

ELECTRONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

Volume 24

Sips At the Fount

April 24 - May 14, 1998

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

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April 24, 1998, 12:02 a.m.

O fool, go back to your spiritual master with humility. Take shelter at his feet. *Bhagavad-gita* says, "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master." I wrote in *Prabhupada Meditations* that Prabhupada saved me not just once but continually "now, always." Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." (Bg. 4.34)

A disciple told me that she's afraid to approach Srila Prabhupada directly. "Imagine," she writes, "that I was asked to enter his room. I wouldn't want to go alone. I would want you to go with me." She gave her daughters as an example. When they were small, they wouldn't go anywhere without asking, "Are you going too, Mom?" I feel the same way toward the previous *acaryas*, but with Srila Prabhupada I feel at home. Apparently I too am afraid of Prabhupada "of his anger, his reprimand, and especially afraid of myself" "what if I rebelled? But no, I have a loving relationship with Prabhupada. We all do. We simply have to find it, nurture it, and allow it to grow.

We certainly can't approach Krishna directly. "The path of spiritual realization is undoubtedly difficult. The Lord therefore advises us to approach a bona fide spiritual master in the line of disciplic succession from the Lord Himself." (Bg. 4.37, purport)

Am I a spiritual master in the line? I'm a functional servant of my own guru, and my main service since his departure twenty years ago has been to guide whichever of his followers turn to me for help. A guru should convey the Lord's message as is to his disciples. "Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige." Satisfying the guru is the secret to our advancement. I could copy out the whole purport to 4.34 to present here, but know that Srila Prabhupada did not manufacture these points. Neither are they my version of *siddhanta*. This is Vaisnava *sastra*: follow and worship the guru.

Service and inquiry; pass the spiritual master's test. "A bona fide spiritual master is by nature very kind toward the disciple." I was submissive and always ready to render service. Therefore, Srila Prabhupada gave me whatever knowledge I required. Now I have to honor that knowledge and continue to serve him with an inquiring attitude.

No more questions?

I have plenty, even the most crucial ones.

No more service?

I have plenty. His mission remains.

The spiritual master teaches us to free ourselves from the illusion that we are separate from Krishna and to see ourselves as His parts and parcels. Krishna consciousness is simple and sublime. A faithful disciple consists of the guru's excellent teachings and quotes. Fine. Then the faithful disciple should repeat them. We're each a walking anthology of Vedic wisdom.

But more than that, we should examine whether the words live only in our mouths, or have they made their way into our hearts? When we know that we are Krishna's eternal servants, our reactions to material activities will be burned up and we will be liberated, by our guru's grace.

Oh, but I learned that already! How many times do I have to keep hearing it?!

If you have learned it, teach others. We should both feel it and desire to convey it. That's what good disciples do.

And there is more than one way to convey it.

I hear a voice. What is he saying? "What about the guilt that we're not doing enough? Is this the society of guilt consciousness, where we push each other and assess one another, never trusting, never honoring one another's acts of love, even if they seem small? One disciple (Whose disciple? Mine, mine, given to me by His Divine Grace to care for and not mislead, mine to deliver to Krishna) told me she feels her services might not be acceptable to Srila Prabhupada, even though she loves to do them, because they are not risking life to tell others about Krishna:

I was talking about this with my husband and he said that it is so easy for us to get a one-sided picture of Prabhupada. So many of the famous exchanges we hear are instructions that he gave in conversations with the "big preachers." Prabhupada was also gentle and compassionate with the "little people" like me (makes me sound like a leprechaun!). He said, "Do what you love to do, but do it for Krishna."

We all know the famous quotations: "Distribute books! Distribute books! Distribute books!" etc., and this is certainly one aspect of his desire and his preaching. But it is so important for us to also hear things like how you gave Prabhupada a mango every day. He said, "Good boy," and everybody laughed, but then Prabhupada was serious and said, "No, this is actually Krishna consciousness." Surrender and austerity have their place "we learn through them "but ultimately we should serve from the spontaneous desire to please, which comes straight from the heart (this is what you were doing by giving those mangoes). This example shows how even the smallest act, something very simple and even (to the outsider) very insignificant, can actually be the perfection of life.

Her letter reassured me. I too tend to worry whether I'm doing enough, whether I'm outward enough "and obviously, as I move into this house, I am choosing a different path of service. Where is my confidence? Let us offer our love and thus offer ourselves "who we actually are.

* * *

I dreamt that a devotee was able to invest money in the stock market. We went to ask Prabhupada if this was bona fide, but it wasn't Prabhupada. Prabhupada had already left the planet, and to speak to him, we had to go to another dimension where we would hear a voice giving instructions. His presence in the dream was strange. In the dream, I was doubtful about the validity of the voice, but various proofs had been put forward to show that the voice was actually speaking for Prabhupada "it wasn't Prabhupada, but represented him.

Finally, Suhotra Maharaja came with us and spoke to the voice. He said he thought the method of having many different people give their opinions and hashing out problems was a better method of management than listening to this voice. I appreciated what he said, because speaking to this voice reminded me too much of the Wizard of Oz.

The devotee wanting to make investments pushed to see who was behind this voice. It turned out to be a non-ISKCON *sadhu*. It was black magic.

The dream ended when we discovered that this man was trying to take over Prabhupada's movement. After the dream, I lay awake for some time thinking about it. It occurred to me that we shouldn't seek only the mystical voice we call Prabhupada, but turn to the voice of truth he left us within the protection of his books, movement, and devotees.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Hare Krishna and the sands of time.

What do you mean?

I don't know. Those words just came to me.

Again this morning I found myself faltering while listening to *Vidagdha-madhava*. Perhaps we can't listen again and again to these dramas. The amorous joking pastimes become tedious if we are not part of them. Even Lord Brahma wanted to see Krishna's more grandiose features while he watched Him play with the cowherd boys. Sometimes submission and pleasure flag as we listen, although if we persist, they will usually rise again.

I wish to be qualified, but I am not. In a good sense, however, these dramas are spoiling me from being able to deeply appreciate descriptions of God that don't recognize His playful pastimes. For example, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* has many good things to say, but how to love Krishna and what He is doing in His Goloka "this we know only by hearing from the *acaryas* in our line.

When Lalita is fierce and insulting, Krishna says, "Has Lalita become Goddess Kali?"

"Ha! The proud *gopis* have been defeated," Madhumangala cries out.

And the pastimes roll on. We will be left behind if we fail to make ourselves worthy.

Radha-Govinda are both wearing crystal earrings and black *cadars*. Both also wear dresses of white with pink and gold trim. I dress Them as best I can with these clumsy fingers and lack of artistic sense, lack of patience. Still, They are beautiful.

And Srila Prabhupada is handsome in his gray *cadar*, tan scarf, and knit cap.

Hare Krishna. Now wipe the dust from the altar, set the pictures back in their places, and may Lord Jagannatha and Lord Caitanya in the Gambhira bless me with Their mercy.

The cowslips in the vase are again standing erect "they had been drooping, but water has revived them. Lord Nrsimhadeva looks like He's removing a thorn from His foot, but actually, He is tearing a large demon apart on His lap.

* * *

It's cold downstairs, but down I go. I'm the one-man cleaning party, and I work against the construction workers who dirty the floors. I stole a cloth from them to use for my own purposes. I'll wipe the linoleum in the bathroom to clean it from dirt and stain and clean the bathtub, even though I know they will be coming to dump their cement flakes into it and muddy the floor again. That's okay because I will sneak back later and clean again. Vacuum, sponge, wipe, sweep, pick up, make soapy, and rinse clean. rub hard, throw away, pick out of the crevices "all with good cleaning tools. Don't complain

to the workers or try to change their ways (how they work, then leave the place a mess). Just do what you can. Afterwards, I'll wash the pots. I could spend *all* my time cleaning with none left over for reading and writing, so even I have my limits, but I don't want to live with the mode of ignorance.

* * *

If I were in a temple right now, we would just be ending *mangala-arati*. The temple president or other manager would then stand up and make announcements. If there are guests, he would say, "Please don't park your cars in such-and-such a place, and don't pick flowers from the neighbors' yards. Also, please don't go out walking, chanting *japa*, in the neighborhood. Stay in the temple room with us." *Harinama* will be going out at such-and-such a time, and please everyone, come forward to participate. Food-for-Life will be going out too, and they need help in the kitchen. Also, if anyone would like to give a donation, that would be gratefully received. There is a devotee who has come to teach time management, and to help devotees prepare individual mission statements.

In the temple the little boys would be pretending they're throwing spears at ten-headed monsters, running through the halls and making noise. The adults would be disturbed and tell the children to be quiet.

A noise! Is that Madhumangala coming in or rain on the skylight? Perhaps it's Bob Dylan or Rupa, Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu's son, or me finding myself suddenly back in a Philadelphia exile, living in silence, and . . .

Oh, forget it.

This is the day after EkadaSi and it's going to be a good day. So far it has been. I just want to tell the people that Krishna is the essence, the entire range of matter and spirit, yet He stays always in Vrndavana. The devotees chant His names and radha's in the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. May I receive the grace of rhythm so I can praise Him.

* * *

Cousin Mary
& I wanted to sing with cousin Mary and
cousin Steve Sessan kirtana with them
this time
but that's not possible.

* * *

They're too rough and have
a different energy.

* * *

Under the bright lights
Krishna, Krishna sonnets sweet . . .

* * *

(Interrupted by Madhu, who was banging the front door down. I had to go downstairs and let him in, make obeisances, and return up here. What was I saying? Something about cousin Mary.)

* * *

Oh yeah, you can't go back
not to rosedale, Long Island
to be Krishna conscious at twelve
to instruct cousin Mary and Stevie and aunt and
uncle . . . it just can't be done.
The past is past.

* * *

Rage, art, burn, cry, flip out
but learn the science of
sixty-four arts as Krishna did
when He went to school.

* * *

Can you see me braiding hair or
mixing paint, hiding something in my hand
or reading minds,
playing music by striking pots filled
with water "xylophone, vibes, drums,
writing plays, solving math problems,
controlling planets "me, this tiny
jiva?

* * *

I am tiny, so I live
joyful in the Krishna conscious times
that are with me
serving my master
and knowing that each devotee
has his own mission, his solo
to perform according to his own scale
and desire

to please Lord Krishna.

* * *

Cousin Mary is gone as
is the house.
Old choruses may cry out
because we wanted to be smarter
cuter or
more alone
a dog whimpers
sheep in the night "is
it a fox?

* * *

We are weeping complicated, but as men
we stand to give each other support.
If we cannot save the old, let us
straighten out our confusion and
give Krishna consciousness to new cousins
we may have never met. "

* * *

9:05 a.m.

Sukadeva Gosvami didn't usually stay with householders any longer than it took to milk a cow. How, then, did he come to meet the king? sankirtaniya sada hari). This is the Krishna conscious parade. Be like the sages at NaimiSaranya "attentive to hear the *Bhagavatam*, to receive at least a tiny drop.

* * *

11:36 a.m.

Hair cut today in cold bathroom. But first M. has to return from the shop. I am a clever but simple fellow. My lecture did not roll with Sanskrit verses, nor analyze in depth the philosophical points, nor fill the room with preaching fire; it was just a simple "what Prabhupada says"-type lecture, and an attempt to encourage devotees to serve Krishna as they are.

Divorcee, retiree "what else? Ex-biographer. Ex-ex.

I don't care. Srila Prabhupada says if we practice chanting Hare Krishna throughout our lives, we'll be able to think of Krishna at the time of death. Dr. Shah and Dr. Patel chime in, but not arguing on that particular morning walking on Juhu Beach. The doctors like to chant the Sanskrit of *Bhagavad-gita* aloud as they walk and to hear a brief remark from Swamiji. His disciples are so silent you hardly know they're there. It's April 1,

1974. I was there, carrying the tape recorder and holding the microphone to Prabhupada's lips.

* * *

2:26 p.m.

"Why did he give up everything to sit down on the bank of Ganges and fast until death?" (*Bhag.* 1.4.10) I'm no emperor, not even a great person, and I'm not fasting until death, either. rather, I'm moving into a house. The linoleum has been laid, and today, B. Leo (wearing earphones that blast out Aindra *kirtanas* while he works) is painting the kitchen and hallway. It's DvadaSi, and lunch seemed especially delicious. Or maybe my appetite has improved.

We say that we can sit beside Maharaja Pariksit and hear Sukadeva Gosvami speak to him, or that we may join the sages at NaimiSaranya, but that's only visualization. If we really wish to join them, we must be willing to be completely submissive and austere, not just for an hour's reading session, but for a long time. Perhaps my statements on this topic in PMrB were too glib. Am I really an intimate of those ancient sages? Well, at least I *wanted* to be there, and I didn't exclude myself.

"The questions have already been answered, the perfect counsel given, but that restlessness both questioner and answer-man feel has not been addressed. Maybe it's because they didn't reach down to the human element. Maybe they even suppressed their human feelings to come up with the absolute response." (PMrB 2, p. 188) What more does he want? Something forbidden? Let's keep this within bounds. Don't break the four rules, don't abandon your sixteen rounds. But yeah, what's on your mind? How are you feeling?

My feet are cold. The *mataji* who cooked made a enough today so Bhakta Leo could share our lunch. He looked so happy with his plate.

At Saranagati I complained that the *halava* was cold. "So this is the nature of my confession . . . a soul awash in pettiness despite the shelter he feels against the shocks of the world." (PMrB 2, p. 192)

* * *

Writing in Time

My sister bought me "Django." remember?

I also remember the escalator at the Staten Island ferry terminal "I gave her a list of a few LPs I wanted, and she could choose a five-dollar Christmas present.

O Krishna "consciousness of You.

It's April and I know where to go with a heart of flesh and an encased *atma*. The things I cling to I will be back to claim next life. The thing is shaking, the thing is sweating, the thing is love exchanged. If she could only play the vibes like Milt Jackson, or even just listen as enthusiastically as I did "but one was as restrained as a Bach fugue and the other too funky, loopy.

Yes. But this

is a Krishna conscious afternoon

when book distributors move in crowds

gamely, competitively,
like warriors on a transcendental plain "aloof, scornful of the people, yet
compassionate in purpose.

I was often out there in my day "then in the back of the parking lot counting the
money while loudspeakers boomed around us for hours.

All fiction "the talking-walking eulogy to this Django. The Krishna conscious earth is
spinning smooth and "

just tell us.

Uh, no. Let's aim to get through this day if God allows, because only He can stop us,
or change the nature of things.

The doctor asked, "What is karma?" and Prabhupada said, "That everybody knows. It
is fruitive reaction. You do something and you have to suffer or enjoy the result. You
may take your next body in the species of animals."

Tell us more? Okay, I'm lecturing, see, and I notice that they are paying attention
somewhat. I shape the talk, guide it along, remembering just in time to include the
examples Srila Prabhupada gave in his Bhaktivedanta purports. I want to be good and
sincerely Krishna conscious, but *I'm not there*. So I speak through the air pockets of
phoniness "bumps, turbulence "does the audience notice?

Tell us, less than perfect. Yes, I was writing along and didn't stop for much. I hear
news and write it down because I'm a reporter of news. My realm is the vastly spiritual
and the tiny physical organism that can't perceive his own soul or God.

Tell us what it's like to write on the most advanced science of spirit, yet with so little
realization. What's it like to write when most of the world doesn't want to hear what you
have to say? *Because* it's Krishna conscious? They think it's Hinduism, or a modern
pseudo cult.

Piety.

But what does it *feel* like?

Oh, we maintain hope that in the future they will come around. It's what keeps us
going. We're not really following our spiritual master blindly, although we're willing.

Free-write, *freeee* he says, and returns to the confines of his kettle. He has a weak
heart, and doesn't care whether they applaud or not. He insists on telling his truth.

Here's something: the void does not exist.

Something else: *pranamas* to the master.

He said, "I saw a photo of you shaving Srila Prabhupada's head. Only your hands
were showing."

I said nothing. I don't think I ever shaved Srila Prabhupada's head, although I did offer
him a massage many times.

It is relatively late in the day, and I have only five more minutes to bring this to a
conclusion. I mean, the things I have to say.

Hare Krishna! Someone calls out to us. It's a way to react, to live, and something to
write about later. If we really do stay here, I'll be able to remember the sidelong glances
of Radha as She exchanges looks with Krishna in the morning. Because it doesn't get
very hot here. And Sri Krishna who is the object of all sacrifices. He's the supreme male
and the source of the feminine potency too. A young one asks me something but has his
own ideas.

No more mirth, no more birth. Don't get them mixed up. O Krishna, please remind us.
We are not meant for this world. The truth is hidden in the hearts of the *mahajanas*.

* * *

After reading Poets
You seek a subject "your sweatpants.
Did you hear that the self is no
longer in? It's communal action that
counts. But it depends on who you
hear from. One guy said SK was
postmodern, but then . . . *he's* into the
self.

* * *

I am myself. I am officially the
jargon-filled canon-faltering
canonned foddered old member of
Rickety stilts ISKCON. rejected
by the literary mainstream,
impatient with achieving "good"
poetry standards, not Christian
but Krishnian. In other words "
is it possible the nondevotees
will hear me? Or the devotees?

* * *

Seeking a subject, you walk around
outside the house but the path
is blocked by construction debris.
Metaphors, necessity "Krishna words
Krishna science "and an empty
"Pure Cow Ghee" container.

* * *

You've come here to live
in a controversial way "quiet writing
constantly daily every day
"too much"
and to hell with those who complain.

* * *

My Krishna is Syama in India
well known, but mistakenly.
They think He's material or impersonal
or Hindu, unreachable, like
themselves. How to get through
to the common man (and woman) for
the common good "the
experience of devotee life?

* * *

You rummage, limping
through your chosen
topic "not sweat pants but
"The goal is Krishna."

* * *

5:34 p.m., Night Notes

Fire out "far out. We're in Eire where words chime, and we are practicing to be lovers of Krishna while speaking in our own tongue. We aspire to be simultaneously teachers and students, following our guru and the Six Gosvamis. All that.

Vacuum was powerful enough to suck up even grit from the crevices between the floorboards. I take pleasure in a clean room.

The first floor will be completely painted in a few days. Tomorrow is Saturday "sadder day "and there will be rain and maybe some sun, tight buds not exploded yet. Soon it will be May, and along will come the visitors. We're rolling along. But God rules.

Krishna, Krishna. "If you make a farce I can't protect you," Srila Prabhupada said at the initiation ceremony in Hawaii in 1974. (Was you there?)

* * *

6 p.m.

Leave me alone to write a good night "bang-bang downstairs
my shelves taking shape
while I bang-bang away
with this pen looking in hidden recesses
for whatever the Dirt Devil didn't find.
I am still the same person I was
I haven't changed
I still love to sit alone in a cement
frieze cave
a lout allowed the equivalent
of a sabbatical pension
an excuse

and no lament.

* * *

Hey, *he* Krishna/ I don't know
much but love to do my duty.

April 25, Midnight

Just before the alarm went off, I was dreaming of Aindra and other *pujari*-ISKCONVrajavasis advocating certain practices devotees could take up while living in Vrndavana. Someone gave me a list, which included crawling around Vrndavana on one's hands and knees, attending temple *darSanas*, chanting many rounds, etc. The devotees asked me to participate, and I saw the benefit of living in Vrndavana.

When I woke up, I realized I wasn't in Vrndavana but at what we have been calling Uddhava's house. A very different kind of life than what my dream presented to me. But let me live here with my little comforts in the spirit of Vrndavana, practicing Krishna consciousness. Have courage and live here with Srila Prabhupada.

* * *

We learn from our spiritual master how not to fall into illusion, "for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine." (Bg. 4.35) We are expansions of Krishna. This is knowledge. An advanced devotee understands this, by Krishna's grace, and he learns to see others as part of Krishna too. Krishna comes first. The guru will teach us how not to displace Him with ourselves. In illusion we choose to believe there is no Krishna, but as I said, that is illusion.

We are all meant to satisfy Krishna: "Perfect knowledge is that the Supreme Soul, Krishna, is the supreme shelter for all living entities, and giving up such shelter, the living entities are deluded by the material energy . . . Thus . . . they become forgetful of Krishna."

It's good to consider this, whether as intellectual study (knowledge-gathering) or as *lectio divina* (prayer). "This knowledge is the mature fruit of devotional service, and when one is situated in this transcendental knowledge, he need not search for peace elsewhere, for he enjoys peace within himself." (Bg. 4.37, purport)

"Such knowledge in Krishna consciousness can be achieved by a faithful person who believes firmly in Krishna . . . this faith is attained by the discharge of devotional service, and by chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, which cleanses one's heart of all material dirt." (Bg. 4.39, purport)

In Bg. 4.40, Lord Krishna states that ignorant and faithless persons doubt the revealed scriptures. They can't attain God consciousness; they fall down. There is no happiness for them. We may imagine that Krishna is speaking of the outright *asura*, but in the purport, Srila Prabhupada also speaks of persons who can cite passages from scripture but who don't believe in what they are reciting. Some may even have faith in what they

recite, but not if it points out that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such "doubtful persons have no status whatsoever in spiritual emancipation."

Please, not me. I want to be faithful; I want to be cleansed by attentively chanting the *maha-mantra*. I want to hear faithfully from my spiritual master and learn that I am part and parcel of Krishna "that we *all* are. I want to please Krishna and serve my guru so that he too will be pleased with me.

But I have to do it my way.

What?

I know that sounds strange. I hope it's not only strange but positive and acceptable. *My way* means giving myself voluntarily "a personal *atma-nivedanam*. It means *giving* love, not grudging respect. It means serving happily with my sensual and mental strength according to who I am and how it makes the most sense to fight the crocodile of *maya*.

And there is a synthesis between my way and Krishna's. The *Bhagavad-gita* contains His understanding, not mine. I may choose a Western-sized desk and chair and arrange this room to my liking, choose one service or another, but the *siddhanta* is His. Everything ends in Hare Krishna.

* * *

Red and gold outfits today, and Radha-Krishna look beautiful. Srila Prabhupada also "you have to see all of them to appreciate. My words cannot give the sense.

Today I began listening to a reading of *Bhajana-rahasya* Madhu and I recorded some years ago when we were in Italy. Both of us were full of phlegm (we had hay fever), but we tried to relish the secrets of worshiping the holy name as Bhaktivinoda Thakura teaches them in that book. Because I chose this book to hear, I did not hear the words of Radha, Krishna, and the *gopis* as I usually have been doing during *puja*. Maybe it's good to pause in that in order to build up my appreciation for it. Anyway, all of this "the Deity worship, what we are listening to, how we feel about it "is private. I don't invite others for *darSana*, and even Madhu, who sees Them more than once a day doesn't seem to notice Them much. But They are here, resplendent, and I am grateful.

Waiting for more crowns and dresses for Them to arrive from Vrndavana. It would also be nice to have a backrest for Srila Prabhupada, and a throne for Radha-Govinda. But most important is that I have a clear view of Them. My worship is simple and direct. I do such things as keep the room "and myself "clean for Them, and I try not to forget Their presence. They know I take risks to preach, and I know They both bless me and protect me.

I still want to get some candles for when the power goes out again. And a comforter for the bed, although the Lord in the heart is the sublime comforter. The Kleenex box says, "One of life's little comforts," and it's true, few comforts in this world amount to much. The only solace a *bhakta* has is that he or she has not lived in vain.

The springboard diver rides the waves. The film "Titanic" won many Academy Awards.

Don't bother to mention it. Say only the good things that inspire Krishna consciousness. Say Hare and Krishna and Rama over and over.

That I could draw expressive pictures "lovely lyrics that wind like ivy up a wall, becoming a graceful poem on a page, or a series of them.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. This is going on. No, I am not afraid to neglect someone's advice that I crawl around Vrndavana eating Zen cakes. I can be there if I want to be and if I receive Her mercy.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada with Dr. Patel and Dr. Shah, walking on the beach. The doctors want to read through the Sanskrit of *Bhagavad-gita* as quickly as possible, to hear themselves recite in the wind, to be *kavis*, even *bhaktas*, to be Hindus, to be . . . Srila Prabhupada wants them to stop and hear some explanation. Srila Prabhupada's disciples are boiling over this, but are forbidden to protest. Later, in private, they may make their point, and they may also hear Prabhupada's purports, but on the walks, they are to treat the doctors as affectionate family members "even when they argue.

On this tape, they are reading statements describing the length of Brahma's day and how everyone dies. The only recourse is to remember Krishna at the end. Where and what is Pitrloka? He says it is material "they're *all* material, those planets. Better to concentrate on the spiritual planet: *tat dhama paramam*, His supreme abode.

When words arrive I say to them, "Hello, here is my imagination at your service." The words then enter like bugs or rodents, or like full-grown humans.

Madhu is up "I just heard him go into the bathroom. I won't have to wake him. The restaurateurs returned at 12:30 last night. This is a porridge morning.

Someone asked, "How do you know what to say when you go to write?"

Well, I ask a little bird, and it sings into my ear like a Vrndavana parrot. Then I just line up the words on the page. There's nothing better than that. When the parrot doesn't speak, I continue to practice. I don't distinguish between practice and performance. And like in drawing, I look for the resolution to all words, which is Krishna. It's not my intention to leave everything scattered.

* * *

Give Your Life

& My own kind of song down a page
my own kind of song. You mean you know
Krishna in a lane where you walk?
What, you remember His pastimes?
Yes, His pastimes and my own life
as it goes by. That too can be Krishna conscious.

* * *

In a dream, the veterans of Vrndavana
ISKCON were deep into practices,
they said I could join them and crawl
on all fours like them

around Vrndavana
but I didn't
think I would make it.

* * *

Then can I give my life? Do I know
when you will be called?
So few are chosen.
In the meantime, let's do a whole series
of Puerto rican sonnets "tropical imaginings
too true "songs like
Lawrence wrote in
his white-haired age that last gasp
to point the way.

* * *

In my last-gasp song, I'll leave the driving to others
and not hold back,
and I'll give just the right amount
of blues.

* * *

But this is no last gasp
and I am here in a gray sweater
not naked like I was in the tub
which rocks back and forth
on unsteady cinder blocks "
the hot from the kettle was so hot
I could barely stand it
then I shocked my head with
ice cold water "made me
shout and follow it again
with the burning hot.
I've got to tell you this.

* * *

Boy, to give your life to God
is a measured thing. We
know what we're doing
if we offer everything as
service. "

* * *

The Private Sadhu Gives in His Way
& Are we the only people here?
Is this joy real?
Illusion is apart from Him
so we must see Krishna
in this scene.

* * *

It's no wonder the wench I
mean saintly *mataji* doesn't
write to mean me anymore she
may be detected by mental police

* * *

that I'm a mean scream
untoward fella and I don't
live in no holy *dhama*
don't *always* chant but
dig my own pleasure . . .

* * *

I only want to love my Krishna
and radha on an altar plain with
friends of Krishna,
and I know Lord Caitanya,
Nrsimhadeva
will purge away
the sins of many lifetimes.

* * *

He came
all the way to me anyway
carrying the right colors for my
walls "subdued and suitable to my
temperament. Please appreciate
what he went through to give
me a chance
to serve my master
in a trance-quiet place
in hopes I'll hold out

till the end and bring this thing
to fruition
as if I'm a five-year pear tree.

* * *

She don't write because I romp dignified
and most are only hoping I
can solve problems or give
Reminders and in all ways
day and night
behave like a *sadhu*. "

* * *

9:13 a.m.

