distributors. I tend to fall to the end of the line, but my intercom never seems to work. Maybe the batteries are down.

Did I think I could call Kṛṣṇa on an FM "transceiver"? "Hello, Lord, it's me, Satsva. I want to go back to Godhead. What can I do to please You—something within my grasp? How can I go back to Godhead? Can You send reinforcements? Can you send down *śuddha-sattva*? Lord, I am a comic mess. How come I am a guru and some say I am not? I don't really even want to hear the answer to that question. I don't want to drag You into that and I myself don't want to be involved, but I will listen silently for the truth. Please speak in my heart. No, I won't forget to chant my rounds. Over and out."

When Rūpa was with Lord Caitanya at Prayāga, Vallabha also appeared to see the Lord. Lord Caitanya introduced Rūpa and Anupama to Vallabha, but they kept their distance saying that they were too fallen for him to touch them.

"Yes," Lord Caitanya said, "don't touch them. They are not as elevated as you."

Vallabha understood the Lord's hint that he should not discriminate against Rūpa Gosvāmī, but appreciate his spiritual qualities, so Vallabha quoted verses about

those who chant the holy names being above all others. Then the Lord quoted similar verses.

“I have only a little spade,” he said when I suggested he dig into his life. I too have only a little spade. Therefore, I will be a good boy and a good old man and wait to see what happens. Kṛṣṇa is in control, and although I am faint-hearted at times, He is always strong; although I am stupid, He is always intelligent; although I live in a desert, He lives always in eternal bliss.

And although I have not awakened my natural love for Him, He does not reject me. He works to bring me to Him. I am a disciple of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda, and for that Kṛṣṇa will be kind. O Lord, I touch Your feet by touching the feet of my master. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

The too-fallen Rūpa and Anupama ran away from Vallabha. Good. Our every movement should be toward humility. There is nowhere else to go but to the source of our *sampradāya*’s truth because we are *rūpānugas*.

3:10 P.M.

It’s 3:10 and I had better get walking. It’s my duty to reach a certain point by the end of today. The *mahā-mantra* resounds on this *pada-yātrā*. The people hear it whether they like it or not and it helps them. When people pray for daily bread or pious politicians pose with *Bhagavad-gītās* held to their breast, they are blessed. Something is better than nothing.

But real devotion is different. It is expressed in faith and conviction in scripture. We accept the scripture as

truth because we cannot know what is beyond our senses. There is no room for doubt or interpretation. We just take it as it is, as our transparent, via medium guru has taught us in disciplic succession. If the material scientists don't accept the scriptures, we reject the scientists. Devotion means freedom from doubt. It's not that Kṛṣṇa left *Bhagavad-gītā* in a rough or unclear form so that scholars could later prove themselves more intelligent than He by giving it new meanings.

I listened to such a lecture at lunch. (It was a good lunch, with a rhubarb pie for dessert.)

O Prabhu

please listen to me—

I say this for your good:

go to Vṛndāvana. Don't despair.

Give up foolish notions and
attachments.

Devotees speak imploringly. But who can we trust? This has to be written seriously on the bank of a *kuṇḍa*. Follow the spiritual master. Nothing more is needed. Be faithful.

He scratched his pen over the surface of the parchment as if he were Tom Jefferson drafting the Declaration of Independence. The sound attracted boys at the *kuṇḍa*, who found the English script amazing (for awhile). The insects were maddened by the smell of the ink and had to taste it, or at least try.

He wrote on even while the *saṅkīrtana* leader rang the bell to announce the end of break. This was a happy walk.



3:45 P.M., Uddhava's hut

What is there to say?

And what is there to do?

My heart's in a deadlock . . .

I sing that song to get relief from the many controversies boiling around ISKCON. The GBC has a strong plan of action, but the situation is out of their control. I also hear the *ṛtvik* communities, although small, have roots in many communities, and some parties are not peaceful about their beliefs but want to proselytize them. It's enough to make you tremble. So an old tune that was once played on baritone sax runs through my mind.

Anyway, we march on. I remember when the original *pada-yātrā* began, we were still living in the zonal-*ācārya* days. A Godbrother decided to leave his duties and walk in India to get away from the politics. He sent an essay to BTG comparing his walking with the

intrigue that forced Vidura to leave the Kuru's palace. I was editing BTG in those days, and although I sympathized with my Godbrother, I thought the article too provocative and didn't print it. He later submitted it to the *pada-yātrā* newsletter where it was printed with a subheading: "The Essay BTG Wouldn't Print."

It worked for him too: he did walk away from embroilment and feel relief from what he saw as injustices, wrong systems, and also his own anger and possible offense to others.

That's supposed to be a benefit of walking. It lets you get away from it all. These days, however, we have the e-mail connection. You can get messages anywhere, or almost anywhere. You have to leave your computer at home these days if you really want to walk in the boonies and be free.

The further you walk, the more out of touch you can become. You just won't be around to thrust yourself into the fray. You will have nothing in your pockets but Kleenex, and nothing on your mind but the holy name and 12,000 other things. That may be an improvement.

You will be able to hear how Vallabhācārya got a glimpse of Lord Caitanya's ecstasy when he took Him on a boat across the Yamunā. Seeing the glossy black water, the Lord jumped in. They pulled Him out, but then He began to dance in the boat and it rocked so badly it almost sank. The Lord then calmed Himself, aware of Vallabha's presence. Thus they reached the shore safely. Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was impressed with the Lord's knowledge of the essence of devotional service and with His loving symptoms. Rūpa was there and the Lord's servant Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya and some

others. Later, Vallabha hosted Him nicely. That was the “honeymoon” phase of their relationship. At that time, Vallabha was still approaching Him as an adoring disciple.

Uh-oh, here they come. A guy just walked up to me and asked if I read the long letter his son-in-law wrote me.

Yes, I got it. I told him he should marry only one wife.

Seeing that man approach me, a girl decided to come too. She said her parents were about to die, so she’s glad they came to visit her at the temple. While they were there, her father met a *sādhū* and became emotional. But the *sādhū* was a controversial one, not a member of ISKCON. Makes my head spin. She gave me a check.

I heard that people like my conservative books, especially *The Qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. They were notes taken while reading NOD.

Someone else said, “I’m a fundamentalist. A book like *Radio Shows* doesn’t attract me.” I think of Whitman who said of his *Leaves of Grass*, “He who touches this book touches a man.” Already I feel the drain.

Now I slip to the back of the *pada-yātrā*, back to my peaceful walking. It’s another sunny day. The leader is singing Hare Kṛṣṇa a bit off-key, but we respond with our own melodies anyway.

O Kṛṣṇa,

Kṛṣṇa,

I desire to pass these days in more than dull routine.

I got a letter in which someone wrote, “Try to understand how our Prabhupāda’s Godbrothers feel and why they cannot accept that he took the name

‘Prabhupāda’.” He said the Godbrothers have no awareness of the great work our spiritual master did.

Well, why not? Why don’t they wake up and see it? Is it so hard to see when hundreds of devotees gather at Māyāpur and there are temples around the world? Who else did such work? How can we say they don’t know about it? I think they don’t *want* to hear about it. They don’t *want* to admit that one of them did what the rest of them combined could not do. Let the truth be known. Or at least don’t harass us for calling him Prabhupāda.

O Kṛṣṇa.

I heard you, master, as you mocked India’s backward material technology. You made your New York audience laugh at the Indians’ pride in making a sewing machine while the rest of the world is making 747s.

Then you reversed it and said technology is for *śūdras*. Real knowledge is to know God. I thought you were brilliant and I was alert and sympathetic to your control over our hearts. I was riding the waves of your words.

Two sheep on a hill. “Did you ever think of keeping a journal while you were on *pada-yātrā*?” I asked an old-timer who had been walking for eighteen years. “No,” he said, but he has seen others who have come and gone sometimes write down their thoughts. He said it was a good idea.

Pada-yātrīs have a magazine, but that’s not what I mean.

I mean this. I am at a loss what to say because you can see I’m already naked and embarrassed, a blushing amateur creating. Ought to just write, but I can’t.

I'll go back to the house and pray. Maybe a more solid idea can come from that.

Oh, today we had a celebration because today ends the first full week of walking. We will eat more rhubarb pie at five in honor.

Yes, we have been at it a week. Do I have three more weeks in me? It would be nice if I did.

More Henry Grimes, Henry Katz, Brooklyn College garden. He said he'd raise money to put on a Broadway musical. If it failed, he'd make more money and try again with another musical.

Then he asked, "And what will you do with your life?"

I may have said I'll keep writing short novels, hoping to publish before I'm thirty. Eventually I'll become a famous writer and meet the woman I want to marry.

I had no idea what was coming.

Christ and Kṛṣṇa and Alan Watts and California—things close and things I read like *Realist*, Paul Krassner, and the guy who wrote, *How to Speak Dirty and Influence People*. Not that everything I knew was hip—there was Ed Sullivan, *New York Daily News*, Aunt Madeline, her unfaithful husband, my old man, the fire house, the stuff I told you about myself. Did you know I learned to play "Night Train" on guitar? Do you know that one? Now I've told you everything. Let's go back inside. I am sorry.

Pada-yātrā statistic: In one week we covered 156 typed pages.

Week Two

July 21

Midnight

I woke after a dream I didn't bother to record because I didn't want to break my sleep. In the dream, librarians said they had been influenced by Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I loved to see that, even in my sleep. It felt like a reward.

Then I couldn't get back to sleep. Started thinking of X dāśī who is estranged from the devotees. She's pursuing a high-pressured professional career, and now hints in the first letter I've received from her in more than a year that she's made friends with the nondevotees. What can I say? She hints that she isn't so into her Kṛṣṇa consciousness anymore. At the end of her letter she drew a smiling face like, "Have a nice day." What does she mean?

It was difficult to respond, but I answered a little obliquely, explaining that at the end of life all temporary pursuits will be useless and what will she have? I'm sorry that Kṛṣṇa consciousness was just a phase in her life. Maybe she thought she could make more out of it, but, "No one befriended me." She had

no spiritual questions for me, just a few wistful hellos. I had to respond in kind.

Then I worried about a guru who is making an American tour. Madhu said my “Prabhupāda only” essay in “Among Friends” was bold. He used the word “bold” not with unequivocal praise, but to suggest that maybe I shouldn’t have published such an essay at a time when ISKCON is struggling with the question of hospitality in this case.

Most of all I worry about my writing. Is there more meaning to be wrung out of this fictional *pada-yātrā*? If not, why continue the pretense? And if I don’t continue writing this, what else should I write?

Things that come to mind:

(1) I don’t want to sustain any one theme but take shots at sensitive themes one after another.

(2) I am now writing in peacock blue ink because someone sent it.

(3) I remember Hugo’s remark that a poet doesn’t owe reality anything. Even if I’m not on *pada-yātrā*, if I want to write a little story about it, I have a right.

When people wonder why I am always questioning my own writing, I thought of this point: I want to throw off all pretense. Tobias said that *all* writing employs a persona of one kind or another. I know I shouldn’t be uptight about the limits of this one. It may not be absolutely true, but it carries the flash of truth. I’m looking for that flash.

All right. I have to accept that this is how it’s coming out right now. My *pada-yātrā* is about writing (serving) without quitting. It’s about endurance despite the circumstances.

Memories:

A summer night in Central Square Park, New York City. It's 1959 and my sister and I have gone together to an outdoor jazz concert. Jean Shepherd, another close friend of mine, was the MC. He teased the paying audience by telling them that the freebies outside the theater could hear the music just as well as those who paid for their seats. That was true, and even from our paid seats we couldn't see much.

I remember him introducing, in his stream of consciousness way, "Speaking of grapes—here's the George Shearing Quintet!" Errol Garner played piano while sitting on a telephone book and grunting to an old-time rhythm. I liked it anyway.

Or did I? Hard to remember clearly.

I liked that night, being with my older sister and hearing groups perform. It's all over now. Does it mean anything today?



Old times—

Yogeśvara dāsa offers to print my first book, *A Handbook for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness*.

I'm a real person and he is too.

There are so many of us real persons, sometimes too many, and to each life we relate only in a simplified way.

X dāśī has no place for Kṛṣṇa conscious relationships in her busy, busy life, and she says devotees never let her into their lives and accepted her as she was. There's no room left. We can only be simple in trying to help. They have to be open to a simple relationship. Love is simple, as is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I don't know if Prabhupāda's disciples wrote to him to express disinterest in chanting and hearing, but chanting and hearing is what he was giving. He promised us direct service to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, do you know that I am on a gradual path as Kṛṣṇa teaches in *Bhagavad-gītā*? But I'm still trying.

I know my writing is not topmost pure Vraja. I know I can't spend my life chanting and nothing else.

I'm talking to myself

and to the reader,

in this book

this brook on clear days and

rainy,

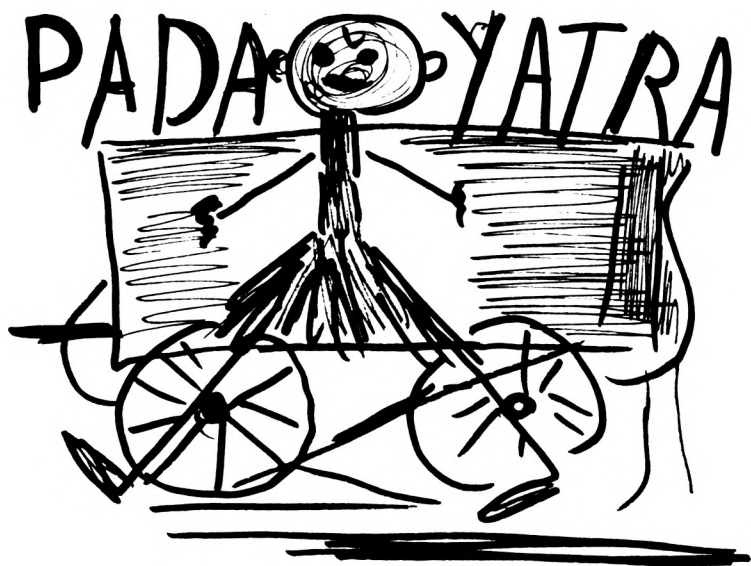
a clearwater brook over stones.

While walking I don't relate much to the scenery. I don't even bother to describe it much. I just walked past a creek, over a bridge, but did not pause to make words or commune. My recent headaches have ex-

hausted me and I'm not willing to make the trip longer than it has to be.

There are limits on all sides, it seems. Devotees who argue among themselves—Godbrothers. We never seem to make peace. If you try to instill cooperation, it wears you down. I couldn't sleep thinking of X dāsi saying no devotees befriended her, so she's taking nondevotees (and her pets) as friends.

Lost out—all of us, but I'm a friend to my writing and to all those who use it to live.



The Lord empowered Rūpa Gosvāmī. He entered his heart. Rūpa was beautiful and lived renounced with devotion in Vṛndāvana. He had no fixed residence, but lived under different trees each night. He wore a

torn quilt and begged his food. He was engaged twenty-four hours a day in blissful Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. He wrote books, talked about Kṛṣṇa, sang and danced, and behaved in an exemplary way. Reading this section of Cc. I came upon this purport and accept it as encouragement to write and publish:

In Vṛndāvana there are *prākṛta-sahajiyās* who say that writing books or even touching books is taboo. For them, devotional service means being relieved from these activities. Whenever they are asked to hear a recitation on Vedic literature, they refuse, saying, "What business do we have reading or hearing transcendental literatures? They are meant for neophytes." They pose themselves to be too elevated to exert energy for reading, writing and hearing. However, pure devotees under the guidance of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī reject this *sahajiyā* philosophy. It is certainly not good to write literature for money or reputation, but to write books and publish them for the enlightenment of the general populace is real service to the Lord. That was Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's opinion, and he specifically told his disciples to write books. He actually preferred to publish books rather than establish temples. Temple construction is meant for the general populace and neophyte devotees, but the business of advanced and empowered devotees is to write books, publish them and distribute them widely.

