

Stowies



Satsvarupa dāsa Goswami

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Stowie 1

There are many stories frightening and fatal relating to stowaways, but I will tell you the one that scared me most, because it involved personal friends, a married couple. The husband is a respectable gentleman, but his beautiful and delicate wife lacked proper immigration papers, so he placed her in the trunk of their car and attempted to cross the border between Canada and the U.S. This was in the days before 9/11/2001, and the borders were friendlier. The couple was successful, and when they reached an obscure point in the United States the husband let his wife out of the trunk and they continued on their way. He told me they had both been scared stiff the whole time they were crossing and that he would never do it again!

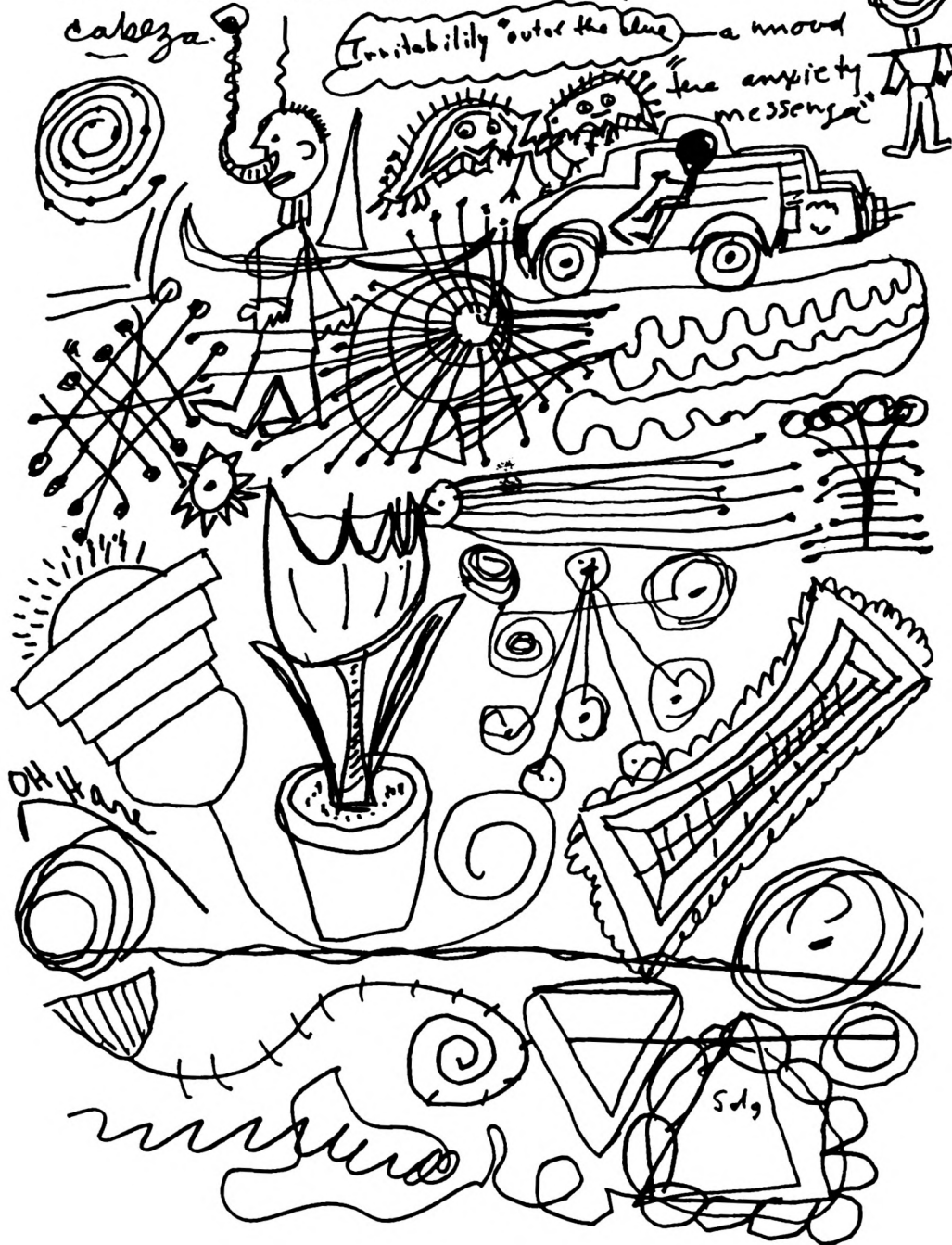
To be honest, their story shocked me. I still can't imagine how they could have taken such a risk. (I have been turned back up to twice in one day upon trying to enter Canada, although I had been invited to lecture there by a college professor.)

I know this is a mild story compared to the many out there. Many people who stowaway meet nasty ends—they suffocate or drown at sea. Anyway, I want to now mount the pulpit and give a small sermon: you cannot get to the spiritual abode with ballast or improper papers. Prabhupāda used to say you could not go “if you lacked the proper visa.”

Of course, he also said that most people don't even *want* to go to the spiritual world. Only a small percentage of the population thinks it valuable. If you are among them, and especially if the hankering to go overcomes you at the moment of your death, then you should know what it takes. There are no successful stowaways. You can't cheat your way there, can't carry a false passport or even a false motive. The voyage is fueled and the goal achieved only on the strength of your *laulyam*.

Now I will sing a song, which may or may not be on the theme of this “stowie.”

Well, baby, let me off the hook. There's a
certain honor and too much pain in the
cabeza.



Ascension

Christ ascended on
Easter Sunday. The rock
had been moved
by the time they came.

"The man you are seeking
is not here."

Marys came there but
were not afraid.

A Pharisee came and said
bitterly, "Now it begins." He meant
the Christian religion.

Christians also ascend but
come down too.

And jazzists. Up, up, ascend
as Coltrane recorded,
but what did he mean? In a gas
balloon? A 747? But those jazzists
also come down.

Ascend in spirit and
never come down.
No more comedowns.

Kṛṣṇa, take me there a stowaway
because it seems
I won't deserve

but my poems fly up on
Wicklow winds, my totems

blown, other things reduced
but me going to Hare Kṛṣṇa
one day to the spirit-spirit-spirit

place if only I can
believe it. O dear
Lord, please.
They say, "I want to
see and hear and touch you,"
before they'll believe
and prepare for ascension.

Carolyn Myss says it's beyond
the senses—that sure presence.

But no, I can't stow away
but by His mercy He
can take me in His pocket
a corner of
His heart.

Dearest, dearest,
if you know a friend here he
or she can take you
and help you much
but
not through lust.
Get it?

Stowie 2

I wouldn't want to stow away with mice, but there is a story about how St. Francis of Assisi, neglected and ill, lay in a wheelbarrow while live mice ran over him. He didn't mind much. He asked his brothers, "Do you know what perfect joy is?" They guessed again and again, but couldn't get it. Finally he told them that perfect joy was to be on the road at night in the freezing cold and to knock on a monastery door and be turned away. Further, when you knock and knock and insist you are a brother monk, a big monk comes out with a club and beats you to within an inch of your life and leaves you for dead. "That is perfect joy," St. Francis said. He was quite a character. St. Francis' life makes a wonderful story, not like the poor Catholic priests who are being exposed as pedophiles all over the United States. Those priests are truly stowies—hiding as saints when they are actually criminal perverts. But they are providing a field day for the media. The Big Church is taking little satisfactory action. Perhaps it will be shaken to its roots, just as an earthquake physically shook the basilica at Assisi a few years ago.

ISKCON may be headed for the same. Our beloved Deities will have to be shifted to private homes if we have to sell our buildings.

They tell me not to worry, my wobbling will stop. They also tell me to allow myself to have friends.

Then shall we sing?

Contemplation

A song about scandals and worries, but
I'll die just like TKG, probably
before I'm all played out—or the scandals—
and then I'll come back.

Unless I'm liberated. But
gee, who wants it?
Right now I have a house full of
Italian biscotti—arrived in the mail

and it's easy to pretend
that everything makes me happier
than it actually does. Or it *does*
make me happy—some triviality.

I'd like to go deep,
dark
tearful

enter a mystery with God.
But I'm lightheaded and playful
and like to seek words
and melodies.

I can take only a little
darkness
at a time
even if it's found
in the holy *dhāma*.

So I said I'd give an Easter lecture
but not on Christ.

No, on ascension, on
rising up to above the stratosphere,
like Nārada to Brahmaloka
or like in *Brhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta*.

Faith
faith
humility
humility. The black folks
won the Oscars
and the white folks
swallowed it
while I stumbled down
an Irish hill

to shake a hand and
find room for contemplation
meditation, saviors.
“If I were your spiritual director . . . ”
“If I were your Buddha . . . ”
“If I were your Christ . . . ”

“I’d tell you to shut
up and ascend to heaven,”
said one poet.

I’d tell them stuff
my mentor told me
but I’m not sure
my heart is in it.

Stowie 3

My Webster's doesn't imply that stowaway is illegal. Stowage is something stowed; a stowaway is "a person who is stowed." Like my cat, Haribol, when he leaps into his favorite cardboard box and settles down. The Collins' Concise Dictionary contains a British slang word: "Stow your noise!" It also gives the full sting to the word "stowaway" (I'm surprised the American Webster's doesn't): "Stowaway: a person who hides aboard a vehicle, ship, or aircraft in order to gain free passage. To travel in such a way."

There are plenty of stowaways in this world. Insects, snakes, and germs hitch rides on our bodies and eat from our vitals. I once pulled a long worm out of my body while I was passing stool. It was frightful, and at first I was so squeamish that I could hardly keep tugging, but I couldn't imagine leaving it there either. Guess what country that happened in? India. I called the doctor, but he didn't think it was a big deal.

Some people make it as stowaways and others die. Many people stowaway so they can have free passage. Some people pay the fare, but stow illegal drugs in their bodies. They swallow rubber balloons full of heroin or cocaine. They get a small fee and take all the danger—if the balloon breaks, they're finished—while the drug lord makes billions.

All right, what has this got to do with Vedic culture? Let's preach. Can we say that Prabhupāda stowed away the Vedic culture and brought it to us in the West? Few Americans liked it. For that matter, few Indian caste *brāhmaṇas* liked it either. Even most of his Godbrothers didn't like it. But he stowed away the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, carrying it to New York, then later to Moscow, this elderly, harmless-looking, poverty-stricken *sādhū*. What they didn't know was that as he stowed the *Bhāgavatam*, so he stowed us within the culture of *bhakti*—all these millions of born and unborn *jīvas*, all claimed for Lord Caitanya's mission. He unleashed us gradually and we spread as quickly as bioterrorism. Then the walls came tumbling down.

Sweet Prabhupāda, now you have left us and it seems that every week your disciples are leaving too. Are you stowing them all away to Vaiṣṇava? Please don't forget us.



Suffering Stowaways

A soprano saxophone is
not my favorite horn and
I prefer boy treble singers over
female sopranos but if you

feel these others should be
stowed, then by all means
do so because I know so little
only what I like.
There's a huge wooden carton
nail it—no bombs please!
One jokes about them.