"Why did he want to give up everything, including his life?" (*Bhag.* 1.4.11) I started reading my own comment on Srila Prabhupada's purport. The topic is renunciation. The examples are Nara-Narayana . . . I skim and don't give it my attention. I wrote about seven and a half pages of straight preaching on this. Now a twinge has appeared behind my right eye, and I must give *that* attention "when and if to take the pill? Not very conducive to *lectio divina*.

M. said I have been invited to speak a week from Sunday on the occasion of the first Sunday feast at Govinda's restaurant in Dublin. The householders here would be inconvenienced if devotees came Sunday mornings for my lectures in Wicklow (they would have to take people into their homes "which are already crowded "on Saturday night and give them breakfast on Sunday). I sympathize, so I'll give future Sunday lectures in Dublin. Good. Let me brace myself for that weekly drive into the city. It's better for profile points anyway "I speak in cities.

Maharaja Pariksit, Lord Caitanya, Bharata Maharaja, the Six Gosvamis "all gave up opulent material life for the life of renunciation. And of course, I did too.

What? I thought you said you lived in a *wretched* apartment on Suffolk Street?

Oh, that's right, I forgot. Well, I did renounce something "I took *sannyasa*. I gave up sex!

Pause for a pill.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Still waiting for the twinge to go down. With the proposal that I go to Dublin every Sunday to preach, my life seems balanced and complete. Going to Dublin makes it easier to justify living alone in my own house during the week. It may be good for me to go out and meet people, to change from the recluse who talks only through writing to the lecturer who speaks *parampara* in public. Even if the trip is disruptive to inner continuity (and robs one day from my weekly seven), I will have paid my ISKCON dues.

And of course, I can write about the experience "the flowers I see blooming by the road on the way into town, what happens in the lecture hall, etc. I'll have to see, however, whether the stress of the drive creates more headaches. No point turning the idea of once-a-week preaching into a romantic meditation "face reality. But Srila Prabhupada very much liked his *sannyasis* to preach.

* * *

Swami, how come you don't
write Swami poems anymore?
Want to get into it?
Ah, but I'm not renounced.
And why don't you lecture nonstop "
five in a day?
My master wants me to
and I want to
surrender
but I don't know how much I can do.
Still, I've loved this life of trying
and always being included as some
kind of spiritual puppy dog in
the pack.

* * *

Yeah, I once thought I'd be a leader.
Thought I was supreme. Or did I? I am still
descending from that one, this time
to the earth of Eire
and the era of error.
In the cyclone fence I mean
the free-write dabble race "
from my window
I see sheep.

* * *

2:22 p.m.

I asked Bhakta Leo to come here one day a week to assist Madhu in his secretarial duties. He wrote back saying he couldn't commit himself. His priorities are *nama-hatta* preaching and selling paintings. I told him I was disappointed by his response, although I appreciated his honesty in listing his priorities. Leo has been painting our house "doing a good job "but M. said he's been reluctant to do more than asked and had to be "convinced" to do that much. We can't help but see a devotee's reluctance to serve the spiritual master. It creates a kind of awkwardness. As soon as I received his letter I thought, "I have no right to ask anyone to do anything for me." I then questioned my

whole position as *sannyasa*-beggar-guru. I want to thank a person "a disciple "who *does* have priorities other than doing menial service for me for whatever he's willing to do. Devotional service is voluntary, even when we prod.

But any human dealing causes entanglement. It was unusual for me to reply to a letter like I received from Bhakta Leo with my own expressed disappointment, but somehow it felt human and honest at the time. And as an instructor "I do take responsibility of that too "I wanted him to know that he had missed an opportunity to serve. Anyway, a few hours after reading my note, Bhakta Leo and I met downstairs on my way to the bathroom. He told me he hadn't want to disappoint me.

"You don't have to explain," I said. I knew that now all he could do was either to agree to my request or defend himself "clear himself of any "misunderstandings." He added, "I just didn't want to be whimsical."

I changed the subject and spoke about paint. He doesn't seem to understand. Or is it me who doesn't understand? Maybe I *was* asking too much. Anyway, let it go. Srila Prabhupada asked me "and could ask me again "to do things I can't do either. My acknowledgment of that fact always makes me feel more lenient toward my own disciples. It's hard on disciples who come close to someone they consider guru to expose their lack of surrender. Does the guru have a right to point out, even kindly, where they fell short? Do they see it? Do they care?

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Back to my comment on renunciation and PMrB. As I read the paragraphs, it all seemed so ideal. My head and heart are elsewhere. Devotees are *often* like this when hearing someone speak on the *Bhagavatam*, even if it's Srila Prabhupada on tape. We can't hear because our hearts are oppressed, our minds flickering, our bodies demanding. The mind-body-heart says, "renunciation, Sastric evidence "who cares? The talk is lasting too long, it's too technical and ideal, and too full of 'you shoulds.' Give me a break. Give me something I *like* to do." I'm afraid if I force the mind to read, today's headache may flare up again. I could skip this purport and go on to something lighter, but no, let me get through it all, bit by bit, if only so I can say, "I read it all."

* * *

Writing in Time

You don't want to write at length, but you will. Walk along and don't feel guilty for expressing your disappointment to Bhakta Leo. Do something you like to do "and if *your* guru puts you down for it, how would *you* feel? It's such a heavy position to judge from, the rep of God. Well, we're all being judged by God, or aren't we? M. feels the pressure of not having help, of how people don't want to come forward to help me. His mood rubs off on me. What are we supposed to do? Say we don't see it? We should, at least, see their situations, the demands upon them, and be happy with whatever they do. We should also simply struggle along like everyone else. Be cheerful.

But there is such a thing as insincerity. We all know the joke about the disciple who invites the guru to his house, sits him on a nice cushion, and feeds him an opulent meal.

When the guru thanks the disciple, the disciples replies, "It's all your mercy, Gurudeva!" No matter what the guru says to show his appreciation, he receives that same reply, "It's all your mercy, Gurudeva." Later, the guru discovers that the disciple spent the guru's money to host and feed him. It *was* all his mercy. A guru should point out such flowery cheap speech as sentimental nonsense.

We say, "O Gurudeva, I'll do anything for you. You are so super, so wonderful. You are as good as Krishna Himself. We love you so much!" Then when Gurudeva asks us to do something practical, we find an excuse. That means we are pious and effusive praisers of Gurudeva but not really servants. And the guru who allows himself to be surrounded by such cream-puff praise is himself foolish. Srila Prabhupada cut through nonsense.

Anyway, I will not say more. They say if the shoe fits, wear it, and perhaps it fits me well.

The rain is falling on the glass which a forms a bit of the roof here. Nice effect. I always know immediately now when it starts to rain. Hare Krishna.

Come and go. Workers leave cigarette butts and crushed soda cans downstairs, I clean it all up.

I'm happy that today I received five new sets of clothes for Radha-Govinda, all made in Vrndavana. I'm greedy for such gifts. I also received three new crowns for radha (although I think I ordered six). Now make Them a throne, and one for Srila Prabhupada "that's my latest request to Vrndavana friends. Then when I worship Them, I'll feel connected to Vrndavana; I will have brought some of Vraja here. That rain beats against the glass like peaceful, rhythmic music.

I heard the restaurant is doing great business, although the hours are long. My conclusion is that I shouldn't complain if disciples don't do more. Try not to depend on the mercy of others. Be fit and self-sufficient.

Krishna, Govinda, when I dress You, I hope You are happy. Please be with me. I have faith that Your Deity form is fully You. Srila Prabhupada states, "Are we such fools that we are worshiping a lump a metal?" I love that remark. We are *not* such fools. We worship Krishna who appears in metal because we are not so fortunate as to see Him in His *aprakat* form of *sat-cid-ananda* but not so unfortunate as to deny His presence on the altar. Dear Lord, I don't have to think about this. I just need to worship You and see Your young smile. May I ever hear of Your pastimes.

I skipped giving Srila Prabhupada his massage and bath today because my head hurt so much at 11 a.m.

I fall short and let myself off. I guess we're each doing what we are. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. rain,

Rain

sisters and brothers of

Krishna religion

first-class

give love

and always forgive.

Surrender to guru is priority, and when our lack of surrender is exposed, it's embarrassing all around.

My time is up on this.

* * *

3:53 p.m.

Bhakta Leo just knocked on the door while I was writing. He told me to be careful not to touch the door, which he has just varnished. He was cheerful and so was I. I thanked him for painting. He's leaving now for the day, and I'll see him in tomorrow morning's class. He doesn't seem to feel hurt by our exchange. I'm glad. I'll consider it a closed case.

* * *

After reading Poets

It's late. He was out fixing the van and
making phone calls to our contacts. I'll hear
about that. I love hearing good news
while avoiding the bad.

* * *

We don't have the crucifix in our
theology but we accept Christ
with a Vaisnava interpretation.
We have Krishna. The *gopis* didn't even
want Lord Narayana. You know
Him?

* * *

You "I'm talking to you, America,
you don't know us. If I say
"Hare Krishna," you'll know us
even less although I admit
you've got our number in
your cynical way.
But you miss the real point.

* * *

You are ignorant, secular, and your Judeo-
Christianity doesn't tell you much.
We cry in the wilderness and
catch a stray citizen at a
nama-hatta or our restaurant
and an even rarer stray

to join for a few years or
twenty
for life.

* * *

"Don't feel sad," said Prabhupada. We are
less than a minority. Hear the rain on
the skylight? Be at peace. Preach
Krishna consciousness in peace but as if
you were fighting a war "a
sankirtana war "happy and youthful.

* * *

Don't feel sad. Be this, be
that, be stick-together insular. No one to trust? No
cross. Just happiness. And let-down.
Disappointment. But no, don't be disappointed.
Just chant. What else is possible? Nothing
else but this.

* * *

6:22 p.m., Night Notes

This *sadhu* must go public with his private thoughts, even when he exposes his own anomalies. But he faces that. It's the only way: either we have to say, "We should, we should, because our leaders are perfect and I believe everything perfectly," or some other such sickness, or we have to be who we are and pray from there. I am writing for the ideal reader who understands me.

Just heard that Kirtana-rasa can't carry my thirty volumes of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Send them sea mail? Airport to airport? Goodnight, Mrs. Kalabash, wherever you are.

April 26, 12:06 a.m.

"The Lord is definitely the supreme person, and His activities are transcendental. One who understands this is a liberated person from the very beginning of his study of *Bhagavad-gita*. (Bg. 4.42, purport)

O Krishna, Krishna, am I liberated yet? Will I live in this body for many more years? Will a few people be interested in what I say? Shall I make an indelible mark (as I always wanted to)? When I read the new ending I had written to my Svevo book to my parents, my father said, "When you read, your voice becomes strong." That's my masculinity, I wanted to say.

Stop. This is not the time or place to record memories. This is supposed to be a place to write out *lectio divina*, to pray with the *Gita*. I just read the last verses of the fourth chapter, where Krishna speaks against the faithless. He's heavy, as is Srila Prabhupada,

when He condemns those who don't come up to the mark, who don't accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Srila Prabhupada used to say that *he* was not heavy or harsh ("cats and dogs," "*mudhas*"); it was Krishna. He was just repeating Krishna's words. It's not a small thing to reject Krishna.

O Krishna, we, Your would-be lovers, want to call out to You at the end from our true heart's lament, "O Dina-dayadra! I could not reach Mathura!" (One *sadhu* in our line made that particular cry; his disciple thought he was something else. Imagine that.)

In the meantime, we rise and fight our doubts with the weapon of knowledge. Those who act in Krishna consciousness do so assured that Krishna is the Absolute Truth. They act for Him.

Do I do that? Am I acceptable to Him? When it says "devotee" in the Bhagavad-gita, is that me?

Srila Prabhupada says we don't always have to ask such questions; we can judge ourselves. When you're hungry, you eat and know that you are satisfied. Are you hungry? Do you eat?

Yes. I do have affection for the Lord, for Prabhupada's Krishna, although I'm aware that I need to infinitely increase my devotion. Because I do feel fear (*bhaya*) and some amount of attachment (*raga*).

"All that exists is a product of Krishna's energy, and Krishna is all good. . . . One is therefore filled with peace in Krishna consciousness." (Bg. 5.12, purport)

Peace, freedom from fear, freedom from attachment "these are wonderful states we can achieve. They are peak states, and often we think that few attain them nowadays.

We analyze and analyze. If you, a teacher of the *Bhakti-Sastra*, tells me what step on the ladder this verse describes, will that help me? If it's less than pure devotion, will I (should I) say, "Oh, then I don't want to feel *that*"? Or should I want it anyway and take my actual place on the ladder, glad at least that I'm connected even if through *karma-yoga*, baby *kanistha*, pre-*kanistha*, pre-less-than-fallen?

"A person who neither rejoices upon achieving something pleasant nor laments upon attaining something unpleasant, who is self-intelligent, unbewildered, who knows the science of God, is already situated in transcendence." (Bg. 5.20) He doesn't mistake the body for the soul. If we always think of the soul's welfare, then we don't become agitated in circumstances that appear either favorable or unfavorable for the body. This is a practical, profound realization, and a person who has it is a real philosopher, a self-realized person. It's someone who can learn to chant attentively.

* * *

Lesson from yesterday with Bhakta Leo: I don't know what another aspiring devotee is going through. Don't judge anyone. That's also true of the nondevotees "don't judge them either. Accept whatever anyone gives, and only if someone (a disciple) really wants to be critiqued should I give it. And gently. Don't expect that everyone is fully surrendered. Show them a smiling countenance, good will, appreciate what they do, and encourage whatever else they are willing to offer. I said all this to Madhu, who feels the unwillingness of others to help much more than I do. We can't claim we're better than others, that our needs are greater than their own pursuits.

But there are failures (like the excuses of all those in the Gospel parable who couldn't attend the wedding feast "they had other priorities and were frank about it). And I *can* respond as Jesus responded to the rich man: you cannot enter the Kingdom of God until you give away everything you own and follow me. But I needn't say it in a personal way. I mean, *I'm* not the savior, the leader; I have already given away my lot. Now I want only to learn how to think myself "lower than the straw in the street and be more tolerant than the tree. Offer all respects to others without expecting any for oneself. In such a state of mind one can constantly chant the holy names of the Lord."

* * *

4:50 a.m.

Starting this session late. I spent extra time with the new dresses from Vrndavana. The first one I tried had no Velcro on Krishna's *dhoti* or shirt. I couldn't make it work without the Velcro. Two other sets are also missing Velcro. Radha, as usual, was more cooperative "or maybe I should say She was easier to dress. They both look splendid in this delicious pink and maroon, however. Krishna smiled at me when His dressing was complete. Their forms glow, which indicates that the daily bathing is going well. Their transcendental bodies. It is a very nice service. "Are we such fools that we are worshiping a lump a brass?" Krishna's lotus feet show nicely with these new outfits "the old ones covered His feet. His shirt is long-sleeved, so I didn't give Him *acadar* today.

Listened again to *Bhajana-rahasya*. It's harder to concentrate on these tapes than on Rupa Gosvami's dramas. The dramas are so light-hearted. But I'll stay with *Bhajana-rahasya* and hear Bhaktivinoda Thakura's outpouring of *sastra* and philosophy about how to chant the holy name throughout the day while remembering radha and Krishna. That is real meditation, not the cloud of unknowing contemplation, the dark cloud. Or yes, let us meditate on the dark cloud, on GhanaSyama. O Vrndavana,

Vrndavana,

coming to me in the form of clothing for my Deities

Srila Prabhupada's hat.

I don't want to travel; I want to stay here and worship these Deities.

* * *

It is an important discovery or recognition that we are publishing books not for casual readers but for a core readership who are willing to go with me through my changes, through my mistakes and the correction of my mistakes, through my zigs and my zags. I need my readership to see all this as worthwhile. One disciple wrote me that she thought I was writing too much. I knew she wasn't referring only to the quantity. She doesn't like it that I keep changing and growing. She doesn't understand that such growth comes from my attempt to be more and more honest.

It has become natural to tell the truth each day, but it doesn't make for a consistent story. It exposes raw nerves "mine *and* the readers'. For example, it shows that I continue to fail to overcome certain habits, like inattentive chanting. I'm also willing to admit when I'm happy and that Krishna smiles at me. An editor would normally scoop a few

highlights from this sort of writing, but that's not what we're trying to do. We want to keep *all* of it "to build a library of one person's hopes and his slow-but-sure progress.

In the introduction to *The Cloud of Unknowing*, the editor states that no one knows for sure who wrote the book, but by researching the very scanty remarks the author made about himself in the book, scholars have been able to guess that the author was a country parson from fourteenth century England, and he may have had "a largish number of souls under his direction." The editor doesn't mention that he's tending people; the scholars surmise this. They also say, regarding a reader's impression of this unknown author, "Probably most people would feel that they would like to know him, and some at least might wish they had his guidance today." I'd like the reader to get that sort of impression of me. I am conveying indirectly, sometimes in lighthearted or satirical or semi-fictional ways, the struggles and adventures of the many people I know through letters and by the grapevine.

Of Thoreau's expression in his journal, a scholar says that many people think of him primarily as a naturalist. "But that is not his only subject. He writes even more about man "man in general, man in Concord, and about one particular man "Henry David Thoreau himself." I write of Radha-Govinda and my struggle to come clean and loving before my spiritual master. I write of my next-door neighbor and the sheep on the hill. Although the humans I know would be scandalized if I mentioned them directly, I know the sheep won't mind. I can't, however, wait until we're all dead before publishing. O Krishna, please let me do this service nicely in Your honor. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare "Krishna and Radha together and apart and me crying out.

* * *

Really True
& Blues the
Really true
blue of Krishna
hue and sky of Ireland
in a rare hour.
That truly blue dark
cloud of unknowing "
Krishna is sweet for
the truly regular the
true me and you and
all we went through
who were truly sheltered so
many times by our Lord.

* * *

The true defense of a pure
devotee, Krishna's Prabhupada "I
mean, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja
and his Guru Maharaja and

his Bhaktivinoda Thakura the
pioneer of spreading Krishna consciousness
to *mlecchas* and converting them.

I was just contemplating
how Krishna is really true
you know "when time
Ran out. "

* * *

Under the Tree
& I have a tree
under which to sit "a
banyan, I think, or at least
an oak, deciduous and gnarly
creeping with ivy
and its leaves not yet burst.

* * *

It's a tree of the mind of the
backyard, and a few of its major limbs
were lopped off by
builders so Madhu's roof
could be thatched "this tree
is actually on the neighbor's land
but he doesn't mind if we
share the shade so we can
contemplate.

* * *

O tree, you are stronger and
more long-lived than
me but we're both *vrksa* "
easily cut down.

* * *

Krishna is the tree that doesn't
die. He's the people and air
and music and sun and rain and
He leaves the judging to
maya while He plays. "

* * *

10:32 a.m.

I sat through the slide show with the taped narration I made. My headache became sharp, and I took Esgic while sitting in the dark. It went down only two hours later, in bed.

Gopi-manjari came and bathed Radha-Govinda. She said They were very dirty, but I don't think so. Different standards. I bathe Them every day, but not with the abrasive lemon and *candana*. O Lords, I want an easy life for both of us "is that wrong? My sentiment may be humanly understandable, but that doesn't mean I'll get what I want.

I asked a friend to read Etty Hillesum's *An Interrupted Life*. I liked it because it shows that a writer may be empowered by God to pass the test of oppression. Writing itself helps the surrender, but we need to pray to Krishna too. When He fills us, then only can we get beyond our selfish absorption in pain and, even while suffering, reach out to others with realized and human God consciousness.

Madhu rushed off to a local melodeon competition with his broken but patched melodeon. I'm alone in the house. Praghosa said he would bring me lunch. I told devotees after the slide show that from now on I'll lecture in Dublin on Sundays.

* * *

11:50 a.m.

Taste is funny. Gopi-manjari dressed my Radha-Govinda *murtis* in her own style. She placed Krishna's necklace not between His arms but lying over His left arm. She exposed more of Srimati Radharani than I do when fitting her blouse. She placed Radharani's veil differently, and the *cadar* seemed to be there more for decoration than for keeping Her warm. She also placed Radha and Krishna farther apart than I do.

It occurred to me that if I were serving as a *pujari* in a temple, I would have to follow the standard set by the head *pujari* rather than my own standard. I would be even reprimanded if I did anything differently. Or, if I were the head *pujari*, I might reprimand someone else. I might even call them "whimsical." Thank God we can worship the Deities in our home however our hearts see fit.

* * *

11:52 a.m., Hand Writ

Hand can write only when the head is clear. The body parts all cooperate and wait out the head's tendency to strike. Sympathetic interaction. Brave *ksatriyas* fight through pain, but I'm no *ksatriya*. So, Little Bear Paw, what do you have to say?

Happiness at the seven gates and throughout the body flowing "the ease of well-being, being cared for with no demands on me. Peace of a hot-cold bath and now a warm comfortable room, waiting for lunch. Was it like this for people hundreds of years ago? Some have and some have not. The transcendentalist and the penance-practicing monks punish their bodies. They are trained not to accede to its demands for comfort. They're not interested in Kleenex promotions: "One of life's little comforts." The harder the pillow, the better. Read of a man who lived for years atop a pillar, and of course, the Vedic penitents tend to stand on one leg. I'm too fainthearted for any of that. But think of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and how extreme *he* was, eating only rotten rice picked from

a drain. Is that how he got to taste the nectar of Lord Caitanya's love? He received intimate gifts from the Lord "a Govardhana *Sila* and a necklace of *gunja* berries. He tasted the highest bliss, beyond the imagination of any softy "*bhakta*."

But Krishna is kind, and even softies get a chance to please the Lord. *Patram puspam phalam toyam*. O lost soul, give your love. You want comfort? Then at least take the comfort and offer it to the Lord. Live in the comfort of Vrndavana.

Hand, grip and move and carve these words into the page. Such marks will become sound vibration and, later, books. You are just a link in the chain of many workers. My hand "on loan from Krishna.

I heard Srila Prabhupada say today that if you lose your hand or even a leg, you can still live, but if you lose your head, you die. He was making a comparison between the various *varnaSrama* divisions and their relative worth. But the hand is important; in the *varnaSrama* system, the hand is the *ksatriya* who offers protection. The hand grips the sword. I've heard that jet pilots say their hands had lives of their own while maneuvering planes on night bombing missions over Iraq.

Oh, sigh. O

Lord,

may my hand decorate and dress the Deities.

May these hands not be struck with palsy

at least not soon. May I always use them

to finger my *japa-mala*.

Krishna, my hand is my friend, thanks to You and Srila Prabhupada, who have taught me not to allow my hands to touch women unless I want to touch the red-hot iron form of a woman in hell. You have taught me to use my hands to seek the touch of *bhakti*, and to grip the instruments by which I can serve You. This is no mystic message, just the truth. Srila Prabhupada promised, "We can give you Krishna hand to hand." Amen.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

Still on the renunciation comment in PMrB 2. Srila Prabhupada proudly proclaimed the renunciation of his disciples and said it was a symptom of their love for God. We may sometimes be asked to renounce the pleasure of a convenient renunciation "as Srila Prabhupada was asked when he left Vrndavana and came to the West. The style of our renunciation depends upon our guru's order. Again, more ideal instructions. The readers may take them as ideal and feel guilty or not, but what else can any of us do but go on living what is possible for us?

I made some small confessions and even listed fictive things I need to renounce. Then I dropped beneath logic and listed things I really need to give up "including persimmons (which I hardly ever eat), hermit life (just wrote the word for shock value, aware that it carries energy for me. That's why I like it "it's suspect, worth putting on a non-logical list), "streaking" (running naked in public). I refused to surrender my passport, to become a follower of New Age gurus, or of cuties, girls' wiles . . .

Maharaja Pariksit lived for the welfare of others, ultimately for their deliverance from *sankirtana* mission. Ideal, ideal: follow the guru, intelligently balance the extremes,

and come out always successful. Positive, possible, right, duty-bound, spiritual. Advice to and praise of book distributors. A non-ISKCONite can hardly know what I'm talking about "my frame of reference. I'm not reaching for them by dropping the reality *I* know. But even what I claim to know in ISKCON is sometimes something from the past or hearsay, statements made in deference to what I think is of concern to other ISKCONites. My actual concerns may be different. Why write and preach stuff I might not always mean? Because there's a momentum, an expectation, and I open my mouth and that's what comes out.

* * *

Writing In Time

Writing in time I find my way into a movie theater and out, into mud and out, into a sunny day in Eire and back into a cloud-filled sky again. rain now. He said, "Stay back." Because a man is walking down a road . . . Is it Harry Belafonte? What are the odds against tomorrow? He's in and out of imagination, but prefers to be honest, a sort of lover of confidence. Is he unable or unwilling to tell his truth?

Compiling and
piling on . . .

Praghosa brought the pots for lunch "left enough for seconds "and left them here because Madhu suggested he not come back to fetch them. I should be left undisturbed, he said, so I may hatch my plans

my eggs. That I
may dig under . . .
find a worthy.

Look into *sastra* . . .

Now I see the face of brothers who don't understand "

"We do! That's the problem!" "this
at all.

Turn away my face and write while walking,
walking
away.

I replied, "You are living in the past when you imagine me going out at dawn past the hedgerows." I don't walk anymore, because I found a link between that walk and the day's headache. I am doing more what *I* feel is right. All those little advisers who tell you what to eat, what kind of a pillow to use "you could live your entire life under such dictates. I'm already dwindling, but this no Krapp's last tape.

I'm now looking for the germ and seed, and hope to take trees from elsewhere and plant them here. Even pits from the fruit I eat "I'll plant them here. I'll use time from domestic travails to work in the garden. Hare Krishna. Because I am a man who has been denied entrance into the mystical Krishna conscious realm of bliss.

Now quiet. Stem the rose.

Oh, I forgot to notice when I began this. Oh, no clock running! It must have been five or eight minutes ago, but I suppose it doesn't matter exactly. Where was I? I told him, "I don't want women, just little projects one after another, and I'll be satisfied." When

something wells up like, "Why don't you do more?" I just take it as flack, as a married man will (if he's faithful) when the mind says, "Why not leave this marriage?" I'm wed to the *sannyasa-aSrama* and now this hermitage. We moved in and made a commitment; we stay because I get headaches. I've been backed into a corner, so I made this choice. Now let the afternoon be quieted by a few hours of habits.

Or transfer to another amusement. Hare Krishna. The man woke up and saw he was being harassed. Another pretended he loved to worship Radha and Krishna. Another found his truth, then thought it might elude others. Hired himself out as a private tutor; made enough to get by.

Hare Krishna. How many students does he have? Ten.

I have hundreds. Before the Swami came to the West, not a single person became a devotee of Krishna, although many had read *Bhagavad-gita*. They could not get at the essence because of the commentators' "kill Krishna" approach. Since he presented *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, thousands have become devotees of Krishna. Fact. No one can duplicate that. Don't relativize it over time.

O Lord Krishna, I'm afraid someone went astray somewhere. Fallen devotee wrote me asking what he has to do before I'll forgive him. But he is already rectifying himself. I told him to "conduct inner research." I told others that the sunshine doesn't last long in this country, and that it is always followed by rain. It's rainy; that's one steady factor in my life. It lets me feel closed in; it reduces my expectations. "Today is a good day for the high stool." That's what the Irish say. That's why they live so much in pubs, they say "because it rains so much.

At least I don't have a headache and I'm making my page quota.

At least I didn't blow up a bridge or break the four rules
and I murmured at least sixteen rounds.

At least.

I'm on tap for an interview.

I am well preserved in wax.