According to Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, distributing literature is like playing on a great *mṛdaṅga*. Consequently we always request members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to publish as many books as possible and distribute them widely throughout the world. By thus following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one can become a *rūpānuga* devotee.

—Cc. *Madhya* 19.132, purport

Lord Caitanya accepted lunch at Vallabha's house. Afterwards He rested. (You can almost picture it, similar to scenes in ISKCON where *sādhus* visit someone's home. But of course, no one's like Lord Caitanya! At least His followers speak His teachings, and as Rūpa Gosvāmī was empowered, we know Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered. No one can spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world unless specifically empowered with *kṛṣṇa-śakti*.)

While He was at Vallabha's house, a devotee-scholar named Raghupati Upādhyāya came to see the Lord. He was qualified, and at the Lord's request he spoke beautiful verses of his own composition which pleased Lord Caitanya. One verse stated that others could study the *Īsopaniṣad*, *Vedas*, and *Mahābhārata*, but as far as he was concerned, he would worship Nanda Mahārāja in whose yard Kṛṣṇa walked as Nanda's baby son. Another verse praised Kṛṣṇa as the lover of the *gopīs*. Lord Caitanya then asked questions and afterwards concluded that Lord Kṛṣṇa's best form is Śyāmasundara, His best place of residence is Mathurā, His best age is fresh youth, *kaiśora*, and the best *rasa* is *mādhurya*.

Things got too ecstatic and crowded, so Vallabha decided to move Lord Caitanya to Prayāga. It was there that He taught Rūpa Gosvāmī.

4:45 A.M.

This morning I thought, "Wow, I wrote something bold in 'Among Friends' Vol. 4, #1. It could even be called right-wing or conservative."

I decided to look at it. Then I opened another page and found this: "The GBC or *sannyāsa* committee

cannot be expected to know my needs or appreciate them. I need to go deep to the root of them and assert them—serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in this way. Full-time writers know they need all their time.” In the next paragraph I warned myself not to exaggerate fears of the institution.

Well, that’s hanging it on the line. M. wanted me to be more careful about what I print. Now anyone can read it. I’m not afraid. I wrote what I wanted to say.

I better get back to my fiction. Yes, folks, here we are in our *pada-yātrā* camp. There’s our leader, L.J.J. Mahārāja with his white and green beard. There are a few punks from England here in our party now. One has orange hair and the other green. They each look about fifteen. They’re giving each other support as they sit around the cafeteria table. I hope no one has humiliated them just because their hair is so bright.

Miss XYZ has cremated, I mean hitch-hiked from Yugoslavia.

That’s no joke.

My words tripped me up. Do I think I’m on a picnic about to speak while the world suffers? At this very moment, hundreds of refugees are in a horrible condition on boats off the coast looking for a nation to accept them. I don’t want to make light of anyone’s suffering by calling it karma or even temporary. I do want to preach to alleviate their material disease once and for all.

But I get off on these tumbling-out word encounters. Do I think it will help? I am fighting against boredom. I know lots of you out there are bored with the mechanical repetition of your lives.

You mean bored with the *Bhāgavatam*?

No, we are bored of our own hypocrisy. I say that outright, damn it. We are bored of our own hypocrisy. Who can tolerate it?

So we say B.G. Pisson readies his speech, hoping to get himself elected. I don't even *know* anymore what goes on in those committee meetings. I am left out. My influence is limited. I am creating a dust storm over Texas. I am not a god of any sort. Heaven.

Prabhupāda said he personally saw them in the yoga studio snoring. "I don't know what kind of meditation they are doing," he said, but he imitated the sounds of snoring and his audience laughed.

Boy, Prabhupāda really went through all that. He saw it in person. They couldn't fool him. We are reverent. Remember that German devotee, Cakravartī? Pradyumna told him to stand at the door and watch out for the hooligan. That hooligan went right up to Prabhupāda and made a "nose" at him, so Cak jumped him like a tiger. Later, Śrīla Prabhupāda admonished Cakravartī for being in such a fighting spirit when they could have been wiped out. It was 3,000 to 100.

Now Ron Padgett seems to write anything he pleases. He says you can't hold back the power of the imagination no matter how hard you try. But a *sannyāsī* is grave. I don't want to be un-grave or irreverent. Still, some things just have to come out. It's not that when I allow myself to speak I become more of an offender than I already am.

The lance corporal came to join our *pada-yātrā*. He heard about Hare Kṛṣṇa from George Harrison. We

told him he had to rise early, give up his cigarettes, avoid illicit sex, and spelled out any other rules plain as day. He agreed. He said he had been disciplined by the army and could follow any amount of rules.

This is a poem
 set in *pada-yātrā*.
 An ode,
 a toad
 jumped into the white tent
 of the make-believe *pada-yātrā*
 where 100 slept.
 The toad had no goad.

Give it up and be better for it
 the real you,
 persona non grata
 who writes "Among Enemies."
 He went outside to smoke and
 met the priest, Timothy Wiclow and
 the defrocked major, the guy I mentioned
 above, the lance corporal from the RAF,
 the ferry pilot and
 the orange and green-haired fairies.
 They were all out there bathing under
 the night stars, which cast light into
 the darkness that was otherwise dark.
 They said if you chant outside
 you won't get drowsy
 compared to what happens when you,
 who are supposed to be so great and sober,
 nod asleep in your room.

I had no answer. I was aghast
and went back inside.

I could write even in December a passionate spiritual book aglow with the pure flame of love—if I were that kind of person. Otherwise, this, where I mix *śāstra* with metaphor, and wrangling over whether to do it at all with flights into the surreal, good things from Prabhupāda, a little sadness.

You will not make friends that way.
Forty years ago a guy told me don't
go to girls you fall in love with
with raw needs. You have
to put on a show of self-confidence
to attract them.
They don't want a bleeding puppy
or neurotic but handsome guy. They
prefer a cougar bear.

But I didn't go to girls at all. I became a *brahmacārī* on Second Avenue and settled up. "God lives and we can live with Him," said Brahmānanda dāsa, and I stole that line for myself last month. Then he used it again himself, so I had better come up with my own one-line appreciation. How about, "He lets me write this way because he's lenient, and because he desires to bless the world with Kṛṣṇa consciousness"? As *guru-dakṣiṇā* I will help this movement, always grateful to him for giving us Kṛṣṇa hand to hand.

To keep oneself free from material contamination and attain the Lord's favor, one must be sincerely anxious to render service to the Lord. This is the only qualification necessary. As soon as one is favored by the

mercy of the spiritual master and the Lord, one is immediately given all the power necessary to write books and propagate the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement without being hampered by material considerations.

—Cc. *Madhya* 19.135, purport

Rūpa Gosvāmī is with the Lord at Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa. The Lord begins by saying that the tiny souls wandering through the universes get different bodies. The soul is one ten-thousandth the upper portion of the hair in size. Therefore, the soul is not equal to the Supreme Soul.

Listen, please. Sit up. If you're drowsy, stand in the back. We did this whenever Prabhupāda spoke.

When class is over, we will walk this old road.

The sky is not so bright today. There are advantages to that. The sun won't be beating down on our heads. People who write to me say they have headaches, back aches, and they take massages for it or go to Āyurvedic doctors. Some think pain is in the mind and then causes physical disorder.

One devotee wrote, "I'm discouraged that you do not want to discuss social issues, such as the imbalance in our society. Fortunately, even the GBC members are now discussing this and admitting that we have to make changes. I am proud of our movement, that we are willing to go through these changes."

The implication? How come you don't discuss it, take part in it, help make it happen? Why don't you help ISKCON rid itself of prejudice toward women and toward those who may not live in temples?

Others are doing that work. I admire them for it. I am doing something else. Can you accept that? One

person can't do everything. If you worked with the oxen and looked to me for direction, you shouldn't be disappointed that I don't also work oxen. That doesn't mean I can't see the good in that work and encourage you in your *sādhana* and Kṛṣṇa conscious aspirations.

So I justify myself.

Another devotee wrote and apologized for always speaking of himself. He said he writes to analyze himself. I know about that. Still, it's good to talk about Kṛṣṇa sometimes.

O Kṛṣṇa.

Then he said, "I'm just going to read 'the four' (books Prabhupāda says are all we need) and your books. Is that all right?"

Yes.

From Basho's, *The Records of a Weather-exposed Skeleton*:

Following the example of the ancient priest who is said to have traveled thousands of miles carrying naught for his provisions and attained a state of sheer ecstasy under the pure beams of the moon, I left my broken house on the river Sumida in the August of the first year of Jyokyo among the wails of the autumn wind.

Determined to fall
a weather-exposed skeleton
I cannot help the sore wind
blowing through my heart.

My walk is literary, is mental, is worried, is doubtful. I nevertheless stumble on. It gets better. Sometimes Basho says he dressed like a Buddhist priest, but the world still clings to him. He is not actually a renunciate, he is a poet, and his walk is well recorded.

He walked so far his feet became tired. He climbed beautiful mountains (probably filled with gas stations and amusement parks nowadays) and heard the wind in the cedars. While residing at a temple he heard distant, sacred sounds—bells, flutes—sounds that inspired him. Walking and walking he recorded his way in haikus.

Almost time for rice. We've been walking and chanting and I have been thinking of my correspondence. I move from one duty to another but look for love of God.

There is no joy in Mudville.

Yes, dear devotee, you are right. Don't talk only of yourself. Talk of your son or the town where you live. Tell the story of the first time you met the devotees. You said you were a child and you were with your father. He had just been divorced and had taken you on a vacation to Prague. You were at an outdoor cafe eating ice cream and suddenly a band of ten or fifteen *brahmacārīs* came down the street with Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*. You saw one of their books on a table beside you. Your father was shopping. You picked up the book and began a translation of it into your native language. Hare Kṛṣṇa. That is a story about yourself and how the Lord's mercy descended on you.

Each page I write is a measure of distance—a mile or kilometer, depending on where you live. This is not a total confession.

I'm keeping my head clear so that when I die, I'll think of Kṛṣṇa. I really have to rise to the occasion.

Okay, the ribbon on this typewriter is running out. Only a few minutes left, then I'll have to switch to pen. I have so much to say. Lining both sides of the road, the people looked for the man who wrote the book, *A Lifetime in Preparation*. I looked over my shoulder, "Who me? "

Someone called out, "There's the fellow who admitted his sins while living at 125 Katan Avenue."

Do you want to hear a little more about Basho? You would prefer to hear of Vaiṣṇavas' walks. "If you want to write a record, why don't you actually get out there and walk yourself?"

You know the answer to that.

Green grassy fields. Let the words come, whole sentences. I don't live in Vṛndāvana. I can't feel the old thrill from nature. I'm not dry, just a notch down, but I am faithful. Listen, I am a fellow of fortune, climbing Jacob's rope ladder, soldier of the poor.

It's all rather sad that we are not in Vaikuṇṭha. Here, everyone is in anxiety. Even the birds live in so much fear they can't eat straight. Even the richest nation in the world is fearful.

We each want to feel safe, although we also want our adventures. But it's all rather sad. We are eaten by our own doubts.

For a change of pace we open the mail and assume a new role. We don't mention anything about ourselves when we respond, but say gently, "You ought to rise early in the morning, as befits your nature, after you have had sufficient rest. Then consider how to chant and hear. Don't forget . . . " In my case, I call them by the names I gave them and never feel bitter.

Still, nothing seems real; nothing seems right because we can't surrender and often don't even want to.

All that saves us is the little love we feel for our master. It's a love that includes obedience, but even as we feel it, we just don't know what we can do to soothe the heart. Is our pain a loss of innocence? A loss of the plain will to serve? Maybe Kṛṣṇa will kick us. We need it.

Another travel diary by Basho, *The Records of a Travel-worn Satchel*, opens with a disarming confession about his uneasy attachment to the vocation of writing poems:

In this mortal frame of mind which is made of a hundred bones and nine orifices there is something, and this something is called a wind-swept spirit for lack of a better name, for it is much like a thin drapery that is torn and swept away at the slightest stir of the wind. This something in me took to writing poetry years ago, merely to amuse myself at first, but finally making it its life-long business. It must be admitted, however, that there were times when it sank into such dejection that it was almost ready to drop its pursuit, or again times when it was so puffed up with pride that it exulted in vain victories over the others. Indeed, ever since it began to write poetry, it has never found peace with itself, always wavering between doubts of one kind and another. At one time it wanted to gain security by entering the service of a court, at another it wished to measure the depth of its ignorance by trying to be a scholar, but it was prevented from either because of its unquenchable love of poetry. The fact is, it knows no other art than the art of writing poetry, and therefore, it hangs onto it more or less blindly.

Basho goes on to say that in the ancient days, a few great writers kept diaries while on the road, but later works are mostly imitations of these. He says it's easy enough to say that such-and-such day was rainy in the morning but fine in the afternoon, and that there was a pine tree at such-and-such a place, "although in fact they are not even worth mentioning unless there are fresh and arresting elements in them." Basho says he jotted down his own records in hopes that they would provide pleasant conversation for his readers and be useful for those who would travel in the same way. "Nevertheless, I must admit that my records are little more than the babble of the intoxicated and the rambling talk of the dreaming, and therefore my readers are kindly requested to take them as such."

Despite his harsh disclaimer, we don't become disinterested.

2:55 P.M.

Ate, who ate nice *halavā*? That's unusual on this *pada-yātrā*. Before the ink runs out, tell us about it.

Well, all I'll say is that I'll probably have to refrain from eating again at 5.

Now the fiction: we are with a big group and ready to start walking again.

Oh? Then do you have the gumption to get out there and write whatever comes?

You were a sorry case, he said, answering one letter at a time and rehearsing

what to say.
 It don't come easy.
 "I go to bed with any man I like,"
 someone said,
 That's how they express themselves
 nowadays.
 The gray sky setting
 so get your ass out there and
 walk. The whole party
 is movin'
 don't get left behind.



Lord Caitanya told Rūpa Gosvāmī that out of so many living beings, only a few are biped humans. Those who follow religion are fewer still, and most of them are only nominal. A rare few become *jñānīs* who hope not for material happiness but to merge into spiritual silence. You hardly find a devotee of Kṛṣṇa at all.

Now I'm out there.
 It's raining but
 I have my gear.

Uddhava's hut

I heard someone asking Prabhupāda a question on tape today. Prabhupāda challenged him that any sane man must accept God's existence.

Hmm. In Prabhupāda's presence the man could not say otherwise, but he had a list of questions and went on with them regardless, not really listening with that inner need to understand and know the Absolute Truth.

Windy today and this group is wind-tossed—*dhotīs* and *sārīs* blowing in the breeze. As long as it doesn't rain too hard we will keep moving because Kṛṣṇa is God and we want to proclaim it.