But what about the stowaways?
Do they have prayer books and
enough to eat?

I want this to be a pleasant
trip and not an Auschwitz ride
where people feel
anxiety at every moment.

They have paid their way
in other ways—purchased tickets
by Prabhupāda's mercy

so no one will get kicked off
although some will feel sick

and realize that
they didn't really want to go or
they'll hijack the bus—kick our

luggage off the roof and leave us standing
outside Krishna-Balaram Mandir.

Jonah hid in the belly of a whale
perhaps made himself a pearl
in an oyster or cut his ounce of flesh.

From birth to birth we're stowed
and now it's Easter.
None of us deserves to go further
but God almighty takes us anyway.

Kṛṣṇa, my ebony king.
Radhā, my golden goddess.

The light is fading over
the rivers in India and that's when
they throw you in, burnt,
remembering what we all deserve
our karma—we've been caught
trying to catch a free ride
by tying ourselves under
a car or riding the roof
of the train.

We'll be dispatched to hell
unless we know a savior
to whom we can call out—
one who will come
because we have done a good deed.

Stowie 4

You have to write and fast sometimes. Couldn't reach the doctor to tell him that I'm changing medications. Got it through the Rx of a friendly doctor of our faith, our ISKCON faith, from Tennessee. He's authorized. All these docs with their rules and telling you what you can and cannot take together.

Of course, they're right. Who wants to die? No, let me write and write for Prabhupāda. The medication and other inspiring factors are giving me stowies, so I don't want to stop just because I'm sixty-two years old and wobbly in the legs. O Ryokan, O Morrie, oh, sorry I couldn't reach Tim

to tell him the straight news

of my new med.

Even if he says no, I'll

say yes.

Prabhupāda wasn't big on meds or stowaways either (except Vedic ones). Now we're talking about new attitudes and adjustments toward him. But what does it all mean? How could TKG die? Someone said he was in exile, but he came back and immersed himself in *kīrtana* night after night during what we now know were his last days.

I'm still in exile. I'm searching for my spiritual master and not a fantasy of him. *What do I mean?* I pray to know him truly.

I found him in my own book, *Prabhupāda Meditations*, and if I mount the *vyāsāsana* he's there, but sometimes when I think on my own, I find something different.

Making lunch—someone who loves me—but I didn't love the lunch. I'm a dried up bellyaching mensch who goes through motions.



Pursuance

Remember you do
follow the ways that
John taught when

he was the band leader
pursuance—they were
after God.

They wanted to find
Him anywhere. I
was searching for Him

there in that room I cried out God
the Ax with marijuana
I found You, hoping marijuana
would help, but overflowed the bathtub twice.
Subletter kicked me out.
His moustache—tough Jew and

me a skinny Gentile
eating milk and chocolate
donuts every night
trying to write higher and
higher and who
could know what
I was after?

John showed me God
as young kids were shown Hare Kṛṣṇa
by George Harrison.
It's not too late
Pick up the phone
the mantra in

pursuance. Be a man after God.
You'll find Him. He's *in* you,
mystics say. I find him here
in a casual poem. Pursuance and
my best friend.
Look for Him. You'll never find Him
if you don't know
the angel of mercy.

If one goes, won't I?
Are we all going soon after
like sheep?

Where I'm becoming doubtful,
will I reach Him?

Stowie 5

Imagine a fool who wouldn't observe Gaura-Pūrṇimā, who wouldn't even know who Caitanya Mahāprabhu was or who would think of Him as just another *sādhū* from India. There are billions of such fools, and Lord Caitanya (like Christ) asked His followers to spread the word who He actually was.

Lord Caitanya's main teachings are contained in His eight *Śikṣāṣṭakam* verses. His primary instruction is that one should chant the holy name of God.

But this is supposed to be a story, not a religious essay, so instead of preaching I'll tell you a few *saṅkīrtana* stories.

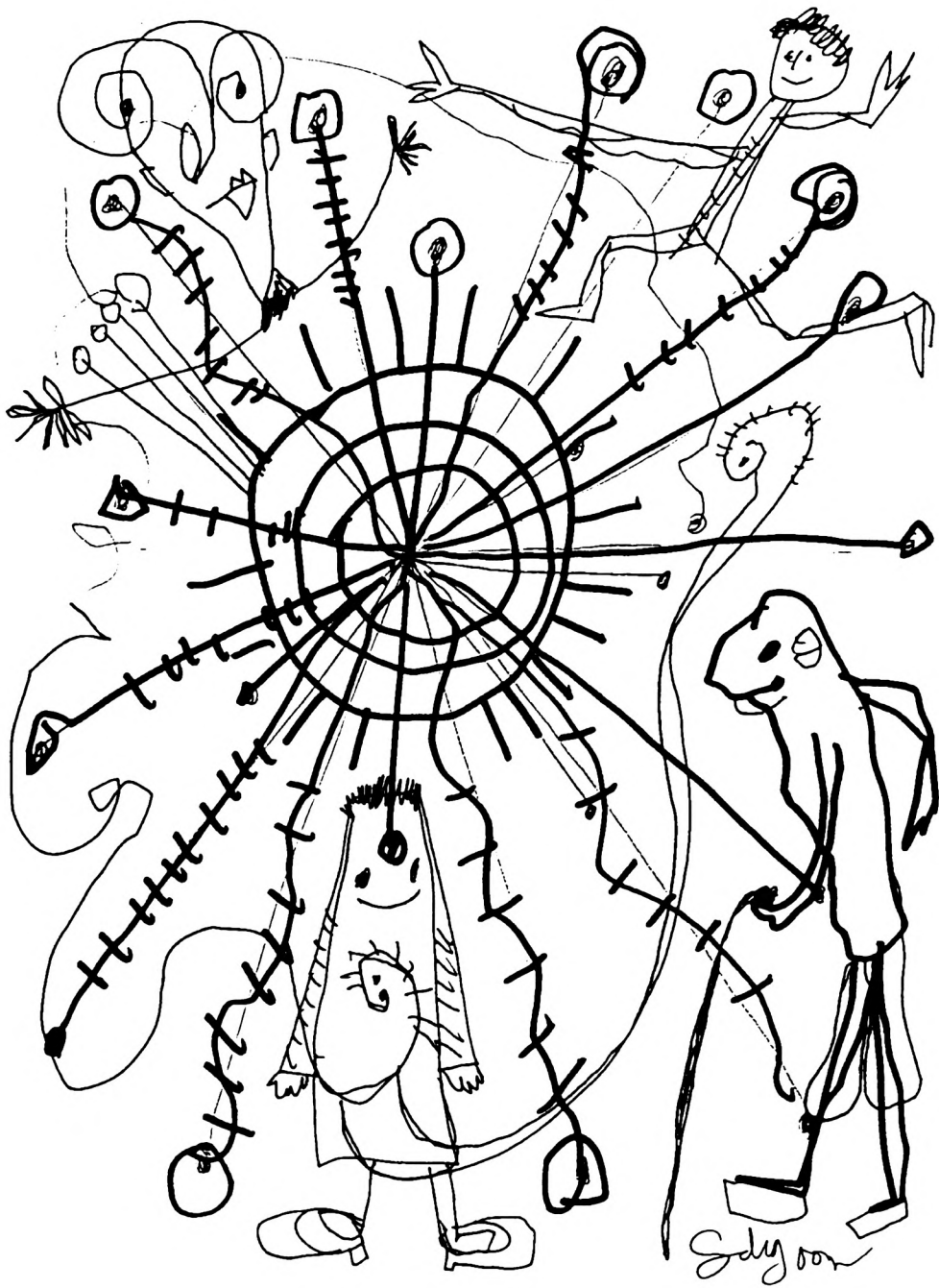
Once a devotee named Vijaya dāsa was appointed book distribution minister for ISKCON. This was in 2002. He was chosen because he had done excellent book distribution for years, even though other distributors came and went.

Never mind about Vijaya dāsa. Here's a different story. One day, a small devotee was singing on *harināma* on the Boston Common when a big man came up and punched him in the solar plexus. The punch completely took the wind out of the small devotee, but when his breath returned he said, "Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa." The other devotees grabbed the offender, punched him, and had him arrested. In court his defense lawyers argued that the small chanter had been making inflammatory speeches. The judge looked over at Bharadvāja and said, "I don't think this man could make inflammatory speeches. I sentence you to thirty days in jail."

Sometimes we lose and sometimes we win. How will we each observe today? There will be thousands of pilgrims in Māyāpur, and strings of lights, wonderful *mūrtis*, ceilings to observe, and of course, plenty of *prasādam*. There will be faith in Govinda! Here we have only a thatched cottage, and some devotees (not me) will go to the schoolhouse at 7 P.M. to watch the 1950s film, *Nimāi of Nadiya*. But I have small brass Gaura-Nitāi Deities and will attempt to decorate Them with wildflowers and a backdrop.

People will be sad this year, because Gaura-Pūrṇimā is falling only a few days after TKG has passed away.

Today I also have to write a letter to a girl who is always thinking of God as the order-supplier. I want to tell her to think differently and to accept whatever He gives and serve Him, even though I can't do it myself.



India

I once heard an “India” song
but now know it’s
not much like the real place—

more like Africa and NYC and
a Philadelphia nightclub
came out of Elvin’s drums
but I liked it. A devotee wrote
to name his favorite drummers
but left out Elvin Jones, Arthur Taylor,
and a whole bunch of others.

This devotee lives in Sweden and plays jazz and
asks me how to use it
in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I put him in touch with Sam Walker (Sankirtana dāsa)
of Dallas, who has an M.A. in jazz
from the University of Texas,
gives jazz lessons,
plays in a nightclub,
makes CDs,
and always tries to think
of Kṛṣṇa when he’s
composing, hiding
songs for Him
within the riffs.

But for Gaurāṅga’s day we
fast from all that and
read how He was born
transferred from the mind of

Vasudeva to the mind of Devakī—

Oh, no, that was Kṛṣṇa. Gaurāṅga
was similarly transferred from Jagannātha Miśra's
mind to Śacīdevī.

He is the devotional form of God:
God as His own devotee.

Most merciful, tell us of His pranks
at the Ganges, His ballistics at home, His
beautiful, brilliant scholarship.

It's 1976 and I'm on the roof of the first Māyāpur building,
thrilled by the happiness of it all.
It seemed our bliss would never subside.

Stowie 6

A Chinese man stowed away. One of the most famous stowaways in my recall is Scrooge McDuck. All he had to eat on his long Caribbean voyage were bananas. That's because he was hiding in the banana hold. When he returned home, his nephews were so happy to see him that as a treat, they baked him a banana cake. You can imagine how he felt about that!

When you go through the dark night of the soul, you have to accept what the Lord gives you. You say, "All right, I'll endure whatever you supply, because I know it's good for me."