The very little child looked up at me with impish glee, as if she wanted to play some trick on me, or as if she found my appearance highly amusing "someone so old and phony who talks in such strange accents. But being so small and unformed, she didn't know how to express any of this and could only look at me, the little imp that she is, lit up with amusement. Okay kids, have your fun, but don't harass an old man.

Then what happened? The old man sorted the paper clips.

* * *

* * *

After reading Poets

Thunder. The lamb who climbed to the top of
the stone wall cries back. More thunder.

The sky is part *Syama* and part golden-sunny. Then it all
turns dark and rain turns into bouncing hail.

* * *

I am back indoors. Christian poets, uphold the mystery.
Then I read a free-lyric secular one. Then
me. A ticking clock. How did I ever
write a single line? I don't understand how I
did it. What did it mean to "let go"?

* * *

My friend attended a music competition for Irish
traditional music. Each one plays only five
or so minutes and
is judged. He plays with spirit but
admits to mistakes now and then, like the spirit
line in a Navajo blanket. I doubt he'll
win. Besides, he's dressed in
a saffron *dhoti*.

* * *

The poets have a theme. I search
for one. How about an afternoon's
musing? Expatriate sings, "I Can't
Get Started." His silence his holiness.

* * *

"You've got some expensive pens there,
sonny," said the electrician. "I'm from America,"
the monk replied. "It's my karma; people
give them to me because I write on
our religion in human, humorous ways.
One man in particular likes my stuff and
bought me that gold-tipped one." I didn't say,
"Now he wants it back."

* * *

The clock ticks. American Tourista. A
Swiss army clock. And a Seiko. I play them
off each other to make sure I go to
bed and get up on time.
"Who's paying for the electricity?" asked
Michael Furey, the electrician.
"Never mind." The monk was no longer
open.

* * *

He wanted to be aloof now. He'd accomplished his purpose. How well he didn't know. Don't judge me; I'm no musician competing. His Divine Grace saw me through and took me anyway and all that I can be now is tender, grateful, humble.

* * *

6:12 p.m., Night Notes

I'll rest early; Deities to bed too. From the bedroom I can hear the roadside stream running down from the mountain. Sunshine at this hour and on this side of the house. Plowed through the repertoire. More "give more. I'm clearly of the Krishna conscious school, not a misplaced Westerner or a "once-a-Catholic-always-a Catholic" songwriter. I was hitched up to Prabhupada's wagon early enough in my life, and this has become my career, How could I ever leave him? Me, and the many like me. Good night Radha-Govinda and Srila Prabhupada, and I hope to see you at midnight.

April 27, 12:17 a.m.

Read a *Bhagavad-gita* verse where Krishna speaks to you. To me. My whole person wants to go to Krishna, but I can't reactivate the events and persons in last night's dreams or my present confusions or conflicts, even my present need for being assuaged by Krishna because people hurt other people "I saw it in my dream "or are envious of one another. Don't reactivate all that; just go to Krishna. Hear from Him; He can speak to you beyond any designation.

"And of all *yogis* . . . " In the *lectio divina* spirit, I decided beforehand what text to read. I thought of Krishna saying to Arjuna, "You are My friend and *bhakta*." I thought of Krishna saying, "Because you are My very dear friend, I am teaching you the most confidential knowledge." Seems I want to be assured that Krishna is saying that to me too. I don't like to spend as much time on analysis of the material nature. How about Krishna declaring that He's God? Yes, that's good, necessary, strengthening. I thought of the verse . . . but I don't want to feel the *demand* that I must do many things before He will be kind and reveal Himself to me. However, they say ("They"? Who? The Christian mystics?) we shouldn't go to prayer expecting everything to go our own way. Be prepared for Krishna to spring His agenda upon you. Don't just look for what you want.

For example, what if you could telephone Krishna? He could say whatever He wanted, couldn't He?

I think of disciples and how they want me to be a certain way, and how I don't want to demand of them beyond their idea of their own capacity or idea of our relationship. If I think their surrender is too small, I live with it and adjust myself, although I know that neither our relationship nor my participation in it has been fully realized. It is possible I

could lose my integrity by behaving in ways they want me to behave, but when I keep track of my private self, that doesn't happen. So Krishna cannot lose *His* integrity when we approach Him with our own conceptions of who He is and what we want from Him "our lack of surrender. Krishna says *ye yatah mam prapadyante* "He reciprocates with us as we want Him. He gives lower religionists less because that's all they want. "And of all *yogis*, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me "he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion." (Bg. 6.47)

I've been trying to stay alone, but sometimes I think my Godbrothers could help me with certain decisions or doubts. I'm sure that is true, but experience has proven that we have to decide most things ourselves in life, and we always have to carry our own responsibility for what we do. Often friendships begin by explaining (defending) our way. It takes time and energy in a relationship. Ultimately, we have to tread our own path to love of God.

Still, if we don't expect to make crucial readjustments every time we're with our Godbrothers, then what should we expect when we are alone? What is the purpose of being alone? When we are alone, we can try to be open to God. He is speaking to us always. Do we hear Him? We are never alone; Krishna is not in the category of a friend with whom we spend time, then feel, "I'm all right." rather, if we are with Him, we will feel our dependence on Him. That's stated in Bg. 6.47. We cannot avoid surrendering to God.

Do we want to be intimately united with Krishna? Would we prefer to stay aloof? Srila Prabhupada says we must approach Him "that's the goal of life. It's done by serving and hearing from the spiritual master. He wants us to go to Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada discusses the word *bhajate* in his purport to 6.47 "*Sraddhavan bhajate yo mam*. The root is *bhaj*, "which is used when there is need of service." We're all part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and if we fail to serve Him favorably, we will fall down.

So make further progress. Don't stagnate. Srila Prabhupada describes Syamasundara's personal features poetically "His bodily hue, dress, jewels, garland, luster, the fact that He has many incarnations and that He descends as the son of Mother Yashoda. "If one remains fully conscious of these features of the Lord, he is called the highest *yogi*." That highest stage of yoga can be achieved only by practicing *bhakti-yoga*. Its essence is unalloyed, unmotivated loving service to Krishna. We have to love Him simply for His pleasure. Srila Prabhupada quotes the *Gopala-tapani Upanisad*: "*Bhakti* means devotional service to the Lord which is free from desire for material profit, either in this life or in the next. Devoid of such inclinations, one should fully absorb the mind in the Supreme."

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Gold and soft purple are the themes of Their Lordships' new clothes today, worn for the first time. When we decorate our faces in a mirror, both the image and ourselves become beautified. Similarly, when we decorate Radha-Govinda, we become more

beautiful. His new *dhota* is styled so that both His lotus feet are visible. That is most important! They are clean, and I am pleased. This is how to occupy ourselves "in *puja*, this service. Srila Prabhupada looks handsome too in his warm brown *cadar* and brown knit cap. May these Deities warm my heart just as the radiator warms my body against the chill. *Bhajana-rahasya* is now on the second verse of *Siksastakam*, and is giving various explanations of how we commit *aparadhas* and become *durdaivam*, unfortunate, and unable to chant the names purely.

On with the work of chanting. For me, that seems to mean to continue chanting with offenses, because that will eventually lead me to the next stage. I don't want to chant with offenses, but I know that I will not achieve *Suddha-nama* by my own efforts. The holy name will choose to descend when He is attracted.

The appliances in this room eat up electricity. Srila Prabhupada says modern education trains us to run machines, but that is the occupation of a *Sudra*. The intelligent class, the *brahmanas*, should be engaged in the culture of transcendental knowledge, worship, and preaching.

Please don't stop, sir. Use your imagination if you have to, or your strong arm. Push and cajole the words into their places on the page. The cowslips stand straight. I filled their vase to the brim with water. Maybe they will stay forever. Maybe they have already left. One sentence leads to another and I never know exactly what will happen, what I will say until I say it. That takes courage. I just wanted to let you know that. Because you never know when you will fall on your face. Or sometimes you do, but you let the words out anyway.

Please, sir, go on with your studies. It is, after all, 4:45 a.m. "time for *mangala-arati* in all ISKCON temples. Maybe only a few devotees have gathered in the big hall in Chicago. Just last night, many gathered for the Sunday feast, but Mondays are blue, and only a few temple residents tend to gather. It may be cold in the temple room, but those participants will get special nectar. Institutional *kirtanas* in full swing. Announcements immediately after *tulasi-puja* to tell everyone what is expected of them today. If they don't agree, they are invited to move out. There is limited living space in a temple, so only those who pull their weight are given a room.

* * *

Escape anxiety. Be a free-writer. Go door to door as a Hare Krishna devotee. Someone may answer with a shotgun and not want you to say anything but that you're just now leaving. They don't understand and don't want to. If you were to preach to them at all, you would be committing the ninth offense in chanting. The seventh offense is to sin on the strength of chanting. Someone told me that although they vowed to chant sixteen rounds a day, they have given it up. They are too busy with other priorities. How can that be possible? But am I better "me who have spared the time to chant without attention? It could be said that I am not chanting either. No, I'm chanting something, if only *namabhasa*. There is always purpose, always benefit to *any* chanting.

Madhu is out in his shed. I will ring him on the intercom in about twenty minutes. That's time enough to blow up the world.

No, no, Krishna only allows us to create havoc. He hasn't given anyone permission to destroy any planets. Not until Lord Sankarsana wants to do it Himself.

We will hear how Madhu did at the music competition. As for me . . . I competed with other *japa* chanters. The judge was a mountain of a man. He listened for correct pronunciation and for how long it took to chant each round. On that basis he decided whether a person's *japa* needed improvement. Somebody said he would be the *Siksa-guru*. Somebody else said he would defend the *sampradaya*. Someone was told he had better improve in his personal dealings. Someone was not investigated this year, but it could happen next year. Everyone is accountable, so he should remove from his act things for which he might be caught out "or hide them well. Pay the big bill at the hardware store and free-write your way to Arcady. And don't eat chocolate chip cookies. "As soon as you stop eating, those cookies start eating you," said a sign in a dentist's office. Oh, that's just more *prajalpa*. Don't indulge in it. Practice austerity now. Don't be the delicate prince who died as soon as he was put under duress in the revolution. Be staunch. Conquer the senses by achieving a higher taste, and chant Hare Krishna with endurance.

* * *

First Prize

& The birds are fewer here than
at Geaglum.

A stray one passes through
barren mountains and valleys
crying.

* * *

That's okay because we can sleep better
without so much chirping at night
a firehouse man needs his rest.

* * *

The roadside stream is friendly here
and Madhu won first prize in
the Wicklow competition for
his Irish traditional singing.

* * *

I won the ball game
by myself in the league of
best poems constructed with ten
irregular lines.
I came in

second out of two
who entered.

* * *

I entered the first race
for four minutes and came out
exhausted
vulnerable
with the best headache
got third place for coping without
an Esgic.

* * *

Sore thumb
sore head
for writers placed
best ISKCON member
who likes his own
work his core
Readers he gave
to them his best
may they win the medal
of respect
Krishna consciousness
Krishna is best
and Radha is better. "

* * *

The Promise
& Promise to follow the master
and don't give up
ever.

* * *

Krishna is the best I said
the promise, the promise I made
wake up dull head "
get it "
you are a *cela*

* * *

and your position is to follow
I promise, it's miserable
when you give up what
you said.

* * *

Came out and said
I promised and even if I have to die
I won't quit.

* * *

Drunks forget and compromise.

* * *

Oh, half-broken promises
and I don't mean little slips
or falldowns but
the general let-down.

* * *

I promised I'd preach as
any *sannyasi* would, that
I wouldn't let any
down.
I'd be on top and stay
there.

* * *

Because I wanted to make the best
for Him "songs, poems
writings "people would say,
"Krishnas are good we want
this too "where did you say
Govinda's was and
what are the hours?"

* * *

Then I promise starting now.
Oh forget it. Just be who you are
and you ain't no Arjuna no

Bhisma who could promise and then knock out
the world before reneging.
You are just a small fella
who can't stand pain.

* * *

Break me, break me down,
melt me, shame me . . .
please Lord look up my
Record I did pretty good . . .
it's only Prabhupada's leniency,
and Bhaktivinoda Thakura's
and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati
Thakura's innovations
that let me in
'cause my promise was nothing
mighty. "

* * *

9:35 a.m.

"We know that you are expert in the meaning of all subjects, except some portions of the *Vedas*, and thus you can clearly explain the answers to all the questions we have just put to you." (*Bhag.* 1.4.13) The real test of a *sad-guru* is that he always remembers Krishna and never forgets Him. We, as followers of Srila Prabhupada and the previous *acaryas*, don't have to learn the details of the *karma-kandiya* rituals. We are meant to enter deeper into *bhakti* with our limited time and capacity. I read and wrote comments in PMrB as a deliberate exercise, then told of stuff that was happening in my life that day. That's PMrB. I invited the reader to come along. I spoke of being a disciple, and often cited examples from Srila Prabhupada's life as ideal. I switched regularly, like a train switching tracks, but never derailed.

" . . . the sages praised Suta although he didn't know everything. Imagine that, congratulating him for *not* knowing everything because he had spent his time cultivating *Bhagavatam* study. Good for him." (PMrB 2, p. 225)

All times are valid when you write. The main thing is to be . . . Here, I read something in the introduction to the Zen haiku of Santoka Taneda that I'd like to share. The editor explains that Santoka's poems are generally admired for their unadorned style, but this alone does not account for his great popularity.

Whatever the literary merit of his work, far more important are the special Zen qualities of simplicity (*wabi*) solitude (*sabi*), and impermanence (*mujo*) conveyed in a modern setting by his haiku. Poetry has often been nothing more than a pastime for many in China and Japan, so that portrayals of "poverty," "solitude," "meditation," and so on were mere conventions. In Santoka's case, however, such themes were absolute; no one was poorer, more alone, or more anguished. Hence his poems are alive, cutting to

the marrow of existence. *There is no dichotomy between poetry and poet, life and emotion.*

Santoka's life embodied the Zen spirit in three ways. First, since his life and poetry were one, he represents the ideal of "*no duplicity.*" *In any art or discipline it is essential to unify thought, speech, and action.* Second, *he did not mimic anyone else.* . . .

"Introduction to *Mountain Tasting, Zen Haiku*, Santoka Taneda, p. 9 [Emphasis added]

What I like about this is the call to oneness of writing and life. And the statements, "No duplicity," and "He did not mimic." I can start by not mimicking Santoka, who wandered perpetually homeless, alcoholic, and wrote very short verses. Better I be myself. Even if I'm a quiet person who lives alone in a house (and thus has very little outward adventure), I can write my truth and convey the essential qualities of the Krishna conscious equivalents to simplicity, solitude, and meditation.

Santoka's writing teacher, Seisensui Ogiwara, expounded the "theory that it is necessary for a poet to express what is in his heart in his own language without regard to any fixed form. Seisensui felt that haiku should be an impression of one's inner experiences; individual symbolism is most important."

No literary form except what impels me. But my life travels along the rails of *bhakti*, guided by guru, *sastra*, and *sadhu*. Within that stricture I flow free.

More later. Today is a vulnerable day for me. If a headache comes, I can't take the pill since I took one two days in a row.

April 28, 8:25 a.m.

Headache went down after almost twenty-four hours. I don't feel inclined to push toward a page quota in the remainder of this day. Forwarded mail has arrived, and also a manuscript to be proofread. rounds have to be chanted. Today I'll call a recovery day.

* * *

Limp-head Blues
& Limp head is happy to be back
on track, but he ain't
sure he's a devotee.
Or even a servant of one.

* * *

Will he, Willy? All he feels
is the headache's shadow
but a great improviser needs to
think on his feet.

* * *

Too fast I can't go, so take it slow.
There's no rush to die or

even to arrive at 11 a.m.

* * *

everything comes in its own time and
sure I'll be there with my
my little hands my friends wishing
me the best and me
Ready for the worst.

* * *

But I can't be sure I'm
strong enough for it "
for holocausts, friends' deaths,
burns, squabbles, break-ins,
kick-outs, or even another
let-down. Because
this limp head is
still recovering.

* * *

Limp head has his string of beads
out, folks, and we're rooting
for him. He's our man, and he's
just glad
he will die in His arms.

* * *

Krishna, Krishna "that's it
I'm told. "

* * *

12:05 p.m.

Scattered, but feeling more recovered. Letters "my answers in head but still need to
dictate. Ani made doors for the shelves, but they don't shut. Sunshine, then clouds and
rain. Everyday weather in Ireland.

* * *

2:38 p.m.

Reading about Vyasa in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and PMrB. Someone reading PMrB in
Switzerland said, "It's dense and I'm reading slowly." Yes, me too. It's a heavy, layer-by-

layer, approach "the two divisions of straight preaching and then the naked (somewhat) and vulnerable.

Someone else wrote me and marked their envelope, "Confidential." Someone times fifty wrote me. I'll answer them all. One man said he's ready to be linked to the disciplic succession. One person said, "How d'ya do?" Nobody knows my name.

This little piggy went to market, *this* little piggy stayed home, this little piggy ate porridge (*prasadam*), and *this* little piggy had none (How come?). And *this* little piggy cried wee-wee-wee *all the way home!*

All the way
back to Godhead
screaming and digging in the heels
as if we were being dragged to a slaughterhouse.

So you're reading about Vyasa? Tell us a little more. This is a good theme for a rainy day-end of April.

"Once upon a time he [Vyasadeva], as the sun rose, took his morning ablution in the waters of the Sarasvati and sat alone to concentrate." (*Bhag.* 1.4.15) Get up early and do the same. Concentrate your mind on Krishna speaking from *sastra* and in His holy name. Live in a place in the mode of goodness where such things are possible.

Once upon a time, Vyasa got up, bathed, and began to concentrate.

Once upon a time, it was April-end and raining (again), and when I looked up at the window, it was spattered with tears. reminds me of the tears that cover the faces of disappointed disciples. Dirty tears wash the face "I mean, the tears aren't dirty, but they mix . . .

with *kajjala*
and streak a face dirty.

Once upon a time, rain struck a skylight and gurgled in a stream. This is not make-believe; it actually happened. Once upon a time, despite the tide of events, without thinking that it was futile, he wrote.

* * *

[2:56] Writing In Time

He broke an aspirin. Better than his ankle. He can write now that he's insured.

They lost the key and asked me for the spare. A hare ran out and back. I'm in control of these sentences, so let them be auspicious. We should never say we have no control, or that we're not responsible for our own actions, because we are.

We are.

So make them pretty.

Pollyanna.

I didn't say that. I just said we should reach the right conclusion. We have all this *siddhanta* we can refer to. We should remain safely fixed in the Vedic conclusion "just elaborate on it some.

Okay. A new desk, a
new pullover,
a new day

quickly growing old
unraveling in quirks and kwinks.

"My *maya* is . . . "

"Stop!" I say. Get out of *maya* if you are caught. Lord Caitanya placed a hand over ramananda raya's mouth so he wouldn't repeat the most sacred and confidential pastimes that even Vyasadeva didn't reveal in the *Bhagavatam*.

Right here we have a rubber band party, and calm and peace. A sage lectured at the college and said we should strive to live in the mode of goodness. That sounded right. Someone benefited from hearing and tried to get his passionate habits harnessed "or how could he assume to help others in Krishna consciousness? We are supposed to be transcendental.

Someone sent me a diary she wrote in Vrndavana. I'll read it. She also sent me some Vraja dust in a box. How do I know it's not from Coney Island or Florida's eastern shore? I have my doubts.

My middle name is Thomas. Thomas is the apostle who praised Jesus in words stronger than any other: "My Lord! My God!" He just needed to be prodded, "Do you want material proof? Believe me." All right, said Thomas, I do. Doubting Thomas.

Flowering springtime. In PMrB he says, "I earned my oats in the gloss; now I can play ring Around the rosy." The kids were let out from school. *ree-ree-ree-ree* trilled the boys (*gopas*), and the hills echoed the same. The rolling green sward, the . . .

Out of breath. Saw someone had set up a badminton set. Patty Berra had a net and racket in backyard and a shuttle cock with a hard rubber tip and feathers. Badminton "you hit the shuttlecock and it flies over the net. Patty Berra was a friend of Erna Fritsch. Patty lived down by the ocean. She knew me, but she didn't respect me because I was so short and foolish, a non-dancer, a coward. Too shy.

And dreams. Yamuna Prabhu cooking in the kitchen and me tasting it before it was offered. Then it was snowing outside. Our dog, Mickey, was moping around. I patted him on the head, thinking he was near death. I patted him tenderly, old dog, while the snow fell softly outside 125 Katan Avenue in a dream. In a dream, Sonny learned to blow his horn forthrightly by associating (as we say) with Clifford. While awake, I heard children tumbling with joy. The dream also contained a regiment of Krishna conscious *ksatriyas*. He hired a *chaukidar* to protect my books while they were stored in a *go-down* in Vrndavana, but the mildew and rot of a 119 degree summer got into the pages. The *chaukidar* slept, but woke in time to see the iguana crawl in under the gate.

Sit up straight. Play Krishna consciousness on chopsticks. Calm down in the mode of goodness. My goodness, haven't you disowned that dream yet?

I told that man I couldn't initiate anymore. My mission is to write. Let me be happy with that.

Personal symbolism is very important. And no duplicity, just simplicity and aloneness. remember? And steady rain.

3.16

* * *

Let's Say

& This is the place where we go to church
a silent place in the middle of busy
Manhattan. That's my impression.

Oh, now I see "it's a familiar
haunt. It's "So what?" I heard it late
at night probably. Yes, they play together.

Then what?

Off alone "I would always leave the gang.

One of them usually turned and mocked me
a joke aimed at a loner, but I didn't care and
still don't. I'm bent on being alone. I would go
back to my apartment or to the streets

all the time being saved by God. I was never so utterly destroyed and corrupted that I
missed the Swami's call. If I had been madly in love, intoxicated by a beautiful woman,
thinking I'd *won* her! "I wouldn't have had the eyes to see my eternal guru.

Is this a song?

Do you belong?

* * *

This man is serious. He got that call! Like the call in me to go to him in saffron
a frayed *cadar*
but I'm romanticizing
correcting my wayward mind. Don't. Just go ahead
and *be* there.

* * *

I can't say what I'm talking about. You'll just have to get it yourself. Let's say we're
playing with toy soldiers. Or cowboys and Indians. Plastic, bow-legged, they fit on
plastic horses and come twelve in a set at Moe's. He was always getting more in "next
week." I put them together and made endless truces. Although I did like to see the
cowboys and the Indians fight. I was waiting to grow up

just to discover I was no ordinary Joe

I could take the Swami's offer
and love him.

O Vrndavana-dhama, holy land
my Swami has washed me clean. "

* * *

4:55 p.m.

I'm too tired to do anything. I keep picking up the EJW dictaphone to reply to letters.
Every time I do that, I have to play the letter into the dictaphone marked "Letters." I just

did it three times in a row! Each time I cursed myself. The last time, I made a fist and said, "I'm going to punch you in the mouth!"

Reading Roxanne Geiger's diary of her 1998 visit to Vrndavana. She's a little eccentric, but her diary is sweet and unassuming as she goes about getting the nectar in the various *tirthas*. Her attitude is always simple, submissive, and humble. She tells how she was repeatedly hit by Brijbasis throwing dye at her during Holi. Little boys surrounded her and rubbed colors in her face, then covered her eyes with their hands. An older boy watched and remarked, "Not getting angry "very nice." I started reading her diary (she sent me the original handwritten pages) with a little resentment that I had so much to read, but she gradually won me over. I don't think I could have such tolerance. She accepted everything that happened to her. Now she's back at her mother's house in Florida with her memories.

I like being able to write twenty pages a day. Now my average is dragged down by the last two "red" headache days. It's silly, I guess, to care how much you write. Compare my world "constant residing in Ireland "with Roxanne's flying over Iran, landing in Delhi, running all over Vrndavana in rickshaws . . . O Krishna, Hare Krishna. At least finish this page.

* * *

5:24 p.m., Hand Writ

I can crank out something from my pen hand. The head, the neck "sending waves of electric energy down this arm. *I can do it*. Hey, cheer me on!

Hand says, "My heart is in the highlands." He developed his own style of singing. Madhu went off to see if he can find someone to give him melodeon lessons. He wants to know what he's doing wrong and how to correct it. Silver and gold medals abound. Tell how it happened.

I told you, I won the prize for the most handsome pumpkin, for being the best storyteller-dad-uncle-priest since Lewis Carroll and Peter Pan. I also had the squattest toad, the scardiest cat, and was the best blanked-out rationer of three medications a week. And I conceal my secrets in a secret file.

Hrsi-Krishna HrsikeSa.

Hand hurts.

"I decided to bloom where I was planted," said a person from whom I haven't heard in *ages*. Another wrote that he wants to take up his *gayatri-mantras* again but forgets them. Could I remind him? Sure. Who am I to withhold a good thing? Another wrote, "I opened my business and made a million grand."

I'm just kidding. My divining rod isn't working so well. I just wanted to fill up a page or two before bedtime to let you know I'm alive and well and tomorrow will be better.

April 29, 12:05 a.m.

Come and hear Lord Krishna in *Bhagavad-gita*. *Sri-bhagavan uvaca*, "Now hear, O son of Prtha, how by practicing yoga in full consciousness of Me, with mind attached to Me, you can know Me in full, free from doubt." (Bg. 7.1)

I've been away from Krishna for a long time and for reasons that still prevail. He gives me what I want. Don't I want Him? "Concentration of the mind upon Krishna the

Supreme is made possible by prescribed devotional service in nine different forms, of which *Sravanam* is the first and most important. The Lord therefore says to Arjuna, *tac chrnu*, or 'Hear from Me.'" (Bg. 7.1, purport)

I wrote to a Godbrother about my mosquito bites. I hope to overcome them by confessing them to a close friend. He won't be contaminated by my confession, nor will he condemn me for my problems. I'm not an ideal disciple, only an aspiring one. I want to improve. And little drops of water wear away the stone. Confess it all bit by bit, and maintain hope that you will overcome. To accept everything another is "and that includes Prabhupada and Krishna "means we have to feel love.

Hearing about or from Krishna is righteous activity. "And for one who hears about Krishna, Lord Krishna, who is dwelling in everyone's heart, acts as a best-wishing friend and purifies the devotee who constantly engages in hearing of Him." (Bg. 7.1, purport) Those who understand this and who hear submissively become fixed in devotional service. We become steady when the hearing washes away our impurities. Chanting also purifies our minds and hearts. I trust both the truth of this process and the fact that it is happening to me.

Lord Krishna says He will teach Arjuna about matter and spirit and the cause of both (Himself). He often teaches analytically. I tend to think I just want to hear the spiritual part "how to *love* Him "because I've heard the other parts so many times before. But it takes comprehensive knowledge to know Krishna in truth. Purity and love are born from knowledge; it will be knowledge that transforms our lust. Ultimately, however, it isn't knowledge that saves us; the real transformation occurs when we chant with faith and devotion.

But that's not easy without knowledge. Nothing is free of effort "not surrender, not self-discipline. It all goes back to the basics: we must control the mind. An uncontrolled mind is an enemy. "For him who has conquered the mind, the mind is the best of friends; but for one who has failed to do so, his mind will remain the greatest enemy. For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity." (Bg. 6.6 - 7) If we can conquer the mind, we will follow Krishna's direction without fail. And may we be so blessed as to do so.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

My disciple, Rukmini dasi, wrote me after reading my account of my relationship with my parents. She has a passionate love for her children, so she felt for me and my parents. She imagined a scenario in which we reached out to one another and learned to accept each other. She said my mother must have been deeply hurt for all these years to have lost her only son. She said when I made that last phone call to my mother from Ireland, I should have given her my address. In other words, she thinks I should have tried more to love them. And if my mother passes away, I should pray at her grave, thanking her and my father for the life they gave me and the fact that they raised me to become a fine man.