The guy was responding to the verse where Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that they have been reborn many times, but Arjuna cannot remember. That's because Arjuna takes a material body. Kṛṣṇa remembers everything because He never changes His body. This body is not the only body, and Christ is not the only savior. God sends His sons and representatives in *every* age. Yes, Christ is guru. The only problem is that you don't follow him. You misunderstand. You have to hear from guru.

"Some say you don't need a teacher."

You need a teacher.

"But what about reading *Bhagavad-gītā* and gaining realization from that?"

If you read *Bhagavad-gītā*, you accept Kṛṣṇa as your teacher. He is the supreme teacher.

It goes without saying, however, that to understand exactly what Kṛṣṇa is saying to you, today, in this body, with this life you are living, and to put it into practice, you need a spiritual master—one who will stand before you and guide you. The only problem is that you are too intent on serving your newspaper to understand that you have found the *sad-guru*.

I am running out of health.

M. said that if I find myself running into a headache every day at noon . . .

Yeah, I do, I interjected. I work hard in the mornings.

Then you ought to back-pedal in the afternoon.

Yeah, but that's a lot of time to waste, and sometimes my fingers tingle with joy and want to write more. I want to walk.

She wrote that they went to the Rainbow Festival and even the movement's political managers were there doing simple things like giving out *prasādam*. "We were born again."

"When will I obtain the mercy of Lord Nityānanda-candra? When by His mercy, will the desire for material enjoyment become very insignificant?" (*Lālasāmayī*, verse 2)

Days and months are travelers of eternity. So are the years that pass by. Those who steer a boat across the sea, or drive a horse over the earth 'til they succumb to the weight of years, spend every minute of their lives traveling. There are a great number of ancients, too, who died on the road. I myself have been tempted for a long time by the cloud-moving, wind-filled with a strong desire to wander.

—*The Narrow Road to The Deep North*

*Up to the man up to the man
who is the leader . . .*

It's not raining yet, but the sky is dark. The color of Kṛṣṇa. Unfortunately, we only see rain clouds and not our Lord because we are so poor in heart. Old Basho expressed that he walked unafraid of robbers because he carried nothing and didn't care where he would stay. He accepted any coarse food that came his way, and was concerned only with things like whether his straw slippers fit him properly. He was eager to meet anyone dedicated to art or to the hermitage or to

Buddha or to cherry blossoms or to the rising moon. He was also always on the lookout for a scene or occasion that would stir out of him another poetic composition.

In my bag I carry *Introduction to Bhagavad-gītā*. I found the little paperback in a bookstore in Belgium. I know that pamphlet. I typed it when it was called “Introduction to *Gītōpaniṣad*.” I was one of the first typists in ISKCON. Now it’s being sold in a printing of 100,000 in the UK.

A disciple in England gave up KC but still wants English residency (he’s from another country). He has a girlfriend now whom he met in college. Maybe he’ll come back. Nothing I can do for him.

Pain again today. I may have to stop. But listen—and feel—it’s raining again. Rain against wood makes such a pleasant sound.

6:30 P.M.

As the *pada-yātrā* devotees sat around sipping hot milk (a luxury), the author said he had something to share. Although it was an uncomfortable topic, he thought it best to let it out. This is what it was: a disciple whom he had initiated and who has since left ISKCON, has become ISKCON’s bitter enemy. Now he stirs up trouble. The author had just heard about some of this man’s activities today, the news arriving from thousands of miles away. What a drain.

After he shares this news, a few of the devotees present absorbed some of his anxiety and said, “This material world is a strange place.”

Yes, but now that the author has got this topic off his chest, he plans to use the energy of the news to

boost himself on this walk. No one can stop him now. Except at this moment, he has pain.

“*Haribol*,” a devotee said in a tone of blessing and commiseration.

July 22

Midnight

When that ex-disciple said the things he said, he was upheld as speaking metaphorically. He didn't really mean it, not literally.

I will turn it to good account. There is nothing I should be doing in this world except praying to Lord Kṛṣṇa and chanting His holy name, serving His devotees and preaching His glories. I have so little time left. I am not a salvationist. Of course, "shoulds" are not always possible because they are not based on realization, but sometimes we become serious enough to turn should into reality.

What we regard as negative events may turn us more to fervent chanting. If we chant fervently, we may actually learn to hear the mantra. Isn't that what we want?

(Will they walk when it rains harder?)

One who depends on Kṛṣṇa is never afraid. One who absorbs himself in the eternal, spiritual world can lose nothing.

(When it rains will they walk? Will they walk when it rains?)

A devotee writer continues to write, is not afraid, is absorbed in reading and chanting, and when bad news comes, he says it can't hurt him. After all, he's not running for president and he has not even done the wrongs ascribed to him. Even if he did commit those wrongs in the past while managing the temples in his charge, and if it all comes out, even things he presently forgets, isn't that what he wants—more to confess, more to admit, more with which to feel fallen? The desert Abba was not impressed with the man who claimed to see angels. He said, "Let us have a man who sees his sins." No one can actually hurt our reputations more than we have already hurt them ourselves, if not by our "sins," then by our pride.

Now do good in your limited time
with whatever capacity you have
and for the right motive—not self-serving.

Received a letter from a lady who was told to leave the temple because her husband took initiation outside ISKCON. She wants to know if it's possible "that some of those who seek shelter of gurus outside ISKCON are following their hearts with a conviction that they are following Prabhupāda, and shouldn't we refrain from condemning them?"

Her sentiment touched me, even though I know the protectors of our movement feel that they cannot afford to have such a vision. I went to bed thinking about it.

O Kṛṣṇa. A devotee is peaceful because he is desireless. He only wants to serve You. *Kṛṣṇa-bhakta*—*niṣkāma*

ata eva 'sānta'. He is never afraid. For him heaven and hell are the same.

Lord Caitanya taught Rūpa Gosvāmī that the *jīva* is wandering throughout the universes according to his karma, but a fortunate soul gets the opportunity to meet a bona fide spiritual master by God's grace. It happens when we become linked to Śrīla Prabhupāda and the practices he teaches. Śrīla Prabhupāda lives on in his movement. Some say the movement is no longer valid, that we no longer follow Śrīla Prabhupāda in essence. If that's true, then there is no hope for the world. We all agree that ISKCON can be improved. I seek shelter in this movement and wish to help others who seek the same shelter. ISKCON is Prabhupāda's body, and its effulgence will spread.

Nārada was cursed so he couldn't stay anywhere for more than three days. He was exiled. Am I afraid to return to *my* home country? Is the concept of home no longer valid for a *sannyāsī*? Where *is* my homeland? Is it in my work?

I have contacted a bona fide spiritual master and received his blessings and approval. Now I must persevere in serving him and satisfy him. I should never be ungrateful for the instructions I have received. My *bhakti-latā* has sprouted and it is now my duty to nurture it. Nothing material can hurt me. The creeper can only be damaged by Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*.

It shouldn't be a problem to march in the rain. We have rain gear—lightweight rain pants, jackets with hoods, and wellies. I have to take my eyeglasses off and

follow a discernible trail behind those who see better than I do.

*. . . a glorious feeling,
I'm happy again.
A smile on my face
for the whole human race
I'm singing in the rain.*

Fred Astaire. Tinkles on the skylight. At least now I'm alone to chant and may God grant me His grace. Even if I am thrust into an embarrassing or painful situation, I can still chant. I am learning this lesson more and more. Life's reverses teach us how to love in any condition. There is no safety or comfort in the world other than that found at the Lord's lotus feet. The Vraja *gosvāmīs* abandoned all worldly pleasures for Kṛṣṇa's service because they knew this.

And the rain tinkles
then smashes rose petals
in the backyard—the ones
I was invited to pick for Prabhupāda.
Don't exaggerate danger
but wake to this quiet room
from nightmares and threats
to chant and write
a little longer.

O moon in
the material world
your
light is covered by clouds.
Infamy is real enough,
and sheep and cows really are slated for
death. Karmic reactions

are worse than you
fear. But the bright spot
is the reality of soul
and Kṛṣṇa
in control. Banish fear.
Let go
of matter and false ego.

3:45 A.M.

In the shower I felt again the power of doubt. Someone told me I should be a more serious devotee in the way I write—rewrite, polish, then publish for the *saṅkīrtana* movement. It's too late for that. I'm too far gone. I would have to forget the process and worry about the results more than I do now. It's not that I revere each word I write by my present method, but I trust that good things come from honesty, and honesty is not rewritten to death.

At midnight I felt a sudden fear of that ex-disciple. Then I thought, "This is not worthy of me." I left it behind. It's just another bubble of pride bursting. We tend to live in the bubble that everything will go right and death will be held at bay. In my case, I can go on writing, it will be edited and published, and this is the nicest pastime of my life. People say my writing helps, so that makes it all worthwhile. Madhu fixes the van so we can travel to Europe. People are glad to see us too. We suffer only minor delays here and there, and even headaches can be controlled by allopathic medicine.

And so it goes.

But I still don't know what's ahead for me. I'll have to hang on to find out. It may be that the future holds *tapasya*. I girded my loins when I was twenty-two and

had to enter the Navy. Somehow I survived. Now I have more spiritual equipment to face my future. I don't have to be afraid. I have the holy name. I can pass the tests.

A woman wrote and said she was recently physically ill. At the same time she had to serve other devotees who were also ill. Not being able to attend to her own material and spiritual needs she felt her pride being cut. Devotees see the good in the tests they are sent. Tests shake you out of your complacency.

A devotee wrote and said that a *sannyāsī* came to her temple and referred to Western psychology. She and her friends loved it. She said they don't get anything from me but the simple message.

Life is hard. We're in a shell, then break out screaming. They say if the parents could deliver the child better, the newborn would smile within a few moments. They made a video of ideal birth. Our philosophy says the material world is a place of suffering and there's nothing to smile about unless you're introduced to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Otherwise we wander through the universes meeting mainly suffering. When we think we are happy, we later find out that that happiness was our greatest enemy.

O Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa.

The reporter said, "Swamiji, you said that when somebody chants 'water, water' you don't get a drink. How is the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa different? It is done with the same body, is it not?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied that the chanting was transcendental. The chanting is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa.

It simply has to be realized, and anyone who chants will eventually realize it.

I thought his answer was perfect, practical, and to the point, but I also knew that I was not living proof of what he taught. When I chant “Kṛṣṇa,” it’s not that different than when I chant “water.” The word and the object are still different. My utterances of the word “Kṛṣṇa” and the nectarean Personality of Godhead are different. That means I am seeing only the outer covering.

But I have faith that my ability to stay in rare consciousness is due to the chanting. To be even six inches above the material ocean (and I feel I am) is the holy name’s mercy.

Thinking more about danger. Belfast is a difficult place to visit because it’s a war zone. They burn vans in the city and we own a van. Madhu and I can do nothing but trust in Kṛṣṇa. The body is made for destruction. The soul can fly out at any moment.

I am here in the West, not in Māyāpur or Vṛndāvana, but I want to learn to be in those *dhāmas* in my meditation. I think of those places while I’m here.

Kṛṣṇa, save me. My veneer is peeling off.

I see a fearful face a

person

desiring peace above all else.

He wants to walk, but can’t walk far.

He wants to stay awake to write this ode.

Life is full of danger, but if they blow up the cities I won’t

worry about that ex-disciple and his bitter attacks. There will be bigger considerations. If I am

determined to surrender in writing, I should get to it. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord. I hope to hear Him better.

8:50 A.M., Uddhava's hut

When we can, we rearrange our lives to avoid discomfort or pain. Some things, however, are not so easy to work out. We can't call off an attack when we don't know the attacker's mind and we can't placate him. We just have to live with what he could do to us, and in the meantime, surrender to Kṛṣṇa palpably. That means realizing He is the center of our lives and the center of everything. He is our only shelter. This is His mystic presence. We cannot and do not live without Him. Therefore, we *must* turn to Him. Achieving this consciousness, we can then turn and thank our attacker for creating the pressure on us that allowed for this awareness.

Still raining. I slung my beadbag over my shoulder and went outdoors anyway. It's good to get out. Earlier when I went out, it was raining gnats.

One reason I like the idea of my brother becoming a recognized scholar is that it gives him a respectable identity aside from his existence in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. For me, I have no such hopes in the academic sphere, but still, I seek to be more than a typical *sannyāsi* with typical things to say and who is told by other typical devotees to do typical things.

Oh? You should be so lucky
as to be told what to do by Kṛṣṇa's representative,
even if he is typical.

You are just a *cela* free to do their bidding. I've heard that's the royal road to freedom. What need have you of other identities?

The *bhakti* creeper grows with watering. It cannot take shelter in the material world. It grows until it approaches the Virāja River, then crosses to the spiritual sky, the Vaikuṇṭhas, and on to Goloka Vṛndāvana. There the living entities are all *cinmāya-rasa*. They love Kṛṣṇa in one of the five flavors.

If we can only think of Goloka even while in this world, then what other concern can possibly touch us?

It's not so easy. Our meditation is often broken by the other concerns because we care about them. It is possible, without imitation, to chant the holy name. I was trying—crying—this morning, calling out the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. But to no avail. They didn't seem to get beyond the windowpane. I mean, they did not live on in me as prayer or as conscious willing to be with Kṛṣṇa. I was just counting my quota. I have no choice but to report that here because I am a faithful transcriber. As if by reporting it, it will signal the hope for change.

Even while in this world, we water the plant. That's as much a metaphor as the things that man said he wanted to do to me. We take help from our metaphors, but the devotion has to be real. To make it real we have to repeatedly face our aspirations and pray for success. We also have to have complete faith in guru. *Goloka eva nivasaty akhilātma-bhūtaḥ*.

Soaking wet, the sage came down. His daughter was with him and they picked some vegetables. The rains flowed down the road in rivulets. We didn't care, we walked anyway, just as if it were sunny, chanting all the way.

A *gurukula* child wrote, "Tell me another pastime with you and Prabhupāda in it."

I thought, "Why is this child pestering me?" I told her flatly that I am not giving initiations. Then I told her of the time I served Śrīla Prabhupāda his breakfast and forgot to put the ginger on his plate.

"Where are they?"

"I forgot."

He was sarcastic. "Oh," he said, mimicking my tone, which lacked real concern. In a moment he had peeled off another piece of false ego.

Later I thought that perhaps this young girl would think that we served Prabhupāda out of fear, or that he was a tyrant. But what could I do? That's what came to mind, shot from the hip.

The hip. "Can't get a new lip at sixty years old," said Jimmy when he was asked to revive his clarinet playing. Now he's chanting and that's what counts, right?

Damn it, we are not doing enough.

Then why not do something better?

She said that she had been serving so long under difficult conditions that no one remembers now. She thought she should receive a fresh reward for the backlog of things she went through. More honor. Why not? Become the highest ranking admiral in the U.S. Navy if you like, but you should know that the present admiral was recently investigated by *Newsweek* for wearing medals he was not entitled to wear. When the admiral heard of the investigation, he committed suicide. (That may have not been the direct cause.) Now his position stands open.

The President's lawyer asked the court, "Could this trial be put off until my client is finished his term in

office? Don't drag him down while he is preoccupied with higher duties."

Yamarāja asked King Nṛga, "You have to be punished, but you can choose whether you prefer to suffer first and then enjoy for a long time, or enjoy first and suffer later."

Nṛga decided to suffer first and enjoy later. He was instantly given a lizard's body.