Kṛṣṇa replies, "When you surrender yourself to Me completely, you'll get My full blessings." That may be what Christ meant at Gethsemane when he said, "Your will, not mine."

A dog insisted on going on *parikrama* with the Vaiṣṇavas from Navadvīpa to Puri to see Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He was not a stowaway, because Śivānanda Sena gave him status as a paying companion.

Oh, please, O reasonable

God, You

know best.

I thought of a good, non-bargaining prayer last night, but by now I've forgotten it. Maybe it said, "I know You are reasonable, all-powerful, and all-merciful, so please do with me as You like." It was a prayer of trust.

Think of the lice (cooties) sitting on your body, along for the trip without your permission. Worms and germs—all stowaways. Words our English teachers taught us and all the piling up of bodies that makes up history. I pray to God not to be a cynic. *There's a reason for everything.*



What Do You Do?

Don't be afraid of mice, lice,
those dogs that maul to death
(when I saw a guy at night
accompanied by a girl I'd
be less afraid).

Fire trucks. Car crashes.
Of four animal propensities, fear
is the most prominent.

Night: mom and dad come home late.
I live in a large, elegant house so
turned on all the lights.

Dad was tired from the long
drive in their rich car so I
didn't put on my NYFD cap.
Saved it
for later.

And no use bringing up the Swami.
I'd have just been
kicked out.

Tomorrow I wanted to
tell them my plan: just
live at home in Great Kills
get a local low-paying job
and keep the dream

to become a writer.
But then the dream turned sad:

*I no longer had faith
that I was a great writer.*

What could I do?
Start attending the Catholic Church?
Lead a life of quiet desperation?
Mow lawns?
Become my parents'
retarded child?

Back to Manhattan? Beg my parents
to arrange me a marriage, because
that's what parents did
in the olden days?

I never found my Lord Kṛṣṇa
by those routes, but must
find Him now
and grip Him
as TKG did
while facing
the final verdict
and then let go.

Stowie 7

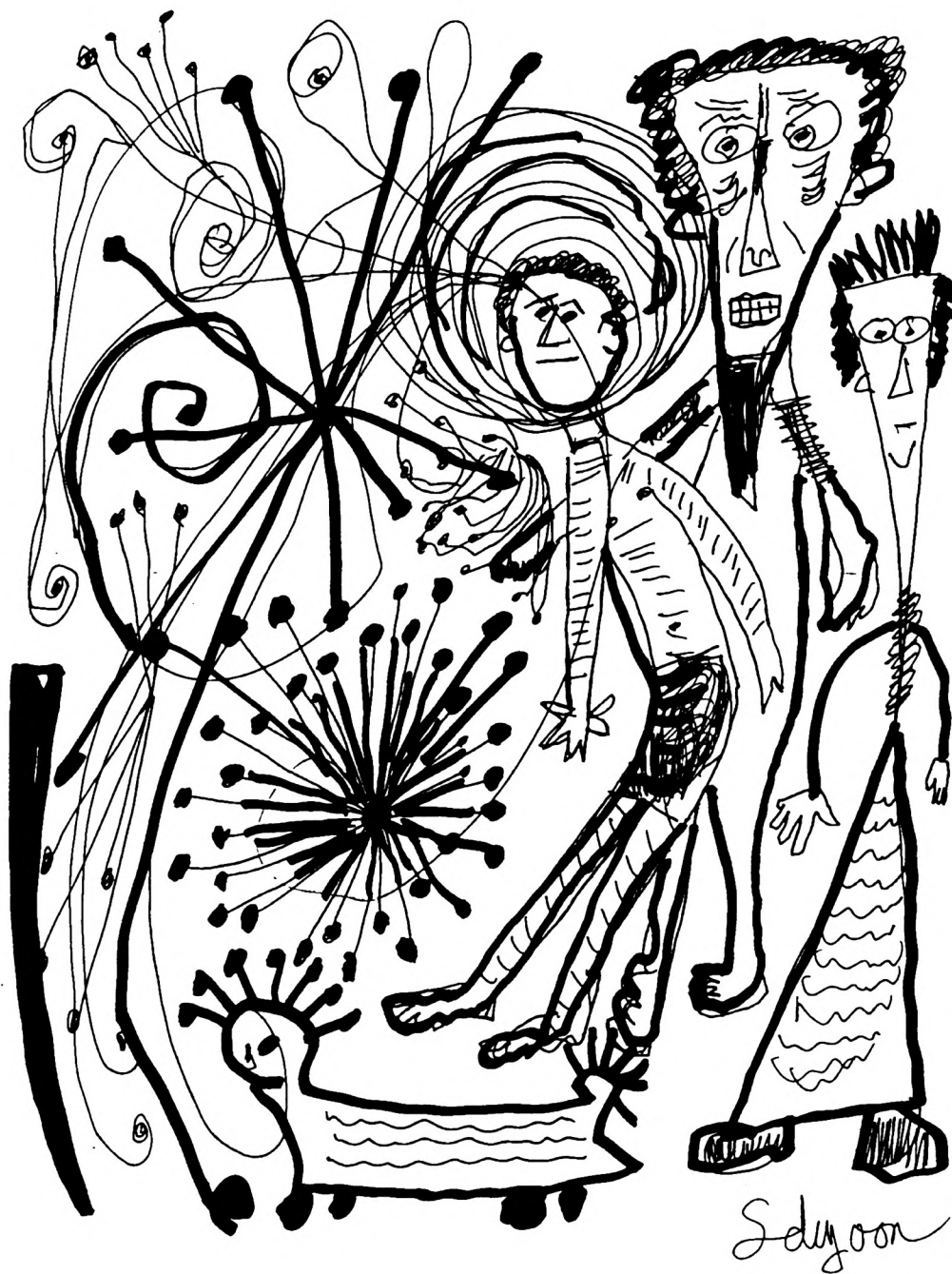
On the 1914 Antarctica expedition, imperial expedition leader Sir Ernest Shackleton hired twenty-two men. Young Welshman Perce Blackborow stowed away on his ship. Friends helped him hide in a locker. This was dangerous for the crew because food was carefully rationed, and even one more man put a strain on supplies. Shackleton resented Blackborow when he was discovered and gave him the lowest tasks, but Blackborow was so willing to work at *any* job Shackleton assigned that Shackleton eventually came to appreciate him and appointed him steward. In an operation on Elephant Island, Blackborow had all the toes on his left foot removed because they were so severely frostbitten and were becoming gangrenous.

It could happen to anyone—losing your toes, I mean. One devotee I know lost his toes to a lawnmower. Another lost his fingers. What do you do when God does that to you? Do you take it that “He” did it? Is He to blame? Is it karma?

People get blown up, shot, bludgeoned, and at times like that when they depend on God and seek His blessing, they prove their saintliness.

I’m cozy here, although it’s true, I’m in a moving vehicle and the driver could suddenly fall asleep. Or I could be hit by lightning, Indra’s electric thunderbolt, and I would then have to be judged a stowaway, someone who posed as a devotee but never really had pure motives.

I was someone who always wanted to be praised. Like a fish I picked at the bait, and now I’ll suffer for a protracted time for my inattention.



Ya 'll Feel It?

Forget these stowaways.
You are the one I love, Kṛṣṇa.

“Ya’ll feel it?”
Bad enough it was when
those times come but
daffodils and smile.

I mean to ask when
you smile “cheese”
is that a bona fide
smile?

Or does it have to come
From the Heart?

Glad to get to bed
so I can fart
to my heart’s content.

Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, the
gravel they
messed it up
so many times I
could hardly believe it.
But still.

Kṛṣṇa, I’m not against
the institution but
for the individual, who
needs a break.

Let that friend wear his
institutional hat—rise
to guru, chairman
and remain liberal
while God saves all we
individuals.

Stowie 8

Threw two paperclips at the trash basket and missed both times. Fired two bullets and missed. Two deer escaped. You wanted to stow yourself in my heart? But I don't want even paid customers.

I have to broaden my heart? I know. It's supposed to be the seat of affection.

But I think selfishly how to hide in a corner of God's heart. *He* knows all. You can't hide from Him. He might just wink and let me climb into some tiny crevice or other. He has room for all of us.

I read that the *īśvaras* can do no wrong, even if they appear to act abominably. That's not true of us earthly religionists. We have to be very careful. Any spot on our white cloth will be seen by everyone and sent out all over the Internet.

Did you hear about the virus named "Hare Kṛṣṇa"? Really. A warning was sent out that this virus could foul commercial and military computers around the world. We tiny Hare Kṛṣṇa cultists were petrified. This was terrible PR.

But nothing came of it after all. Jayādvaita Swami wrote in *Back to Godhead*, "So what if it *did* happen? Everyone could have been chanting, 'Damn that Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare!'"

Mucus solidifies in your nostril and stows away. Once after chanting for thirty minutes to a hostile crowd at the Boston Common, we took a break. I picked at my nose, and immediately a rowdy yelled, "Pick me a winner!"

Yeah, get a haircut, get a job, you demons—you are the ones who are not doing anything in this world—not doing anything good for anyone.

But we love you, or if we don't, we do our duty by you anyway, because Śrīla Prabhupāda told us to on Lord Caitanya's order.



Everyone Knows That

We have to know songs by heart.
What good will it do to
read the lyric off sheets?
I know plenty of stuff, like
Mother Goose and multiplication
tables, algebra (harder) and
geometry (I couldn't master it).

Could you? Were you good
at eating Chinese food?
Could you figure out
how much of a tip to leave the waiter?
Could you drive a truck? Parallel
park? Have sex? "Everyone
knows how to do *that*," Śrīla Prabhupāda
said, but I'm not always sure
that's true.

One thing we *must* know
is devotion to the divine
and guidance gives us that knowledge
if we will listen.
Kṛṣṇa, You are in our lives our
smallest acts and all we need to do
is learn to listen to
You.

Just look at all that wisdom
flowing out of me you'd
think I was an African seer
or from Hrishikesh.
Actually I don't know anything

except that I want to be happy
and free. I once wanted a woman
and thought little of God
the grand figure I saw
sixty feet above me
painted in stained glass.

I spit out my well-chewed bubble gum
and admitted I was too tired to
consider Him. All I could handle
were the Brooklyn Dodgers and mom and
dad and my dog Mickey
and my diddle and whether
I would ever grow up.

Stowie 9

Don't expect this Sheaffer pen to work. It can't even write *stowaway* until you have violently shaken it at least ten times. By then, you're angry enough to have forgotten your original, gentle point of view.

But young Kṛṣṇa, that beautiful *kiśora*, you don't forget. He was once a stowaway: He climbed into a box and allowed Abhimanyu to transport Him to His Rādhā's room. It's a long story and I can't remember all the details, but I do remember that Jaṭilā didn't want that black boy coming anywhere near her daughter-in-law. But when that box arrived, supposedly filled with jewels from Mā Yaśodā, Jaṭilā accepted it, gloating over the fact that her daughter-in-law had brought such good fortune into the family. How could she know that at the last minute Kṛṣṇa had emptied the box and then jumped in Himself, the ultimate stowaway? When the box was opened in Rādhā's private chambers, out jumped Kṛṣṇa to Rādhā's great delight. That's the best stowaway story in this book.