I replied to Rukmini that I have done all I can. My life has been sold out to Srila Prabhupada and his movement, and now to my disciples and my writing, for years. I appreciated her letter, though, and I will pray for my parents as spirit souls.

Srila Prabhupada seemed to smile at my tears when I told him of my parents' initial rejection back in 1966. Srila Prabhupada had eternal vision; he knew that such rejection takes place again and again between every father and every son. Children grow up and go away. The spiritual father is the only true father; we never leave that father. If I have any fault for not honoring my parents, then I appeal to guru and Krishna. Lord Krishna absolves His devotees of all material obligations when they wholeheartedly surrender their lives to Him.

Writing this after bathing Radha-Govinda and dressing Them in another new outfit from Vrndavana. This one is cream with green patterns. Light and soft hues. I love Them to look nice, and They do. Prabhupada is nearby, and Lord Nrsimhadeva next to him. I am their *pujari*.

Tuned in a little better to *Bhajana-rahasya* this morning. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was explaining more about the *anarthas* and how to remove them. If we can free ourselves of *anarthas*, we can achieve the perfection of chanting the holy name. *Nama cintamani Krishnas caitanya-rasa vigraha*: the holy name is Krishna Himself and bestows liberation and love of God on the loving chanter.

* * *

The joints wear out. The obscured soul cannot realize God. *Ceto darpana-marjanam*: chanting cleans the mirror of the mind. The material senses can't see the name and form of God, but when you perform devotional service, beginning with the tongue, then He reveals Himself to you.

Dear parents, please forgive me. I left home and didn't care for you. I wanted to pursue my spiritual life. It must have seemed selfish to you. I never repaid you for all that you gave except to turn my back on you and join a cult. But I did it to help you and others. It's a mission you condemn because you could never understand it. I can't find fault with you for that; Krishna consciousness is simply beyond your power to understand. But that doesn't mean your ignorance and prejudice should hold me back. Although you fed and clothed me, you also covered me (or tried to) with middle-class American values "prejudice, materialism, and a mere lip service to God. You sent me into the Navy. So many wounds I carry, and they all reappear whenever I think of you. No doubt you too are wounded. I know you don't want blessings from Krishna, but I pray that you may receive them anyway. Wolfe said it right: "You can't go home again."

Dear Radha-Govinda, please be my parents. O holy name, You have absolved me from the wrong of not taking material care of my mother and father. Gurudeva, please let me serve as a prodigal son. If I offend *you*, then I have no shelter in the three worlds.

Sri Krishna Caitanya. Heated room on a chilly day. Soon time to ring Madhu and ask him to get up and prepare breakfast. I hope he becomes the all-Ireland champion in Sean-nos singing, because then they will recognize that a devotee of Krishna can lilt and offer it to God. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Krishna is the source of all beauty and all talent.

* * *

Vraja's Story
& You wanted this ability to sound
with Krishna consciousness, didn't you?
You abandoned your mother and father
for this Cherokee ride in
the night.
It was for this.

* * *

She was so fast I didn't know "
Vraja-lila writes me how the
monkey stole her eyeglasses at
Rupa Gosvami's tomb. "Just what
I feared!" She got them
back, chewed at the ends. A
Brijbasi woman lured the monkey
with sweets and it dropped the
glasses. They showed me a
photo "a female monkey with
pink nipples and white breasts sagging,
silver gray hair "hair all around
her ugly mask of a face.
Legs open showing her reddish crotch "
what a travesty of female beauty.

* * *

I'm telling you all this "I
can't grasp it myself how
this happens in the holy *dhama* or why
I'm squeamish about it. Vraja-lila drew this
moral: "First I was distressed and the monkey
was happy, but then she
was distressed and I was happy.
I never felt safe with monkeys after that."

* * *

So that's my Cherokee story it
just came and I didn't pay attention
to the lecture or the distraction
I am
here now to remember.

You are my Lord and I don't
forget that much.
Please retain me a
little life to make songs in
this world
Hari Om
Hare Krishna. "

* * *

Early-Morning review
& Scoring my pages,
cajoling words of praise "
you know where *I* come from
and Haribols from Guyana.
Going through my mail
batting back replies to a man in SD "
"No, I'm not coming there
in 1998." No, I won't go back and
try again with my mother. Yes,
I approve of your academic work.
Yes, it's good you are washing dishes to
help your mom. No, I don't
know the Sanskrit word for
fun unless you mean *vilasa* or
lila, and yes, *kinkari* means
servant and *Stotra-ratna*
is good.

* * *

Oh, for simplicity!

* * *

Chant, but of course
they say "can't"
and I'm a sorry lump myself
fourteen and counting
quick with no love.
If only I could get that
one thing I want "love of God
love of *God*
then all I did and do
may come alive before it's too late
and Krishna will

save me. "

* * *

9:10 a.m.

"The great sage Vyasadeva saw anomalies in the duties of the millennium. This happens on the earth in different ages, due to unseen forces in the course of time." (*Bhag.* 1.4.16) Ignorance causes suffering. We misuse our free will, then are placed under the control of all-powerful destiny (*kala*) in the material world. We hear this again and again, we practicing devotees, yet we have little emotional response. We're heard it too many times, perhaps, and anyway, haven't we changed our lives and begun to walk the path of *bhakti*? We are doing "all we can" (according to time, place, and person) to free ourselves. And we have the philosophy down; we have attended enough *Srimad-Bhagavatam* classes. We may even continue to attend them every day, learning to balance the ideal teachings with the realistic compromise that equals each of our lives. We are complacent. How can we tell? Nothing shocks us anymore? It doesn't even touch us. We say that if Krishna wants us to change, He will change us, either by providing an external event that leaves us no choice but to take instant shelter at His feet, or by giving us internal revelation.

I am describing the state of being jaded. If the shoe fits, wear it. But know that it's not a nice shoe. Better to remain barefoot on holy ground.

But complacency is a dire situation. We are caught in the material world and it's Kali-yuga. Vyasa edited books just for us, Lord Caitanya came just for us, and Srila Prabhupada came just to get us out of this predicament. When they approach us today with an invitation to surrender, do we reply, "I just gave to one of you people yesterday"?

Anomalies of the age. "Sats tends to be eccentric, talking to the moon or searching the outer spectrum for sounds and their meanings." (PMrB II, p. 255) Good when he *does* cut loose, busts through with heart, gut, honest, unconscious extra force coming from some place beyond the usual level of energy. Please make it true what we have said. We should "Pitch in" and "Save Earth Now!" That's done by the welfare work of distributing Krishna consciousness, the only panacea. Mean it, live it. And know that people die for lack of what is found in poems. (The poems have to be *Bhagavatam*-based.)

* * *

9:58 a.m., Hand Writ

Okay, hand in a body and sing your song. 'Cause I got rhythm. I got my gal. Who could ask for anything more?

Dear Sincere, I got your letter, and thank you for the enclosed check. I encourage you in what you're doing. Is that especially because you sent a check? No, but we could sure use the money. This broke artist has no other way to prepare his art room.

Sandman. Ferry. Left hand
cold.

Then give it a glove.

I would and

I did.

Want one for the right?

No, it may slow progress. It's not freezing in here, but after all it's Ireland. It never quite gets warm.

So, you want to live here with your spiritual family?

Hand-oriented. Hand grinder. I wanted to say it's the end of April and I'm getting used to a warm room. I have a delicate body "a prince.

Something came in a dream "I don't bother to record them much anymore.

I'm more conscious.

I think I'll stop this before it gets more handy. It only started because I had a certain hunch that a freer hand could help me tell my story.

Fair enough.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

I'm looking for more seamless writing, but it occurred to me that those who have clear hearts are lucky. Krishna, Krishna.

* * *

3:27 p.m.

Something's going on with me, I don't know what. Don't want to do certain things. Kind of blue. Perform; write for whom?

Krishna far away. Where I put Him. Krishna, I do allow myself to change into a gnome, don't I?

It doesn't matter. All that's left now is to live out my karma. Eyeglasses loose, no big pain, but pain is always just on the way.

He wrote for himself, he said, then added, "Maybe my brothers are trying to tell me something. I should listen to them, even if they're stern." He has decided to give some stuff up. We're all stern about lust. And this and that. I don't have time to say everything at once, and right now, I feel tired of the extreme regulation of my departmentalized day. Want to break out of it a little.

Cry a little, sigh a little. Let them make fun if they like. Santoka wrote a haiku out of a day and I just write the day. But I keep wondering what "they" think "my guru, my brothers, and anyone else.

He mocks those with "emotional needs" "says they're never satisfied. Laugh at those who opted like a fluent modernist. I don't know. I want to see Krishna and to be with Him. Maybe I'm tired of the slightly phony, pushing edge I assume when I have to face people. It's as if I feel my integrity being leached from my body. Or maybe it's not that exactly. I'm just sheer tired of having to face each person like a priest hearing confession. At least Catholic priests have rote remedies; I have to approach each person and each problem as individual. Each one wants a piece of me, of my wisdom and applied knowledge. It's an inevitable fatigue I feel. The old has served me well in the past, but where to go next with myself is uncertain. That, too, creates exhaustion.

Because this bowl is empty. I do know, however, that begging bowls accept both sun and rain.

* * *

After reading Poets
Me at the crossroads of downstairs
M. starts up the jigsaw then
hammers away so the
men in the yard cleaning up will
think he's working as passionately as they are.
I know his secret "he'd rather
be playing melodeon.

* * *

I don't pretend to work I
just hang out upstairs
unseen, pace and chant *japa*,
at a sort of crossroads
deciding how to write without falling
off any cliffs, or worse
falling down.
How to stay close to *sastra*?

* * *

How about by writing a "How To" book?
Preachers made fun
of our brother who
two years ago disappeared
to fulfill his emotional needs. One
preacher quipped twice, "Emotional
needs," as if we have to release them after
long suppression and that will make us happy.
The preacher was right to scorn it, but
I remembered that poor lonely brother and
preferred his gentle mood to what seems so harsh
in this brother. Doesn't this joking brother
have emotional needs? Or are they
all fulfilled by meeting around the cracker barrel
with his peers?

* * *

Yes, I favor the gentle release,

the relaxing song, the path of *yukta-vairagya* that leads us to God.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

You must, Mister, you must. KC man "KC man, be a follower and find out stuff no one else does. Sacrifice thyself, but don't cheat thyself out of going back to Godhead. I'd really like to go there but it seems "

I wouldn't want to be with there *many* brothers and sisters. I mean, I wouldn't mind if they were all there, but I hope I'll have my own room. Seems I am a hermit after all.

Bang, bang "they are hammering those shelves for the hermitage. "It cost a lot of money to keep Gandhi poor," and it takes a lot of noise to create a place for silence. It also takes a lot of time to prepare a comfortable berth for these last few years.

Before he gets kicked out.

But he's not sitting around waiting for death; he's writing *now*. Men with paint.

* * *

Save the stuff. This pen skips. I feel like I should write everything twice. I can't stay away from holy scripture, but sometimes it's hard to live *with* it "especially when your attitude is stuffy and stultifying. When I get like that, I know it's time to get out there among the dandelions. (I sympathize with your irreverence toward John Wills.)

It's five o'clock.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

End a day. It doesn't matter how many pages I wrote or what combination of drawings and words; a devotee needs only the loving arms of the Lord to sustain him. In sleep, even when we dream so hopelessly far away from divine release, He is the underpinning. Like Kurma under the mountain. He's here.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:58 p.m.

Maybe closed out two repertoire items today: "Hand Writ" and "reading and Writing PMrB." Similar can appear without headings, more discrete, one blend. Let there be one hymn, one work. I am trying to be decent, not a renegade, but quiet and alone. The angle of the lamp just now makes the ink shine ink in my eyes. Pulse on. But I know my affixes and prefixes won't save me at death. *Bhaja-govinda*.

M. says we've run out of money to construct the art room, but he can do a job on making it ready with what we have "table, cork board, and paint. A poor man's studio. Splash and be happy. After all, you're not a casualty. It's true you could have done better, but at least you flew to Pittsburgh. You made it that far. You are not a phony with a chandelier. You are a different kind of phony, one with sponges and brooms and

linoleum and a house, but no children. Today I heard a brother speak the Absolute Truth, but he lives it in the institution's shadow. He speaks boldly but can offer no solutions. He gives that old-new definition of what it means to be a devotee, and there's no room for compromise or even persons. A person like that makes me quake. I have to run to other friends and ask, "Did you *hear* what he *said*?" But does it affect me? No, I'm resolute in purpose and my aim is one "to run and serve."

April 30, 12:05 a.m.

Had a long, seemingly endless dream about the fall of Hong Kong at the beginning of World War II. It was a film. It had no central characters, but many minor characters and many sub-plots. The film showed how gradually different people were affected. It didn't show military action but more the social effects of war. I finally woke myself up to escape the dream. To watch so many lives on film created a sense of endless entanglement.

Anyway, let it go. This is the time I give to my attempt to contact Krishna by reading His words in *Bhagavad-gita*. But I feel like I have a Hong Kong drowsiness, and I also feel an uncertainty about whether I'm doing the best I can right now to serve Prabhupada. Let me go forward. As Santoka writes:

No path but this one "

I walk alone.

And:

There is nothing else I can do;

I walk on and on.

And:

This straight road,

Full of loneliness.

* * *

Now let's try some *lectio divina*. Now let's allow Krishna to speak for Himself. "Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavor for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth." (Bg. 7.3)

It is very difficult to know Krishna. It is easier to know Brahman or Paramatma. If we know these other aspects of the Absolute Truth, that doesn't mean we know Krishna.

Nondevotees can't know Him at all. Nondevotees think the *bhakti* path is easy, but they can't practice it. "Actually the path of *bhakti* is not easy."

Yes, I know.

I find a similarity in my application of *bhakti* and the lonely statements sankirtana and *prasadam*, and managing temples; we're always attending meetings and seminars, and preaching to guests and each other. How can anyone possibly be lonely in this process?" But people are lonely; it's not some characteristic peculiar to me. If not lonely, sometimes alienated. Not quite feeling themselves. Or loners.

But we are loners protected by friends. That is true.

* * *

Now that I know more about the sheep, it's a burden to hear them crying at night. I've liked watching them from my window, and have even called M. in to watch the spring lambs with their mothers. I thought sheep were kept by herdsman mostly for their wool. M. says people keep sheep mostly for their meat, and of course, everything is calculated scientifically. The males are killed early. All we see now are the mothers and their babies. Mothers are allowed to live because they can give birth. When they stop producing lambs, they too will be killed. Many of the lambs are also killed each year, because people like their meat tender. The exploitation of one species by another "this is our idyllic view from the window. But I know the shepherds are actually more ignorant than they are "at heart, cruel.

* * *

The sheep, I suppose, are part of my endless story. I tell myself, "Please accept it." I beg Lord Krishna, "Please accept it." I submit myself to Srila Prabhupada and ask, "Please accept it." May my books serve others. That's all I want.

It's now 12:30 a.m., and Praghosa and Goloka are just returning from Dublin. I hear their car. I find it encouraging that they are so determined in their service. Let me also be determined.

Only the pure devotees can know something of Krishna, "because Krishna is benevolently inclined to His devotees."

"No one can understand Krishna as He is by the blunt material senses. But He reveals Himself to the devotees, being pleased with them for their transcendental loving service unto Him." (BrS 1.2.234, quoted in Bg. 7.3, purport)

May Krishna reveal Himself to me as I chant His holy names and tread my path.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

Jaya Nrsimhadeva. Struggling to decorate Radha-Govinda nicely. For the first time, They are wearing the white and pink outfit from Vrndavana. Radha's blouse and Govinda's *dhoti* are pink and have little rose buds sewn onto them. The effect is delicacy, and I see His lotus foot. This is Prabhupada's kindness . . . I say such flowery things all the time to caress myself and to caress the Deities in words. Why not? Must I always be harshly denigrating in the name of honesty? No, we should never be false. If sweetness wants to come out, let it out.

While I did the *puja*, I listened to tapes we made some years ago of *Bhajana-rahasya*, with verses supporting the fourth verse of the *Siksankirtana* and who has executed any of the nine processes of devotional service to perfection. I don't know anything about any of it, but I am allowed to serve in the vicinity of such topics.

* * *

"O Lord of the universe, O Soul of the universe" . . . While chanting, those words sometimes echoed in my head. I won't expound on my unworthiness here. It's not a fit topic.

O Govinda, are You looking at me while You play Your flute? Another day filled with hope and opportunity.

* * *

In the meadow, five butterlarks sang, delighted. At least they were free of man's grip, although man is raping their forests. But these birds were not caged; they could not be slaughtered as easily as sheep or the innocent cows. Srila Prabhupada says the population will be reduced by famine and flood "natural disaster. Natural disaster is a sign that the Lord is meting out karma for animal slaughter.

* * *

Madhu will go to Dublin after lunch to see an old, famous Irish musician. He's looking for someone to show him what he's doing wrong on the melodeon. O God, how I run out of things to say.

Krishna, Krishna. And don't be disturbed. Go to God, who is dancing in the fields, playing His flute. Here, Lord, is the love I brought from the plains of Nebraska, from the Grand Canyons and Gobi Desert, from the top of a minaret . . .

Remember that song on your mother's radio? "See the pyramids along the Nile . . . just remember you belong to me."

"You belong to me." A woman asserts herself, and the man agrees to be bound. The *sadhu* cuts at those bonds callously. Love is for Krishna.

And who has attraction for Krishna? Who loves Him like *that*? Such love is not easy to attain.

I prefer not to put people down. Go ahead, tell him, "Your wife sounds like a nice person." Or, "I was shocked to hear you were in the hospital." And don't forget, you belong to me. See the pyramids along the Nile and all that.

See the red Fort and the Krishna-Balaram Mandir, go to the Guesthouse restaurant and to Radha-kunda and Ter-kadamba (but not when it's dark out "too many thieves). Go where you want, but remember you belong to me. You belong to Krishna. Don't go consorting with Buddhists or Christians or Beat poets or hardware store owners or Irish banshees. Just remember, you belong to Gaura-Nitai. Play the Ilion pipes and the drum of Ireland, but remember . . .

And don't forget to fill the hot water bottle for my post-breakfast nap. remember to insist on setting up the art room. Remember to correct your errors and stop being phony. Remember that when you chant Hare Krishna, you should try to hear the names and be prayerful. Remember you are not a meat-eater, not violent. Remember you promised you'd be a *sannyasi* "always. Remember not to overeat or to dally with women, not to seek power, to be a preacher, to be a repentant ex-GBC man. Remember that you'll have to repeat all this, and you can't avoid that just to present something novel. And please chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

* * *

Don't Be Harsh
& "If you want lust, you're in the wrong
movement!" he said. Maybe they'll reply
"Then I'll got to another movement!"

* * *

So make them feel at home "
that's best. Acorn, popcorn, extras.
Walks, swims, sits for *Gita* I mean
emotional swings and being nice
while paying dues
sitting up with
troubled friends.

* * *

Hurry out this mantra. "

* * *

Before You Burn on the riverbank
& Hold 'em, Joe. He's got calypso
in his blood. But I have already
been there and back.

* * *

I want to be something of a true person.
An artist has to be content with
every moment as inspired by God
and can't be the best at all
times.

* * *

At least he can be a KC person
and ride out on that wave
flailing his arms as
he burns on Yamuna's bank
like everyone else.

* * *

He flips livid he freezes
like everyone else. His pelvis
separates from the rest. Like
all *jivas* he fries and dries.

* * *

But each soul is alone
to turn in eternal true moment
to his worshipable God
and a few are fortunate to
meet the *sad-guru*.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada on the *vyasasana*.
A man in prison for twenty years
asks, "Do they still worship
Srila Prabhupada as in the 1970s when
I was there?" I assured him
we've got a big statue in
a prominent place.

* * *

Beware your fake allegiance
your denial, your night
waiting in the airport
lounges. Be careful of
women. Be fervent
to pray at the moment when
you need Him most. "

* * *

9:10 a.m.

No *sastra* right now. Outside walking around the house. I can hear recorded violin music and Madhu playing along with it, live bouzouki, in his cottage. As I walk, I feel the strain on my ankle due to the uneven ground. Occasionally, I hear part of a mantra and wonder what is happening to me. I am also considering the idea that if I stay in one place long enough with a regimented schedule, I will probably fall into a rut. How to keep a monk's cell vibrant?

I think of fighting off all opposition from this cell. My disciple, Dhira-Krishna dasa, who is in prison, wrote that he now has a cell mate. That means there are now two people occupying a space 6'x8'. The guy smokes, drinks coffee, eats meat, and reads girly magazines, but after two days with Dhira, the man gave up smoking and coffee

and now eats a "Krishna diet." Dhira didn't mention whether he also gave up the girly magazines.

Am I thinking of some change? Possibly. But I have seen in life that even when we make outward changes, very little actually changes in our lives. I can't help but think that at this time, it is probably better for me to dig in and do what I am doing in earnest. Because what difference am I seeking? Do I want to write in a different language (as in Joyce's crazy *Wake*)? Write less for the reader? Or maybe I should give up writing to become a gardener, or like Sacinandana Swami, spend all my time on *japa*. Or prayer (become a Krishtian).

None of that will last. I will always go back to writing because it's all I know. Waiting for a divining rod to possess me and tell me what to do.

* * *

9:50 a.m.

Open wide. Compacted wisdom. He cuts to the bone. He . . . he.

You mean, you don't know what to do? Why not recite the verses of *Brahma-samhita* aloud? Or play at Tao and do Absolutely Nothing? Just make sure it's a responsible Nothing.

Guru-seva sent me unsolicited a large book of an artist's notes and spontaneous self-portrait mandalas. He's Buddhist-Jungian-Blakian, and I don't *need* all *that*. I want God consciousness "Krishna consciousness.

I just want a banjo. I want

a rock star.

You don't!

People misunderstand you. Speak true.

I want pain-free food, the crispy-tangy sweet bread *mataji* makes. I can speak cross (vexed) when I want. What I likes I gets. That's the rubber-band theory.

The write-until-you-get-a-headache plan. I believe in that. Look at all the good stuff I've reaped.

I say . . . I'll wait until a desire comes for something rather than moving myself by rote from one project to another according to the clock. That's the point.

* * *

11:50 a.m.

Mint tea "M. and Bhakti-rasa like to drink it. Shaved face, bathed with lots of hot and some very cold water poured from a cup. Waiting for a head vise to get a little worse before I take the medication. Stay cheerful.

I wrote a note to Aniruddha, asking him to complete the kitchen as soon as possible, then do the art room and the grounds. The work has been dragging on for weeks. I don't feel settled with so much construction going on. So he's aware, and I think we'll bear down on it. I said I wanted M. off construction and back to being my secretary "secretary and part-time Irish trad musician.

Next week Kirtana-rasa comes, so that will give next week a whole new orientation. We'll do one-hour interviews about the letters I received from Srila Prabhupada in 1971.

* * *

Daydreams

& I was daydreaming that instead of red Something playing trumpet at a high school dance, what if I stood up and played like a muted Miles circa 1958, a very slow ballad, and all the guys and girls would be astounded? They would be prone to mock it, but it would be too good to stop. The teachers would also be amazed, "We didn't know."

Or instead of Teddy rice, who played tenor sax at the dance, I would stand and play a ballad like "Trane. Why dream like that? You want to win some crinoline-skirted princess?

Why not dream of going to Krishna and serving His associates? Put your daydream power into *that*.

* * *

Okay, I'm going to breakfast at Mother Yashoda's and assisting Radha, who is cooking accepting my orders by Her least gesture.

Or I'm with Prabhupada again, and in half an hour we go over all traumas from 1966 - 77 and 1978 - 98 and I feel resolved and ready to serve him "just like Arjuna was ready to serve Krishna by the end of *Bhagavad-gita*.

I leave the room
Ready to shout
and shove if necessary. "

* * *

12:25 p.m.

Just took a red-capsuled Esgic. Now I'll lay down on my bed and listen to the loud hammering below. Then my mind will sail into semi-sleep, I won't even know where I went. I expect relief from the pill "its power. And if that's true, I'll eat a relaxed lunch and be able to write a short piece in the afternoon: I'll praise Vaisnavas, lament for sheep, and do something constructive for humanity.

Mr. Clean. I want each cleaning station equipped with sponge, mop, rags, brush, and pan. I'll go at it when I can, wiping the floor to remember Krishna. It's a form of meditation. Go ahead and laugh, but that only proves that you don't know the inner meaning of "Cleanliness is next to godliness." I do.

* * *

1:25 p.m.

Listening to JS's "Psychology 108" lectures from last year. He praises India as the model, even modern-day India, for *varnaSrama* and family life. Indians, he says, tend to live a life of sacrifice. The West he sees as a place of lust and "me generation" values. Such values, he says, are tearing apart ISKCON.

If I had been in his class, I would have raised my hand and spoken in praise of the hybrid plant known as Krishna consciousness in the West. Indian family ties (we see it in Ireland and Italy too) prevent individuals from joining the Krishna consciousness movement. Why follow your mother if she wants you to be a pious *karmi*? Otherwise, he's right to condemn the Western mood of sense gratification and speculation. So few, West or East, are willing to embrace Krishna consciousness fully.

As to why ISKCON isn't attractive or pure, it seems more complicated than that we are suffering from an invasion of lusty Western values. ISKCON has failed on its own grounds and can't blame "the West" for that. And right or wrong, ISKCON is changing radically. No one can turn back the clock, even with sharp logic or hard arguments against corrupt liberal values. I tend to refrain from such strong preaching: "This is what's wrong, and this is what we have to do about it."

* * *

2:38 p.m.

Don't expect to come to the page with a neat aphorism or short essay in mind, or think that you'll hit on one just by writing, but throughout the day, as you breathe and be, surely you can write of your self and of life beyond the self.

Here are some things I wanted to save from the introduction to Santoka's poems:

He described his greatest happiness as "one room, one person, one light, one desk, one bath, and one cup of *sake*."

Every evening he recorded in his journal the name of the inn, the sites he had seen, the money received from begging, his expenses for that day, and then the haiku he had written together with his reflections. His journal was his self-portrait.

Walking was his *zazen* . . . while begging was the discipline of killing selfish desires:

Pierce the poverty of the poorest man,

Throw yourself into the most foolish foolishness.

rather than imitate anyone else

Use the nature you were born with.

" . . . while others maintained haiku to be literature or art, Santoka felt that haiku was his *samadhi* . . .

"Introduction to *Mountain Tasting*, by John Stevens

3:18 p.m.

Another room in which to write "the bedroom. I look out a window and see only the upper portion of a tree and the top of a low Wicklow mountain. The sky is usually cloud-covered. One doesn't even see clouds as shapes, but the whole sky is gray most of the time. The tree is also gray with a few horizontal bark markings "like birches have. Buds still unopened on this last day of April. I quieted a headache by taking a pill, so I ought to thank allopathic medicine and Krishna for allowing me to write. I don't mean to put medicine before God "He is the source of all medicine and its potency. And maybe I shouldn't have taken it "He will teach me in any case "but three times a week I take this easier route through pain.

I have only a desk lamp; otherwise this room is dark. It's the scene of sleep and dreams. I don't do much of anything else in here.