On the way home from insulting the *brāhmaṇa*, Mahārāja Parikṣit realized he had made a mistake for which he would have to pay. He thought, "Let it come now like a thunderbolt upon me." He felt that much regret.

We want to reform, but who prays for suffering? Who has the clarity to understand the stakes? Most humans don't know that their life is meant for serving God, and they certainly don't realize that if they fail in their prime duty, they will probably have to take animal births.

Walking. It's warm enough out. I will walk until lunch, but my hunch is that I will not make sufficient advancement to cross the blazing *brahma-jyoti* to reach Goloka in this lifetime. At least I'm praying for it, and hope to die remembering the goal. O Kṛṣṇa.

I do see the rose petals shattered by the rain. Birds dig at the artificial dirt tamped around the plants. They want to know what's under there. Worms, they hope. They throw the dirt around with their sharp beaks. All right, I surrender to You, Kṛṣṇa. Empty words? Words without meaning cannot rise to God. Something like that he said in rhyme and dismissed his attempt to pray—that old guy in *Hamlet*.

Nice poem by Jane Kenyon, who struggled with and finally succumbed to leukemia before she was fifty.

The Clothes Pin

How much better it is
to carry wood to the fire
than to moan about your life.
How much better
to throw the garbage
onto the compost, or to pin the clean
sheet on the line
with a gray-brown wooden clothes pin!

In other words, don't complain about your life. See the good in it. In my case, I have more than clothes pins. I have a wooden *chowky*, I have Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā deities, I have roses on my altar and noisy rooks in my chimney and my vow to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I also have his blessings. These things are my "clothes pins." I feel the pulse beat of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra in my blood and I know there's nothing more to fear, not if I remember Him at every step.

There is nothing else to do. We are each spirit soul. Ninety-nine percent of the population is in ignorance. If they know God at all, they know only something vague. They think His purpose is to serve their interests. A devotee is *kṛṣṇendriya-prīti-icchā-dhare 'prema' nāma* (Cc. Ādi 4.165): a devotee has no desire other than to please Kṛṣṇa.

Please do as I am doing and pray to Him on your knees, in your work, and don't harm others. Oh, and you'll have to put up with some stuff.

I have it easy. I know some of you think like that. I try to explain the Kṛṣṇa conscious way to you and give you Prabhupāda's teachings in a way you might assimilate, but often I see you are already trying to apply these teachings in your own way. Some of you have received the wisdom and put it aside. I want to remind you to take it up again. Can you? Oh, I know, many of you say it's too hard to practice spiritual life with all the other stuff you have to bear up under in this world.



Yes, I know I am a *sannyāsī* and have no experience of family life. Some of you think that's to my disadvantage. Each path has an equal chance at being spiritually liberating or spiritually empty. I try to fill up my life with meaningful thoughts. I want to encourage others to do the same.

Some declare they don't need another guru. They want to stick to Prabhupāda and his books. Others agree, but who reads Prabhupāda's books? He said we could follow Christ if we wanted, but who follows him?

The reporter said, "You mean if someone did follow Christ . . ."

"Yes," Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "that would be fine. It is the same as following Kṛṣṇa."

It's a matter of love. Whom do you love? What is your genuine understanding of God? That's what we're looking for.

If you read these passages without sympathy, you won't be able to understand them. Rather, you will take advantage of my candid expressions. Still, I have no choice but to speak. I am writing for friends. Let's not complain about our lives. Use them for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Be grateful.

This page is dedicated to no harm.
 Be the man you are—a six-footer at
 a hundred and thirty pounds.
 You're approaching sixty, so
 why should you still worry so much
 about insignificant obstacles?
 The Lord is with you
 you
 shall not want.

Death will destroy what you have—fame, prestige, honor—and you will fall into oblivion. Gone to a new life. Why bother trying to enjoy? Better to serve and create.

I know I still scream and show my restlessness. I even flinch (I am not yet unflinching). That's just to let you know I'm real and to give you ease in your own struggle. We all know that art can make suffering easier to take. It can solace us when we are barely hanging on in this strange life.

A man from Nigeria wrote to ask me for books. I told him I was a *pada-yātrī* and didn't carry books around with me.

A woman in Puerto Rico reported that the temple is filthy, but she goes there to clean it. What will I say in reply? Something worthy, I hope.

Each letter seems to contain complaints, heartbreak, physical pain. I know they have to go to hospitals to heal broken bones. Some of them seem so bitter about that that they don't even write but prefer to remain forgetful, trapped, carried blindly in the stream of time. We are contemporaries. I want to tell you that I like the play of the typewriter keys and the feel of a good Sheaffer pen. All this has to do with Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

He gave his guru aspirin in his orange juice without telling him. Sometimes they do things for the master without asking. That's not so good. I don't step in and control their lives. O dear devotees, please chant and hear so this life won't be only cotton, foolish, unfelt words.

3 P.M., Hut

Name me an obstacle or reason not to go forward and then keep going. The time will come when we won't be able to walk. By then we hope the point will have become clear. For now, if we are able to put one foot in front of the other on firm ground, then we have to keep going. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Let the chanting come as long as we're able.



Lord Caitanya is still teaching Rūpa Gosvāmī and we are all learning from it. He warns us to guard against the weeds that will grow up beside the *bhakti* creeper. Some of them look just like our plant. These *anarthas* are things like behavior unfit for devotees, serving for material gain or adoration, duplicity. Avoid all *anarthas* and don't commit offenses to the Vaiṣṇavas, the spiritual master, or the holy name. Proceed carefully. That is the Lord's advice.

Some mud stains—weakening of the heart. An orange-winged, brown-spotted moth got into my room somehow. Let me let him out. The rain is slowing, although by now we have become accustomed to it. Rain is normal for this country. Sunshine is what's unusual.

I noticed that all my brothers and I are growing older. This is one point on which we can all agree.

The first business of a devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, is to avoid the nondevotees. If you think there are only pseudo devotees or no devotees in ISKCON, then associate with your spiritual master. Don't associate with nondevotees.

When our desire for matter wanes and we are interested in reading the Six Gosvāmīs' books, when our taste for the holy name increases, then we may become eligible to enter Vṛndāvana and our spiritual desires will be fulfilled. That's the kind of song we want to sing in right company.

The reincarnation store is open and they are selling advanced topics too. The audience laughs. They have heard this metaphor somewhere before. Should I cut it? Is it too much of a cliché? No, we like the familiar.

Our secret fears are familiar to us, but we can't often express them openly. Anyway, each day is precious if only because we have a limited number of them.

Alex King once wrote a book called *Mine Enemy Grows Older*. I'm not sure what he meant—maybe he was acknowledging some bad part in himself—but it made me think how when your enemy grows older, it doesn't necessarily mean he relents. He may even outlive you and come back next life to carry on the enmity, just when you thought you were happy. One of the three miseries is inflicted on us by other living entities. Only Kṛṣṇa consciousness can cut the bonds of enmity, although even devotees experience trouble.

The cows wander in the wet fields. I know I have not been writing so convincingly of a *pada-yātrā* in the last day or so. Should I try again?

The *pada-yātrīs* are marching in a row chanting, and their leader is preoccupied. He sends a message back to the *Pada-yātrā* house in Shortsbury from where the magazine is sent out. They want fresh stories, not the same old stuff about which trees they walked past.

But somehow the reporters in the field are not inspired. They want to lower the standards without having to wrangle about it.

The editors don't agree. How can these *pada-yātrīs* be out there walking every day and not feeling the nectar? They just can't understand it.

There used to be a little light on this typewriter that showed where you were. It's burnt out.

There used to be a class of 1958 that won the baseball championship at Tottenville High School.

There used to be sax players named Stan Getz and Paul Desmond, and of course the many, many others who are all dead now.

Someone told me that there are four thousand and some initiated disciples of Prabhupāda, and of them, eight hundred and something have passed away. I don't know if those statistics are accurate.

Thinking of Basho again: Basho walked and sometimes rode a horse. He stopped at shrines—mostly literary or historical ones, and even ones that were religious. Sometimes he felt devotion for Buddha.

Mostly, however, he searched for the "haiku moment." That has its shortcomings. We want to be saved

by what someone says. We want to find guidance in their words, or at least descriptions of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes from someone who cares about them. We want to work with a genuine devotee.

St. Teresa said inspiring words are worth nothing if we don't follow them up with action, but I tend to think words are themselves action. A book is a force, and reading a spiritual book contains action for the soul. Just to read it is *punya*, pious. More than pious if it is written by a pure devotee. It can give us Kṛṣṇa.

This was a difficult afternoon. I'm tired and starting to get a headache, so I'm heading back up to my attic. I don't want to complain and I don't want to quit. I still want to walk for peace.



The rooks come and go from the chimney. They all look big. I don't know if there are children as well as parents. I can't imagine that the babies are still unable

to fly. When I first visited here on June 1st, the rooks were already living here with their infants. Surely the big ones must be the new generation.

Similarly, in Kṛṣṇa consciousness people get forced out of the nest. Not just the juveniles, but the old-timers. They get old and people want to see what they can do in the face of less than unanimous approval. Then they die.

They want to see our God.

Well, come back tomorrow.

July 23

12:10 A.M.

“A pure devotee must not cherish any other desire than to serve Kṛṣṇa. He should not offer worship to the demigods or to mundane personalities. He should not cultivate artificial knowledge, which is devoid of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and he should not engage himself in anything other than Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. One must engage all one’s purified senses in the service of the Lord. This is the faithful execution of Kṛṣṇa conscious activities.” (Cc. *Madhya* 19.168)

The devotees who live here garden. I wrote a note to Uddhava and his wife that they should feel welcome to garden even though I’m here. They said they’re doing their work and we need not feel we have to chat if we bump into one another. “You are here to write and we are here to garden.”

Yes. The poly-tunnel is flourishing. The corn stalks are pushing against the ceiling. But I’m sure he’s having his problems. The leaves of the tomato plants seem shriveled, and the rains are dashing the roses to pieces. You have to keep heart.

Hare Kṛṣṇa dāsi's flower garden is even more untenable than Uddhava's vegetables. He knows his garden provides food to be offered to Kṛṣṇa and eaten by devotees. Hers is mostly aesthetic. In that sense it seems more tragic the way her flowers come and go. She is growing a durable "Prabhupāda" orchard, but we read in a poem how someone planted a tree and fifty years later it collapsed in the wind. It requires heart to make *any* offering in this world. We'd like to be pure and bold and to satisfy guru and Kṛṣṇa. When we fall short, we'd like Him to understand—and to help us, encourage us, show us the light.

As my disciples seek encouragement, and as they already have deep convictions about their work—and as their work has arisen naturally according to their circumstances—so I feel the same about my work.

Peacock blue ink I told you. I strive for the original and in order to attain it, become surreal, combining things that happen only in a convoluted imagination. Tick-tock my Tourista clock. A heart beating friend, although I don't so much like its piercing alarm.

Sometimes I feel the heaviness of getting up at midnight without the verve or energy to live out my day. I think of all the people who feel like that all the time, and who may feel it so much they commit suicide. Like that admiral. We were waiting for our Baltimore-Boston flight last spring when the news of his suicide was broadcast on the terminal's television. They interviewed his wife. She said he killed himself because he couldn't stand the constant scrutiny, and she added, "We who are left will never completely

know why he did it.” Then the story switched to the play of yesterday’s baseball game.

4:45 A.M.

What is it that attracts me to read the poets, although they are often agnostics? It’s their honesty. They have disciplined and dedicated themselves to saying what they feel even if it erupts in obscene language, in anti-government statements, is about something trivial, or is not so pretty. They say what they feel. Although most of them rewrite to find the aesthetic, they try to preserve the outburst.

Why is it important to me to be honest? I could analyze it, quote scripture as to why it’s important, but I want to assert something simpler: it just is. If we can’t speak the truth, then how will we be true to God? We say, “I love You, God,” or, “I wish I loved You,” or, “I don’t love You yet, so please help me to serve You,” or, “Please accept me as I am.” We want to make that cry as sincere as possible. If we can’t be honest with God or with ourselves, then we won’t be honest with others, and then what kind of transcendentalist can we be? Are we in touch with our feelings? That may be a little different than honesty, but it’s related. Be in touch with your feelings. I write to keep these things alive.

Here’s something honest: I have some attachment to Christianity, but it’s not strong. My attachment to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is my real spirituality and education.

But it has shortcomings. I can’t get into living in India and I don’t feel ecstatic devotion. I was introduced to the higher *rāga-rasika* stuff, then stepped back from it. Maybe it has confused me. It felt

premature. Whatever it was, it's over and I'm back to straining toward Śrīla Prabhupāda. But he is so much the institutional figure appropriated by all leaders, quoted by everyone including the outcasts, and even possessed by ISKCON's enemies that sometimes it's hard to see him as your own in a face-to-face relationship that touches your heart.

Therefore, I have undertaken this *pada-yātrā* to make little forays into these kinds of discussions. I don't feel the drive to sustain the theme, but I am making little statements about it because I want to be Prabhupāda's and I want Prabhupāda to be mine.

Prabhupāda liked *pada-yātrās*. He made different statements about the "bullock program," as he called it, and he encouraged Lokanātha Mahārāja to travel with bullocks around India. He wanted to go out himself in his last days and ride on a bullock cart around Govardhana. He might have died there, so his disciples disallowed it out of love. They were afraid he would feel too much pain.

As you know, we have been taking a solitary walk around 5 in order to avoid the commotion at the camp as people get up and get ready to go. When I'm off on that walk, I chant and try to hear the name.

More honestly? I don't even try anymore. I just chant to get a few rounds done to fulfill the bare quota before the sun is too high in the sky.

I haven't even been noticing the weeds much. I look around to see if there are deer. I walk only a short distance these days because I'm afraid of igniting a headache. I also don't want to run into boy scouts or army guns.

A month ago I started a project called “Walk With Me” (I know, it sounds arrogant now), in which I proposed that I would talk about things people wanted to hear such as philosophy and Kṛṣṇa conscious self-improvement. It seemed to require such a high degree of communicativeness, however, that I couldn’t keep it up. When I walk I want to be with myself and not speak on topics as if from the *vyāsāsana*.

But you *want* to hear my opinion on things you say? Like what?

“Hey, we want you to be part of the world more. We want to know your opinion on oats. And maybe you can contribute to the social changes taking place in ISKCON. If you refuse to speak about them, we will be forced to conclude that you are actually proud. You are convinced in your own conclusions and don’t want to hear from others. You don’t want to expose that you are poorly informed. Right?”

Oh, the water is filling up in the bathroom. All day I listen to it and imagine it’s a creek, or a small waterfall in a creek. That makes it more pleasant. If I were to remember constantly that it’s just water filling a toilet tank, it doesn’t have the same effect.

I also hear this typewriter and my stomach growling, and are those crickets out there in the yard? I can’t quite tell. There are so many sounds outside our range of hearing. I can’t hear Kṛṣṇa’s flute, but that’s a cliché.

Can’t hear me cry because I don’t,
can’t hear the silent feeling of wanting
to be a devotee.

Crack that silence of worries
by uttering Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras.

And feel your need deeply.

6:15 A.M.

In camp before day's walk:

"Hey, Henry, see that guy with the peacock blue ink coming out of his pen?"

"Yeah, what about it? He's got a right, don't he?"