In another story, Rādhārāṇī was absorbed in *māna* against Kṛṣṇa and wouldn't even look at Him. At that moment, a cobra, who had hidden itself in a cave, slithered before Her. She fled to Her beloved's arms, crying, "Kṛṣṇa! Help me!"

Remember the Trojan horse? The demons in Kṛṣṇa's *līlās* appeared as Pūtanā, calves, and cowherd friends, but all were found out and dispatched to the liberated state.

Stowing away can be fun, but don't expect to jump into a box and appear before Rādhārāṇī to Her delight. You will be chastised.



More Stowaways

They go like someone
in love stowing so they can
be with their lovers
taking life in hand and
money—their lives—at stake.

One man traveled (an
Indian) to visit his
mistress, but
he was a German spy.
The English captured him easily
because his “beloved”
was part of the plot.

When he realized,
he swallowed a suicide pill.

These people act so recklessly
stowing in rockets or pockets
so they can travel without cost.

We stow ourselves differently—
becoming *sannyāsīs* or gurus,
chairmen of the GBC
but we’re all caught
in the end, at least
if we’re pretending.

Kṛṣṇa catches us but
like Shackleton, He may
like a fellow and let him serve.

Words and turds, angel
symbols, backyards and lovers
stowing bracelets and Levis
and L. L. Bean jeans,
Wranglers—

stowing eight years worth of
prayer facing the dissension
of living beings.

The Lord, Prabhupada's books
everything including

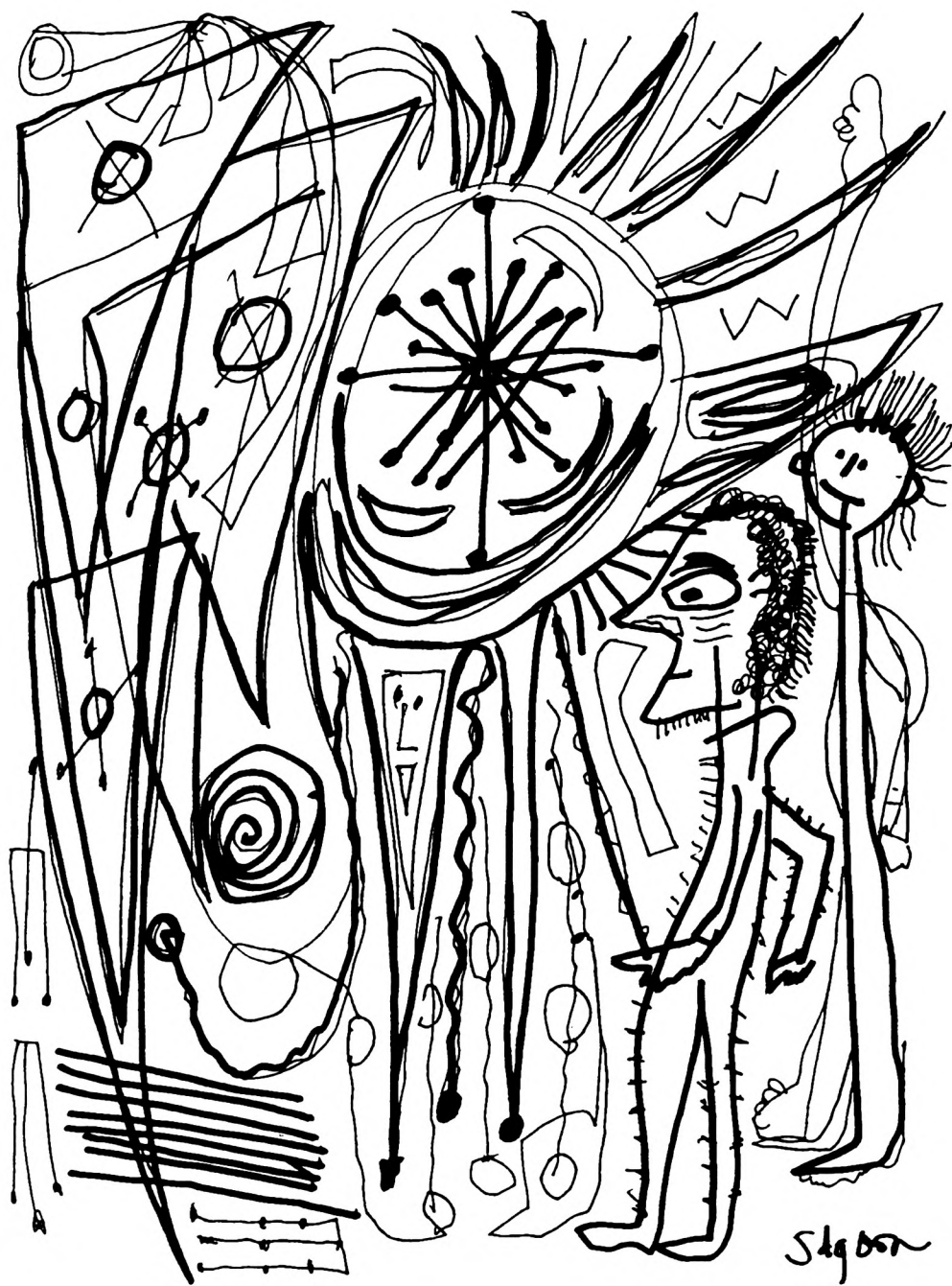
rituals and kickbacks,
hassocks and caves, tombs and
fistfights, "Out,
vile jelly!" and
there goes the eye.

Stowie 10

Is this Stowie 8? I can't keep track of them, there are so many piling into the back of the truck. Put a cat in a bag and call it a pig. When a buyer opens the bag, he cries, "The cat's out of the bag!" So many people have traveled hidden. The Lord's Deity form is often stowed, marched past the stupid border guards who fail to recognize Him.

Is stowing away the same as sneaking under fences? I once sneaked into a circus and another time a baseball game, both times under fences—once into a state fair. I sailed on a ship to Timbuktu. We wore our wigs to Trinidad, and we were paying customers, sneaking in as if we were tourists, this *sannyāsī* and his *brahmacārī* assistant. O Kṛṣṇa.

Deep, deep. You need to find yourself alone on a mystical journey. Why were you born? What is your purpose in this incarnation? Don't flow with false motives. Don't become distracted. Did you want a spiritual path so that you could become a guru and be worshiped? Did Lefkowitz catch me on that one? Be a good boy, and the guru will make you the next guru? I am enduring. I am confused. I don't remember what I have so much forgotten—what I really wanted to do. Deep in my heart, did I ever want to purely serve Kṛṣṇa through Prabhupāda? I can't recall. I do recall wanting to escape the Lower East Side's madness. I do recall being attracted to the mystical East, whatever it was (I didn't know). Couldn't make it in carnal life. Scared out of it by my mother and St. Augustine.



Don't Be Afraid To Dance

You can always find happiness
in the roll of rhythm.
Don't be afraid to dance in a way
that eases the furrows from your brow.
But travel straight ahead.

We played together in the Strand Theater when
I was ten and watching
movies start on time. Sometimes
I was alone in the audience with
Zachary Scott, cowboy. Watched
him kiss the horse's face. Realized
I didn't like people who liked pizza.
Later learned that God
is the best person.
I know He's almighty.

We're all making adjustments—
Bala too—taking me less as a person
and more as a guru—no, I mean
to say, less as a guru . . .
You see, I'm confused I
walk alone but can't think.
They assure me I can
go to Māyāpur or
Tipperary.

She said when I started free-writing she
had to adjust
lives still on a tightrope.
I love you, she said, but don't know what you are.
I'm just a fire hydrant kid with a soft heart
and not much fight left.

Stowie 11

Happy stowies in an unhappy world. They are trying to get out. “I’ll hang onto your *dhoti* and you’ll bring me to Prabhupāda.” Thanks for that faith.

People doubt whether I’m a “śāstric” guru or merely human. They like me either way, but prefer I be bona fide and take them back to Godhead.

Deeper. O mystical journey. Am I cheating? Is the real me not good enough? No, I have to be divine, pure enough to hear Prabhupāda talking. I have to ride on the wings of Garuḍa and the chariot to Vaiḥaṇṭha, but deserved.

Can’t ride in a pickup truck. I let people pass me on the road. They are Prabhupāda’s disciples, and I really think they deserve a round of applause.

But I’ll have to go deeper into darkness. O dark night of the soul, you force me to endure confusion so I can come to clarity. Let me accept what God wants from me.



After Payday

But I don't know what it is. It's Sunday and
he's waiting for a lawyer—
on a Sunday.

After payday, a Sunday with her
but why not one day with *God*?

Every day! Complaining preacher
says people should pray
either way it's long
or never

but after payday

Kṛṣṇa, I'm with you
while chanting. I'm
full of rounds and rounds.
Am I in hell?
I have to improve!
But I tell myself I need
rest to
wrap my troubles
in a dream.

Stowaday Something (12)

“You are still my favorite author.”

“You are my favorite tenant,” said eight-year-old Louise Campesi on her parents’ behalf. But you are not my favorite bug-eyes. I want plenty of people around, meaning no one in particular. I want beads and jackets and boots to go walking. He returned her wedding ring and called it his karma.