Aniruddha is downstairs working to get our kitchen in order. I thought of sharing a friendly word with him, but that would have to come naturally. You can't rehearse friendship. Anyway, the best I have to give is in this book; let me stay alone and hatch it.

Funny that I identify so much with Santoka, because he was always walking and I hardly walk at all. It's his spirit of aloneness and his direct, simple writing of self that appeals to me.

Rather than distill experience into a few moving lines, I need to write much of the time. If living is like breathing, it doesn't seem enough to gasp only four or five times in twenty-four hours. Also, to live in a continuous writer's *samadhi*, I have to live and write continuously. Otherwise, I'd get out of touch. Therefore, I try to link the times when I'm not writing with the times that I am, and by practice I hope to get better at making clear utterance. Writing can begin to breathe, to bleed, to live. I remember the author of *The Cloud* saying that we feel many little aspirations to love God during the day, but we tend not to notice them. If we ignore them, they depart. If I write on the hour, I'll be more likely to catch those aspirations to become Krishna conscious and build on them.

The tree branches move in the wind. That tree, like writing, is alive. People pretty much leave the trees alone here "I mean the few that are deciduous. The pines are all crops, as are the sheep. That's why I now admire the crows "they're out of man's grip. Krishna consciousness teaches us to be nonviolent by giving Krishna consciousness to others. So let's do something about it and not just sit around telling others to preach or feeling sorry (sentimentality) for living entities you could actually help.

I think I'll go downstairs soon "take a walk through the yard and chant a few rounds. I'll tell Aniruddha what I've learned recently about the stark fate of lambs. I'd like to hear how he deals with the violence in this country. It probably doesn't really touch the devotees much; we can't be that sensitive. We have to block it out.

Ambarisa from Poland writes that he was recently hospitalized. In the hospital, he got to musing about how he might die. When he thought of his newly married wife, he was overcome by emotion. When he thought of me, however, he admitted he didn't feel much. He asked me about that. I said something typical in return and suggested he read my books. Also, if he wants to develop our relationship, he will have to take the opportunity to be with me when I travel in Europe. Emotional ties and needs . . .

How glibly we refer to that higher taste that will replace lust.

"The *sankirtana* movement," somebody sankirtana movement? Oh yes, oh yes, I know it's when we all go on *harinama*; it's in the festival, in the daily temple *kirtanas*. And if I even ask such questions, well, that's only more proof that I'm a deviant, a slough-off. I'm one of those guys who walks away palled just when the *kirtana* gets going. But let me tell you, you fellows don't always know what the *sankirtana* movement is or why . . .

Oh, shut up. Look at that tree. No one is attacking it or me, and even if they are, it doesn't touch me much. I'm too deep in the hills where I can walk alone and thank Krishna, although my heart is still gagged and my mouth is full of mumbles as I try to chant that most holy name, poor soul that I am.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

Narottama dasa Thakura went to Vrndavana. I'm reading the story, tradition, legend, biography as Satyaraja variously calls it. Narottama, the best of men.

They have decided to build me a Japanese garden here "does that mean it will be mostly stones? No upkeep. Hope it doesn't create *Sunyavadi* thoughts. I want to see Krishna there and chant His holy names. When I walk in the yard now, I often linger by the shed where we store the turf and wood. The trees are covered in moss. It's a good hiding spot when a car pulls up and someone enters the house. I can also see the neighboring pastures from here. Maybe on some days, the cows or sheep will graze close to our yard. I can't save them. Hare Krishna.

Narottama. My new, free-floating approach to a schedule may evolve more . . . I reach out spontaneously for things to do, to read, to be. What is best suited to my attempt to reach Krishna? *Bhagavad-gita*? Lord Krishna says the souls are superior to matter; they *manipulate* matter. Krishna controls both souls and matter, but only His devotees recognize that.

There are some old-fashioned candle holders. You hold them by a ring attached at the side and then walk through darkened rooms, lighting your way. They got them for when the power fails. Use them in Krishna's service, and then be ready to leave them behind. It's never too late to practice detachment.

* * *

5:58 p.m.

Aniruddha said he will work in the kitchen until 7 p.m. I can hear him sawing and hammering away. I thought I should work at the typewriter to reciprocate for his labors. Let my labor match his.

Just wrote a letter to a Godbrother in which I spoke about friendship. I said it means liking and being interested in something because our friend is interested in it. It also means being open about the fact that we are sometimes on different wave lengths. It means protecting one another's solitude. My Godbrother expressed his interest in detachment "preparing to leave the world by jettisoning attachment "which he does by trying to intensify his chanting of the holy name. He's attracted to chanting, and when his attraction fails, he tries to call out in desperation. I'm not so much cultivating

detachment but hoping to burn up my material proclivities in Krishna's service. I don't know how else to do it. It was a longish letter. Now he owes me.

Today I thought how much I play the role of liking to live alone, going out to my Japanese garden or lighting my way through darkened rooms with a pewter candle holder. I thought I sounded like a character in Dickens "an old, white-haired guy in a long nightgown and worn slippers. Yes, that's me, up at midnight to read a tiny amount of *Krishna-katha*. Because He's talking to us, to me. He teaching so many things I need to hear.

But I especially want to hear certain things. I know what they are when I hear them, and I feel the immediate response in my heart. When He calls me to exchange with Him in *bhakti*, when Prabhupada says something that grabs me, moves me . . . The analytical things don't do much for me. I keep reading, looking for that magical touch.

I started off well on my *gayatri*, then got lost along the way. My car went off the road, and I must have been driving through cow pastures "I didn't even notice until the car flipped over and over, and like a sleepwalker, I slowly righted the mental chariot and tried again: *klim Krishnaya govindaya gopijana* . . . or words to that effect. May Krishna revive my lost love for Him, and may I kick out envy when it comes. Kick over the poisonous mushroom of dislike for devotees. Hare Krishna. He hunts for words as someone hunts for mushrooms in the forest. I told my friend I'm not detached because I am writing "that's my service.

You said all that? You are quite a person. When are you going to the Himalayas to walk the path of great departure? You don't know? Then when are you at least going to Inis rath again? And how do you plan to celebrate Nrsimha-caturdaSi?

Oh, in no special way. I'll be here, just here. Perhaps I'll do an interview with Kr, because you see, I get them headaches.

I am matching Aniruddha on this typewriter after all. My sounds are not quite as loud as his, but they are industrious. He carves wood and I carve sentences. I'm not begging and walking the miles that Santoka walked each day. We each have our sojourn in this world and travel in one way or another, as the sun moves from east to west. We fritter most of our time away. We're not so noble, actually, and barely extend ourselves to others or turn completely to Krishna leaving all else behind. Then whatever we do, grab onto it and hold it for dear life. O Krishna, only in that way will we save our lives from being simply ordinary.

I'll tell you, I was outside and walked down the rocky road that leads up to this house. This road is so bad that some cars won't even attempt to drive up it in case they get damaged. In the winters, the heavy rains run down from the mountain and gouge out streams, washing away all the gravel that Praghosa has put there to improve the road. Of course, the government is not going to pave it because only two of us live here. There's no need. I thought of hanging a sign on the gate: "Don't enter: meditating." But that might be an invitation to thieves. Don't most monks have valuables? Better to write, "Beware of guard dog." Or, "Blessed are the poor," or "*Karuna-bhavan* and home of the retired fierce, port of individual rest, and the last stop before Goloka Vrndavana." "I can't see you 'cause I just wanna chant Hare Krishna." Write in peace, rest in peace.

May 1, 12:10 a.m.

"All created beings have their source in these two natures. Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both the origin and the dissolution." (Bg. 7.6)

I want to feel and be in the *sastra*, in topics discussed by the *sastra*, and not just in my intellect. When intellect reads this verse, it says, "Claims like this "although not as great "are made by Jesus Christ. Many *mad* men have made such claims. What about that fellow who wrote *Conversations with God*? But here is Krishna speaking in *Bhagavad-gita*." Then I think of the secondhand report I heard from a devotee who heard a Godbrother lecture. Was that envy I felt? "Could he actually have such realization? Why do people appreciate him so much?" This is the mind, and it pollutes the intellect, and we lose track of the real Krishna when we operate without getting to the heart. Although the Bhaktivedanta purports seem to be addressed to the intellect (are discursive) they're transcendental. They can strike the heart.

(The *maha-mantra* is especially powerful at bypassing the intellect and reaching the heart. The chanting has no discursive content. I'll be chanting again in less than an hour, but for me it is not even a matter of turning an intellectual exercise into a heart one; it is a prolonged torment of ignoring the holy name.)

"O conqueror of wealth, there is no truth superior to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread." (Bg. 7.7) Purport: "As far as *Bhagavad-gita* is concerned, the Absolute Truth is the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and this is confirmed in every step." Turn to scripture if you want to increase your faith in Krishna. read it aloud, intone it, ruminate on it, and pray.

Wear the verses as a garland, although they can begin to weigh around our necks if we don't receive them nicely. We can be shut out from their meanings. What use is a big collection of memorized verses to titillate the intellect? The verses are meant to unlock our hearts.

Meditate on these quotes:

"That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend and can therefore understand the transcendental mystery of this science." (Bg. 4.3)

" . . . those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Krishna when they are spoken by Krishna Himself. The devotees will always worship such authoritative statements of Krishna because they are always eager to know more and more about Him." (Bg. 4.4, purport)

"The jurisdiction of Krishna consciousness extends everywhere, and one who knows Krishna consciousness is blessed. Those who do not know Krishna are in illusion, and so knowledge of Krishna is liberation, and ignorance of Him is bondage." (Bg. 7.8, purport)

I have tried to range out to see just how far Krishna's jurisdiction goes. I have looked for Him in places other than *Bhagavad-gita*. That's all right. The *Bhagavad-gita* sends us on a mission "read what Jesus says at the Last Supper in the Gospel of John; read the haiku of a wandering Zen monk in Japan; free-write. Look around you "at that spider on your desk. Is there anywhere a place without Krishna?

And the *Bhagavad-gita* where Krishna Himself speaks? return to it moment by moment to takes sips at the fount "faithful, feeling sips. Take those sips while sitting

with the actual book and again later in recollection while you clean the floor. "O son of Kunti, I am the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable *om* in the Vedic mantras; I am the sound in ether and the ability in man." (Bg. 7.8)

Swami, controlling the senses
was a vague idea but now you know
it means attraction to Krishna
and only Krishna. It is not necessary
to restrain our thirst, but let us
drink only from that one fountain.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Hearing my voice confidently reading and discussing *Radha-bhava* on the recording of *Bhajana-rahasya*. We made this recording three years ago when M. and I were in Italy at a retreat house. What do I think of it now? I still think it's private. We didn't say anything wrong; we spoke only *siddhanta*. It's just that we don't normally discuss such topics because they are confidential. Our only mistake in those days was that we were too eager to speak such confidential things. We even thought that since we were preachers, we could find a way to share or advocate Bhaktivinoda Thakura's teachings in regular exchanges with devotees. Some of that was pride, "Just see how advanced I am." The rest was naivete. However, the *Slokas* in *Bhajana-rahasya* cannot be denied. Chanting Hare Krishna according to the teachings of *Siksastakam* leads to our understanding Lord Caitanya's mood of separation from Krishna, His *Radha-bhava*. While Lord Caitanya cannot be imitated, we are meant, ultimately, to follow Him.

Radha-Govinda cooperated today "They allowed me to dress Them in a delicious, almost-red color. This outfit was sewn by Maha-mantra dasi, who serves the Radha-Govinda of Inis rath. I'm eager for her to sew my Radha-Govinda another set of clothes.

Srila Prabhupada is also well dressed. I'd like to have a large collection of silk *kavacas* from the devotees in Mayapur. They make and offer them to Lord Nrsimha, Can someone gather them for me? Would Srila Prabhupada like to wear them? I like him to look regal, colorful, but simple in dress, like a *sannyasi*.

When I look past the altar and around the room, the other things here sing out their existence. It's a quiet hour; I have to fill it up by thinking of the many books I'd like to read, to study, to pray from. But I know it's all more than I can do. I have to choose among exciting projects and do what I can according to my limits. Do the basic things. Then, if there is time, I'll do more free-writing.

Santoka said his greatest happiness was "one room, one person, one life, one desk, one bath, and one cup of *sake*." I don't ask for the *sake*, but two meals a day instead. Otherwise, Hare Krishna.

* * *

Sips at the fount. May I come throughout the day to drink the clear water? It's intoxicating. O Krishna, Your words are the water of life. I return to taste more, one

verse at a time. They are my fountain of youth, my fountain of eternity. Each time I sip, I pray to write something worthy to glorify You.

Aimlessly, buoyantly,
Drifting here and there;
Tasting the pure water.

* * *

My throat is parched "my soul cries out for water.

* * *

Heard Srila Prabhupada make arguments to defend various points. He was speaking on a morning walk in Hawaii, January 1974. I was present, and Nitai, and we were both counterarguing, playing the "they said" role. Srila Prabhupada said that he had not seen what the scientists want us to accept. Why, then, should he accept it on their authority? I suddenly realized that it wasn't important to judge whether or not Srila Prabhupada's examples and logic are always perfect. His perfection was that he continued to argue on Krishna's behalf, always seeking better arguments, better challenges, fighting atheistic conclusions. His arguments were good and strong, but of course logic is not the way by which we understand Krishna. And he didn't claim it was or that his arguments were without flaw. He said *sastra* was the only *pramana* we needed. Still, because he knew we were such skeptics, he often used logic to defend the position of *Sabda-brahma* and to prove that Krishna was the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

On the walk, the devotees told him of the latest activities of a guru who claimed he was God. Prabhupada pointed out how his activities were controlled by higher powers. A disciple replied, "They say that is his *lila*."

"Then I kick on your face! That is your *lila* "that I should kick you, or it is my *lila* to kick you?. As if *lila* is such a cheap thing."

All right, finish this page true blue and get out your crayons so you can doodle while you talk to your secretary. Hear what he gained from meeting with the Irish musicians in town. What did he purchase, a comforter? A board to put up in the art room? Chant Hare Krishna and become detached. You are the writer and *brahmana* hermit, so play it out. Don't wear the veil; dance on the hill. You can do it. Let us hear you chanting clearly. Let us see you pacing quietly. Let us see that you are centered and serene and creative and *parampara*. Let us see you reading that book "*Bhagavad-gita As It Is* "and tasting its sweetness.

* * *

8:50 a.m.

I can sip at Krishna's words anytime. May I become like a bumblebee landing in the whorl of a lotus, then becoming intoxicated by the pollen. There's no escape for an intoxicated bee, and when the sun sets, the lotus petals close around it. It drowns in nectar.

So sip.

And cut through with your little sawlike teeth. Always do some surgery or other on your *anarthas*.

He went out into the yard. Two men were talking there. He bowed down to them, touching his forehead to the ground. Then he walked outside, under the arch, so he could be alone. A girl's new bicycle sprawled in the middle of the road. He walked down the hill chanting forgetfully on his beads, aware that it was his fifteenth round. In the house on a hill, a neighbor was standing outside. He had returned that morning at 1:30 a.m. The girl looked out the archway, saw the chanter walking, and went shyly back into her yard. He kept to himself. He noticed the roadside stream wasn't running, although it was full of water. I won't tell the rest, but soon the traffic cleared, and he returned to his own yard, circumambulated a few times on the uneven walk, and went back inside.

The chanter indoors had seen that it was a beautiful day and that the birds seemed happy. This left him at a loss for words. He thought of saying, "Yes, but it'll probably be cloudy in an hour," or some other similar non-joyous comment. Grumpy. Perhaps it's because he saw the sheep "almost all of them as good as dead. What good is it if they run happy through the pastures?

But he wanted to be agreeable to his May first assessment: "It's a beautiful day. The sun is shining; the birds are singing." As if to cheer himself up, he listened to a Communist give an even dimmer demythologization, turning legendary heroes into malcontents. Humbug.

Wearing a winter coat, a knit hat, his hood up, his gloves on "he glanced around him and saw that most people go bare-headed in only a sweatshirt.

Dim view. Sweatshirt. I don't need logos or repertoire items. Just walk and talk. As others shop or work through the morning, so I must write. Someone said a *sannyasi* accused another preacher of being "wishy-washy," and this disturbed someone else. I decided to stay out of it. I won't throw stones at either side. They must all be trying.

Breathe in and sigh out. Then prepare to live here and actually do it.

How? Simply squat on the passage of time? Wait out the millennium until they kick you out? Duck low? Yes, I may do any of those. Why not?

* * *

10:30 a.m.

He read his *Gita* on Davey's day. He went into a trance, part sleep, part trying to feel "reading and thinking over the Lord's personhood. *ISvara parama Krishna* "the same lines I always read have to be read anew. They are encrusted with associations built over years of study. For example, I might read something and smell *dal* cooking, or think of a particular ISKCON attitude. One thing usually leads to another in this world. But I am often stifled; I can't actually read with feeling. It requires a different kind of hearing. Hare Krishna.

He said he read *iSvara parama* "that inconceivable One is not ultimately no-thing. He's God, and He can reveal Himself fully. He can come before us as He has revealed Himself to great saints. Now go ahead, Johnny, tell the people what they have to do if they want to see Krishna's two-armed form.

Oh, I have a stiff neck.

Now I feel that this has been a strange session, sitting with an open *Bhagavad-gita*, looking at *mattah parataram nanyat*. Who could understand and sympathize with my problem?

Well, *any* session is good. Hearing, feeling that Krishna is the Supreme Person.

But now I have to write something, some kind of report. Why? Because I am pledged to write pages. I want to.

Aniruddha has a problem; the pipe is blocked. He had to break through the cement wall to locate it and put in a new pipe. Problem, you see? Life is full of them. We have to persist despite the difficulties. I too have a broken pipe lodged in cement. Get to it and chip away at the wall. Locate the hidden pipe and unstop it. O Krishna, please help me. I am so dull, and I'm sorry about that. I'm living a life of half-failed attempts.

* * *

11:25 a.m.

Listening to a Godbrother's lectures. He said we should not follow our propensities or any inner voice but follow *sastra*. Something inside me "the strong resolution I have to live the way I have chosen to in Krishna consciousness" quakes. Oh, is he going to expose that everything I'm doing is wrong? Then I caught on: he's not speaking *so* absolutely. He's only quoting absolute scripture. He says, "What I'm saying is not my opinion, it's what Srila Prabhupada says."

But he does have an angle. We *all* do. And I agree with what he's attacking "the propensity for sense gratification which makes us break our vows. Then why do I quake? Because I fear he might turn the same attack on me and say *I'm* guilty of Bad Things. Or, I could do that for him "grab the sword from his hand and plunge it into my present resolve.

We do that to ourselves. It makes us feel confused. We begin to think maybe we *are* disobedient, deviant. We run to the nearest Godbrother or GBC official to consult.

And what if we *did* consult? He might approve cent percent what we are doing. He might approve only seventy-five percent and tell us what to correct. He might say we are very wrong.

In any case, we have to tend our own souls and make our own decisions. I'm not at the beginning of my career in Krishna consciousness, I'm three-quarters through. I had *better* be doing the right thing by now, and I had better know how to hear from *sastra* and guru and how to follow for myself.

I just want to tell you, dear readers, that there is no relief from self-scrutiny. If we feel pinched to hear another devotee preach, we should take a look and see why. The pinch is good; it shakes us out of our lazy thinking and comfortable austerities. Let it also return us to our responsibility to be ourselves. Don't just freak out and imagine you're all wrong without analyzing who you are, where you have been, what you think is best for your Krishna conscious development, and your personal realization of guru and Krishna. There is no other way to learn.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Sip at the fount. reminds me of the lambs running to their mothers, pushing under, then butting hard against the udders.

You call that sipping?

The lambs are getting bigger. They must be doing more than sipping. And they come back frequently. They come with need, with hope. If we don't feel need or hope, come anyway.

In the end, we'll throw away all that is extraneous and say, to our brothers, with simple neediness, "Please forgive my offenses. Please help me to think of Krishna by reading to me." relationships get reduced to that at death because that's the time when we are completely helpless and dependent on the goodness of others. Until then, keep building that backyard bonfire and burning up the things that can be consumed in *yukta-vairagya*. Don't shut the outer door, as Bhaktivinoda Thakura did, until the end. It isn't time. We won't sustain it.

* * *

2:56 p.m.

There is a common controversy about whether the Absolute Truth is personal or impersonal. Some say there is no Absolute Truth at all. But the *Bhagavad-gita* teaches that the Supreme is a person. In particular, the verse *mattah parataram nanyat* teaches it. So, will you follow it? Will you contemplate His personal form? Will you yearn to understand God? Give your love? Lean toward God with naked intent?

Don't you know that you have to use your boots to kick out the part of you that says there is no God, that keeps doubting? Yes, kick it out. Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. I lean with the naked intent to know Him, to serve Him, to love Him in this world and the next. I have misused myself. I haven't done my best. But I'm still His.

The blue sky is blue and accommodates space out of fear of Bhagavan; the wind moves the clouds out of fear of Him; the sun shines out of fear of Him; the buds open because it is May, and it is their duty to open in springtime. They are servants of Time "that impersonal form of Krishna.

Krishna accepts a beautiful, humanlike form. There are many religions in the world, but few can reveal His most beautiful form. Hare Krishna. Each person is a receptacle of faith, more or less. We tend to accept one religion or another. Each of us is striving and have been for lifetimes. We move up and down through the species by taking on the characteristics of our associates. None of that matters in the present: what we are now is a culmination of everything we have been, and the world around us continues to press in and shape us, but within, we are the same spirit soul. We cry through our exteriors, subtle and gross.

A wry smile with a closed mouth, a sarcastic word, an evil deed "we take these to be important or not. Sometimes we want to be sympathetic to someone; other times we are against them. But it is all temporary, reactions formed by the modes of material nature.

O mind, please be one with the interest of my inner self. O soul, turn to God. The *sastra* teaches love of God, but you, O spirit soul, are the one who has to feel it. Otherwise, what is the *sastra* but another book? A pure devotee carries *siddhanta* in his heart. How much truth can we absorb? If we find a person who has absorbed the conclusion, we rush to him, throw ourselves at his feet, and pray that he will share it with us. Or, if we are materialistic, we persecute him.

What am I trying to say? I'm trying to direct myself in line with good instructions. I'm trying to be my own teacher. I'm helpless, I know, but I have to take enough charge of my soul that I cry out to Krishna for help. That much. Just be sincere.

After this I'll go outside and chant another couple of rounds. I pray to be with Krishna in His original form. There is no one who is greater than He. I will play the role and lecture these truths as they are presented. I don't have to confess either my own situation or my own aspirations to the audience. Such things are private. Let me be intent on sipping at the fount, singing the songs that come, and being myself.

* * *

After reading Poets

To hell with those poets obscure,
blasphemous ignorant of actual God "
they'd imagined their joke
a sophisticated version which
may amuse asuric sophisticates and
mislead the innocent.

* * *

That's heavier than I intended but
I get angry! What they do
compared to Vedic-Vaisnava science
is puny, foolish.

* * *

God is beautiful, a person, the controller
of all. They don't have to mock or
make it up or apologize for Him.
Like to tell them, "Just stay out
of it, since you don't know Him."
But they talk, they talk, and
He allows them.

* * *

I have a burden a joy a right to
tell of Krishna in the moonlight by

Yamuna at KeSi-ghat, but I
am poor at that. I could tell you to
Read
Rupa Gosvami, but we have
to speak American too.

* * *

Sing Hare Krishna, behold Radha-
Krishna on our altar, even sometimes
draw Their forms "best Boy and
Girl "or Krishna as the Universal form,
Krishna driving the chariot of Arjuna and
speaking *Bhagavad-gita*. Think of Him
serving His pure devotee and
hear what He says.

* * *

Krishna saves the *jivas*
by appearing as Lord
Caitanya, Gaura and Nitai.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

Aniruddha is on a construction marathon to prepare the art room. He may even have it ready by tonight or tomorrow. We ran out of money for our more ambitious plans, so we have gone ahead and made do with whatever we had. I'll have to (want to) reciprocate with Aniruddha by using the art room ASAP. I showed devotees my color drawings two Sundays in a row in the slide shows, and now they say they want me to keep it up. I'll need more paint, but I can start with what I have. Splash and be happy.

* * *

6:33 p.m., Night Notes

Sun still up. Sheep cute but pitiful. Mothers have homely faces. They move along until they are killed. Don't even ask the devotees how they relate to the sheep and their predicament, but it seems we ought to register some protest. Or at least love the sheep. I'm aware that I'm not in the business to judge either side in most ISKCON squabbles, but is this different?

O Krishna. A swami called from New York City. He left a name and number on someone's machine "we don't have a phone. The devotee couldn't catch the name, but dutifully gave me the number and the one word that came through clearly, "Important!" M. will call him tonight.

Hare Krishna. Now rest by the Lord's mercy, and contemplate His love for His *parisads*.

May 2, Midnight

Took an Esgic at 9:20 p.m. last night, then couldn't sleep. I want to get in as much writing as I can each day before I shut down. I usually shut down by late morning; if I get a whole day in, I consider it a boon. But I don't want to be feverish. Let me be patient about my spiritual life. For example, I want to be with Krishna in a contemplative mood. Who doesn't? We want to be ecstatic, like Lord Caitanya. But that costs so much. It costs that we feel intense separation for the Lord. That means pain. We don't like such intensity. Do I equate it with headaches? Loss of sleep? Does any of this have anything to do with the mode of goodness? O dwarf reaching for the moon . . .

I am writing this in my bedroom before I go into the main room where I usually open the *Bhagavad-gita* and try my version of *lectio divina*. I realize I can't achieve my desires on my own. Their fulfillment must come from Krishna Himself. He is available in the *sastra* and in His holy name. Thus the power-packed morning program I follow from midnight until 3 a.m. Even if I fall infinitely short in my practices, my attempt to please Krishna is worth the effort. And maybe I can improve. There is nothing as desirable as this process. I may continue to look at other forms of spirituality, but I won't find anything to match Radha and Krishna, *Bhagavad-gita*, and the *sankirtana* movement.

* * *

12:15 a.m.

Will you accept the authority of *Bhagavad-gita*, *Brahma-samhita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, the Six Gosvamis, and Srila Prabhupada? Yes. I'm aware there are other books in the world, but I want to accept the Krishna conscious ones. I'm aware that I have free choice. I value freedom because it is given by Krishna. I want to use it for Him. I don't want to be a nominal or blind follower. Using my freedom for Him means simultaneously surrendering it to His will and using it to turn myself toward that surrender. Even while living physically outside Vrndavana.

Without Krishna, however, our freedom means nothing; we cannot accomplish anything. "The duration of man's life is also due to Krishna. Therefore by the grace of Krishna, man can prolong his life or diminish it. So Krishna consciousness is active in every sphere." (Bg. 7.9, purport)

"O son of Prtha, know that I am the original seed of all existences, the intelligence of the intelligent, and the prowess of all powerful men." (Bg. 7.10) Purport: "One cannot do anything without intelligence, and Krishna also says that He is the root of all intelligence. Unless a person is intelligent he cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna."

"Since everything is manifested by Krishna's energy, "I am, in one sense, everything, but I am independent." (Bg. 7.12)

"Deluded by the three modes . . . the whole world does not know Me, who am above the modes and inexhaustible." (Bg. 7.13)

"This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it." (Bg. 7.14)

* * *

4:34 a.m.

"You are something of a hard-boiled man. I get that impression when I read what you've written. Is it a pose, New Yorker? Or have you turned out so bitter, worldly-wise (at least in the ISKCON sense), and cynical? Wouldn't you prefer to be a softy?"