"Yeah, but I thought it was funny, him with that little tuft of hair on the back of his head."

"What's it to you? Go home and sleep off your drunk."

(Thus a police officer prevents a possible attack on our group by a few fellows in a car parked outside our camp. They thought we were so weird we could use some shaking up.)

9 A.M., Hut

Be safe at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Be aware that safety cannot be found in this material world. If we chant in the right mood, everything is available to us. My devotees, Lord Kapiladeva says, do not want liberation even if I award it to them. They simply want to serve Me.

"Some of you must have experienced this," Śrīla Prabhupāda said in 1966. "or how could you spend so much time doing Kṛṣṇa conscious activities all day and not feel tired? If you chanted 'Mr. John, Mr. John' you would get tired and give it up, but if you chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra you can go on doing service twenty-four hours and you won't get tired."

What is he talking about? I don't get tired? I fail, get tired, then come back again. I never get tired of *doing* the duty or looking forward to the next early morning in which I can again chant, and I always maintain my

desire to read. That much is true for me. But I look forward to that other stage where I am so absorbed in Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa that I never become tired.

Walking. Today is the coolest it has been yet. You wouldn't think it was the middle of summer. Gray mists, gray clouds, cool breezes, but no rain.

In Kṛṣṇa consciousness we know that Kṛṣṇa is supreme and lives on the topmost planet Goloka, yet He is all-pervading even here through His energies. He directs the wanderings of all living entities, and He controls all outcomes. He Himself is not interested in the materialists' affairs. If we want to please Him, we must serve His pure devotee. Ask Him again and again what we should do. Be ready to change on His order or indication.

A devotee writes, "I seem to be more concerned with getting a place to stay and a job to maintain myself rather than spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Is this wrong?"

What am I supposed to say? It is not topmost, but can I say it's wrong for this particular devotee? He and others give reasons why they can't live in the temples anymore. Then it stands to reason that they will have to earn money to maintain themselves.

Another devotee writes, "I am gathering my conviction that this is best for me, but I have not yet been tested with an actual job in the material world—without regular devotee association and without attending the temple programs. I don't know what effect it will have on me."

She will have to see. I told her of communities like the one I am visiting now.

A Russian devotee, a young man, looks at me now that he's initiated. He still seems nervous and almost superficially sad. Or let's say obviously sad. He's sad that I'm not going to be with him more than a few days.

Cheer up, I say, and I give the standard reasons why a devotee should be happy. How deeply do I feel these things?

The cows we see are not on *pada-yātrā* but belong to the farmer who keeps them penned, feeds them, milks them, and waits until they no longer turn a profit. Then he will kill them. But they look peaceful enough, and they don't seem to lament the cruel treatment they are already receiving. There are scenes like this all over this country. The grass is cut for a profit. Nothing is done out of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Does this affect us as we live in the midst of it? If someone is thinking ill against us anywhere in the world, does it actually affect us? The proliferation of e-mail makes us more aware that the earth globe is a small place. We hear more from our friends but also our enemies. Maybe we affect each other in more ways than we are aware. We can turn that to something positive. Be callous toward discouraging words or psychic darts, but put out deeper, stronger confidence and urge yourself and others to feel their dependence on Kṛṣṇa.

We all want you to be happy, on *pada-yātrā* or otherwise. No one wants to be afraid. I want to be realistic, or let's say in tune with reality. I know the material world is inimical, and I know that beyond this world is the *sanātana* world. Feel the assurance and share it with others.

We ought to turn our minds to Kṛṣṇa. For example, I volunteered to speak to the group on Saturday morning. I could paraphrase the material I've been reading about Rūpa and Sanātana, but perhaps those saints are too far above us for us to feel their victories.

Maybe.

Still, they are our worshipable *ācāryas*. We need such saints. Rūpa and Sanātana met Lord Caitanya at Rāmakeli. I don't have to tell the whole story again, but it would be good to hear how Rūpa heard about the *bhakti-latā* from Lord Caitanya, and how the creeper grows by watering it with chanting and hearing. It is a marvelous plant because even while we are living in this world, it can take us to Goloka.

But be warned: there are other *bījas*—*karma-bīja*, *jñāna-bīja*, the money-making *bīja*—and such concentration should be minimized.

Yes, it's good to talk about the *bhakti-latā* once again and to try to be as precise as Lord Caitanya was about it. It's also good to name the weeds so we can all remember them. Even hearing this information can release our minds from fear.

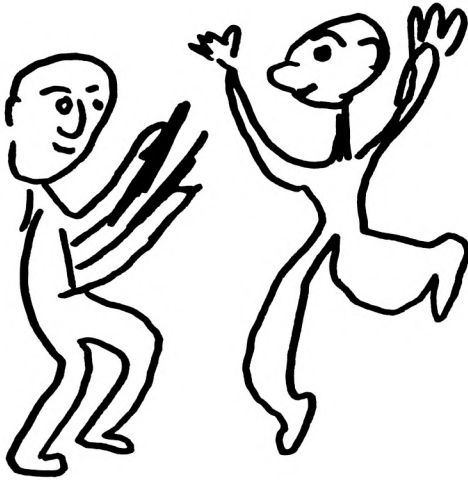
Prahlāda said, "O best of great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My concern is only for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for material happiness and maintaining their families, societies and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them." (*Bhāg.* 7.9.43)

Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa. I know this much: we ought to hear the simple sound of God's name regularly and concentrate on His activities as they are described in the

Bhāgavatam. We should then dedicate all our activities, according to our inclination, to His service.

Unfortunately, I can't solve more complex problems so well, such as the ones we encounter when we actually attempt to live the life I just described. I have to leave that to other thinkers.

*I only know when he
began to dance with me
I could have danced
danced, danced all night.*



3 P.M., Hut

I never admitted they were notes for a novel when I wrote of Svevo in pre-1966. Kowit said they were great, but when he understood I meant them to be final, he retracted his approval. I stayed with my writing as-is and Eliot supported me. That was what happened.

But Eliot was leading me to the hell in which he lived. Swami rescued me. By 1966, I was already disassociated from Eliot, but what was I doing? Expiring on Suffolk Street. The dregs.

Lord, I want to be

want to

can't even say . . .

what I want but

I appeal to You with these words

that don't even know

how to order themselves . . .

I call it a *pada-yātrā* and a struggle because

we don't have a map.

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa. There are five *rasas* of permanent ecstasy known as *sthāyī-bhāva* and seven occasional ecstatic emotions such as wonder and laughter. In these twelve ways, the pure devotees relate to the Lord.

Big muscular clouds, white bulbs, on the hillside. O Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, I'm afraid, bored, and I don't know how to write. What's the point in telling me to get into gear? I have already written all these pages and we can't turn back now. I have to keep walking these pages, one page at a time.

Someone wrote me that she had the "*āśrama* wobbles," which, in ISKCON jargon, means she was uncertain whether she should get married, was feeling the need for it, went through periods of anxiety about it,

and now is back to herself. We've all got wobbles with which to contend. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Gorse is no longer blooming. It used to be the most brilliant yellow and it covered the hillside. Then we had hawthorn with its delicate white flowers.

As for B.M. Swami, he arrived in Toronto and was on time to join the hundreds of devotees celebrating Ratha-yātrā. By now he is something of a celebrity for his unaccompanied walk. I don't know more about it except that his goal is St. John's, Newfoundland, and that's still a long way to go.

My goal is more modest. A few days left before I reach it. All I will have in the end is the certainty that each of my steps recorded in this book were necessary for me at the particular time I took them. What more can I ask?

King Daśaratha asked Viśvāmitra Muni, *aihiṣṭam yat tat punar-janma-jayāya*: "Is everything going well in your attempt to conquer the repetition of birth and death?" This writing is about that.

I should be able to give a clear answer to that question because this writing should be coming from my Kṛṣṇa conscious source. If all I'm feeling is "the writer's life," that's not necessarily Kṛṣṇa conscious and may have little to do with my attempt to surrender. But I am walking to get beyond the writer's life and to enter into the devotional life.

When did I see You, Lord? Devotees in *vātsalya-rasa* have Kṛṣṇa as their son and He worships them. The devotees in conjugal love . . .

The devotees here are working on the van. Why am I afraid to tell you who I am?

Hamsters, gerbils, tell about other people? Tell of that man in Antigua who wrote, "When will I get to wash your feet and ankles again?" He's on a farm on a hill, a bare-chested black man who works for Kṛṣṇa. Does he do enough? Who is *really* doing the most? Who are the best sons? They are the best who preach-meach-keach. He is the good son who is antlered. They do not scorn me. It's up to me to see what I can do for them, to prove how much I love my spiritual master.

O Lord, is it laziness or a lack of love? I'm hammering away to get words down on the page, but they don't make sense. I'm dedicated to giving my spirit for them, but feeling more.

Damn it, I don't feel love, and confessing it doesn't release me. I don't believe in another religion. I'm not in torment. I'm okay. But what can I write from this mediocre life?

A young Russian disciple asked, "Should I even strive for perfection, or should I be satisfied with a mediocre profile?"

I thought he might have used the word "mediocre" because he is not so familiar with the shades of meaning in the English language. Maybe he meant "humble." Humility is painful, but mediocrity is worthless. I don't know.

Now it's raining again.

Prabhupāda too seems far away.

No, the words have to mean something. Maybe it's what happens to a man who has lost his teeth and his brain falls out.

That's the way Ron Padgett writes. He doesn't care if he stays in touch with reality.

That's not me. I don't need to imitate him. I have enough to do on my own.

Oh, we're leaving for our last bit of walking this afternoon.

Left face, right face, bark commands. Dig in your heels, you said in Newport, Rhode Island in the Reserve Officer Candidate School. "Dig in as you go past the White House," and I don't know if you screwed up the group. It was your turn. Everyone got a turn to be the commander and get them to march to and fro. Whenever we had to go away, our barracks went as a group. We were all part of that group in the barracks, put together for no particular reason we could discern. But we had an identity. When we went to classes or to the chow hall, we didn't go on our own or with a few friends as you might in college. You had to march in columns with your entire barracks. To keep order someone had to be in charge and say, "Attention! Fall in!" and "Right face! Forward march! Oblique left! Oblique right!" and all that. If the whole thing got botched, it was your fault.

Okay Guarino, it's your turn today. I seem to remember I was pretty cool about it, although generally I was not cool. I was a fish out of water in that place, with Ferlinghetti's *Coney Island of the Mind* in my locker reminding me of the world to which I wanted to belong.

This *pada-yātrā* isn't like that. It's more relaxed. Everyone is a volunteer, yet requested to serve guru and Kṛṣṇa. There is no other purpose for being here. That's the austerity: walk only for devotion.

When you die the irony is that it's not the end. Some might think that at least they won't have to be bothered with so-and-so anymore and they are now beyond the reach of the draft board, but that's not true. You accept a new body and begin again. You remain subject to rape, being cut open, getting stuck in traffic jams, working a job you hate—all over again. Death is not the end. The only way to break out is to surrender to Kṛṣṇa.

At death you pray to be reborn with devotees. Even if you have to suffer material pains (we all do), you will be free of rancor and ignorance. We'll be fixed in serving Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

I believe this information and so should be scrambling to get it together before my own end arrives. I seem more interested in other things now, such as safety, and publishing, getting away—yes, getting away to some house where I can write and recover from headaches. But like everyone else, I can't escape the realities of my life. I have to use them to serve Kṛṣṇa, unless I choose *māyā*.

Boy, my mind is wandering as we walk today. I feel like there's no one I trust enough to talk to about it. So I walk and keep up a superficial conversation with anyone who comes close enough. I tend to think most people out here probably have similar concerns on their mind. Everyone has hang-ups, don't they? And talking about them doesn't necessarily get rid of them. What's the result? People walking side by side without ever getting to know one another.

We are approaching the rest point for the day. What have we accomplished? Don't worry, I'm not asking that question out of desperation. I just wondered.

July 24

Midnight

I am not my mind because my mind is always changing. Last night I read aloud to Madhu from *June Bug*. He said it contained great things and that I have a good sense of humor. That melted me and I felt bashful, warm, and pleased all over. Rather than feel my writing was going nowhere, I felt assured. I went to sleep in good spirits.

I thought I would be abounding with confidence toward my writing this morning, but here I am a few hours and dreams later, and I don't feel ready to write up a storm.

That's the mind. It's not me. The intelligence should govern the mind and I should go on writing.

Much of writing is to capture the mind's changing currents because the mind includes emotion. That's a writer's duty. Ultimately, however, we want to see the victory of the intelligence and the self over the mind. The self is part and parcel of the Supreme Self, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so beyond even that victory, we want to see the self experiencing its loving relationship with God.

Here we are on a beach, listening to the waves. Words reach us and we realize that reality is actually beyond us. We wait to become the conduit for something worthy. I'm up early to increase my chances of success.

Small insects come into the light by which I write. They don't use the light to write their own version of *pada-yātrā*; they simply seek warmth. It's the human who has the extra task of self-realization, preaching, and praising the Lord.

It's not ranting.

Walk. We plan how many miles we'll cover each day. I heard that they give a report every day of B.M. Swami's walk on the Internet. I don't have access to that because I don't have a computer, but I can imagine the report.

I could report my *pada-yātrā* there too. It would only take a few computer skills to send it out.

But I can't because I haven't physically covered any ground at all. My *pada* is a poetic foot, a free-verse foot, or what William Carlos Williams called the variable foot.

In poetics, a foot is a line of poetry, so a poet makes his *pada-yātrā* by writing lines of poetry. Thus it becomes a journey achieved by many feet of verse.

Same thing more or less with writing prose. You walk along by putting down sentences and you leave a trail that others can follow. That's the record of the journey. It's as real as walking over the countryside with your actual soles, only the landscape tends to be

inner instead of outer. In both cases, you pray and chant His glories.

If you are worthy and attentive to the point.

It's just a tactic to gain purification. It's also good exercise. *Kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa he*. Lord Caitanya also walked and chanted *Kṛṣṇa he*, Kṛṣṇa, please protect me, please save me, *kṛṣṇa keśava pahi mam*.

Sustain the metaphor:

Out of the ink bottle creatures crawl. You decide they are friendly toward one another, and you shape and control them, then turn them into devotees rather than creatures beset by lust.

All this is whistling in the dark
through the cemetery
where there are ghosts
and robbers, plunderers
the ones who have it
in for you.

Kṛṣṇa he!

O Lord,

please protect me
ultimately from Death.

I know death must come
and a next life of fearfully repetitious
events beyond my control.

What can I do but appeal to You for safe passage?
Please give me a next life full of devotion to You.

I am a broken vessel
who will become a new person
a soul reborn
in a fresh body but

still mortal. Real life
is eternal and I seek it. I
walk for that.



Kṛṣṇa consciousness is traversed through stages from *śraddhā*, *sādhū-saṅga*, all the way to *prema*. These steps are listed, but not mapped out. Each individual must chart his own course. That is the symbol behind *Pada-yātrā*. We walk for advancement in spiritual consciousness. We throw off bad qualities like too-heavy bags along the way. Then we celebrate when we reach the end.

3:50 A.M.

I drew quick portraits of SP. They don't look like him exactly, and they're not so artistic, but I felt his presence while I was drawing them.

I carry Śrīla Prabhupāda *mūrti* on my *pada-yātrā*. He rides in a box on a palanquin, and I carry him on my shoulders. I strapped him in carefully so he wouldn't bounce loose. Whenever I stop, I'm always careful to set him down without bumping him. It's nice to have him with me wherever I go. It is he who protects me.