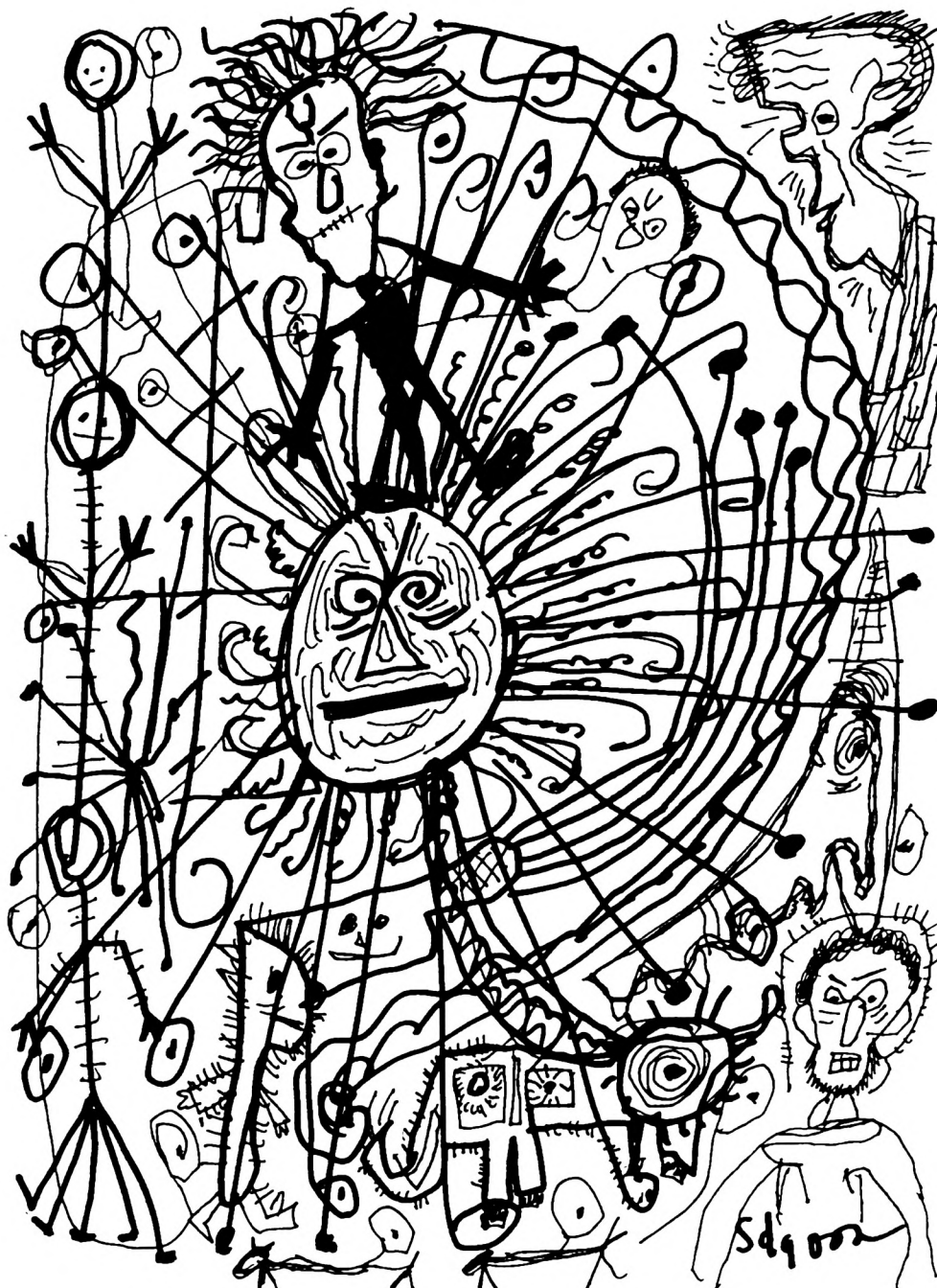
They thought I had stowed cocaine up my anus and made me and Mahā K. strip down on our way into Santo Domingo. I tried to maintain my dignity. I was afraid they would remove our wigs, but the dopes didn’t even suspect them. They gave us a piece of paper with a sort of apology for the ordeal written on it.

Entering Ireland from the ferry from England they searched our van. The most interesting thing they found was my huge supply of E-A-R earplugs. They dissected a few to make sure they were clean. I tried to explain about the noise on the road.

Entering Poland, customs dismantled part of Madhu’s well-constructed van interior. Afterwards, they shook his hand, smiling, and complimented his carpentry.

Once when I was entering the USA from abroad carrying a beautiful new briefcase, the guy at customs took out a knife and slit the interior. “Hey! What are you doing?” I protested. He was indifferent. Handed me a piece of paper and said if I wanted to complain, go to the supervisor’s office. When he saw I was trembling, he said, “Don’t worry, we’re not the KGB.”

Once I had my *sannyāsa danda* well wrapped in plastic to protect it in transit. When I tried to enter Puerto Rico, they insisted I unwrap it. But the tape with which I had sealed it was so tough they couldn’t cut through it even with their knives. When I explained the religious nature of the *danda* they let me go. In Australia, however, they made me unwind all the cloth and poles, the bastards.



Oh, it was great!

Leave me—that's
my topic. Why?
Because I need to be alone.
You and I don't make an
amiable pair. Listen
carefully and

observe nuances and séances the
subtle ways.

I said I would go to Māyāpur.
“Why do you want to go to Māyāpur,”
she asked. “Uh . . .”
I couldn't speak from the gut
so said that I had heard it was good.

No blasphemy in me though,
because if I go to Vṛndāvana
I'll see the spiritual sense
of the *dhāma*.

Something *good* will happen
despite the black hogs and stench
and the bluff of “Oh, it was great!”

Whatever happens, I'll
be claustrophobic. Someone told me
her husband wants to stay there all year.
I guess some people take it better
than others.

Stowie 13

Now, some stowaways were actually criminal. A man stuffed heroin in his suitcase, left it in his checked luggage, and as soon as he came to claim it, they handcuffed him. While in jail he said he had a vision of Lord Caitanya. Another man carried heroin in a shaving container. There was fifteen seconds of cream before the heroin appeared, but the men at customs were determined to find out what was in that can and he was caught. Yes, some stowies are racketeers.



Bad Navy Dream

Remember? Your
second take you
forgot you're human
and should shut your mouth I think
you should not stow away
on a Navy ship and
I thank you for that sense.

Stowie 14

Stowies left, stowies right. Why don't you stop reading those newspapers and emoting with the dolls of the universe? The elegant six-foot-two center of the UConn basketball team vaulted her team to the national championship and their thirty-ninth win in a row. That's light stuff. Arafat boxed in, living in a few rooms, his death desired by many. The United States, Israel's best ally, makes those people hate him.

Who are terrorists? My terrorists are your freedom fighters. They stow bombs around their waists, enter bus stations or cafés, and blow themselves up along with their nineteen enemies. Revenge or retaliation—who can say for sure?

If I didn't read the newspapers, would this stuff stop happening? Would I be better off? Thoughts are our own "universe," and we carry that world with us as we jam into subway cars and meditate on the way to work. One monk I know took a lowly job. Imagine that God wants us to work humbly. It's our assignment. Listen to His voice within. He's letting you deal with your difficult marriage. Be happy with whomever you meet.

Rats stow away on ships. There was a *Punch* cartoon that showed the pompous and blushing admiral boarding a ship where all the rats were running down the rope connecting the ship to the shore. They knew he was a loser. Even the rats didn't want to stow away with him.

Story of a man who out of desperation stowed away on the S.S. Titanic just before it sailed. He did not survive.



My Friend

You are my friend. In our cell
we sing songs to keep from going
crazy. Black and white
doesn't matter after a few
years.

I got to know you
Irishman, and you
love me, Jamaican.

The man fought to get up
to his son. I told him,
"You'd better leave me alone."

Don't just stand there! Do something practical!
He threw water
on the floor and backed
out of the room.

These are Kṛṣṇa vanities
and I remember all of them because
I was a Kṛṣṇa conscious young man
headed for the top.

You had to be puffed up and
motivated to serve. Had to say,
"Don't be stupid. Warm
up my milk!" Or,
"These pancakes stink.
Make them over."
So don't desert me now.
She asked me to wear my seatbelt,

remembering how the car rolled over
and over and never again will we see him.
He was buried within hours
under too many flowers
our Tamāl—our
fiery, loving enigma.

Stowie 15—Stowate

Stowaways can become respectable citizens. One John C. Schaff, born in 1857 in Hendersdorf, Germany, stowed away while still a youth. He boarded a ship headed for Pensacola, Florida. His family members never followed him, but he made it on his own. He joined the U.S. Army in 1880, and eventually raised seven children by one wife. He died in 1929 in South Dakota. That's a pretty full life, roaming around the country, being blessed with seven children and serving in the good ol' U.S. Army. Not all stowaways are bad. They just move by unusual ways when they have no money and are seeking new opportunities.



Where Are You Hiding, Lord?

Stow away like a bear in a tree
and you'll never be spotted you'll
eat all the honey
and get so fat you'll
split the tree.
I knew a stowaway who came to
America to join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement
and one from a Soviet Union country.

I won't tell you the details because it's
a secret, but they were definitely seeking
their freedom to help create
a wave. It's easy. You pay someone a
small sum and he puts you in a
bag of rice. But the stakes are high.

The human body can only take
so much. Reach out to Kṛṣṇa with right hand
and left in prayer: "Lord, please
make me Your devotee. It doesn't
matter where I go. I don't
need the advantage of escaping one
country for another."
I just need Your assurance Your
mercy. Stow me within Yourself and
let me see You in every blade of grass.

Kṛṣṇa, I don't know how
to do much at all.
Where are You hiding?

Stowie 16—Britain

The British press is particularly hard on “bogus asylum seekers,” but when they discovered that fifty-eight clandestine migrants from China had been asphyxiated in a sealed container bound for Dover from Belgium, the press calmed down. They resorted to honest reporting as to why so many young people would leave their countries for the West at such a risk. They explored the issue sympathetically. Even weeks later, when twenty-five persons were caught stowing away on a freight train leaving Britain for Milan, their headlines, “Migrants Make Tracks,” were subdued.

But before the catastrophe with the Chinese, the tabloids and other newspapers were covering the story with inflammatory language. They were especially scathing about Romanian gypsies: “Kent and West London have become transit camps for the world’s flotsam and jetsam. . . . Our land is being swamped by a flood of fiddlers,” screamed a *Times* editorial on March 9. During the same week, the paper gave us, “Gypsy sponges are building themselves PALACES with the vast fortune they are milking from the soft-touch Brits.”

This article, which I’m taking from a pre-April 2002 Internet source, was written by Jennifer Monahan, a freelance journalist from London. Her final point is that it appears that the news media is determining the attitudes of what kind of welcome or unwelcome refugees can expect when coming to England. She meant what they could expect in terms of housing, health services, and other humanitarian aid.



Life Is Suffering

Why are you mixing in this
welfare crap? Just tell us
of Gopala even if
people are being mistreated
and are singing
the blues.

Well, I'm on a health regimen
that requires that I do what I want
whatever that is
and I think of cops crashing
shooting and knives
and me resting with no cat
a crick in the back of my neck
and an on-the-way headache.

Do whatever pleases?
I am pleased to think this story.

But I don't answer my mail.
Except the ones from
Satya, Shasta, Satya,
Śantaya,
Śuka,
Sheila,
Sunyas—all too dear to me
to ignore.

I know they have their
particular troubles and
I have mine. Mine are
almost the same—my
advice too.

Stowie 17—Caitanya Stowie

Lord Caitanya was conducting *sankīrtana* in the house of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura when He suddenly announced that He no longer felt ecstasy. Something was wrong. He claimed that a nondevotee must be present. The *bhaktas* searched the room and finally found Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura's mother-in-law hiding in a basket. She was expelled, and the happy mood returned. Don't ask me about that one. A death in the family also caused Lord Caitanya to notice the change in mood. But sometimes He went on no matter what, regardless of whether He had eaten or slept.

Can a non-Govardhana *śilā* stow away on that hill and be taken by someone and worshiped? Will that stone carry the same potency? Could God build a rock so heavy He couldn't lift it? Could Jagāi and Mādhāi be reformed? What about those imposter Yadu boys who brazenly dressed as women and went to Nārada and the other sages and asked, "Will my pregnancy result in a boy or a girl?" Oh, they got their due!