O Krishna, I don't know anything. I just want to write honestly and not try to be one thing or another.

I have just come from dressing Radha-Govinda in white. Krishna's clothes have gold trim while Radha's dress is trimmed in blue. His turban sits high, reaching toward the tree branches, which bend down to offer their homage to Him. Prabhupada wears a handsome brown *cadar* and cap. I sit before them as I am, and if you'd rather I not describe what that was, I'll skip it. Let me instead repeat the points in today's segment of *Bhajana-rahasya*. Bhaktivinoda Thakura chose verses from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* describing Krishna's beauty. One I particularly remember is the one where the wives of the yajnic *brahmanas* describe how they saw Him with His hand on a friend's shoulder, twirling a lotus, dressed in gold, with flowers in His hair that swept His cheeks. He also quoted the verse from the *Venu-gita* where the *gopis* describe Krishna entering the forest in the morning with the *gopas*. He plays His flute and wears a blue *karnikara* flower pushed over His left ear. The *gopis* say they think it is the perfection of their eyes to see Krishna at that time.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura goes on to explain that when a pure devotee doesn't see Krishna, he feels the ecstasy of separation. Lord Caitanya personified such feelings and expressed them in His *Siksastakam*: "When will My eyes be decorated with tears of love when I chant the holy names . . . O Govinda, I am feeling separation from You."

A pure devotee wishes to be born as clump of grass on the outskirts of Vrndavana so that the *gopis* may trample him as they come and go. Bhaktivinoda Thakura meditates on Krishna's evening pastimes. Radharani has cooked for Krishna, and now Her *sakhis* have brought His remnants back to Her. She honors the *prasadam* with great love. Mother Yashoda cares for Krishna when He returns from the pastures in the evening. Then He goes to the cowshed to milk the cows. After, Mother Yashoda will feed her son.

Who can understand the love behind these pastimes? Not *mudhas*. An educated man once came to see Srila Prabhupada and said, "I'm an agnostic." Another fellow came and said that he was a poet. Prabhupada asked him, "What is the subject of your poetry?" He replied, "No subject."

We want a person who knows God, and if he writes, let him write of the Supreme. At least a poet should chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

After being on the altar to attend Radha-Govinda, I feel sanctified. Now I am waiting for M. to stir. He came back at 9 last night. He was out making phone calls. I want to know if he reached that unknown swami in New York City.

I looked in on the art room. Aniruddha is making good progress. I drew a little diagram of how I wanted it to look "a table for art, a space with a board that holds four big drawing sheets, a moveable table for art supplies and . . .

Somehow we're getting by. Sips at the fount. This is different than what I expressed in my essay on "Churning the Milk Ocean." There, I spoke about sometimes churning poison and dealing with it. This fount always runs pure. I may find poison in other places, in memories, dreams, or material desires, but not at this fount. This is the water I'm after, and somehow, the way to drink is open to me.

* * *

Someone had a reputation for being a lady's man, being wishy-washy, and for having a funny face and words. He was known for avoiding populated places "even good times like reunions, ratha-yatra festivals, and responsible times, like long meetings to hear each other out. But he had plenty to say in his own venue. He wondered daily how to weave a blanket, and worked at his loom. He wrote a journal of his efforts and sometimes burned it. Santoka writes, "These few ashes/ are all that remain/ of my diary?"

Want to hear another?

The giant camphor tree and I

And the dog

Are soaked through.

The electric heaters make this room warm. It's close to 5 o'clock. Peter Pain, will you be back today?

The *patram puspam* verse is about *bhakti*, not food. God is self-sufficient, but He likes the devotion we use to approach Him. He's both soft and hard.

But even before *bhakti*, there is the consideration that we ought to sacrifice what we eat or else we are stealing. How many have full faith in *prasadam*? We only eat what is tasty. We offer it with mechanical prayers. We offer food that isn't good. Often we think of ourselves rather than of pleasing the Lord. Improve your prayer time in the kitchen and offer with quality. Then eat as prayer. Did you chant during the night when you had the opportunity?

Let me do so now: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna . . .

* * *

Everything Happens to Me

& Everything happens to me he said I said

it's okay. That NYC phone call was just

some ecumenical place "their answering machine

said, "May you remember God."

* * *

So don't worry
everything doesn't happen to me,
I avoid the stone
I sift out the Mickey Mouse
watches
from the
dustpan.

* * *

They know better than to seek me out
I can improvise and walk and
sing "Everything Happens To Me"
if they don't.

* * *

But you can count on me for
simple, simple porridge
spelling mistakes.
blundered *maha-mantras* but
at least I'll be punctual and
uh, true
hoping the Swami will
Recognize me and if not
to be dashed, my self-importance
dead.

* * *

* * *

Everything happens to me and you
because it's a funny world
we don't get the breaks
we want, lose the woman, our
youth, the job, are hospitalized "
have to go through all of it.
We expect too much, listening
keen to forget the hand is
made of tissuey flesh.

* * *

Sips at the fount, but you know,
there are a few air pockets

although no dirt no
pebbles and therefore
no cause of indigestion. "

* * *

I'll Sing the Song That Comes to Me
& We want to be with Krishna even before we
know Him. What? Go back and
find songs so we can say
"Krishna was here too."

* * *

Not possible. The school yard was
too sordid and I was afraid.
That's all there is to it.
I'm only grateful I survived.

* * *

We can't change our past, even ISKCON's years "
they also we can't improve once they are gone.
Although we can learn from our mistakes
as long as we remain in the present.

* * *

I learned that I just want Krishna
in truth. I want to do the prescribed duties
straight as an arrow.
I can't learn from
nondevotees except how
bad it is out there
and that I shouldn't
consort with crows.

* * *

Why don't I love my
brothers and sisters more and
the temples as halls of absolute truth
and joy and sweat and tears?
Why don't I own a restaurant or
lead a *brahmacari* party "get
a piece of the action?"

* * *

I just don't care for
the high, straight stuff.
I know that number already
and am already happy to go
this way, tolerating all
guff while singing
the Hare Krishna song that comes. "

* * *

9:36 a.m.

Hare Krishna. reach for quality.

We're waiting for Aniruddha to come and continue the construction. It should be an earnest day in which I strive to fly up under the cloud and hit it. I want to beat my little wings against it.

This is the time of day when I feel drowsiest. It comes in a wave, often followed by a headache. But in the welterweight fight, each man was knocked down three times before the champ finally knocked out the challenger.

* * *

The buds are a little fatter. They could burst when I'm not looking. My hand doesn't feel too self-conscious today. Srila Prabhupada spoke, and I dreamt that a room was being prepared for us.

* * *

Sip water, sustain solitude, weave a web from your own sankirtana in a buffer zone. Tell that story, or especially one with Srila Prabhupada in it. I say I've told them all and can't remember more.

Krishna tells Arjuna about His opulences and how He can be known even in the material world. Lord Krishna is the purely spiritual Personality of Godhead and cannot be seen with the blunt senses of materially conditioned *jivas*. But He does appear in His material energy, so one may begin his God consciousness by appreciating that Krishna is the taste in water, the light in the sun, the sound in ether, the ability in man, and so on. Wherever there is *mama-tejas*, something strong and wonderful "a big fish, an elephant "or something very tiny, that is Krishna's potency. In His spiritual form and name, qualities and pastimes, He is perceivable only to those who perform devotional service. Devotional service begins with the tongue. Usually we say Krishna consciousness begins with hearing about Krishna from authoritative sources, but the response to hearing is chanting "our first expression of love.

* * *

This Prayer

& They want to impress on you that the best thing is Krishna consciousness. The macho preacher, he said, can overdo it, staying at people's homes and intimidating them.

Switch over to the theme. We want Krishna to accept this sincere prayer: "I'm lonely in this world, and it's because I'm not with You." Please lift me up. Let me know You accept me. Especially, make me aware that my purpose is to serve You in love."

Yes, that's the theme. Now, when pain comes, don't shut down. Be alive and vulnerable

like flamenco sketches or

fattening buds. Be right here in this body

now. O Lord, they say You've appeared in the holy name, but You won't appear to those who don't accept You, only to those who hold Your names attentively in their hearts.

I'm always mumbling.

* * *

So this prayer. Krishna "catch sight of Krishna. It won't be long before the whole show is totaled up for this one entity. And there are so many of us,

but You care for

each one.

Individual power of God.

* * *

Krishna, I'm fighting the forces of opposition and doubt "this age of doubt, disbelief, materialistic science. May You accept my fighting

as *seva*. Because this day

will turn as it will

and I can't control,

anything other than my own desire

to remember You. "

* * *

11:49 a.m.

What's wrong with a Godbrother giving the straight stuff in a seminar to householders, saying marriage is not for enjoying sex, and reading Srila Prabhupada quotes on the subject? Nothing. It's bona fide. But I don't think I'd do it anymore. I did something like that even last year, but now I think I'll stay out of those affairs. If I'm asked on an individual basis, I can repeat the teachings. Mainly keep the teachings myself, and when I lecture, speak on *sastra* and our relationship with God "how we are trying to get to Him. Whatever the verse and purport say. I need to speak on these things.

He wants to know details about how to live with his wife. The Godbrother quoted an Ayurvedic doctor, who said husband and wife shouldn't live in the same room, shouldn't look each other in the face, and shouldn't undress in front of one another. I don't think I need to speak on such things. It's not my business, I'm a *sannyasi*. I don't want to *think* about such things. Let me tend the garden here.

Wait a minute, we want *you* to give people the straight sauce.

You give it since you like sauce-giving. Let me give the things I have learned.

What have you learned?

To be quiet and to chant the holy name.

Yeah?

* * *

Gray sky today; yesterday was sunny. Krishna, Krishna "this is hard work. I feel as if I am chipping away at stone. The yard is beginning to look clean. Maybe in the afternoon I can go out there. This diary reveals that I am not at the Food-for-Life center giving out free pizzas. remember in Detroit when the people got angry that the pizza was cold?

He sankirtana, and "associate with devotees." What does that mean? You sit with them while a *sannyasi* (devotee) gives class? But maybe you have to walk out in the middle because your kids are making noise. Perhaps someone sees you in the hall and asks you to do some service for the temple. You feel bad because you can't, you have to work, and anyway, they just want you to give money all the time and don't respect that you are using all your effort just to support your family, to raise the children as devotees. But it's true, it's hard to follow the rules at home without a higher taste, and we all need others to help us surmount lust.

Krishna, Krishna. There is nothing "not a damn thing "to say, except what they say in the book and the little entertainments we give each other. He told how Krishna said, "I am independent of the modes. Me no one knows." He said cripes, underwear "he said he ought to have more pairs so that if he doesn't get a clean pair one night, he'll have something to wear in the morning. And turtlenecks.

Were you born in New Jersey too? Where? Englewood?

No, I was born in Queens, New York. I have an allegiance to that place. But I have to stop now, because that *sannyasi* who gave that class wouldn't like to see me letting my words fly.

But I'm not afraid to risk, to write my worst. I have that right because this is my process.

The concrete mixer was returned.

The temple management was changed.

The man earned money.

The visitor will speak.

They have a spare room but no heat and no hot water.

They cook for the Deities.

Everyone is busy doing something. Me too.

Bhakta Fred is no longer going on book distribution; now he's the direct servant of the temple's vice-president. But he's got a strong inclination to live in a monastery "a tranquil life conducive to prayer. "Sorry," he is told. "We have nothing like that in ISKCON." But it's a good sign in such a young man. Let's honor it somehow or other.

Another man finds time to read every day, although he has to sit in the corner to do it. He reads a little, then pauses to pray to Krishna. He says he feels reciprocation.

A *mataji* sews for the Deities, cooks, raises her children. Who will teach the *gurukula* now? How to spend our lives? Not being cads. And don't waste time in debates. Find a quiet place and read. Don't read only those things that come off the Internet.

Man, my feet sure got sore from that *pada-yatra*. They are going to see their guru. Now that's relief from tedium. We expect to feel personal inspiration, to feel good, when we do such things. We expect him to say something to which we can reply submissively. We expect to praise him because, "Gurudeva, you are never stagnant." Keep it up, man.

And that's all I have to say before lunch. I'm sorry it isn't a press interview or overview or report on how to win over enemies, how to broaden our image, how to get our constituency to give money, or even how to wash socks and comb hair and tell the ladies to speak less brazenly "that their guru is the only one and all others are wishy-washy. Now everyone come and worship Prabhupada at the right time, and nobody contradict me, I'm the boss because I'm smart.

* * *

3:55 p.m.

Some fog has developed in my head, but I am reading on how Krishna is the strength of the strong, the seed of existence, etc. I am trying to visualize His influence, trying to be with my desire to be close to He who spoke such words about Himself. It worked for a while, but I am growing drowsy. Headachy. I stay with the open book and come back periodically to words like "*tejas*" and Srila Prabhupada saying that Krishna is the heart of things like the flavor of earth. We can't live without Krishna, who identifies Himself even with our fire of digestion. And we disciples cannot live without Srila Prabhupada, who has no desire to steal attention away from Krishna for himself. Neither does he water down Krishna's message to spare our feelings.

An hour gone. Now it's 4:00. Go further. Head warning. I don't want an evening like last night, because tonight I can't take a pill, and tomorrow I'm supposed to go to Dublin.

If I make it to Govinda's tomorrow, I'll speak on Krishna's *patram puspam* verse. Will I speak sentimentally "that is, beyond my actual faith and *bhakti*?"

No, sir. You know the proposition: a speaker should present *Bhagavad-gita* convincingly, and at least during that time not dwell on his own spiritual poverty. He can't entirely forget his shortcomings, and they do influence his talk, but only indirectly. He may even give brief disclaimer: "I don't realize this myself, but . . . "

But what?

"But I have faith in it." Bottom line.

The wind is strong. It might not be good to go outside "even that little effort to walk around in the wind may be too much.

Tejas, fire, air, wind, and sunlight "Krishna gives us contact with Him through the *Bhagavad-gita* verses. When I pray, I leave aside all presuppositions, previous realizations, or what I think I can or can't do. I simply offer a prayer that I may know Krishna faithfully and in truth. O Krishna, Hare Krishna "the original flavor, the original word, Krishna.

* * *

5:18 p.m.

Keep moving the hand. I'm not alone in this house, and I never know when someone will need to get into this room.

What do we do with our knowledge? How can we distribute it? More primary, how can we live it? We have knowledge. How should we wield it? One man delivers lectures, abjuring the flock (and amusing them as he does so with choice American slang) to be strict and to kick out nonsense deviation. He says he's not speaking his own viewpoint; to prove it, he quotes *Slokas* and purports. And what if people don't like it? Leave the movement. Don't be cats and lusty dogs and call it Krishna conscious.

But the details "how to actually live in a temple, how to actually put up with the mistreatment we sometimes suffer at the hands of authorities, how to actually fight dryness . . . and does even a strict celibate have emotional needs he should recognize? Is "emotional needs" only a whipping boy?

Don't try to out-answer him. Srila Prabhupada *murti* heard him speak, and I imagine he approves. I listened on as a third party and said nothing.

I am not alone in this house, but I can write and they'll mostly leave me alone. People only seem to enter just as I'm halfway through my *gayatri*. That's okay, because my senses are controlled. I'm not one of them cats and dogs. I don't call nothin' that ain't Krishna conscious Krishna conscious.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

Running out of excuses regarding this house. The kitchen is now functional, the faucets in the bathroom have stopped leaking, the construction in the art room is completed and is now being painted "it will be ready in only a few days. The grounds are also starting to come together. Someone even bought me a comforter for my bed. The weather is becoming milder, although it's always windy here (rathdangan, "the place of winds"). I guess I'll have to get serious about my purpose here. I know little if anything of what goes on in this country. Just as well. I go only to Govinda's restaurant to give a lecture to a group of people who are already attuned to what I have to say. Otherwise, I stay in these rooms. At least for awhile, as Krishna desires.

Krishna, Krishna . . . I will not be able to go directly from here to Goloka, however "not without making some radical internal changes first. These devotees who are working on the house can't do that for me; it will take more than a coat of paint or fixing a leaky faucet. Neither is it a choice to stay here and think of Goloka from a distance. I won't be able to stay here. As Prabhupada constantly reminded us, "Death will kick you out." O Krishna, may I use this facility to write something others can use.

One small tree outside my bedroom window is about to burst into pink blossoms. Beautiful. And the wind is chuffing and chuffing.

Chuffing chuffing.

In late sunlight,

all glories to Prabhupada. Krishna consciousness is for brave souls, but I am here anyway, Prabhupada, at your feet.

* * *

Night Notes "Filler 6:12 p.m.

Get ready to dress Radha-Govinda in Their nightclothes. O inner self, self within a husk, you are neither rich nor poor, not this body. Don't become attached to residence. The devotee who is dear to Krishna has no fixed residence. He sacrifices even that for the Lord. If I am going to accept a home, I had better increase my writing service.

I was lucky today "no headache, no pill.

Krishna says no one knows Him, but we can, we can, we can come closer as He speaks and take it into ourselves. O Krishna, please reveal Yourself to me. You are willing; I only have to show that I am sincere in my desire to see You.

May 3, 12:15 a.m.

"This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it." (Bg. 7.14)

We live as if this one life were all there was. That's because we are *nitya-baddha*, eternally conditioned to the cycle of birth and death. This life isn't all there is. How to realize that? One way is to live out each day as fully as possible, trying again for self-realization. Give love to Krishna in every part of the day. Express yourself in order to know Him; express yourself *to* Him. Go beyond body maintenance (*anna-maya*, *prana-maya*), and try to become eligible for *ananda-maya*. Try to do something wonderful as a disciple of Srila Prabhupada.

But that "something" should be basic and simple too "and it should include following the rules and chanting sixteen rounds. That something should be service to the *sankirtana* movement. Self-realization means knowing that we cannot do anything or be anything without Krishna.

But it's hard to shake off the influence of illusion. "Although *maya* [illusion] is false or temporary, the background of *maya* is the supreme magician, the Personality of Godhead, who is MaheSvara, the supreme controller. " (*Svetasvatara Upanisad*, quoted in Bg. 7.14, purport)

I'm reading with the intellect (the body is seated cooperatively in a chair). Now give more. I'd like emotion to enter in, psyche, soul, to actually worship the Lord as He speaks. Worship is beyond intellect. Sometimes, however, we have to take what we can get at any given time.

Lord Krishna can order His *maya* to release us. We beg Him to do so. But it takes earnest surrender on our parts. The *Svetasvatara Upanisad* states, *tam eva*

vidhitva: "Freedom is possible only by understanding Krishna." We have to pray to the Lord. It's *right* to pray. We are told not to ask Krishna for anything, but most of our prayers will naturally be petitions "we are such dependent creatures. Those petitions should not be for sense gratification, however. We shouldn't ask the Lord to become our order supplier. It's not wrong to ask for spiritual strength, support, help, guidance, and mercy. We want those things so that we may become better servants. O Krishna, please give us the courage and determination to be faithful disciples. We have no power on our own, and what little power we think we have we tend to misuse. Please protect our *sadhana*. Let us turn to You in everything.

Only Krishna can grant us devotional service. *Nayam atma pravacanena labhyah*: Krishna awards His mercy (devotional service) to whomever He chooses. I seem to be afraid or reluctant to ask Him for His mercy. I wonder why? I have, over time, arrived at an attitude I can call "my devotional service." I'm attached to that attitude. If I ask Krishna to release me from *maya* and engage me fully in His service, perhaps He'll break what I consider a secure position. I have worked so hard to attain my attitudes "my love of solitude, my desire to serve by writing, my little publishing company, my aloofness, my semi-invalid lifestyle. They all seem parts of a composite self-identity, and I consider them all aspects of my service to Krishna. Although I readily admit that I'm not yet pure, am I ready to have more falsity removed at the expense of giving up all these things that have come to define my self to me? Do I distrust all-knowing, all-caring Krishna? Surely He knows what is best for me. But do I hesitate to approach Him more fully because I fear He might demand too much?

Is there such a thing as trying for something impossible for us "to be "too surrendered"? Yes, I think there is such a thing. If I imitate the renunciation of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, I will fail. Srila Prabhupada has assured us if we imitate a position more advanced than our own, we will even lose what gains we've made. We have to be careful.

But not *too* careful. We shouldn't hold ourselves back from Krishna when we feel called to go forward. We should always be looking for the chance to take Krishna's offer to abandon all varieties of religion and surrender unto Him without fear. We don't want to be among the four types of miscreants who oppose Krishna's plan. But we may be hampered, too sensitive, afraid of being misled by those who come in Krishna's name, unsure how to dovetail our apparently separate interests, unsure of what even should be dovetailed and what should not. Dear Lord, please guide us. I may be too insincere to make such a prayer, but what choice do I have? I can't do it on my own; I need You.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Bhaktivinoda Thakura selects verses from *Krishna-karnamrta*, *Radha-rasa-suddha-nidhi*, and other books for his *Bhajana-rahasya*. He hopes to drown us in the ocean of Radha-Krishna's pastimes. I don't understand the connection between these conjugal moods and the chanting of the holy name, because I still offend the names. I don't have *nama-ruci*. But I continue to hear about the pure state. Rupa Gosvami wrote a verse to state his own disqualification in which he describes himself as low-born, the victim of

bad association, and that he has no taste for the Lord's pastimes or devotees. He adds, however, that he maintains a hope against hope that he will one day achieve Krishna, "and that hope gives me pain." There is no reason to hope "I might as well die "but this foolish hope has come to keep me alive. Srimati Radharani sometimes expressed Herself like that too.

I hope, because the holy name is so powerful. I have no hope based on my own abilities. The holy name, however, offers brilliant hope. I can't find the holy name's full mercy because of my *anarthas*. Therefore, the hope of one day overcoming what is impossible to overcome gives me pain.

* * *

Radha-Govinda are so beautiful, and I was happy to dress Them in maroon, pink, and black. Black *cadars* keep Them warm in this cool room. His gold staff and flute, Her gold *candrika*, His lotus feet, Her flouncy skirt "I like to set Them close together. The knowledge (even theoretical) that They become one in the form of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is a sweet meditation.

Hare Krishna. O Sauri, after being apart from the *gopis* for so long, You finally appeared before them in a brilliant yellow *dhoti*. You never leave Vraja.

* * *

Two new white comforters suddenly appeared last night. They call them "duvets" here. I started with one, and as the evening grew colder, I pulled the second one over me. I felt like I was in a paradise of white duvets and pillows. Except that I couldn't sleep. The sunlight entered the room, and I could hear a faint sound of sheep. The wind was blowing quite hard. These are potentially peaceful sounds, but not last night. Then I heard M.'s van arrive (more noise), and I had to wonder whether he had come into the house. Was he coming upstairs? Finally, I put in earplugs and drifted off to sleep. I dreamt that I was in the Berkeley temple and that Hamsankirtana, but the children were surrounding me too closely. I felt the strain. A headache was coming on. Madhu was trying to arrange for my situation.

* * *

Someone could say that we have a damaging attachment to Srila Prabhupada's exclusive place in our *sampradaya* and that we should give it up. People *do* say that sometimes. But let us simply go deeper into what he has taught us; let us recognize the entire *siddhanta* that will take us to *Krishna-prema*. Everything is contained in his *vani*. He's in our hearts and can guide further progress.

Keep going. Don't play with yo-yos. Don't stand on street corners spitting and watching cars go by. I used to do that with Phil Backoff "stand on street corners and lust after women. What foolishness. Prabhupada made me a *brahmacari*, a *sannyasi*. He remains my teacher. I still have to learn about lust and anger and preaching, compassion and service and Krishna. I can enter what he taught in a prayerful mood and find that

everything is still valid; it's ever-fresh. May I learn to tolerate the times when I do not enter prayerfully and see with jaundiced eyes.

* * *

Report to Work
& relaxing is all right but I want to see
you at work on time "and
assigned to pounding away
at a Krishna conscious job
getting out the teachings-writing-preaching and
analyzing categories so we all know the difference
between matter and spirit. And don't forget
to prove Mayavadis wrong.
Make your put-downs not harsh, but
as definite as a soldier's.
At Kuruksetra, Arjuna was told
not to be squeamish. "

* * *

Improvising Speech
& Kisses are not for you
or chocolate cakes
'cause you are happy restraining
and want to be right on time
to finger beads, write songs,
belt out lectures

* * *

and go to Dub "the restaurant "
to tell them how good *prasadam*
is. That's blowing a tune
improvising on what we already
know "*patram puspam*."

* * *

Tell them to brighten their faces
in real-time. Without a
speech to read from,
Tell them Krishna is sweet and savory
and we can eat to be His
devotees. Easy, isn't it? "

* * *

9:10 a.m.

Ugly face, or at least it's not to my liking. Or, let's just say it's *old*. It reminds me of my own face reflected in a window. Remember that when you don't like someone's face, that your own reminds you of everything sour and silly.

I can't use the right words. You find your *own* words, reader. I can't produce every reality for you. I am only here to fill pages.

We're scheduled to leave at 1:30 p.m. for Dublin. The Deities won't take rest until I return. After the talk we plan an immediate exit, so prepare yourself for a ride of joy upon which you will notice every bump and turn in the road, and see how spring is progressing. I don't know the names of many of the trees and plants we'll pass, so I will have to continue to note my state of mind, which I can name. "Do they love me? Where we are going? Will the dream of Hamsaduta's return to power ever come true?" This makes me remember Rupa Gosvami's book, *Sri Hamsaduta*, and I think I would like to read that again.

Life is for *ananda*. To reach happiness, we must first perform austerity. Therefore, life is actually for Krishna consciousness. Any other "austerity" is useless self-torture.

The wheels roll, the van hurtles forward, but we will be careful not to hit birds or rabbits. Krishna, Krishna. The habit doth troth.

Count your rounds. Look for a way to better your life.

Hare Krishna, Hare

Krishna. Coming

down hard

on himself.

Looking for justification?

Prepare yourself and don't demand of others.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

Just tell us what's up. Madhu got a . . .

No, don't tell.

Don't tell? What the hell. He's busting out with a tune.

Tomorrow I'll begin sessions with Kirtana-rasa on the Dallas days. I hope to glorify my spiritual master.

My spiritual master. Get into that deeply. But to the folks, give a sound so attractive they can rise to it "include a touch of blarney if necessary.

Because life is too hard in all its complicated aspects.

Blues-gutty-guttural has a place too

in the round-up we call Krishna consciousness

he doesn't know it all "the

jurisdiction encounters.

I have no more to say. It's a blue sky. Poor Praghosa and Goloka's car broke down between Dublin and Wicklow. The Garda rescued them and drove them to a B&B.

That's the news.

Thrilling, sort of. I have my books lined with goodies "*Bhagavad-gita* with Post-its; a letter I wrote on Prabhupada's behalf in 1974 about the value of Krishna conscious restaurants (when I was his secretary!); a bottle of Esgic; another letter by Prabhupada saying, "Name it Govinda's restaurant." *The Nectar of Devotion* says about *prasadam*: "Let the palatable dishes be served," but the senses will be restrained.

Sweaty. Is this summer or winter? And the race is on "not for me "to forget death. I know he's out to get *me*. But I'm on an express train, getting down some *bhakti* smarts and arts

before he comes grinning,

"Okay Sats, your turn."

I get in licks. But Krishna and guru

know words have their place their

juris

juris

diction

I hope they moved the piano

aside "do they know

I'm here to link it?

I am a link-train-man taking

karmis to Vaikuntha if they

want to go

and can open their ears

to hear.