I often pray to Prabhupāda to let me know him as he is now. I love the *siddha* form in which he appeared to us. I don't feel the need to meditate on him as a *gopī-maṅjarī*, as if I had that realization, but I want to know how he pleased Kṛṣṇa in the form in which we knew him, and I want to know how I can please him. He revealed so much of himself in his books and lectures, and all that is there on record, but even Śrīla Prabhupāda is not a static person. He changes and we change and the relationship can always deepen. His self-revelation is *continuous*; it has no end point.



And I want him to know me. I pray for that. I shouldn't assume he wouldn't understand me or where I feel I am going in my service right now. Neither should I think he will reject me. Rather, I should be open to his loving commands. He has the right to change or to talk to me, to order me. Jesus asked Francis to repair his Church, and in similar ways the Lord speaks to His devotees asking them to serve Him in particular ways. The pure devotee is no less capable than the Lord.

In the dark room looking up to that skylight and the dark sky beyond, I called, I called out his name and thought, "This is my guru. I can pray to him. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, reveal to me how you are always present in my life."

It's so hard to pray!

One fellow was awake late last night trying to use his battery-run computer to link up with the Internet. He couldn't get on. Is the computer in that category of what Prabhupāda condemned as diversion? That depends. If you use it for Kṛṣṇa, then it's okay.

Another person was up writing in her journal. She says she's writing only for herself. Well, go ahead with it. If it helps, that's what's important. She's a book distributor from Tobago.

Others have gathered from other countries to walk with us—a hundred countries represented.

A hundred arteries
in the body a
hundred pieces of *sandeśa* eaten
a hundred poems

times a hundred times a hundred. I've lost count. It's silly to endorse all the "one hundreds" just because it's the Centennial year, but yes, let's say it: Prabhupāda is great and this is the one hundredth year since he appeared in the world. He is the world's savior, if they will only listen.

Everybody up! Even if you stayed up late last night, you still have to get up this morning. Someone has to clean and shop. We'll be ready to walk soon.

Oh, I don't want to pat myself on the back one hundred times for being up early.

9:10 A.M., Hut

Happy to write, and happy to be a boy in love with his spiritual master. I will tell them on Saturday how hard it is sometimes to tell the true from the false, the *bhakti-latā* from the weeds. It's even harder to uproot the weeds. Those who are complacent will always be saying, "This is the best I can do—a garden of weeds and the good plant."

Is it?

Put that question to them: "Is it?"

Do *I* know what is true? When do *I* fake it and when am *I* real? Am I afraid to know the answer to that question?

It's too easy to say that the real self is the pure soul. We have no realization of it.

Then what do we do in the meantime? Who is the real self before it's liberated? How do we use that real self to know Kṛṣṇa?

And how far have we fallen short? Do we even know? Do we really understand the goal and openly aspire for it? Do we, as the Christians say, feel the loss

of heaven and the pains of hell? Do we even care, especially when our bellies are full and we find relief for the pain?

It's such a nice morning
clouds aplenty but sunlight in and out
typical Ireland
but the air is fresh
even if I am not.

The cows and green fields—they hide a secret world from those who want peace. We chant, we smile, we say we like to walk with our fellow *pada-yātrīs*, but we don't see the secret hell being lived out in the beautiful scenery around us.

The PY magazine needs a story. They also want a photo—quick. We sent one of three men walking. It will have to do on such short notice.



They also want an update for the Internet.
Okay, here goes:

Today we rose and served ginger tea (it was cold out). Unfortunately, the tea was only lukewarm. Then we gathered for *maṅgala-ārati* in the tent, although it (the wind) was blowing. McFergus led the chanting not too badly. A *mātāji* led *tulasī-pūjā*. (We have a *tulasī* plant. She's doing okay because it's been sunny most of the time. She doesn't mind rain either, though.)

Then we had *Bhāgavatam* class and breakfast (*kicchari*). The *Bhāgavatam* class was about Kardama Muni (RS spoke). The *kicchari* wasn't bad. We offered it to my Prabhupāda *mūrti*.

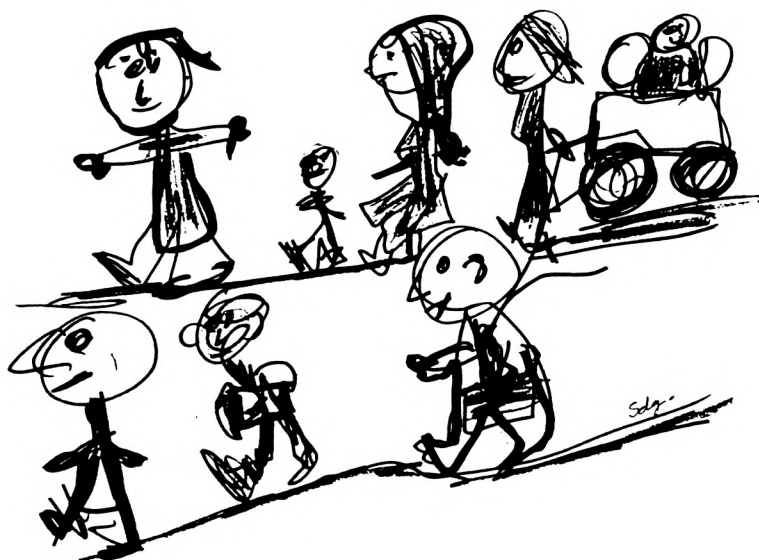
Then we gathered, and after the usual delays and disorganization, started out (a little late and with little idea where we were going). That wasn't too bad either because we understand our purpose clearly: we want to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda during his Centennial year.

In addition to getting into the usual PY propaganda, we are each promising something extra (an improvement) that we will do this year and next. Yours truly will send you his pledge later.

That's all for now. One lady pledged to read the *Bhāgavatam* every day, which she hasn't been doing. A man said he'd chant twenty rounds. Another said he'd do Food-for-Life in London, and another said he would try to avoid faultfinding Vaiṣṇavas.

Let me know if this update is sufficient. You can fix the grammar and spelling to make it okay."

At the PY magazine, they read it and shrugged. "It will have to do."



Then I added this:

P.S. Here is another drawing. I hope you can use it. We can send more if you want. Truth is we are out here and I hope we can last, but I can't say for sure. I heard a new man was coming to join us. If he hasn't left yet, can he bring more plasters (Band-aids)? One of the men here uses up two a day on his thumb and third finger because his *japa* beads cut his hand.

By the way, are we allowed to eat chocolate? Also, one of the ladies wants a journal to write in. Can we eat ice cream, and if so, can you send it in some kind of refrigerated container for us? We could really use some. Maybe the new man can bring it, and some

pen refills,
paper,
money,
plastic spoons,
Kleenex or toilet paper.

I wish he could bring *bhakti*, but maybe that's not so portable.

How are *you* guys doing? What are you doing to promote the Centennial and our walk?

What about pain? It's not good to keep walking, for example, if your shoes are too tight, but then someone like Sanātana Gosvāmī walked barefoot across the blazing sands.

In his case, of course, he felt no pain. He was in ecstasy thinking about how he had been invited by Lord Caitanya to Purī.

The Cc. says that the Lord *tested* him in the month of Jyestha.

I'm no saint. If I don't want to feel pain, I take a painkiller.

Jesus,
Lord Nityānanda,
Haridāsa Ṭhākura—

Did they feel pain or not? Śrīla Prabhupāda seems to say they didn't suffer because they had spiritual bodies. In Haridāsa's case, Lord Caitanya took his whipping. That's why Haridāsa felt no pain. Also, Haridāsa was clinging to the holy name, as Prahlāda Mahārāja did when he was tortured.

Even in ordinary hypnosis if you think of something else, it acts as an anesthesia. I wouldn't recommend that sort of thing. I want to get as much work done as I can before I have to bow out.

*There's a bright golden haze on the meadow,
there's a bright golden haze on the meadow.*

Yeah, I'll be out for a little while longer and then that's it. I will be happy to offer myself to the Lord of Goloka.

O Kṛṣṇa, I saw Your name as the first words of a poem and was happy. I recognize You as my friend, as someone both abstract and concrete in my life.

Can You imagine me in Sanātana Gosvāmī's shoes during that month of Jyeṣṭha, my Lord? I would probably have worn shoes to cross the beach, or taken a shady path. I certainly wouldn't have been worried if the *pūjārīs* touched me. I'd think, "Who the hell do those *pūjārīs* think they are? They're no better than I am." And I'd stride. Or I'd catch a rickshaw and use the money I have earned by my karma to arrive at Your door. That's Kali-yuga for you. At least I'd be happy to come.

O Lord, please make me always happy to serve You. Please place me at the feet of Lord Nityānanda's devotees. I serve outside the holy *dhāma* and wish to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One devotee who lives in the *dhāma* said, "Please tell me how you celebrated Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day and what you will do for Puruṣottama month?"

I couldn't even remember where I *was* on Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's disappearance day. As for Puruṣottama month, what does it actually mean to me? Śrīla Prabhupāda just never followed those things so closely. He thought the main thing was to be engaged always in some regular service for the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

A *sannyāsī*'s first duty is to write books and to speak about Kṛṣṇa. That doesn't mean he has to be imper-

vious to Vaiṣṇava holidays. That will just make him hard-hearted. Still, I'm out here walking.

There's a bright golden haze on the meadow today. One lady writer said that every morning her father, while shaving in the bathroom, would belt out, "Oh, what a beautiful morning!" We belt out, "*gaurāṅga bolite habe*" and "*bhaja bhakata*." Śrī Kṛṣṇa sits down to eat with His friends in rows. Rādhārāṇī is the best cook.

I remember living in the Detroit temple. Bhagavān dāsa was newly married then, and he was also the temple president. I visited him in his room. His baby was in a crib. That was his normal way of life. Maybe he should have stayed that way. He probably would have been happier. We advanced too quickly for our own good sometimes. We took up more and more responsibility and finally became incarnations. Then down we fell like rockets run out of fuel, contaminated by the lust that had never left our hearts.

Oh, I was saved because the Lord had something else in mind for me.

Do you actually believe that?

Sometimes. Maybe in later years, before this show is over, I'll have to face a different dimension than the one I live with at present. The world may go on as is or it could radically change. *I* could go on as is or *I* could radically change. I am in His hands and I am always aware of that.

3 P.M., Hut

We walked all morning and I still managed to recover from head pain.

"Are you plagued?" he asked.

“No, I take allopathic medicine now. I get more up time.” I don’t know what price I’ll have to pay for that.

We chatted in the kitchen. He is worse off than I am. We both need to plan any trip we take. He cannot get exhausted or eat unplanned meals. I told him that I set conditions when I go some place. The first condition is that I must have a room to myself. We agreed that people often don’t understand the needs of those who are chronically ill. Even those who are sick can barely understand other people with ailments. We all need to become more generous.

Rūpa Gosvāmī just received his last instruction of his ten-day meeting with the Lord. Lord Caitanya said, “I have given you just a brief synopsis. Now you will have to expand and adjust it.”

How did he do that? We know that Rūpa expanded it better than anyone else could have because he was empowered. Kṛṣṇa taught him in the heart and no one can have a better teacher. Lord Caitanya chose him to write the *bhakti-rasa granthas*. Thus that meeting culminated in praise of *mādhurya-rasa* as the ultimate goal.

Rūpa Gosvāmī later wrote *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, as well as many beautiful *rasika* poems and plays.

But when you read Lord Caitanya’s instructions to him, you realize that the details of what is contained in those books were not described by the Lord. How did Rūpa come to understand them? Kṛṣṇa taught him in the heart and then empowered him with the proper understanding. Rūpa also went to live in Vṛndāvana, which provided inspiration.

When Rūpa and Sanātana were searching for the lost places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, how did they find them? They had a few hints from the *śāstra*, but nothing really describing the topography of Bhauma Vṛndāvana. Therefore, they prayed to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and all the *rāsa-sthalīs* were revealed to them. They were spiritual divining rods. Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī had a similar experience when he discovered Lord Caitanya's birthplace so many years later.

Changeable are the tides. Imagine you are on the beach relaxing. Imagine you find certain encounters stressful, but you are able to relax in the midst of them. Examine higher and higher levels of stress and relax through them. That's not so hard, is it?

Now imagine you are dying.

Lord Brockway told Prabhupāda, "I will die peacefully."

But he didn't know where he would be going. He may manage a peaceful death, but can he manage a peaceful next life?

By "die peacefully," people mean they believe their existence will come to an end, or they content themselves with thinking that whatever comes after is little cause for worry. For now, drink tea and take a walk with your grandchildren.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is against that idea of not knowing the next life.

This walk is about knowing the next life, even though it's an armchair *pada-yātrā*.

I can't fake it. If I haven't actually been walking, it's impossible for me to come up with the descriptions Basho could come up with. Here's one, given while he walked in the northern regions of Japan:

I had a bath in a hot spring before I took shelter at an Inn. It was a filthy place with rough straw mats spread out on an earth floor. They had to prepare my bed by the dim light of the fire, for there was not even a lamp in the whole house. A storm came upon us toward midnight, and between the noise of thunder and leaking rain, and the raids of mosquitoes and fleas, I could not get a wink of sleep. Furthermore, an attack of my old complaint made me so ill that I left the Inn upon the first hint of light in the morning. I suffered severely from repeated attacks while I rode on horseback bound for the town of Kori. It was indeed a terrible thing to be so ill on the road when there still remained thousands of miles before me. But thinking that if I were to die on my way to the extreme North it would only be the fulfillment of Providence, I trod the earth as firmly as possible and arrived at the barrier gate of Okido in the province of Date.

His reverence for the old hermitages and places of the poets of old, his knowledge of their poems, his meeting with contemporary poets and painters, his appreciation for the common people, and most of all, his own poetic talent exercised in writing haikus, all make for one of the best travel books ever written—except that he's not a devotee of God. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person should be able to write the best travel book, but when he doesn't get off his duff . . .

Basho's heart leaped with joy when he saw a celebrated pine tree which had been described by ancient poets. In one city he found a painter who

showed him some places which Basho might have missed on his own:

We first went to the plane of Miyagino, where fields of bush-clover were waiting to blossom in autumn. The hills of Tamad, Yokono, and Tsutsugujai-ga Oaki were covered with white rhododendrons in bloom. Then we went into the dark pine woods called Konoshita where even the beams of the sun could not penetrate.

When it came time to say good-bye to the painter, the painter gave Basho map-like drawings of the land ahead and two pairs of straw sandals with laces dyed the deep blue of the iris. Basho writes, "In this last appears most clearly perhaps the true artistic nature of this man."

I guess you could say all this is just aesthetic *māyā*. Still, Basho's a nice guy and he means no harm. Just a little more mercy was required and he could have met a bona fide guru to teach him the way.

A brother says, "I don't know why he doesn't write exclusively of Vaiṣṇavas."

Well, what does he want, that I write of him? I can't. He wouldn't really like it. I find most devotees prefer not to appear in print, even if their appearance is favorable. They think I don't appreciate them sufficiently. And that may be true. I'm short on the quality of appreciating others.

But you know, I'd like to include Basho in the fold.

"What about Lao Tse?" he asked.