Don't mess around with the Lord.

Unless you're His unalloyed lover.

Cowherd boys: "Kṛṣṇa, open Your mouth. We want to give You a nice sweet." Then they placed a flower in His mouth instead.

Kṛṣṇa dressed as a barber's daughter and served Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to Her amazed ecstasy. All kinds of cheating and posing and stowing away in the realm of divine love.

But not an inch is allowed where Yama's constables watch over.



The Need to be with You

Don't be left behind
I want Kṛṣṇa. He'll take
me. But not if I'm not a real
refugee.

A refugee flees war
but a stowaway seeks only
a free ride.

I want that refugee passion, O Lord,
the need
to be with You.

I pray to be a leader who takes
many with me
unselfish like Prahlāda. I am not a *mauna*
vrati in the Himalayas. I must
bring people with me—bring them
or don't go myself.
We Hare Kṛṣṇa people
have been told to give gallons of blood
and not to simply help ourselves
find the higher taste

Save yourself and
save others
clear and pure
no petty cowards.

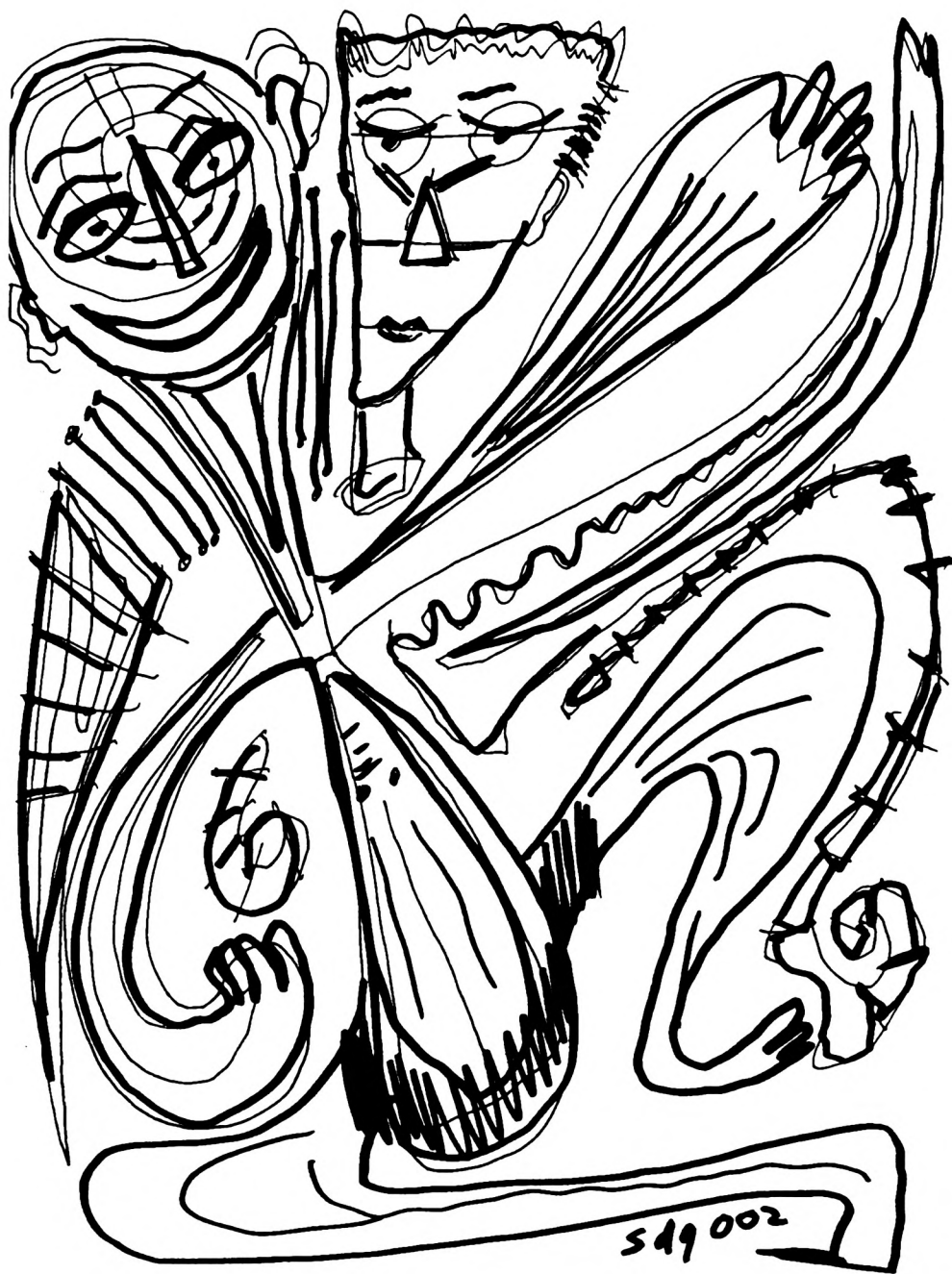
Someone said, "All you know
is your books and
papers, writing, not people-
feeling."

Stowie 18

What of Kṛṣṇa Himself? Perhaps the greatest stowaway was baby Kṛṣṇa. He asked (or allowed) His father Vasudeva to carry Him away from Kāṁsa's prison so that he would not be killed by Devaki's wicked brother. Devaki begged Him to go.

Vasudeva agreed. He told Kṛṣṇa that he had given his word of honor to hand over all his children to Kāṁsa to be killed. Now that Kṛṣṇa had appeared, he was willing to cheat. "I must save You!"

When Vasudeva lifted the Lord, who had assumed the form of a baby, the chains binding him broke, the iron doors fell open, and the guards fell asleep while father and son braved the storm. The Yamunā parted and Vasudeva, Kṛṣṇa crossed safely. Some say He was led by a fox; others say He fell into the water so that Yamunā-devī could receive His blessing. Whatever happened, He made it safely to Gokula, the sweetest abode. M. Yaśodā had just given birth to twins and was exhausted. Under Yogamāyā's direction, Vasudeva placed Kṛṣṇa in Yaśodā's arms and picked up her daughter. That girl was Yogamāyā herself, and she later appeared to Kāṁsa as Durgā-devī. Actually, she scared the day-lights out of Kāṁsa when he tried to kill her.



Take Me Back!

Yeah, that's the best, when
Kṛṣṇa said, "Take Me,
take Me in your
arms
dear father." He wasn't
afraid of Kamsa but wanted
to give His childhood to
the people of Gokula.

Stowaway. Stow away in a basket,
Karna. Stowaway Rāhu and disguised
too. As if he were just
another *deva*. *He*
lost his head!

Objects can also be stowed—gold
in the Himalayas—so much it could
help in the horse *yajña*. So Kṛṣṇa sent
Dhanañjaya there when they were broke.

Go to stow, cheap, do it for Kṛṣṇa,
hide away for a million years
and come out when He needs
you.

But as for me, I'd like to spring
back to Godhead ASAP.
Not like the five-thousand-year-old
Aztec painting in perfect shape
just found in Guatemala.

Air stored in and out of nostrils

chest and blood in and out
of the abdomen—no
immortality for this cat
no matter
how much he eats or drinks
today.

Stowie 19

“A Few Examples of Visitors who Should Have Stayed at Home” (by Mark Little, from the Internet):

“As world travel has increased over the last five hundred years, so have incidents of biological clash, such as the appearance of a tropical seaweed, *Caulerpa taxifolia*, in Mediterranean waters, where it threatens local sea life. Some famous examples of guests who outstayed their welcome are the African honeybees introduced to South America; the European snails that escaped from a gourmet’s *escargot* farm and are now devouring the state of California; or the starling, one hundred of which were released in New York’s Central Park in 1890 by a club of Shakespeare fans as part of a hare-brained scheme to introduce all the birds mentioned by the Bard.

“The traffic has worked both ways. The blight which caused the Irish potato famine in the mid-nineteenth century may have come from America. Another devastating example of an imported menace is the vine-root louse, *Phylloxera*, which arrived in France with some vine cuttings from America and began to attack the local vines, which unlike the American stock, had no built-in resistance to the pest. First detected in 1868 in Bordeaux, within twenty-five years it had all but wiped out most of the vineyards in France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, and Italy.”



Starlings in the Park

Starlings on the loose! How crazy!
Can't they train those millions of birds
hopping around?

And me announcing truth to you
as to how they must be understood
in later years

those starlings these
Stowies! I'm taking it
easy, easier.

Don't wear my medals anymore.
Will tell my no-holds-barred stories
but won't eat those starlings
only remember
that I was there too in
Central Park
with Swamiji.

The starlings let us sing
our Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra
later we were applauded
at the Louis Abolafia love-in

and now we are hopping
all over the world.

Stowie 20

More from Mark Little: "Other threats have reached Spain under their own steam, including one recent arrival, the ruddy duck which is originally American but flew here from England, of all places. Now it poses a threat to the rare, local white-headed duck. The white-headed duck was on the verge of extinction two decades ago, and only the constant vigilance of environmentalists has helped bring the population back to a meager four hundred or so breeding pairs, which survived in the wetlands of Andalusia, representing some twenty percent of the world population. But its cocky American cousin could reverse its timid comeback.

"These American ducks are all descended from three pairs that escaped from a British bird fancier's menagerie in 1948. They became naturalized in the UK, where there are now several thousand, and many of them started heading south in search of fresh territory. They were first spotted in Spain in 1983, and ornithologists were later alarmed to discover that they were interbreeding with the native species. Competition from their hybrid descendents may be too much for the white-headed duck to cope with."



End of the White-headed Duck

He's chasing another Trane
and won't be able to reach
it 'cause God commands
their speed
and only by His mercy will
the white-headed duck fly over the
Internet and reach the roof
of heaven.

Heaven, Svarga, Vaikunṭha,
Goloka, the feet
of Nandanandana.