Krishna Krishna.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

I'm retiring that gold pen. I did that before. It has a nice scratchy sound when I write, and just as it's driving smoothly as a Cadillac, it has to go and skip. I try again and again to get it to stop skipping, but all to no avail. My very old, black, recessed-point pen stains my forefinger (that's not good because the ink might get transferred to the Deity clothes). but it never skips. It's trusty. No such thing as a perfect pen.

The edited version of EJW Vol. 7 just arrived along with some books I ordered. I'm just a curious person. I can see from the EJW that I was reading less *sastra* at this time last year. The midnight session was good. I was also hearing a lot of tapes "that's an important way to hear both *Krishna-katha* and *Krishna-upadesa*. I raked over past reading, turned over the earth, planted seeds of re-reading, watered the crops with earnestness, then harvested something in my notes. Reading follows such cycles when we do it year after year. We might harvest only a simple desire to love Krishna, but it is enough.

* * *

1:10 p.m.

Eyeglasses loose. Bhurijana lecturing that life is tottering; can easily end. We are helpless; turn to Krishna. We don't know what is happening or why. Bhishma advised Yudhisthira that we should accept tribulations unbegrudgingly, as a benediction from Krishna. Is it possible to be that heroic? Love. He's our best friend and He's also the Supreme Controller of all planets, the one enjoyer. These are serious and correct deliberations that come from hearing someone speak *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

En route to Dublin: Plenty of gorse, dandelions, white daisies. Narrow roads. Oncoming cars slow down, stop, and we wave to one another as we pass. Madhu eating *kerela* and bread from a bowl. Me chanting two rounds.

Bank holiday. Traffic. Women and men. Into the city. M. is tired; pushing himself. Big guy on roller skates with earphones. Afros. Girl with arm around guy's waist. Taxi. "Sale Agreed" sign. A.I.B. green light. Brady's Pharmacy. I've been here before. Go to where devotees are. Hip pictures in poster ads "I take a quick look and try to psyche it out, but it partly wounds me. response House. Flanagan's Funeral. Dublin Civic Trust, Govinda's "small storefront (bright red).

* * *

4:00 p.m.

I spoke for less than an hour. Made the points okay. Nice to see so many devotees. One so-called Christian, a long-haired drunk, argued that the Bible says you can kill animals. I argued that there's an enlightened movement within Christianity that is more in tune with nonviolence. There has also been research to show that Christ didn't support violence. The man quoted Christ as saying he didn't come to wield peace but to wield a sword. That referred to attachment to family life "it should be broken if needed to come to God. He didn't mean we should wield it to kill animals. Then Arjuna told the man to be quiet.

I said, "Let him speak." He then said the *Bhagavad-gita's* Arjuna was a warrior with a sword.

"A warrior doesn't kill cows."

He argued back. Finally, again Arjuna dasa told him to be quiet. I invited him to stay for *prasadam*. He was one against fifty in that crowd, but he was still disruptive.

Praghosa came up to me after and said that man was a flavor of what we could expect at our Sunday feast. "Dublin can be intense," he said. I suppose it was good for me. But it jarred with my presentation to the devotees. I had to speak loudly so they could hear me.

While leaving, I saw many faces quickly. Fergus gave me a new issue of *Discovering Our Voices*. I saw devotees I hadn't seen in a long time. In my talk, I praised *prasadam* and its distribution. I could have said more about devotion to God. But who am I, anyway, to say anything?

* * *

Warm Sunday. Parked at petrol station. I read a few pieces in DOV "read them too quickly, not forgiving. Esso. Get in lane and back to Wicklow.

* * *

Socializing at the restaurant "I avoided it. How many people can I be nice to? I'm not a mixer. Do I come off as some lonely aristocrat? I don't mean to. It's just that I can't mix with so many ladies and gents. I spoke my spiel and am now speeding home.

I hear that the Belfast temple is still being attacked. People break windows and even break into the building.

Keep Blessington Tidy.

At the restaurant, I saw Ramanuja's baby son. First time I've seen him. He has blond hair and blue eyes. And other babies, some noisy. I couldn't concentrate fully. Heard my voice, got a few laughs, felt sincere, then said hello to people on the stairs.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

Writing is a serious business "worth doing full-time every day. It helps me break through false or superficial God consciousness. The serious and constant practice will ultimately produce better writing and a better person. I don't have to compare myself to others "just become myself, deeper and clearer.

* * *

Wicklow mountains ahead. road too bumpy to write, too narrow for two cars. We wait for oncoming cars to pass. Gorse, crows, sheep, and lambs with black knees.

* * *

5:40 p.m.

So I'm back in the house and look forward to my quiet routine. Made it through without a headache.

May 4, 12:10 a.m.

"Therefore, when Krishna Himself speaks about Himself, it is auspicious for all the worlds. . . . those who are devotees heartily welcome the statements of Krishna when they are spoken by Krishna Himself. The devotees will always worship such authoritative statements of Krishna because they are always eager to know more and more about Him." (Bg. 4.4, purport)

A real devotee doesn't want a boon from Krishna; his only purpose is to serve Him with love and devotion. "Such a devotee cannot live a second without contacting or

serving the Supreme Lord. Similarly, the Supreme Lord is very fond of His devotee and cannot be separated from him. " (Bg. 7.18, purport)

* * *

Things I could have said in my lecture yesterday:

(1) By offering *prasadam*, we can develop more devotion to Krishna.

(2) Sanatana Gosvami offered only *capatis* to his Krishna, and Krishna asked him for salt. So much intimate love.

(3) I could have been cooler and made more points with the pro-kill Christian, but he was so pushy.

(4) I could have . . .

But Sharma was so intense "others too "and the ladies, the babies, the old guys who have been around so long, watching me and my less-than-an-hour talk. I was eager to go home. I wanted to unwind the persona. But I *am* that persona. As I asked Swamiji in 1966, "I can be many persons, but which person would Krishna like me to be?" He referred to my plain service "giving money and typing. "Be like this boy, Steve."

Be like him? Okay, I'm typing. I have no money anymore, but I collect it from others and spend it to publish books for Krishna conscious readers.

Be somebody, not a No-thing. Live to be a presentable, interesting person in the book of your own life. Oh, I'm a real person, not just polished up for my book. Live life, and the book will come by writing it. Emphasize writing what comes, not shaping a book.

"After many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing Me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." (Bg. 7.19)

"He realizes the material world to be a perverted reflection of spiritual variegatedness and realizes that in everything there is a relationship with the Supreme Lord Krishna." (Bg. 7.19, purport) A devotee sees Krishna everywhere and surrenders to Him. Krishna is the prime entity in everything. Surrender to Krishna should therefore be offered in full knowledge.

We can't know Krishna unless we render Him devotional service. "When one is fully engaged in Krishna consciousness, beginning by chanting the *maha-mantra* "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare "then only one can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Bg. 7.24, purport)

My dear Lord, I try to pray with *Bhagavad-gita* early in the morning (my only real chance, it seems), but even then I think of the unanswered mail. If possible, I'd like all those "other" things I do to also be ways to think of You, to serve You. Srila Prabhupada's grace has made that possible. Whatever I do, eat, etc. "may I do it as an offering to You.

And these sips at the fount. Everything, all day. May I always think of You. Please give me faith "*more* faith. Please give me devotion. Unless You grant these things to me, I cannot please You. Queen Kunti prayed, "Lord, You got me into this world through Your *maya*, so only You can rescue me." Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays in a similar way

in "Gopinatha." He begs the Lord to make an arrangement to take this fallen, lusty person out of the material well. Let me love You, Gopinatha.

Now Goswami has finished this purport page. He pasted together some good quotes regardless of whether he felt deep and absorbed or not. But he was in the right place. Oh, and in my next life, please bring me to You swiftly. Like that boy, Nimai dasankirtana! How pleased. May I grow up to smile inwardly like Nimai dasa, secure that I'm a devotee.

* * *

Dreamt I was conducting a meeting with a variety of people in a hall. The air was tense and exciting. I wanted to break through to a new area with them. One guy was challenging; he wanted to fight with another man whom he referred to as "a contender." I tried to control and direct the energy, but it was difficult because everyone wanted to do their own thing. At least I managed to dissuade the guy who wanted to fight.

When I awoke, I remembered the exchange I had with the drunken Christian who believed in killing animals. It occurred to me that I'm no longer used to such people; I'm not in practice the way Prabhupada was. He was expert at handling such people. Usually he could simultaneously diffuse a challenge and win the crowd over to his side while defending Krishna consciousness in a debate. Preaching often requires such skill.

* * *

4:33 a.m.

O Lord, please deliver me.

We want genuine feeling, but what is that? What if we genuinely want sense gratification or some state that's less than pure devotion at any given moment?

Not possible. For the soul to experience sense desire is not genuine.

But even understanding that we are spirit soul can be, for us, more dogma than genuine understanding. We want to be devotees and real people at the same time. Hare Krishna. That's all I have to say about it. Let the waxing moon of the holy name flood our little hearts with joy and repentance. Chant Hare Krishna day and night. And pump out words. Don't even pause. We have a self-appointed contract to go on with this life until we die. Let's use our time to explore those words that express the state of a spiritual aspirant.

When we first got out on the road, I had my notepad on my lap and the seat belt on. But it's hard to write on a bumpy road, and now my back hurts from all that jostling. I wrote the words "gorse" and "dandelions." The gorse is golden, like goldenrod, whereas the dandelions are a purer yellow with a touch of lightness in them. The gorse looks heated, pungent even; the dandelions are a washed yellow. Words fail to describe those colors. Neither can we hope to express the reality of Krishna "His bodily hue, His beauty. I wish at least I was brimming over with feeling and deep conviction. Then words wouldn't be so required. But God is in everything we see. If we know this not only because it is axiomatically true but because we love Him, we will go back to Godhead.

Besides the yellow flowers, I saw white daisies. Madhu also showed me the village where he's been playing his music.

Anyway, that drive is over. Now I'm seated before Radha and Krishna. They are wearing simple outfits "you could even call them casual "as if They are dressed for play. His long-sleeved *kurta* is pink, as is His turban. His *dhoti* is patterned in two shades of blue with a little pink. Radha's entire dress is that blue-light-blue-pink combination. I offered Krishna His silver buffalo horn, flute, and leaning stick this morning.

We drove into town. The billboards in any city are usually explicitly sexual. It doesn't matter what they're selling "they use sex to sell it. We parked on the street. The restaurant is slightly away from the mainstream but still in the heart of Dublin. Inside, I saw immediately that it wasn't very big. They place the tables close "that's how people eat "together.

O Krishna, I want to be a devotee. I say such things because I want to write out more my desire than a tiresome blow-by-blow narrative. Did you know I hope to vacuum the floor tomorrow? It will take me a while to find all the attachments, but I'd really like to get between the cracks in the wood floor. M. says the wood contracts as it dries in a heated room. Therefore, the cracks between the boards widen. After a woman gives birth to a child, she tends to remain fatter. The husband . . . has to put up with it. I saw such a couple yesterday. A *sannyasi* ought to keep his mind out of their affairs. Just lecture on Krishna and the spiritual family.

In *Discovering Our Voices*, Prabhupada dasa writes about some encounters he had on the street while selling Srila Prabhupada's books. He tells of one he found unpleasant. He stopped some young men who told him they were Roman Catholics and therefore not interested in what he had to show them. Then they mocked him. One asked, "How many of you are there in Dublin?" Another joked, "Seven!" They laughed at that. There are thousands of Roman Catholics. Prabhupada dasa felt hurt by their jibe. Later he thought, "Am I part of something weird, a misfit?" The reader becomes vulnerable along with him. His own open and vulnerable writing allows us to examine our lives and feel our own vulnerability. Another example of the power of presenting your faults rather than asserting that you are the perfect medium for the philosophy. Those who aggressively push the teachings and themselves as perfect media sometimes come off insensitive to the predicaments of other devotees. They tend to condemn rather than understand. They define surrender in righteous, rigid terms, and when others tell them that they're being insensitive, they respond, "It's not my opinion but Krishna's. Are you saying the *sastras* are narrow-minded?"

M. bought himself a portable phone, but it doesn't work out here in Wicklow. He can only use it when he's in Dublin.

Saw some interesting censorship in DOV. The word "shit" was censored, but the editors allowed "bastards."

I'm sick and tired of being tired when I chant *japa*. Keep moving so that doesn't happen. Sir, will you give us a little free-write treat? Sure, after I offer it to Krishna.

I wanted to tell the audience at the lecture, "Offer it carefully, and then honor *prasadam* "don't just gulp it down." But I have no conception of what that means, so I thought, "Why impose it on others?" I eat heartily, alone, quickly. I listen to a

lecture tape at the same time, and my mind is on that while I relish the meal. At least I eat only food that has been offered to Krishna.

* * *

Billboards
& We got a man who will
teach you Krishna consciousness
so please step up and be with him.
All right just let go/ I saw a guy
undressing on a billboard. I saw the
town unloading and a camera eye
my words fell short and didn't
even attempt to be in the Liffey.

* * *

Man, I'm blue and chilly I just want
to get my words out so you can
fit it in don't matter.

* * *

Don't want to be
on a trip. "Don't fiddle with it"
his fly was open "huge
billboard. Billboard
billboard. The church was
there roman Catholic Christian
art concert.

* * *

The white van maneuvered.
M. looked haggard at
Hagerstown and Enniskillen
"It's exciting to drive
on these roads."
I'm all worn out nothing
to say. Krishna Krishna.

* * *

I will find the thing to say and
not horse [censored] you with something
I researched and pretend to be the

best person.
Do people really change from
attending a seminar? I don't think they
do, but if they hear of Krishna that could
save them at the time of death.

* * *

After eight rounds I opened
Srila Prabhupada's *cadar* and saw a
black spider on his hand.
I tried to remove it but
couldn't "it ran
away and I couldn't find it
anywhere.

* * *

The town "old churches, big stone
churches I want the Church to be
nonviolent and Jesus a son
of Krishna but they don't
want it that way.

* * *

Just give and drive/ the one who
goes back to Godhead out of our crowd
we'll be envious if we knew
which one.

* * *

He was a book distributor and gave me the
hard eye when I said *prasadam*
is the easiest method.
But to prepare it isn't easy. You have to
be expert. I know that.
Chanting is an easy thing but
you have to be serious. "

* * *

Impressions of a Lecturer
& Use what you can as soon as you can
all your best

because it might be called off "
your life
and the old stuff everyone has already heard
the idioms
so don't complain.

* * *

We've got our *parampara* but
a man was playing trumpet in a bar "
that's how one person saw it "and
another had a vision of a desert saint.
One was homesick and just wanted to
groove-bliss-out-forget he had ever
been born but wound up in this present
space with wife and kids and him drunk
on too much liquor
in a city somewhere.

* * *

Another said we should keep as far
away as possible from the non-
divergent. Don't be spaced out.

* * *

Another said the devotees of Krishna are
distributing books and have a right
to do it, but I don't want one.
Hare Krishna. He's on top

* * *

serious and smooth
I just want to get that one off/ tell
my KC stuff to some audience
and put down all aggressors.

* * *

Adroit at it
yeah slice you and get the audience
on my side
you fool
Krishna is God

I conk you on the head
and smile to audience I did good
let's all celebrate with *kirtana*
and *prasadam* while I
exit out the fire door with my shoes
and garlands and smiles of *matajis*. "

* * *

9:18 a.m.

Something under the surface; you don't know until you dig.

I don't like to look at oxen "beefers. There's no illusion when you look at them like I sometimes try to maintain for the cute lambs, their stringy underbellies dirty. The bovines are alert, real beasts. I saw a lamb come among them, then become frightened and run back to the sheep. The oxen looked its way, curious, turning their big heads to watch the movements of this small stranger.

Under the surface. Waiting for Kirtana-rasa's arrival from America. We're supposed to do a week of interviews "he'll read a letter by Srila Prabhupada to me, and I'll answer his questions on it. I'll just tell it as it was, or what I remember that it was. Just talk of Prabhupada. That's a spiritual exercise.

Lazy, I don't want to get up and walk across the room to get a drink of water. What will happen in my head today? I sink down in the water. This is where I belong, hiding like a water lily in a lake. On the return ride yesterday, as we entered hill country, I fantasized that I was a fugitive hiding in Wicklow. I had taken a new identity. But the FBI discovered me and was coming to get me. Although I had chosen a remote hideout in the Wicklow hills, the neighbors knew of me. The FBI staked out my residence. Now they were closing in for the arrest. They could easily pluck me, put me in handcuffs, and off I would have to go, out of my haven.

Romance: To live alone and pray while living a tranquil life. Bhakta Sam wrote me that he'd like to do that, "but I know it's unrealistic." Yes, everyone will say that. You can't go alone. You can't pray. You'll get bored, restless. You'll return to the city. It's only for the very advanced, and even he isn't as worthy as a city preacher. A true disciple works to spread the master's movement and does not care for himself. Dedicate this one life to bringing others to Krishna. If you don't, you lose and we'll know you for what you are "lazy, cynical, selfish, and unconvinced.

Is there an alternative to this line of thought? I don't know. All I know is I won't discuss it with the pro-actives. If I find a hermit-inclined devotee . . . No, I probably won't discuss it with him either. We already know all the Prabhupada quotes. But we maintain a desire and hope that he will accept us no matter what we are, and we also hope not to forget his mission. I pray that my writing can be helpful to the preaching mission, that that is how I can fulfill my obligation to Srila Prabhupada.

Hare Krishna.

Krishna, Krishna.

The evangelist, the proselytizer, the organizer, the shepherd, the counselor, the warrior . . . There are quite a few rocks out here. Wherever you go in Ireland, you're

surrounded by rocks and pastures and low stone walls and condemned livestock. We have no choice but to remain aloof. Otherwise, we would go crazy.

Answer that mail, whittle down the manuscript proofreading, get through the books that arrived "until you're clear to sip at the fount.

You mean what Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita* and elsewhere? You're not reading from them advanced Cantos are ya, son?

No, dad.

But maybe I will. I just want to be with Him, especially when He speaks about Himself. I am no impersonalist. Visualize yourself reading Krishna's speech to the *gopis* when they came to Him in the middle of the night, called by His flute. Or what about the part where He meets them at Kuruksetra during the solar eclipse? Or when He returned to them after they sang the *Gopi-gita*? Or Lord Brahma's speech in the fourteenth chapter of the Tenth Canto? Uddhava's visit to Vrndavana? Can you do it? Yes, why not?

How about a free-writer first?

Pallbearer. Paul of where? Saul of Tarsus. Sid Torin. Paul's letters, affectionate and angry "the first Christian to write and preach *big*. World religion. Me off to the side. These valuable senior years in ISKCON. But even those "can I use them as "legal tender"? A free pass? I'm expected to do something new and worthy of my rank, not just live like an old ox on a Hare Krishna farm, pledged not to kill off their elders.

Anyway, don't die sad. Frolic until the end. Think, "No one cares." Got a friend somewhere; seek Him out.

Buttoned Irish sweater. Cup with broken handle. rural men walk slowly around here, usually wearing Wellies and carrying pitchforks. Quiet now in this space. Hey, you're running up the electric bill.

It's good to have gone into the city (although I felt wounded by some of the billboards), and it is good to be back in this easy chair.

Clock moves slow or fast. It depends . . . Liffey. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. This old boat makes its way across. That teenager hangs out outside Govinda's. What does he want? Let him grow and see.

* * *

11:45 a.m.

A Godbrother says it's okay to have "down" emotions in spiritual life; we should lament that we can't be better devotees. That's part of the ups and downs of spiritual life. It's healthy.

Agreed.

Nothing else to say.

I washed Prabhupada's clothes, and they are drying now. It takes about eighteen hours for them to dry. Prabhupada is wrapped in a warm *cadar* and scarf. A woman in my Godbrother's class says that emotional life can be fulfilled by Deity worship. "Yes, that is a practical suggestion. Make Krishna your son, and He will never leave you."

I'm finding it hard to listen; it's a strain. *Everything* is a strain. I don't want to impose strain on you when you read this. This is supposed to be an easy-going book.

But I blend in strain, because this is a real book, not just another book about chanting or Deity worship. I've done those other kinds of books, and you can read them and get a charge, but there's something artificial about them too. Because we don't live always in the 240 pages of ideal instructions only on *japa* or *varnaSrama*. We live our lives blended together. At least I hope we do. As he said, we each have some emotional ups and downs. That's what my book is for.

Krishna is playing His silver flute, and He is very handsome. My sweet Lord.

Someone has come here and is talking in the yard with M. I'm closing my eyes to gauge the sensation of pressure I feel across my forehead. When some brothers speak, I feel trepidation. What if they say something that tears a delicate feeling in two? Put-down. Are they putting *me* down too? Are they breaking some other delicate plant? Ought it to be broken? I mean, is it a *weed*? We laugh that acerbic laugh at put-downs. Some of the put-downs seem bona fide "they expose the *maya* of material emotion. What is spiritual emotion? Is the difference between material and spiritual always clear? Someone may risk a delicate question . . .

* * *

12:10 p.m.

In one day, Peter made three thousand disciples of Christ. Kierkegaard claims that that was the demise of Christianity. It's not so cheap. We have to go one by one through the gate. Examine yourself, because God will too. Lament your lowness. "I wish others ill, I don't have attraction to the holy name," etc. Srila Prabhupada said of Bhaktivinoda Thakura, "They feel like that." Okay, join them. But don't exaggerate. Wait for lunch, the crunch.

* * *

12:42 p.m.

Kirtana-rasa arrived with Beth and Nathan-KeSava. Nathan is blond "another toddler talking to himself. He slept on the flight over the Atlantic. We are scheduled to meet at 3 p.m., but if my eye . . . oh, an Esgic will take care of that.

"The cows," he said, "you have them in your backyard." I made a sound that indicated I was not happy. "They make noise?"

"No, their fate is not good."

* * *

Dream: I was talking with Srila Prabhupada in his room. I was his servant, so I came in after his afternoon rest. He looked nice and said he felt a lot better. He has recently been ill. Perhaps we were in India, and the climate was giving him back his health. I suggested that maybe he shouldn't travel. "I know you travel out of spontaneous love and duty, but maybe you should consider . . . wherever a disciple calls you, you go. With *my* illness, I have had to stop so many activities. I realized that if I go somewhere to lecture, it doesn't make *that* much difference." Prabhupada agreed with what I said, but I could see he still planned to travel. He will always go wherever he is asked to go.

Later in the dream, Prabhupada asked me to make him some *kicchari*.

* * *

6:15 p.m.

Right eye headache flared up during the thirty-minute interview with Kirtana-rasa. I shouldn't have met with him today, because now I have used up a third of my weekly pill ration, and the Esgic was not effective. I miscalculated. But it was a lesson: the headache syndrome is the driving force behind this life of seclusion. Whenever I take on more stress, the pain forces me back into line. Thus I am not living whimsically; living with pain is my reality. I live more inwardly than most people and write of inner existence because I cannot maintain an outward life. I'm willing to accept this fact, even to rejoice in it.

Writing this note after spending two hours in bed.

May 5, 4:29 a.m.

Feeling better, thank God, after all-night sting. Couldn't sleep, couldn't get up and write or read, didn't meditate. But I was there for Krishna. Now hello to the morning. I rose at 1 a.m. and chanted *japa* still hampered by the tail-end of the pain. When it leaves, I tend to think quite differently. During the headache, I spoke with M. about how to avoid a proposed visit from a Godbrother, but this morning I thought I would meet him. I always think I can do more as soon as the pain is gone; I forget the pain. I . . . go up and down. I'll try for the meeting with Kirtana-rasa this afternoon. Maybe we can speak a little less intently "just go over my memories of Srila Prabhupada. Still, the intent talk is meant to dig up topics that will be useful to devotees now and in the future.

Deity worship. Radha's blouse does not fit as perfectly as I would like it to, and Her skirt has the tendency to slip too low. But I tried to dress Her as best I could, and now She looks so happy and pretty. And *I* dressed Her, not some famous *pujari*. They let *me* do it.

While dressing, I listened to Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's comments on *Siksastakam*. Chanting leads to appreciation of Radha-Krishna's Vraja pastimes. My chanting is certainly far below that standard. We all know that, so I won't belabor the point.

* * *

From the news: TV worse than ever, they say. Case against Clinton dropped. He was so happy that he played on a drum, a cigar hanging from his lips. Happy guy with six harassment charges dropped. Crime dropping in U.S. cities. Northern Ireland solution sought, but . . . And mister, can you come to the Prabhupada festival and give the keynote address? They're going to have three fire *yajnas* at once, the biggest *harinama* party ever, tons of lectures for hours and hours, the most *prasadam* anyone has seen "and it will all be attended by us growing-old devotees so we can laugh and hug and meet one-on-one. Then we will have a contest to see who can out-praise the next guy by telling Prabhupada stories.

And what would I tell all those old-timers? About my "mosquito bites"? Of course not. That I read something about Pentecost? Of course not. That I make mud pies, don't wash my dishes for hours, and have an art room? I won't even tell them that I have my own house (Uddhava's house, but I live in it). I would definitely not tell them that I'm on Vol. 24 of the one big book of my life. Oh no, I won't tell. I don't even have my books reviewed in the Hare Krishna newspaper. All my news goes to my core readers.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. And BTG. Something about the man in the moon. I mean, man *on* the moon.

You mean we didn't go to the moon?

Prabhupada answered that one already. He said they may have gone there, but they didn't enter the dimension of the moon described in the *Bhagavatam*. That's why they thought the moon was a desert. I'm convinced.

And Urmila's pets.

I will not come back to this world. I wish I could go to the spiritual world and serve radha-Krishna just as I do here in Their Deity forms. Krishna and Radha, the playful couple. The *manjaris* serve under Rupa-manjari, and they're even more intimate than Lalita and ViSakha because they are permitted to enter the *kunjās* to render service. You can't imitate *that*. Hare Krishna. But it's good to write and find the way to your occupation.

* * *

After reading An ISKCON Newspaper

& "We want Krishna!" chanted my men's party. "We've got a lot to say in a limited amount of time. Please be kind and let us in."

You can't be an old-timer "you're not polished in all the *parampara* arts.

ISKCON vendor ""For sale, devotional items only." And, "Welcome to our festival, everyone. You'll find bathrooms on the right "men and ladies separate."

Oh, tired old rolling Stones rap artist for ISKCON *hari-nama* clinic, on TV 50,000 saw "Hare Krishna."

Epic jousted in

opening P.M. spoke ISKCON

tinkled disrupted the cops but despite opposition

* * *

He came on strong and sold books to the temple priest and Australasia mayor got boofed when he slighted a devotee.

I wried. I spied an ISKCON lawyer can help me I want a green card to heaven's inner dimension I mean to Goloka.

Management heaven

tape ministry jive this is the way to behave/ read the *sastra*.

I don't know why you scramble your impressions the newspaper deserves more than that. And you're a writer too. You'll be chastised for this unless you mean well and for that I have to be a tiptoe child once again and type for the newspaper in a future birth. "

* * *

Just Because You Can Improvise
& There's noise in back/ an electric
heater, and in my brain some kind of twinge
oh but I'm free from the worst pain of night. He played and I was in the audience.

(skip)

Climbing up the Himalayas to the source
of Yamuna and Ganga/ you are such
a put-down artist/ of sacred yet
you let into your door
the mundane holiday
spiritualized (no pets)
honking foghorns
Carl Sandburg special
cats' feet
Italian shoe repair man
lost looking for Great Kills "
that emotion.

* * *

The priest who says No
emotion "to him I say
pie meringue in the face
laugh a goof-off . . .