Yes, him too. Not that I think he's a devotee, but he preached a preface to God consciousness. Bring him into the fold, admit I know some others, and be myself. I am not exclusively Indian. God isn't either. When a

person asked Prabhupāda if there were incarnations outside of India, Prabhupāda replied, “Why talk of India? We are for the whole world.” There are rascals in the East and good people in the West. It all boils down to quality. Prabhupāda brought the *mahā-mantra* to every corner of the world, regardless of who lived there.

I’d like to include Jane Kenyon, another poet, in the fold too. She’s not a devotee either, but I think she could be. Here’s an excerpt from a poem she wrote:

The most painful longing comes over me
a longing not of the body . . .

It could be for beauty—
I mean what Keats was panting after,
for which I love and honor him;
it could be for the promises of God;
or for oblivion, *nada*; or some condition even more
extreme, which I intuit, but can’t quite name.

That’s what it is, that for which we have been searching but have not found life after life—that keen longing—can be fulfilled in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa is the lover, the friend, the parent, the protector. He is the self of all selves. Will Jane Kenyon eventually be able to taste it?

O Kṛṣṇa
O Kṛṣṇa
one last *japa* round
my duty.

July 25

Midnight

Hello, pen. Keep moving. It's midnight at the Zen Center. Tick-tock

we got books on a walk.

Wanna see?

And hands on the throttle—don't read her poems. I owns

a Cadillac.

He was hampered (zounds) by the formula that he could write a great novel but wanted this instead.

Astounded at his age to read for the first time in Rousseau's self-pitying *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, "Everyone is against me." The translator writes, "The struggle between Rousseau's yearning for solitude and his need for society is the central theme of the *Reveries*."

Oh, nobody likes me

everybody hates me

I'm gonna go to the garden to eat worms.

Here is an old friend, *The Way of a Pilgrim*. Let me tell *his* story.

He introduces himself as a homeless wanderer who has no belongings other than a backpack, a Bible, and a crust of bread. He's a man of low origins. Says he went to church and heard a New Testament passage stating that we should pray constantly. That really got to him and he began asking respectable religionists how to do it. To his credit, he was determined, even though no one could answer his question practically.

He asked one father superior, "How can the mind be always set on God, not distracted, but continually praying?"

"This is extremely difficult to understand unless God Himself reveals it," the father superior said, and he explained nothing more. The pilgrim continued his wanderings, asking the question to whomever he met, "not knowing where it would take me."

Eventually he received a copy of the *Philokalia*. He then went to see a hermit who told him how to follow the book. He was also given the Jesus prayer, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me!" and told that if he perseveres, the path of the heart will open.

I have heard other accounts of this pilgrim's progress which say that his experience is unusual in that he got quick results and was also given such a high quota to begin with. Nevertheless, it's a wonderful and presumably true story. A real *pada-yātrā*. The end of his first chapter reminds us of what Nārada tells Vyāsa in describing his own life: "Thus I began chanting the holy name and fame of the Lord by repeated recitation . . . So doing, I traveled all over the earth, fully satisfied, humble and unenvious." (*Bhāg.* 1.6.26)

So I now walk and say the Jesus Prayer without ceasing and it is more precious and sweet to me than anything else in the world. Sometimes I walk seventy or more versts a day and I do not get tired; I'm only conscious of praying. When the cold air chills me, I begin saying the Prayer with greater intensity and I warm up. When hunger begins to overcome me, I begin saying the name of Jesus Christ more frequently and I forget that I wanted to eat. When I become sick and feel rheumatic pain in my back and legs, I pay greater attention to the prayer and I do not feel the pain. When someone offends me, I remember how sweet the Jesus Prayer is and the offense and anger disappear and I forget everything. I walk in a semi-conscious state without worries, interests and temptations. My only desire and attraction is for solitude and ceaseless recitation of the Jesus Prayer. This makes me happy. God knows what this is all about. Certainly, all this is on the sensual level, or, as the late elder said, it is a natural and artificial result of habit. I am not yet ready to make the interior prayer of the heart my own, because I am ignorant and unworthy. I wait for God's good time and I trust in the prayers of my deceased spiritual father. Praise be to God that even though I have not attained the ceaseless self-activating prayer of the heart, I now clearly understand what is the meaning of the words of the apostle Paul, "Pray constantly."

Yeah, Bhūrijana Prabhu and I discussed it in the Gītā-nāgarī cabin by the Tuscarora in our naive days when he was a schoolteacher and I was a guru. It seemed such a novel idea. He said he tried it a bit even in the classroom—recited Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras to himself all the time. We really thought we could do it!

What a joke
that a bloke

could always chant. Was it against what Śrīla Prabhupāda taught? He never specified, “Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra constantly.” Yet he said it too.

And chocolate is not allowed.

4:50 A.M.

Two points from *The Way of a Pilgrim* which are relevant to this *Pada-yātrā*:

The pilgrim is a perpetual wanderer, but early in the book he expresses a desire to settle down to concentrate on prayer. He’s happy when he finds a little hermitage in the Siberian woods and can advance in his prayer life through reading and mantra-chanting. So it is not incompatible to speak as I do of simultaneously walking and seeking the benefits of seclusion.

The other point has to do with facing adversities. I mentioned that I see clouds gathering on the horizon, or sometimes I imagine them, out of fear. The pilgrim met a real catastrophe early in his wanderings while chanting the Jesus prayer. Two thugs knocked him unconscious and stole his knapsack, which contained his Bible and *Philokalia*. He was so devastated by the loss of his books that for two days he couldn’t bring himself to move from the spot. Finally he dragged himself under the bushes and fell asleep. Then he dreamed that he was in his spiritual father’s cell, where he told him of his losses:

The elder comforted me and said, “This is a lesson for you on detachment from material things so that your path to heaven will be more direct. This was permitted so that you wouldn’t fall into spiritual complacency. God wants a Christian to renounce completely his will, his desires, and his weaknesses and give himself up to

God's will totally. He directs all happenings for the salvation of man. 'He wants everyone to be saved.' (1 Tim. 2:4) 'You can trust God not to allow you to be tried beyond your strength and with any trial he will give you a way out of it and the strength to bear it.' (1 Cor. 10:13) Soon your joy will far surpass your present suffering."

Wouldn't it be nice
if we spoke of Kṛṣṇa all the time
and inward chanting not just
from the mind and words
but the constant chanting of the heart
clinging to the name of Kṛṣṇa?

Yes, and now the land is waiting. The weeds stand tall in the dark. The sheep are lying on their stomachs. Perhaps wilder creatures will emerge from the woods and take to the road while I am out walking with my stick.

As for meditating on solitude vs. society or any other such matters, I will simply repeat what Prabhupāda has said and apply it as best I can to my own situation.

Prabhupāda said that he didn't speak on his own but repeated Kṛṣṇa's words. Still, he repeated those words with his own strong and expressive mood. He said things like, "If you ask a human being what about the next life, he will reply, 'Bow-wow!' He will say, 'Don't bother us about that. You can be concerned but we are not.'" He said they were no better than dogs.

O Kṛṣṇa, you wanted us to inform the fallen souls,
Dear sir,
look at this communication,
this signal flair

to catch your attention and disorient
 you so you can hear the message you
 have so long neglected.
 Although you studied and entertained yourself,
 you missed this point: life is brief,
 the body is not the self,
 and whatever you do in this life
 shapes the next one.
 Wake up and get out of the pit.

9:05 A.M., Hut

Lord Caitanya embraced Sanātana, cleaned his body, and asked His friends to give him new clothes and “make him gentle.” Prabhupāda used the word *daraveśa*, Muslim mendicant. Prabhupāda said, “A Muslim mendicant, or hippie.” Sweet entrance of Prabhupāda’s experience with us into his writing. We loved him for it.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. I daydream of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa more often than I daydream of managing or lecturing. Those other two seem harder to sustain. Still, it’s hard to chant (and write). But it would be weak-hearted to tell Madhu that I give up, I want to actually go traveling. Since our van isn’t registered, we would only be able to travel in Ireland anyway. We *could* spend time in Dublin, but we were just there.

No, it’s best to stick it out here. Of course, I could give up the walk and just be here. I guess I don’t always have to be on a forced march, especially when the energy to be walking has worn off. I am allowed to listen to my inner voice directing me as to what I want to write.

I want to go to where the process leads. If it leads me off into a France of the mind, then let me go there on the ferry or *le shuttle*. If it takes only thirty-five minutes to arrive and come back, then no problem. Or if I need to go somewhere else to follow the Muse from there, then let me go. If I want to live on the coast of France for a couple of months (if I'm lucky enough and find some absorbing work to do there), then I should be happy to remain.

"But this is grasshopper life! We should stick to our work and bite the bullet, not trail after some Muse."

No, I don't have to do that. I may have to move along. What that will mean for my *pada-yātrā* is that it will have to go ahead without me.

"Okay, then if you didn't walk, where would you be?"

I drink water and worry. I think of Rousseau and how paranoiac he was, saying the whole world was against him when he was actually an extremely famous writer even in his own day. Yet the scholars say he was exiled from his homeland and that some of his books were officially banned in France. He had no intimate relationships with women, although he seemed to crave that, and his idea of the Noble Savage who would be accepted by society did not come true. I guess he *felt* the world was against him. At least he recorded what he felt. I may be disgusted to read his self-serving arguments in favor of Jean Jacques Rousseau, but I'm glad he said what he meant. A guy has to say what he means.

3 P.M., Hut

There is always a certain amount of duty to be done. Remember Little Dorrit in the Dickens novel? Our teacher made fun of her. Dorrit used to go around the castle with a big bunch of keys, humming merrily to herself. I think she may have been cheerfully saying, “Duty, duty.” Dickens held her up as ideal. We laughed at Little Dorrit, or am I confusing her with someone in *Bleak House*? But duty.

My duty is to get up at midnight and put on my socks no matter what I have to write. Or, if I decide not to write but to read, I still get up and put on my socks. I don’t feel so great today, but I got up anyway. I can’t find in myself the stuff to face all duties easily. I can’t go beyond duty to spontaneity. Regardless, I do my duty.

My duty is to dig deep in writing. It’s to be hard on myself, but not too hard. It’s to expect the stirrings.

If a skinny boy wants muscles, he has to work out. If a dreamer wants to play the guitar, he has to practice. Duty doesn’t mean working in such a way that you are removed from your initial joy and attraction for a task, but to feel deeper joy at accomplishment always costs something. We always have to move from joy to practice (including drudgery) to accomplishment.

Where the problem comes in is when we realize how much we love freedom. That’s natural, according to Prabhupāda. Unfortunately, if we want results in this world, we have to work.

For example, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra comes straight from Goloka. If we want to taste it, we have to chant it even when we don’t want to. We can’t keep hanging

our beadbag on the peg on the wall and expect that we will taste the holy name.

How can I know
that my spiritual master wants me to walk? It's
not enough to be proclaimed
patron saint of Canada and Serbia
for my ability to walk under duress and
wear out thirty pairs of shoes.
Because the moon is small and speaks
to me that here is a good place to chant—
right there under that elm—
and I ought to stay and chant there.

This *Pada-yātrā* is a free-write book and we have almost come full circle. We have circumambulated. We have shown our respect. It is almost time to move on to other questions: Can I give more time to chanting now? Is there some other service I should be doing? More reading? Can I measure up to what Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda require of me? Since this book is about prayer, I ask these questions.

The greatest authority in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line is Sanātana Gosvāmī but he describes himself as *nīca jāti*, *nīca saṅgī*, low-born and fallen because of his association with the Muslim leader who recruited him. Sanātana also said. “I am always suffering from the threefold miseries. Why is that? How do I get free? I don't know what is good for me.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda elaborates in his purport that there is danger at every step. The world is composed of misery. Those who are practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, however, become free of suffering.

Sanātana goes on to say that despite this dangerous condition, he is called *paṇḍita* by the village men. Even worse, he accepts the title because they claim it is true. “They call me *paṇḍita*, but I don’t even know who I am.”

Fallen, and I admit to myself
that when I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa
my heart remains wooden, stone, and
the Lord does not appear.
Yes, I admit it. I have only the outer shell
of His name, and
I cannot force Him to come to me. I have
nothing to offer Him.

“Not yet,” He seems to say.

“You have not been tested enough.”

Or blessed enough.

Or I have been blessed, I have received
so much but I am still poor.

Can I admit to my offenses?

Then why do you accept that you are *paṇḍita*?

A bird sits on the last telephone wire from America to here. That wire stops at this house, but we have no phone.

Lord Caitanya told Sanātana that He was pleased after he had given up his valuable blanket. His words constitute stiff instruction, something we have all heard hundreds of times but haven’t realized. I am not always even enthusiastic to repeat it to others, although we are all in need to hear it. After all, I am not above the struggle myself.

What? Can’t an older fellow struggle?

I guess so, but we don’t expect him to be struggling from such a low position. We don’t expect him to be

dancing the bugaloo, but be composed, like Sanātana, or a junior version of him, wearing saffron mittens and saffron dress, his only heart's concern to be a good fellow and die unadorned and nonscandalized.

Where is he going?

Where is the Mathurā of Yadupati?

Where is the northern Kośala of Raghunātha? Keep your mind fixed on the eternal, O *paṇḍita*.

When Sanātana read the note his brother had composed in Sanskrit, he became happy and decided to free himself. It was inspired writing, and it worked wonders on Rūpa's older brother. Even then, the poet Rūpa knew how to touch the heart of an elevated soul. His words were meant to inspire meditation on the temporality of this world. Even the *dhāmas* become overrun with weeds. Time kills all, even memory, so why be concerned? If you are now suffering, know for certain that it's temporary.

I would like to remember Rūpa Gosvāmī's words when I am stuck in what appears to be a painful and endless situation.

July 26

“When the living entity is attracted by the material energy, which is separate from Kṛṣṇa, he is overpowered by fear. Because he is separated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the material energy, his conception of life is reversed. In other words, instead of being the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he becomes Kṛṣṇa’s competitor. This is called *viparyayo ’smṛtiḥ*. To nullify this mistake, one who is actually learned and advanced worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead as his spiritual master, worshipful Deity and source of life. He thus worships the Lord by the process of unalloyed devotional service.” (*Bhāg.* 11.2.37, quoted in *Cc. Madhya*, 20.119)

The Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy is soothing. It liberates us from our mental *māyā*, and beyond that, actually frees us from this world.

When I read alone it becomes clear to me how to understand the philosophy, but perhaps each person has the same experience. I am a teacher, but perhaps others don’t need me to “teach” them what Śrīla Prabhupāda has written. Of course, many are too

restless to read Prabhupāda's books, so they may need more help than others.

M. is going to Belfast today.

Lord Caitanya taught Sanātana that he is *jīva-śakti*. Originally he is spirit soul, equal in quality with the Supreme, but because he is tiny, he is part of His marginal energy. We become covered simply because we are so small. We suffer like prisoners who are sometimes held under the water until they almost drown, then brought up again for a gulp of air. That air, we think, is our greatest enjoyment, because in the material world, enjoyment is experienced only in relation to distress. When we become enlightened by the spiritual master's instructions, we engage in devotional service and *māyā* frees us. Then we can return to our original, blissful life in the spiritual energy. *Mahātmānas tu mām pārtha/ daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ . . .*

Oh, how we rush along, not interested in this philosophy.

O Kṛṣṇa.

My dear Lord, we have forgotten You and have been plunged into the material world. This is important.