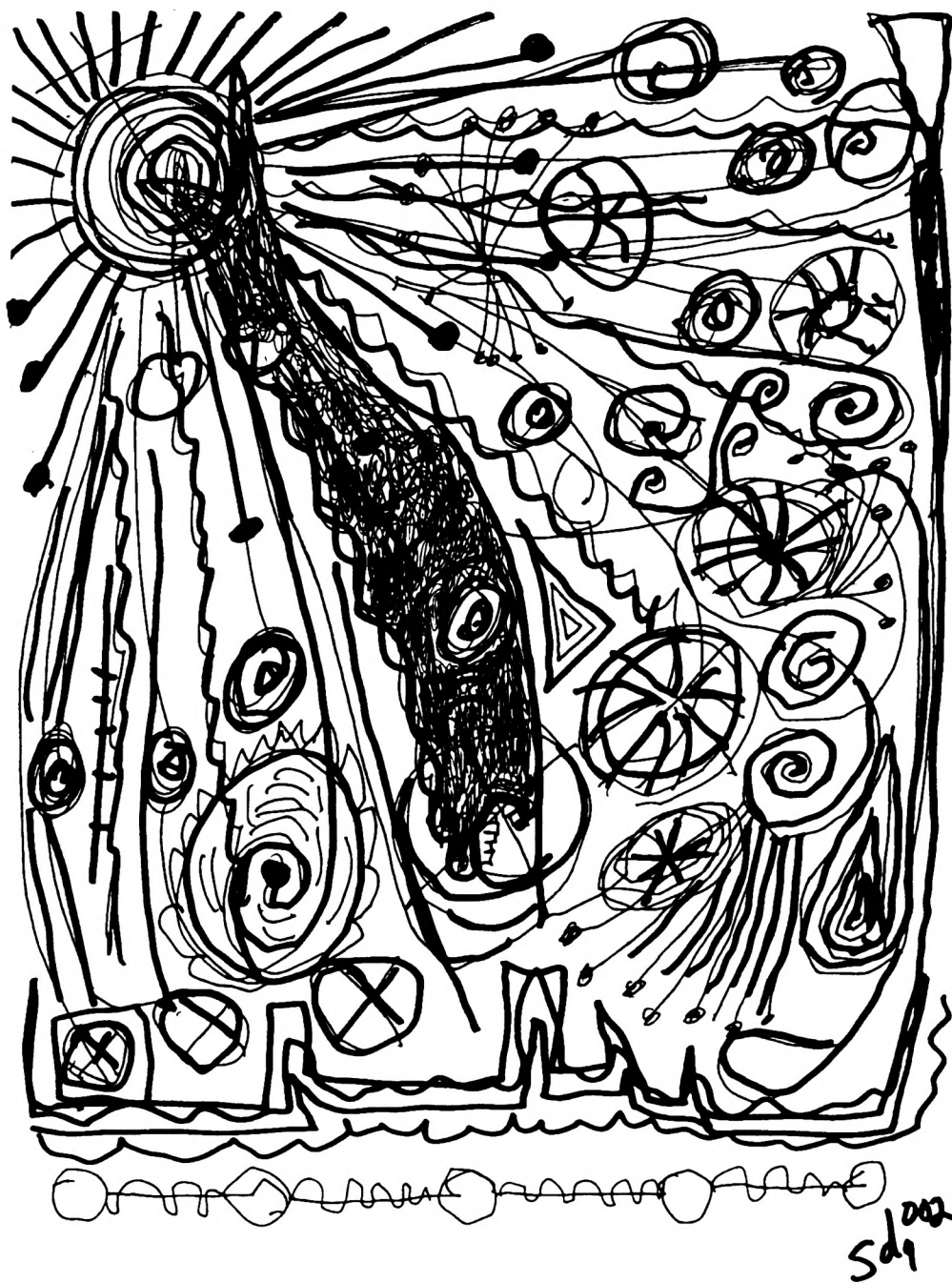
See how I went nowhere special after those twenty starlings were released?
What could you expect? Those white-headed ducks were stowed away so they
could return in force, gobbling up their timid prey, and then those American
ruddy ducks appeared on the scene.

How did the wet germ multiply to five crores? How did the single *jīva* think
he'd become God? Do you know that fungus stows away on the outside of
spacecrafts like barnacles? But pure saints clear themselves, I'm sure, and carry
no germs, by taking a clear bath in *hari-nāma's* clean waters. So let us pray for
the white-headed duck.

Stowie 21, Monster Catfish

“More often than not, damaging species are introduced purposely, either for commercial reasons or for sport. Fast-breeding common partridges were introduced into central Spain by hunters, where they proceeded to interbreed with the native red-legged partridge. Non-indigenous deer and chamois have caused havoc to the ecosystems of Spanish nature parks.

“Spanish rivers have not been free from the meddling of overenthusiastic sportsmen or even agricultural authorities. The native brown trout, for example is being crowded out of its territory by the aggressive rainbow trout used to stock many rivers and streams, but perhaps the most spectacular example of an introduced fish species is the siluro, the monster catfish, which now lurks in the dams of the Ebro River. A native of central Europe, the siluro or wels, will gobble up just about anything as it hunts along the muddy bottoms of slow-moving rivers and lakes. It feeds on fish, frogs, water birds, and even small mammals that have the misfortune to fall into the rivers. It is Europe’s largest freshwater fish, reaching a weight of more than six hundred pounds and length of up to sixteen feet. This voracious fish from hell appeared in the Mequinenza dam in Aragon, northern Spain, not long after it was built twenty-five years ago. Apparently, siluro fry were smuggled into Spain by a group of German anglers who were tired of fishing in the rain and fancied the idea of hooking their favorite catch in the Spanish sun. The small catfish proceeded to eat everything the dam’s water could offer, and every year they increase in size, some recent specimens reaching more than three hundred pounds.”



Horribilus

The monster catfish
upstaged all the river animals
near the dam, weighing in
at six hundred pounds.

Twenty starlings equals a
billion now. They should
have stayed home.

I should never have left
Goloka. I wouldn't be
confused if I had
eaten my bread and butter
and obeyed the priests
and nuns and parents.

Instead I listened to the boys
in the dirt lot at P.S. 8
who told me about girls and
how babies come out.

We flipped baseball cards together
and played marbles for keeps.
Got a few bloody noses. What
do you think?

Stowie 22, *Kṛṣṇa* conscious stowaway stories

Here's a devotional stowaway story. When Mahirāvaṇa kidnapped Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa from Hanumān's tail fort (what's a tail fort?), Hanumān had to come up with a desperate plan to rescue them. Otherwise, they were scheduled to be sacrificed at midnight. Hanumān went through various adventures, but he finally contacted Mahirāvaṇa's sister. Because it had been predicted that she would bring about Mahirāvaṇa's death (he wanted to think he was immortal and had therefore arranged for his life force to be stored in three separate places, all of which Hanumān had to extinguish before midnight), he imprisoned her. She became resentful of him, even hated him, and gradually came to wish for his death. Mahirāvaṇa let her out of prison once a year to help with a particular sacrifice, because only her offerings were accepted. This sacrifice was intended to prolong Mahirāvaṇa's life.

Hanumān contacted her, and she agreed to help him. She was supposed to carry a waterpot with consecrated water covered by a lotus leaf to the altar. Hanumān shrunk himself and hid under the lotus leaf. When they approached the gates of the palace room where the sacrifice would be performed, Mahirāvaṇa's security system informed him that someone was there who was inimical to Mahirāvaṇa. Mahirāvaṇa never let enemies into that room—it was one of the ways he protected himself. The guards were on the verge of stopping her from entering, thinking it was she who had become so inimical; they didn't find Hanumān. Finally, they let her through, and in this way Hanumān was instrumental in bringing about Mahirāvaṇa's death. Lakṣmaṇa actually shot Mahirāvaṇa, but Hanumān brought the antidote to the drug that had been given to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to keep Them docile. Hanumān had also managed to first extinguish the other two places that were maintaining Mahirāvaṇa's life force, so when he was shot by Lakṣmaṇa, he died. Hanumān was a stowaway in that regard.



Hanumān Devotee

Hanumān once disguised himself as a
little cat and in this story
hid under a lotus leaf.
I have always loved him
as he carried the whole mountain
me hearing it while in my perch-bed over
the Boston kitchen. I had his picture
and sang to him, “*Jaya Hanumān!*”

I felt he was our protector
from teenage thugs.

Prabhupāda didn’t talk so
much about him but he
was my patron saint

for those years—muscular
protector for a
skinny job-holder
temple president and soon-to-become
sore *grhaṣṭha*.

All over India Hanumān is worshiped
in his orange forms, called “monkey-god”
sometimes by iconoclasts,
but I know he is a saint-
devotee of Rāma,
humble and strong.

It’s been a long time since I
went with you disguised as a cat
over the walls of Lankā,

but please
remember my youthful
devotion and prayers
before your framed picture my
sincere songs before bedtime
while the others laughed at my
“Hanumān! Hanumān!”
You were my boyhood love.

You slipped small into the pot a
stowaway, but later expanded huge
and leaped the gap
between India and Lankā.

Jaya Rāma! So much trouble today but
those who know your
inner truth know you
are a pure soul who
can lead one right to
the holy feet
of Sitā and Rāma.

Stowie 23

If we broaden the definition of stowaway to include things that are stashed, hidden, or stowed, it will probably be easier to come up with Stowies. For example, old Deities. There are many stories. Mādhavendra Puri found the Gopāla Deity, who had been hidden away to protect Him from the Muslims. Jayadeva Gosvāmi found a Deity at the bottom of a river. Jayadeva Gosvāmi was a devotional “madman.” Few people, of course, understood his ecstasy. He was always searching for Kṛṣṇa. When Lord Jagannātha sent Padmavati, his eternal consort in the spiritual world, with her father to meet him—Lord Jagannātha had told her father to find Jayadeva and to give him his daughter—it seemed appropriate that Jayadeva settle down. Therefore, one day, during a violent storm, when Jayadeva was crying out, “Where is Kṛṣṇa!” again and again, he suddenly dove into the river. Everyone thought he would drown, but Jayadeva saw something glittering at the bottom of the river. When he swam to the bottom, he found beautiful Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities. These Deities were later installed in the palace temple of Lakṣmīpati, then the king of Orissa. Although the Deities had come to Jayadeva, he turned their worship over to the king after about a year and moved to Jagannātha Puri to compose *bhajanās* and to have his wife dance in the temple for the Deities’ pleasure.



Deities

Of stone and brass is
spiritual God but
fools don't know.

The *ācāryas* wouldn't
waste their time
dressing the tender
sweet forms or
feeding them
if They weren't
real.

(In Uḍupī they have a cat
guarding Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet
from rats. We have one in
this house too, although he's
not a real hunter.)

Line up to see Govinda, Gopāla.

Old saints went mad and
dove into rivers to find Him.
Lived poor to serve the *arcā*
to talk to Him and hear His
replies.

We have it in ISKCON—this
worship of Deities—thanks
to Prabhupāda's grace.

This poor beggar has his
Rādhā-Govinda, and someone

complained that my servant
should have spent less
on Their altar but
what's done is done

and They *are* beautiful. That servant
says, "You won't have to go to Vṛndāvana They're
so nice," but how can this replace *that*?

In weakened body and mind
I try to bathe Them, choose dresses
and necklaces, earrings, the
best cloth.

If I can't do it all myself, I
ask Bala to help.
I don't look at Them enough,
and when offering food
I spy on what there is for me
to eat.

But the Lord has given us
this mercy and any contact will help
will bring us to believe in God and His
consort Their
forms as charming boy and girl.
Don't ever forget Them.

Stowie 24

Here's another one: After the demons and demigods churned the milk ocean and obtained the pot of nectar, Mohinī-mūrti incarnated to ensure that the demigods received the nectar and the demons did not. Lord Viṣṇu considered that giving nectar to the demons would be like giving milk to a poisonous serpent: it would only increase their "poisonous" effect.

After tricking the demons out of the pot of nectar by saying she would "honestly or dishonestly" distribute the nectar, Mohinī-mūrti arranged for the demigods to sit in one line and the demons in another. She then proceeded to give the nectar to the demigods. Because the demons had become attached to Mohinī-mūrti, they did not want to disturb their relationship with Her. Therefore, they remained silent even as she cheated them of the nectar.

Rāhu, the demon who causes the eclipses of the sun and moon, saw that the demons were being cheated, so dressed himself as a demigod and sat in the line of demigods undetected even by Mohinī-mūrti. Then the moon and the sun, who are always at odds with Rāhu, saw Rāhu and ran over to protest. By this time, Rāhu had already begun to swallow his portion of nectar. Why couldn't the Lord detect Rāhu? He wanted to show the effects of drinking the nectar. The Supreme Lord then cut off Rāhu's head. When Rāhu's head was severed, the body, being untouched by the nectar, did not survive. Rāhu's head remained alive because nectar was in its mouth when it was severed from Rāhu's body.

"Rāhu's head, however, having been touched by the nectar, became immortal. Thus Lord Brahmā accepted Rāhu's head as one of the planets. Since Rāhu is an eternal enemy of the moon and the sun, he always tries to attack them on the nights of the full moon and the dark moon." (*Bhāg.* 8.9.26)



Rahu-Yahoo

You ever see that “Yahoo!” at the
end of your e-mail message?

Well, it’s the other half of Rāhu,
Ketu, the dead body. The head is
immortal, the superior
dead body just hangs there

No one likes Rāhu or Ketu.
It’s bad times when they appear
and the tattletale Sun and Moon
are covered.

Some demons offer him a
coconut and old coins or they fast or
offer coal to a leper on the
first Saturday of the waning
moon they chant a
mantra and get power over
their enemies.

This is extremely dark and
curious information
how one head could
cover the whole sun
or at least it appears to
us from our tiny material
view. I advise you to keep
away from the influence of this fiend.

Stay indoors in your temple
room and finger your beads.

Even if you have no voice utter
Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras in whisper and mind.

I'm not certain how much of modern psychology I
believe, but I believe
Rāhu is alive because
the *soma* (eternal in this
world) got halfway down
his gullet.

The scientists are laughing,
the athletes are laughing
with women on their laps
the dogs scoffing up
rotten milk pouring
down from the offerings
at the tongue of Govardhana

but we believe in Rāhu
and stay out of his view on
the dark night.

If you dare to stare at
the sun through dark glasses
on the day of the eclipse that's
your choice. Maybe
nothing bad will happen
to you.

Don't take my word as a
seer, but I do believe
in the screeching insane

bodies that become
asuras for wrong
deeds and trying to cheat
Mohini-mūrti and
the *devas*.

Better be a good boy or one
way or another
they'll twist you in the sky
and nether regions and
you'll be sad you didn't
believe the simple
truths of Vedic science—

A head covers the moon, a planet
eighty thousand miles below
the sun, and it moves like one
of the stars. He's the
son of Simhikā, the most
abominable of all the
asuras. So if you want to josh
with him or
propitiate him, you do it
at your risk.
I'm on a spiritual journey
asking for grace from my downfallen
position and hoping someone will
save me in my remaining
years and keep me far away
from Rāhu, Ketu, Simhikā
and the rest with their evil hearts and
sharp blades.

Glossary

Abhimanyu—the heroic son of Arjuna and Subhadra. He was killed by the son of Duṣśāsana as described in the *Drona Parva* in *Mahābhārata*.

Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by his personal behavior.

Arcā-vigraha—an authorized form of God manifested through material elements, as in a painting or statue of Kṛṣṇa worshiped in a temple or home. Actually present in this form, the Lord accepts worship from His devotees.

Asura—demon or ungodly person.

Bhajana—devotional activities; a devotional song.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Brahmā—the first created living being and the secondary creator of the material universe.

Brahmacārī—a celibate student living under the care of a bona fide spiritual master.

Brahmāloka—the highest planet of the universe, that of the demigod Lord Brahmā.

Brāhmaṇa—one wise in the Vedas who can guide society; the first Vedic social order.

Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta—a book by Sanātana Goswāmī about devotees, devotional service, and Kṛṣṇa which was highly recommended by Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Caitanya (Mahāprabhu)—lit., “living force.” An incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in the form of a devotee to teach love of God through the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Daṇḍa—a staff carried by *sannyāsīs*.

Deva—demigod.

Devaki—Kṛṣṇa’s mother in Mathurā.

Dhāma—abode; the Lord’s place of residence.

Dhanañjaya—a name for Arjuna meaning “he who attains great wealth by conquest.” This name refers to Arjuna’s collecting vast wealth for Yudhiṣṭhira’s Rājasūya sacrifice.

Dhoti—a garment wrapped on the lower body of men, commonly worn in India.

Durgā—Lord Śiva’s wife in a fierce form, riding a tiger. The goddess is empowered by the Supreme Lord to preside over the material nature and bewilder the souls situated there into misconceiving themselves to be their material bodies, and enjoyers and controllers of the mundane creation.

Ganges (Gaṅgā)—a sacred river in India that washed the lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu.

Garuḍa—Lord Viṣṇu’s eternal carrier, a great devotee in a birdlike form.

Gaura-Nitāi—Lord Caitanya (Gaura) and Lord Nityānanda (Nitāi).

Gaurāṅga—lit., “golden-limbed.” A name of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gaura Pūrṇimā—the appearance day of Lord Caitanya.

Gokula—the manifestation of Goloka in the material world.

Gopāla—a name of Kṛṣṇa as a young boy; the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, who protects the cows.

Govardhana Hill—a hill in Vṛndāvana, the site of many of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes.

Govinda—name the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. “One who gives pleasure to the land, the cows and the senses.”

Gṛhastha—a married person living according to the Vedic social system.

Hanumān—the great famous monkey devotee of Lord Rāmacandra.

Hare—the vocative form of Harā, another name of Rādhārāṇī; refers specifically to the internal spiritual energy of the Lord.

Haribol—“Chant the holy name.”

Harināma—public chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

Hari-nāma—lit., “the name of the Lord”.

Indra—the chief of the administrative demigods and king of the heavenly planets.

ISKCON—acronym for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Īśvara—a controller. Kṛṣṇa is *parameśvara*, the supreme controller.

Jaṭilā—Rādhārāṇī's mother-in-law.

Jagāi and Mādhāi—two debauchees whom Lord Nityānanda converted into Vaiṣṇavas.

Jagannātha—lit., “the Lord of the universe;” may refer specifically to the Deity of Lord Jagannātha in His temple at Puri.

Jagannātha Mīśra—Lord Caitanya's father. Kṛṣṇa's eternal father, Nanda Maharāja of Kṛṣṇa-līlā.

Jaya—an acclamation meaning, “Victory!” or, “All glories!”

Jayadeva Gosvāmī—a great Vaiṣṇava poet and author of *Gīta-govinda*.

Jiva—the individual, eternal soul or living entity; part of the Supreme Lord.

Kaiśora—a youth between the ages of eleven and fifteen.

Kaṁsa—a demoniac king who tried to kill Kṛṣṇa during His childhood pastimes.

Karṇa—the first son of Queen Kuntī, born of her union with the sun-god, the son who she abandoned at birth, and who later sided with Duryodhana against his brothers, the Pāṇḍavas, in the battle of Kurukṣetra.

Ketu—an invisible, inauspicious planet positioned at the descending node of the moon.

Kīrtana—chanting of the Lord's holy names.

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma—the presiding Deities of the ISKCON temple in Vṛndāvana, India.

Lakṣmaṇa—a younger brother of Lord Rāmacandra's. An incarnation of Saṅkarṣaṇa, He accompanied Rāma and Sitā in Their exile.

Laṅkā—the golden city of Rāvaṇa, situated some eight hundred miles south of India, in Ceylon.

Laulyam—greed—when directed toward attaining Kṛṣṇa it is the greatest boon and when directed toward material things, it is an impediment to spiritual progress.

Mādhavendra Puri—the spiritual master of Īśvara Puri.

Mahirāvaṇa—a brother of Rāvaṇa who lived in Brazil.

Māyāpur—a town in West Bengal, India, where Lord Caitanya appeared.

Mohini-mūrti—the incarnation of the Supreme Lord as a most beautiful woman.

Nandanandana—the Supreme Lord, Kṛṣṇa, who is the darling son of Nanda Mahārāja.

Nārada—a pure devotee of the Lord, one of the sons of Lord Brahmā, who travels throughout the universes in his eternal body, glorifying devotional service.

Padmavati—wife of Jayadeva Goswami.

Parikrama—a walking pilgrimage.

Prahlāda Mahārāja—a great devotee who was persecuted by his demoniac father, but who was protected and saved by Lord Nṛsiṃha.

Prasādam—lit., “mercy.” Food which is spiritualized by being offered to Kṛṣṇa and which helps purify the living entity; also referred to as *prasāda*.

Pūtana—an evil witch sent by King Kāṁsa to kill baby Kṛṣṇa, but who was killed by Him and thus achieved liberation.

Rādhā(rāṇi)—the eternal consort and spiritual potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Rāhu—an invisible planet involved in lunar and solar eclipses, and the demoniac ruler of this planet.

Rāma—as part of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, refers to the highest eternal pleasure of Lord Kṛṣṇa; may also refer to Lord Balarāma or Lord Rāmacandra.

Śacidevi—the mother of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Sādhu—saintly person.

Sannyāsa—renounced life; the fourth order of Vedic spiritual life.

Śāstra—the revealed scriptures, obeyed by all those who follow the Vedic teachings.

Śikṣaṣṭakam—eight verses of instruction in devotional service written by Lord Caitanya.

Simhikā—the mother of the demon Rāhu.

Sitā—the eternal consort of Lord Rāmacandra.

Śrīla—a term of respect given to a spiritual master.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva, which specifically points to the path of devotional love of God.

Svargaloka—the heavenly planets or abodes of the demigods in the material world.

Swamiji—lit., “great master.” A common term of respect addressed to sannyāsis.

TKG—Tamāl Krishna Goswami.

Vaikuṇṭha—the spiritual world.

Vasudeva—the father of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vedic—pertaining to a culture in which all aspects of human life are under the guidance of the *Vedas*.

Viṣṇu—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His four-armed expansion in Vaikuṇṭha; A plenary expansion of the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Vṛndāvana—Kṛṣṇa’s personal abode, where He fully manifests His personal qualities.

Vyāsāsana—The seat of Vyāsa, on which the representative of Vyāsadeva sits.

Yajña—sacrifice.

Yamarāja—the superintendent of death and karmic justice.

Yamunā—a sacred river in India, which Lord Kṛṣṇa made famous by performing pastimes there.

Yaśodā—Kṛṣṇa’s mother in Vṛndāvana.

Yogamāyā—the internal spiritual potency of the Lord.

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