"Which is more important," Śrīla Prabhupāda used to ask, "the car or the driver?" The guests were often slow to reply, either because they didn't know where he was leading them or because they were unwilling to feed him the answer he wanted.

"Both are important."

"But which is *more* important, the car or the driver?"

"Well, I guess the driver. But cars are pretty important too. They cost more than a human being."

“No, the driver is more important.” The humanists would agree, or at least admit to it. But people are so degraded these days. They say a goat will eat anything and a crazy man will say anything. Some insisted that the car was more important.

“Do you want to go back to Godhead?”

“No, I’d rather stay in Southern California.”

“Do you want *kṛṣṇa-prema*?”

“Why ask? Is it within your power to give it? I want it, but not enough. I have too much else to do.”

Sanātana Gosvāmī wanted to worship the Deity of Madana-Gopāla, but he performed the worship as *manasa-sevā*, meditation in the mind. When the Deity asked him for better food, Sanātana told Him He would have to take what he offered because he was compelled *by the Lord* to live as a *vairāgyi* and didn’t have much money.

That’s all, folks. The deeper purposes of Kṛṣṇa consciousness alluded this writer. He tried writing poems of the KC life as he saw it go by, and sent faxes and maxes. Geez. The hours frown no more, so leave me alone to write.

But are you writing an important opus or is it just this?

Just this.

Just what it is.

But under the surface are the subterranean planets. I heard Sadāpūta Prabhu explain all that on tape today.

But I care less about it nowadays. I mean, I don’t feel the urge to understand so that I can explain it to others. I have Godbrothers who can explain whether

Bhū-maṇḍala is on the same plane as the sun's orbit. I just can't grasp it. Sorry. I got a "D" in Chemistry at Staten Island Community College.

Then I got Cs in my two semesters of Geology at Brooklyn College. Hundreds of liberal arts students took the easiest science course to pass. Why take *any* science if you prefer poetry?

But in any college, you still have to learn about Sidney Lanier, Sinclair Lewis, Robert Fulton, and Sir Lady Ashbrook, and you have to write essays to get an A because English was, after all, your forte.

Then outside the syllabus, without Dr. Solomon's permission, I bought The Grove Press editions of *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and *Tropic of Cancer* (did they have blue dust jackets?). I found them stacked up in The Eighth Street Bookstore in Greenwich Village and thought, "*This is the real stuff.*"

But my life was not like Henry Miller's, neither did I dare to write of it.

What's your life like, kid?

Well . . .

1950s backward kid's stuff, but after a . . .

"Sounds like a French novel," said Henry Katz sympathetically.

Impressed?

Disgusted.

Now I confess along with Rousseau and Augustine. Allen Ginsberg, "debauch number one," somehow contacted Prabhupāda and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa. At least he chanted. George Harrison did much better.

But better still are the girls and boys

not famous or talented

or rich, who kept the principles

and worshiped their master and
 dedicated their lives to him
 distributing his books or
 doing other full-time services in one of the
 nine limbs of *bhakti*. One can
 just imagine their good fortune.
 Surely they will go back to Godhead at
 the end of this life (see Bg. 11.55, purport).



I just can't bear to leave a picture abstract. I want it to tell a human story. Maybe I find abstraction too impersonal. If you're going to draw, give us a face, even if it's distorted or crude. It should at least be *some* kind of creature with a discernible shape, and it should be

striving. And add signs of worship, maybe a sacred verse, and that's how I feel.

By the way, I just wanted to let you know that I repeat the same things sometimes because I write so much every day. When you move so slowly, you have to say, "We are on the south side of Detroit." Then later, admit, "We are still on the south side of Detroit." If you measure the angle of the stars now and again in six months, you will note little change.

Madame Mama was ten years older than Rousseau, so she called him "little one." He felt the world hated him. Some did! He suffered an accident and some people thought he was dead. They even printed a nasty obituary. Imagine how he felt reading that! Twain might have laughed it off, but Rousseau only became bitter.

There is often no way to reconcile opposites. We go to the grave with unresolved issues. Therefore, I'm glad I'm reading Lord Caitanya's teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī in good time.

4:45 A.M.

Willow, weep for me. Everyone feels the blues. They have to go to work at six o'clock. In America, they're stuck on the highway; in Bombay they hang on the trains. Prabhupāda laments for them. He says it could be simpler. He invites them to live with us, but they don't want to. How can the economy run if everyone becomes a devotee? Don't worry, it won't happen, but if you think it will, then follow *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Live in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

How little I understand of the complex implications of the economy and politics of the larger society and

even our own institution. I can't claim that because I have distanced myself from it I am able to see things clearly which others cannot. The opposite is also true: those who work intensely from the inside to maintain our society have insights into Lord Caitanya's mercy that I may not have. They may also see how ISKCON can continue and affect the larger society.

Rousseau said that the subject of his essay would be mostly himself. Couldn't he have chosen a better subject? Why not God? He says he loves God, but he hardly mentions Him.

We mention Kṛṣṇa. He's supreme. Śrīla Prabhupāda speaking in Māyāpur in 1975 to hundreds of mostly Western devotees. We were there too—Mahābuddhi and Ghanaśyāma, Kalakaṇṭha and me, TKG's party and Tripurāri's party, Madhudviṣa's party and Haṁsadūta, Bhagavān—all the big ISKCON kingdoms striving for Prabhupāda's attention, back-talking, getting sick, wanting to adore Śrīla Prabhupāda and be appreciated by him, or given a post. We didn't know what we were doing and the women were suppressed.

Prabhupāda said, "Caitanya means the living force. There is a person behind everything and that is Kṛṣṇa. They take Kṛṣṇa's words in the *Bhagavad-gītā* but try to avoid Kṛṣṇa, although He is the center of the *Gītā*. He says surrender to Me."

Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya wrote a verse praising Kṛṣṇa: *vairāgya vidyā*. Rūpa Gosvāmī also wrote one: *namo mahā-vadanyāya*. We must follow in their footsteps. Lord Caitanya is not an ordinary *sādhū* or *yogī*. The Cc. verse states that He is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. It's in the Eleventh Canto . . .

We were all listening or spacing out, three hundred devotees in the marble temple room. The competition was insane. He even said of one, “He’s waiting for the old man to die so that he can become guru.” Years later that person fell down, although we didn’t foresee it at the time.

O Kṛṣṇa. I too am marginal energy. Will I be forever satisfied with my proud mechanical rounds and my hopeless *gāyatrīs* as long as I can slurp down hot cereal?

9:10 A.M., Hut

The living entity is caught by *māyā*. It is very difficult to free oneself. We are befuddled and act in ways that harm us and others. We go always for the sense gratification and thus ensure future entanglement in birth and death. The cycle never ends.

Therefore, Kṛṣṇa sent Vyāsadeva to compile the *Purāṇas* to help us get out. The *jīva* can take advantage of this mercy in three ways: through the scriptures, through the spiritual master, and through the Lord in the heart. He can thus learn of his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa, engage in the activities of devotional service, and eventually reach the goal.

These are Lord Caitanya’s teachings to Sanātana. We can read along and try to understand how to practice them with more life and depth. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is more than reciting scripture or mechanical practice. We have to learn to feel the Lord’s mercy. That means we have to first notice it in our own lives.

Śrīla Prabhupāda says the Lord in the heart gives us the conscience to accept the *Vedas*. Conscience. Otherwise we may neglect them. We don’t know why

exactly we stick to the Vedic explanation, but we do. That means Kṛṣṇa is helping us. I'm thankful for that.

Squeezing out a page at a time. What did you have for breakfast? It's Ekādaśī, so I had tapioca and raspberries. Then Madhu gave me what he called a Murphy breakfast. It consisted of boiled potatoes with salt and butter and a little cheese. I liked the taste of his prep, but could not give myself to enjoying it for fear I would not digest it. M. seemed to love it though, and he ate while he spoke on the phone to his God-brothers. He's going to spend the day with some of them.

I am left out of that. I'm not one of the God-brothers, but the spiritual father. That leaves me alone when it's time for fraternity and fun. I could have it with my own set of friends, but I don't have those types of friends. I even prefer not to. I prefer to stay in this house alone. That's fine, but it means I have to deal with a little loneliness sometimes. That's fine too if I can find a way through words to bring release. Will it come in a memory? A patch of scripture? A realization? Is it in a literary flourish, a springboarding off what a poet writes, an allusion to the walk?

Oh yes, let's play *pada-yātrā*.

Hello. We have been marching in the soft rain. It's not so cold, but we have not had a single day of scorching summer heat. No such thing in Ireland.

Here's the report: we went to Gardenville and held a lecture about the connection between outer space and the higher dimensions according to the Vedic models. We couldn't give the lecture ourselves, so we played a tape by Sadāpūta Prabhu. Then we showed a

movie about it, then gave out sweets. It went all right. We are walking hundreds of versts for the KC movement.

You know, you can walk with your fingers or arms or a wheelchair or by motor car, computer, or telephone. You can walk by speech. All this is possible by the power of the imagination God gave you. I am simply writing on the energy of that imagination and the peaceful day I am experiencing. There's just the sound of the rain and no hands clapping.

Ryder Rent-a-Truck. Someone said a devotee inherited it. I don't see any big money coming in from it though.

ISKCON is low on big resources. Some people still think we're a cult. Time can change that and has to some extent, but we could change it right back by some weird book distribution technique or being linked to some crazy suicide cult. Just when we thought we were becoming respectable.

Eleven percent of Americans are black, gays constitute a movement large enough to be taken seriously, and there are enough Catholics to form a legion. The Protestant influence in America is enormous—the ruling vote. Hare Kṛṣṇas don't count except as proof that democracy exists. Doesn't the American government allow them to run around in orange sheets? Adds local color, they say. Only a few college professors who specialize in Indology say we're authentic and not mad, although they also believe our scriptures teach myth and not truth. Where else can we go but to the Lord Himself for shelter? And of course, we have each other.

I think it was Montaigne, a personal essayist, who said he was going to record not the essence but the passage. Be a barometer of what passes through the mind. Yes, I come from the same school. I hope while passing through to hit upon mineral veins. Diamonds would be great. That means real life, real pines, real rain, the real gray sky. It's all Kṛṣṇa's domain and He is not a minority. He is the One.

The Boy Scouts, the Cub Scouts, the high school band, the Boys' and Girls' club, the Girl Scouts, Brownies, baseball teams, Knights of Columbus, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Elks and geese and meece and Moose and the auxiliary and the Catholic Ladies, the Polish Reformers, the Better Business Bureau, the Young Lions, the Rotaries, the Elks some more, the fathers from Ireland and Italy, the parish friends—in those days there were no marchers in the band representing blacks or gays or any other race, and no Indians in sight. We didn't know what they were, and had never heard of Hare Kṛṣṇa. No one had even heard of Beat poets, only rock-'n-roll bands, although they weren't in parades either, only sounding in attic rooms to the tune of Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock Around the Clock." Those ignorant sunny days where the parade ended just a half a block away from my house at the Vets lot where three soldiers shot rifles not quite in unison, pointed up at the sky and then everyone went home. Memorial Days.

No, I don't want to go back to all that. That memory just slipped out when I started to allow the

words to come out of me like a fire hydrant open to the street.

Now breathe. What do I want? I would like to be more absorbed in verses, like in a collection such as that, “A Necklace of Vaiṣṇava Verses.” I would like to savor the different *tattvas*. I read the requirements for guru and thought, “I don’t have all those qualifications, but it might be said that I know the conclusion of the *Vedas* since it’s simple to say and understand: ‘Kṛṣṇa’s the Supreme Personality of Godhead.’”

Kṛṣṇa

is the Supreme Truth.

I read the beautifully composed verses
in translation and knew

they were better than any American poet could do.

Sanātana Gosvāmī was so renounced that he did not offer his Deity salt, only love and the work He required. Śrīla Prabhupāda is teaching us to preach and to help misinformed people find God. He wanted us to help him set the record right as to the meaning of *Bhagavad-gītā*. He wanted people to know conclusively that life comes from life, and he wanted us to build Māyāpur, establish Kṛṣṇa conscious communities, protect cows.

There are so many complaints and opinions as to how things should be done abounding these days, and we also have to sit through these discussions without getting bogged down. It seems the whole movement is stuck—leaders and followers, teachers and students—and there really are a lot of problems.

I dropped out of the nitty-gritty problem-solving work to sing my lightweight songs. May they bring levity and a little rest.

3:05 P.M., Hut

Seeing the writing process as a bona fide means of attaining Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It takes patience, dutifulness, perseverance, and often coming before the page without knowing what to say. As in any service, I could choose to stay away entirely; I could answer mail instead. But this is my writing time, and that means it's the time to dig. By not avoiding the work, and by feeling dependent on Kṛṣṇa while I perform the work, I can attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

All right.

But here's the news: my time on *pada-yātrā* is coming to an end. Tomorrow makes the fourteenth day walking and I said two weeks in my original premise.

I went nowhere, but the days were sunny or rainy according to higher decision. I had no real story to tell, to which the PY magazine people can attest. The story was this everyday writing as if I was walking. Each sentence equals a distance.

Now that I have thought of leaving, my mind has already begun to move on. It's time to let the image go. Friends, it has been fun. Keep glorifying Prabhupāda as you are, and stay fixed on him. This is a sublime way to live simply and to concentrate on the holy name away from the comforts that accumulate when you live in a house. It produces a special consciousness. These are only a few of the obvious features that make your *pada-yātrā* wonderful, and I salute you for them.

I spent about ten minutes reading some of the beautiful verses Lord Caitanya spoke to Sanātana Gosvāmī. He said *bhakti-yoga* is the best thing and it

gives the results of all other activities. Let the demigods' followers live in the illusion that they are on a supreme path. Worship of Lord Viṣṇu is actually supreme (*Padma Purāṇa*). Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's service, and Kṛṣṇa's devotees bring great wealth and happiness. Don't hanker for material things. Live for the eternal.

Thus the Lord poured sheer nectar into Sanātana's ears.

I was reading it and thinking of that young woman devotee who said she found the teachings to Sanātana hard to get through and preferred the pastimes. I know some sections are like that, such as how the different Viṣṇu forms hold the different symbols, but something like this?

Everything, even material activities, leads to Kṛṣṇa. All aspects of the *Vedas* directly or indirectly lead to Him. Seek Him out. Use your entire life to search for Him. Hare Kṛṣṇa.



Okay, good-bye. Although I'm leaving, I know the *pada-yātrā* will continue. You know, the official ISKCON *pada-yātrā* has been going on for about ten years. A few devotees have stayed the entire time, but most of them come and go. My leaving won't have any effect and I may join it again sometime.

I might even join a physically real *pada-yātrā* somewhere and keep a regular diary, not just an imaginary one. So what I have begun doesn't have to stop just by my leaving. I'm sure the friendly souls who stay on the walk would welcome me back just as they have welcomed others back. This *pada-yātrā* will continue in spirit, if not in imagery, anyway, because I still face that desert and I still mean to cross it. *Pada-yātrā* is about walking back to Godhead.

What's that? You'd prefer to use your fastest car for that journey?

This walking may be safer, and it's definitely more humble. In that sense, it's also the quickest.

As I write, a bird (a gull? A crow? It's too small to see. Maybe it's a hawk gliding overhead) is silhouetted against the clouds. The clouds are settled on the hills and a very small blue shines through.