* * *

Boy we're disgusted with you, old man, you
better teach a course at the VIHE.
"I can't, I get headaches!" With
that motto I ask the doorman
to let me in.
I
worship the Deities
clean the floors chanting
kept my red beads for decades
Didn't, didn't do some things
yeah but I did find fault.

* * *

Just because you can talk or
improvise doesn't mean you are free
shaved head, shaved face

(once a week) loyalty oath,
yearly letter of where I
went, pledge my money
I love thee still
my congra
gation/ hold on hold. "

* * *

9:08 a.m.

M. told me of three *sannyasi* Godbrothers visiting Ireland. One will stay in Dublin for three months. My desert is being invaded! Of course, I can simply state that yes, I am living in Uddhava's house because of poor health. If necessary, I'll meet with them once. The main thing is to keep writing. Everything is grist for the mill.

* * *

Hare Krishna. rain tinkling continually on skylight. At least part of this morning is mine "a small bit in which to move my energy. Krishna. Aniruddha hasn't been here to work in two days. M. wants to finish the construction so the house can be made private and clean and usable, but we are dependent on others.

Dear So-and-so, you're a dirty little . . . Why didn't you write to me? And now why *are* you writing to me? See my scowl? I could have been "and you too "you know, *different*. But this is how we turned out. You say you need money, food, air, shelter. Krishna will provide. All glories to Prabhupada and all that was done in his name.

All glories to free-thinkers. Except there's a limit. We must always return to be led by the *Vedas*, the way an ox is led by the rope attached to its nose. We're not independent.

But tired of cant and propaganda and dogma. Sometimes just tired. Want to just relax and be yourself "find yourself.

Old inner tube floating.

Then get up and work. You have no grandchildren, no obligations. Even Santoka had to work and walk and walk.

Or sit and get drunk.

His Zazen.

Stick it out and keep chanting, despite the lack of taste.

Hare Krishna. Give me a slug of water, Pat. I'm tired and me bones seek repose. The skeleton says, "Clack-clack." In me, there's a walk, a river run, a meadow. I opened the window and chanted Hare Krishna mantras aloud for the oxen. The nearest ones looked up at me attentively, and even some distant ones glanced over. After a while, I began to sing Hare Krishna. The nearest one grew bored and wandered off, but another stayed until I shut the window.

* * *

10 a.m.

Saw an intriguing passage about Christ being "unorganizational," whereas Peter is portrayed as "asking people to make a visible and verifiable profession of their acceptance of Jesus." This is tantamount to asking people to "join up." Raymond Brown writes, "I have often thought that in the 21st century the deepest chasm experienced in Christianity may be between those who, although they worship in various churches, think 'church' is important, and those for whom Christianity is really a matter of 'Jesus and me,' without any concept of being saved as part of the people or Church." (*A Once-and-Coming Spirit at Pentecost*) It made me think of ISKCON, and in particular, my own situation. Am I disillusioned with institutional life? To what extent?

* * *

11:15 a.m.

Hearing a Godbrother give what he calls his "personal bias" on how a community should react to falldown of a member "he said it should be seen as abomination and he is not in favor of unlimited mercy "I realized I didn't want to judge. Is it irresponsible to avoid forming opinions on how we should live with one another? I do form opinions, inevitably. Or maybe that's my point: don't put me in a managerial, judgmental position because I'm deciding such things on my own.

M. wants me to take a strong position regarding visitors to Wicklow and the *sannyasis* who want to see me. He suggests I don't invite them to this house. The house should be off limits, a place where I can retreat in peace. I like that stand, but I'm afraid it would put them off or look weird. We'll see.

* * *

2:34 p.m.

Kirtana-rasa will be here at any moment. I'm clear, ready to talk with him on Srila Prabhupada's letters. He'll ask . . . I won't be able to answer deep and alive with living memories, but I'll scoop out whatever I can. To prepare myself, I read a letter and commentary from *You Cannot Leave Boston*. It's nice, going back to 1969, and our simple and absolute faith in our spiritual master. Good to share that with readers and remind myself what it was like. I can't duplicate it, but I want that same absolute *guru-nistha* now. I seem to struggle harder; I guess I'm not as simple or innocent as I was in those days. The fight has become my devotion "staying true. Whatever was false about that early devotion has been lost. Now I am facing bedrock.

* * *

Swami, swanning the world's
effluvia and finding Krishna therein
in a storefront adorned and adore
ye the happy day, sweeter than heaven

more blessed than May
when he comes to us
even today, our spiritual master.
Behold the faithful friend.

* * *

The interrupted life. "Hello, I was just writing my memoirs when I heard your car."
"Sorry I'm late (or early) and am intruding."

"It's perfectly all right. I asked you to come. Let us begin. I can return to musing
another time."

The waves of wind, cattle sitting in a tight circle, eyes shut, chewing cud, feel the
respite even on a gray day. They're suffering past karma, yet they are innocent now.

* * *

3:02 p.m.

He's not here yet. House empty. raining. Typical cold feeling for May or anytime in
Ireland. A little robin with a worm. reminds me what this world is.

* * *

4:15 p.m.

Had a nice meeting with Kirtana-rasankirtana-rasankirtana-rasa says if he were in
New York, he'd complain about such weather, but here it's okay. By the time we finished
speaking, I was warmed up to it. He said he assumed that Madhu would be back soon
and asked if I wanted him to wait downstairs until M. arrived. I said, "No, he won't be
back until late tonight." So he has left and I'm alone. But his comment made me aware
that I sustain a lot of alone time. It's potentially lonely, and one might even feel insecure,
but I'm getting used to it.

Can I write in an empty house? Am I comfortable here? Would I like to play
some *bhajan*s to make myself feel sociable and warm in a mathematically harmonious
universe?

No, I'm all right.

Talked of the Swami. Kirtana-rasankirtana-rasa said that maybe they're afraid of
being hurt. Most intimate relationships are painful. Me too. I'm living that service I did
as the Boston temple president only in memory now. I've chosen another reality.

When discussing the utilitarian servant, I said that some might want to stay aloof
because they prefer to contemplate God rather than to serve Him actively. Those are
impersonalists, or at best, *Santa-rasa* hermits.

* * *

5:15 p.m.

So cold and rainy, I ate a small green apple and a milk sweet from Radha-Madhava in Belfast. I found them both in the kitchen along with a few raisins and three pieces of walnut.

Kirtana-rasankirtana-rasa says his life revolves around his little boy's ways.

Whistling winds. Chimes in time "the petering out of words. This will be just one page, sir, I can't make your quotas. I had a slow start this morning.

Looked at photos of Srila Prabhupada and myself and others. Sometimes I feel haunted by those others "one was murdered, some went to jail, most fell down, and those who were *sannyasis* gave it up, those big, swaggering men. What are they now? Kicked out of ISKCON, those big shots, and Srila Prabhupada is gone and the young are now old. O ISKCON, how have you managed to survive it all? But I tell you, looking at those pictures dredges up those memories and the truth of what happened to all of us.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna,

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

This is the way we go
over the waterfall, over

the sentence. I was cold and alone, so I raided the kitchen. Now let's see you digest that snack.

* * *

Cripes, aren't your hands cold? Is there anything else to say? Go back in there and answer letters.

One man wrote from Guyana and he told me who has been there recently and what he himself has been doing. He said the GBC man was busy talking to the other managers, and he didn't get a chance to spend time with him. He only stayed one or two days at his temple, then went to Berbice.

Someone else told me that for a lecture, he chose Prabhupada's statement, "I can forgive three times, but the fourth time, 'Get out rascals!'" He said they laughed. That was the quote he wanted to use to prove that we are not unlimitedly forgiving. We do kick some people out. That's what he wanted to say. So he can do it himself.

But most people don't wait to be kicked out; they leave us and say, "You can *have* your movement." And your righteousness. That you kicked out sinners and kept the ranks closed.

Well, Prabhupada said, "No crazies, no lazies."

Then who would be left? The in-charge? And the gurus, or some of them, who will them recruit more disciples.

He wrote, "If I'm not absolute and you're not absolute, how can we be guru and disciple?" I handed out the party line: "You should not look upon the spiritual master in a relative way. Don't find fault. He's absolute because he teaches what Krishna taught, and he's fully surrendered to his spiritual master."

They *want* to break down. They *want* to think it doesn't really work, this system of guru and disciple. They want their guru to be just another brother. I mean, is he really

going to hold them to account? Why don't you just say the *rtviks* are right and let it go at that? But I didn't release him from his responsibility or his vows.

* * *

Day's End

& He cuts through sharp as ice or dagger and you go with it. This is the sad part of the trip.

I know a place, rainy and cold, where you can dig out slowly. Disciples sometimes get impatient as the sky gets darker.

Some don't. They're busy romancing.

Religions are breaking up because of the "immigrant connection," and some want it to be only between themselves and Jesus.

Is this true of Jesus?

* * *

I raise these questions and then leave them. I don't have to solve them, just live out the end of this day. Just say "Hare Krishna" a few more times.

We were human, we wasted time, we lasted a little longer.

* * *

The "argument" with God and self means I do love Him. I try but I fail. Lord, let me see You, be with You.

* * *

He's "arguing" to his Beloved ""I'm talking to You" "

he pauses, got to search his heart,

his pocket, his literary allusions "what

does he actually like and who is he truly?

Is that worth telling?

Or do we have to be a Sukadeva

parrot stuffing

carrots "people in old cold castle

Ruin in Ireland now

transformed for tourists with pop band

playing and scantily dressed girls and beer.

* * *

I sat and stared into the fire

at chimeras I didn't want

to consort with lower spirits

give me God or nothing

but cement walls. "

* * *

6:45 p.m.

I'm not afraid to be in a two-story house alone at night. I have my guard, my Narayana-kavaca shield armor and Swiss army clock. I have *hari-nama* ready to spring when needed. I saw the photo of the ISKCON leaders surrounding Srila Prabhupada as he got off the plane in San Francisco. I will not . . . O Krishna, may I turn my attention to You.

May 6, 12:13 a.m.

"O Arjuna, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, I know everything that has happened in the past, all that is happening in the present, and all things that are yet to come. I also know all living entities; but Me no one knows." (Bg. 7.26)

A non-liberated person can't tell the past or future (neither can an impersonal light). All-knowing and all-sentient Godhead speaks this verse.

I'm not writing down everything I think. That's all right "I'm not responsible for that "but I should write what is most useful to myself and others. That is the best way to use my time. I'd like to get totally in line with *sastra*. Never mind if I look foolish. Someone wants to know why he should follow me or regard me as guru if I'm so relative. That's all right too. (Say, "I was relative but just now becoming absolute." Or asks, "Don't hang onto my heels so literally when I say I'm like a worm in stool.") Just accept me. He says, "Why?" It doesn't matter to me. I'm moving forward into deeper Krishna consciousness with or without him.

We're up to Bg. 7.26. Krishna says He knows all. How could a person know *all* without being God?

But still we doubt. Are we to believe it just because He says so? Or am I not supposed to ask a question like that at this stage of my life?

Krishna is not alone in asserting Himself as the Godhead. Great Vedic authorities accept Him. *Somebody* has to be God, don't they? Why not Him? Just look at His activities. He was God in the lap of His mother and when He danced with the *gopis* and killed demons and killed Kamsa and at every moment.

If you doubt, pray to Krishna to remove your doubts. Look at me. My middle *name* is Thomas. My first name is Stephen "who died a martyr; then Thomas "doubting; Guarino "little warrior. Note: Thomas was also a believer. He overcame doubt after hesitation and went on to do amazing things. He was supposedly the first Christian preacher to go to India.

Oh, no.

Srila Prabhupada: "As it is stated in the third verse of this chapter. [Be a student. A student is in process when he hears and studies. He has the *Sraddha* to inquire and now listens to the answers.] out of millions and millions of men [what about women?], some try to become perfect in this human form of life, and out of thousands and thousands of

such perfected men, hardly one can understand what Lord Krishna is." (Bg. 7.26, purport)

We have to be Krishna conscious in order to know Krishna. We can't remain outside the bottle of honey and expect to know how it tastes. Take the lid off and leap in. Lose your damned objectivity. That's what Kierkegaard called "the leap of faith." Leap, grasshopper, leap. You are about to die. Study *Bhagavad-gita* while you have eyes and peace. rattle your brains with Krishna's words before death rattles them.

Krishna, please help me. All I have to do to get Your help is desire to hear from You. I want to serve You. Godbrothers may visit Ireland or Australia or Berbice or anywhere else that I go "I don't own any person or any territory "but I'm responsible for this plot of land which is my body and mind. I'm responsible not to them but to myself, to bring myself before You. (I'm honest, that's why I can be a teacher. And I'm in the class of the Absolute Truth grinning in the back row.)

You mean that guy is a devotee? Krishna accepts him?

Yes, and he accepts Krishna (tentatively, theoretically).

The less intelligent can't know Him. Clouds cover their consciousness. Sorry, folks, about Ireland being so cold and rainy. Hope you have enough turf in your fire to keep you warm, and that you are not sorry you came. You'll be back in New York soon enough.

Sips at the Fount may not be the best title for this book. I'll hang the shingle anyway. Better than calling it, "The Doubts of Thomas," or, "Worries From Behind the Wall." The robin and the snail, I mean, worm. The cattle in the backyard. Visitors to hell. Visitors to the cave of young Vyasa. The military march. The porch light free-write.

M. went out to play. I stayed home and ate a snack. How come you're a guru and you admit "Gurupada" (former name) wasn't a good thing?

Oh, don't bring that up; I'm the only one who is allowed to bring that up.

Call the book, "Sip at the Old Bottle." Lord Caitanya drank from Kholaveca Sridhara's broken iron cup. All my nights have shrunk into a ball.

It's not easy to realize God. Try and pray. Help me, Lord. I want to know You from the *Bhagavad-gita*. It's as good a source as any, and probably the best introductory book. You reveal Yourself to Arjuna. It's in the *Vedas*. A great scheme prepared by Vyasadeva. Many world cultures. I believe. Look at *Back to Godhead* magazine. Help! Cry help.

And take up the role. "Persons who have acted piously in previous lives . . . engage themselves in My devotional service with determination." (Bg. 7.28)

* * *

4:31 a.m.

Back to hearing *Vidagdha-madhava* and liking it. Our voices intone as we read the moving story of Madhumangala, Krishna, Lalita, Radha.

I tell people by letter that I can be with them best when they read my books. Books are a wonderfully intimate exchange. Krishna invented books. Some people feel personal exchanges are better. They are good, but they're not everything. It's a fact that we had Srila Prabhupada with us for only eleven years, and even then we couldn't be with him often. It was difficult to stay by him. But in his book form, he is very accessible. One

devotee wrote me how she and her husband went to Vrndavana and spent a day reading *The Nectar of Devotion*. You can do that to be with Prabhupada. Stay with the Lord and the spiritual master in book form. Prabhupada said we were the *sampradaya* of the book. In our *sampradaya*, words unfurl, uncurl, come lapping at our feet like the ends of waves on a beach. Hare Krishna.

Kirtana-rasa said his wife is not very attracted to Ireland, although he himself is quite attracted. Too much rain. Can't say the rain's unseasonal, because it comes at any season, especially in Rathdangan.

When we speak of Srila Prabhupada's visit to Boston in 1971 today, will it be possible to go deeper?

What do you mean?

I mean . . . I don't know what I mean.

O *sakhi*, what happens when we speak?

I am reminiscing, and that is always light in some ways. But to be merely philosophical is not what I mean when I say deeper.

"Stop, fool. Don't speak in this way." This is how the *gopis* tease one another and tease Krishna. When Lalita speaks harshly, Krishna says, "Is this Lalita becoming Mahakairava (Kali)?" Madhumangala says, "Krishna, You're still dizzy from when the Trnavarta whirlwind spun You around. Therefore You think You see Radha when it is only a golden flower." Similarly, radha becomes stunned when She sees objects in nature that remind Her of Krishna. O Radhe . . . O mind, please stay . . . keep the body awake a little longer. It was deep asleep when the big clock's alarm went off at midnight. It was sleeping at the bottom of a lake filled with dreams I can no longer recall.

* * *

I am becoming empty. I can only recall the rhythm of *Vidagdha-madhava*. "O uncivilized girl! O foul-mouthed girl!" Madhumangala claps loudly and jumps around, "Ah, the proud *gopis* have been defeated!"

* * *

Krishna and Radha's pastimes are the ocean. I am not this body, but I seem to be. When it asks for something, I go running, not to the ocean, but to fetch some matter. A devotee discovered that by writing she felt alive. Krishna, I am sorry, but I am tired now. I will free-write before Jatila comes. I mean, before Jara arrives.

"O *sakhi*, you ascribe your own faults to others. It's you who are desiring to see Krishna, but you say that I want to see Him."

"O *sakhi* . . .

Someone wrote, "My husband no longer goes to the temple. Now that we have to earn our own money, our family members are more helpful and commercial, but my husband doesn't go to the temple at all." She wasn't criticizing her husband, and if I were to criticize him, she would probably stop me. "The 'reading *sannyasi*' has a way of cornering you with logic," she said, "until you are intellectually defeated. He did that today and proved that you cannot be happy unless you are Krishna conscious." Oh, well

done, old bird, well done. Here is a bouquet of Salingerian parentheses as a prize:
(((((((())).

Thank you very much. I will repeat all this to my superior.

Go ahead, I'm not afraid of you. My friend is Krishna, and we have nothing to fear as long as we're on His side.

Who can imagine the privilege of those who took part directly in His *lilas*, who saw Him every day?

Relatively speaking, it was only a few years ago that Lord Caitanya appeared. Hare Krishna transcript conscript. The electrical heater, the sheep in the dark. Soon I'll ring the bell for Madhu, who came in at 2:30 a.m. It's more likely that a sports broadcast is coming in. The royal Air Force picked it up by mistake and I give it to the people of England, claiming that the State of the Union message by the President (I almost said "temple president") . . .

Hare Krishna. Chant out loud and everything will be all right. I have experienced that truth.

* * *

Morning Brain Fatigue

& Okay we know this very well "

I'm played out.

Your brain ain't played out;

I order you to work,

said the jerk

but if you insist

I'll work out.

There's no way a guy would be good enough to play

Hare Krishna music unless

he was a devotee. Fuzzy

Wuzzy was a bear

I read *Shack Notes*

I read that Krishna is God.

* * *

He played so good I liked it. I'm sad to say he whipped your . . .

I tell you, don't write letters to women. And don't sass me or berate me, I'm only preaching. I don't have to take guff from no fire-and-brimstone preachers

and I don't have to put them down "people like them. She got it right. Now the magpies are complete.

Forty regiments. regimen for health. Are you aware of cranial adjustments you could make? Yeah, I heard about a prize fool who opened a book table.

He was a fool because *you* say so?

"We're roman Catholics." We are

fried shrimps. Then he said, "This is enough

I had better report to work sharp as a button. It's

over now. "

* * *

5:45 a.m.

He left the house and I'm just here dwindling. Doing what I ought.

* * *

9:02 a.m.

Relax and write. I want to reach my twenty-page quota, and that means I have to work. But a fog is rising in my head. Duck. Hide. Wait awhile. If it goes into remission, I can go forward.

Asked a friend to read Etty Hillesum. He did, and now I'm asking for his response.

The masked man. The Lone ranger. Why the disguise if he's a law-abiding hero? Does he have some secret from his past?

An Indian man wrote asking for initiation, but he still calls me "Gurupada." He doesn't know the history and maybe could only grasp a simple version of it, whereas others want me to be as sarcastic and confessional as possible about my past association with the Old Boy's Club, the system "they like nothing better in my writing than those come-down disclosures.

You are making this up. You haven't researched it. It's not a final draft. The proctor hasn't approved of it. Anyway, it's subject to change. Or will you say, "Let it go into the world"?

Yes.

Sitting in an easy chair (where it's harder to write with a pad propped on crossed leg) before Radha-Govinda. Give me more clothes for Them; I'm greedy to see Them in splendid, tasteful varieties.

What's that noise? It must be the electric heater in the bathroom one floor down, or the kitchen water heater. Madhu must be taking a late bath. Little life.

If I'm up for it, I'll meet at 3 with Kirtana-rasa. Before that, I plan to formulate "mantra" lines with M.'s assistance "statements to make to others why I prefer to meet them somewhere other than this house. It will take resolve to say those lines. I'll have to live with it if they see me as eccentric. I need a place where I can be safe and alone and handle my almost-daily pain.

Here's a line: "Hare Krishna. Don' bodder me, ya hear?"

Yeah, we hear you, Boof.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Look at Bg. 7.1's elements; think of Krishna in yoga, free from doubt, if you want to know Him. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada quotes *Srnavatam sva katha Krishna*, how the Lord in the heart awards you, cleans you, so you can know Him. God, the supreme power, the supreme pure, the best friend.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. Let's pause now for a commercial or to pray on padded kneelers. Try to think of God and what happens. The mind goes off to recent and old ingestions, crisscrosses the many tracks available at any railroad junction. *He* Krishna.

* * *

12:17 p.m.

Swami, your undertaker is here.

Only kidding.

And this is just the beginning
me and you make a good pair.

I understand you don't like lemons with your meal. Oh, you *do* like lemons. I didn't know. Excuse me. I'd like to confide in you, but I realize you can't guarantee absolute confidentiality. If I appear to almost cause harm to myself or others, you may be compelled to report me. In that case, I'll talk with you, but don't expect me to tell you all the stuff that counts. Why should I bare my soul to you? Are you so expert a counselor?

It's now twenty minutes past twelve. Pushing stuff aside.

Why would a guy want to tie the knot with a girl? Why, I mean, if he doesn't even know her?

Hey, cut it out. Don't ask questions like that.

But people getting married ask my permission. Aren't I suppose to know something about the dynamics of married couples?

No, just tell them to chant Hare Krishna and follow the four rules. That's all you need to know.

What's the lasting benefit of reminiscing about Srila Prabhupada? It's fun for his followers to hear. He's great, so anything about him . . . and we assume you are a disciple, so your reflections may be valuable. That's my take on it.

And now . . . now Alfred will bow out and give us the anchorman, Scratch Scratch.

Aniruddha is making a door to the art room. I didn't stop to say hello or thanks; I will if I get a chance later. I'm grateful to Krishna for self-expression and the chance to be reasonably honest, although we all have to lie and be polite and hide sometimes. Everyone just chant Hare Krishna and be happy. Let's explore what that means.

* * *

4:00 p.m.

Remembering Srila Prabhupada. Kirtana-rasa asked, "Did he treat you gently?"

"Yes, that was a feature of our relationship. He didn't have to exert much force to get me to submit or to correct me." He treated me with respect. It seemed he saw me from the beginning as sincere and trustworthy.

Recalling these things, I can't help but feel what a special relationship it has been. Especially in the years he was with us. And I have forgotten so much! I have maintained 110 percent loyalty to his memory along with everyone else in ISKCON. He's perfect *"more* than perfect. But probably like others, my praise has been somewhat official. That is, I have not always stopped to consider how I actually feel when I am praising him, what is it that's touching my heart. Therefore, some of my praise has been blind or too

profuse or absolute, and sometimes it has taken the form of putting down others. Ultimately, I want to go before Srila Prabhupada with real praise and full surrender. He's my guru. I also want to ask him to forgive me for the ways I may have misrepresented him or failed him.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

Hare Krishna. Hungry crasher, Hanger Krishner. Krishner Krishner. Hooray hooray. Watch your mouth, don't get foul with holy sounds. But I've got to tell you, this mantra's my life and soul.

Oh, don't boast you can't tell the truth. He (the lecturer) said if we bared our feelings and told the truth on all occasions, life would be unbearable. In India they have "yes-yes" honed to a fine art. You say, "Yes," but you don't listen seriously to the other's advice. Why? Because you mean "No."

Krishna. Tall, cascading "like a giant sequoia but with the roots down to the center of the planet. And much more "He's everything, supreme container and spinner, the Lord of Death and Life. Him no one knows. Krishna, I am with You early in the morning when I hear the tracks of Rupa Gosvami's plays.

* * *

4:58 p.m.

Turning to Krishna. I ought to chant a round or two. A dark mist outside. I think it's raining again. At least the sun won't be pouring into this room just as I want to rest. The helpless cattle stop at our cement wall and sniff at it almost pensively before they move on. We all move on; we have to take life after life.

I told Kirtana-rasa (and myself), "Don't be afraid to take birth again. Do it manfully." He said, "That's all right if I can be born with my guns." No, you can't. You will be born a helpless babe in a horrific world, so get a bead on something by the inner light that will endure. When it gets bad, turn to Krishna.

I have many letters to answer.

Why not more?

Krishna crashing down the rain

prose poems "an old pack of perfumed playing cards in the hands of Baudelaire and his cat, the midnight rain, the prostitutes on Paris streets and him taking morphine, waiting for the printer to come by and pick up the latest poems.

Why mention this? O Krishna, where is Vyasa's quiet cave? Or should I go to a new temple somewhere in Europe "in a city, just find the address and drive up? They would want to know I was coming in advance, and even then there's no guarantee they would greet me at the door. But most temples have guest rooms, as long as no one tries to stay in them for too long. O Krishna, "Hare Krishna" is the expert defense. I want to be a devotee who can serve You. Therefore, You tell me to think of You in what I do. You tell me to work under the guidance of my spiritual master. You tell me You are present in Your holy name, and when I don't see You there, it's because I am still crossing the desert of spiritual poverty.

A pure devotee is happy to remember Krishna, is entranced by Him, and tastes the nectar of the holy names. When others see such a devotee, they automatically think of Krishna. To become pure, we must both pray for mercy and be aware of our unworthiness. Krishna is so intelligent He can see through our prayers, but still He scoops the good "even creates the good "then gives us something better than we could ever imagine asking for.

May 7, 12:05 a.m.

"Persons who have acted piously in previous lives and in this life and whose sinful actions are completely eradicated are freed from the dualities of delusion, and they engage themselves in My service with determination." (Bg. 7.28)

Now unload the dream: Two camps were fighting to win the hearts of *gurukula* boys. Sometimes members of each camp kidnapped boys to get them to join their side. I was on one side, a brother on the other. But it was difficult to win their hearts, or even to be completely convinced we were right. It was even harder to get them out of the clutches of the other more established party. I was also checking myself, in the dream, to see if my headache was increasing.

Now back to the gentle *Bhagavad-gita* verse. Krishna is speaking. I think of it in terms of how logically convincing it is. But it doesn't matter. He's not arguing about why He can make the claim to be God; He's simply stating the facts. Therefore, we don't have to respond with intellect but with love.

This verse seems different than ones in which all we need is sincere surrender no matter how sinful we are. Now we're told we need to be *free* of sinful reactions. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada stresses that we need to associate with pure devotees: "For in the association of great devotees one can be delivered from delusion." Why, then, do we associate with anyone *but* pure devotees?

Srila Prabhupada created our *punya-karma*. He freed us of sin. Then we became eligible to practice devotional service. But why was he so kind if we weren't eligible? We think that we may have actually been eligible ourselves "that we were already pious souls. He must have liked our looks, our ways. No, he was causelessly merciful to have awakened our dormant Krishna consciousness.

O stone heart, give more blood.

* * *

Dance of the elves and the starved head. Signal for free-writing. Call for it "shazaam! I shall do the dance not of infidels but of *kirtana* marshaling words. May worlds come alive. But I can already tell this will be a shaky dance on account of my head.

Krishna, Krishna. My heart is beating faster and faster. My knees creak and my head, oh, my head, the fog rolling in.

But I do love thee, O Eternity, O Supreme Personality of Eternity, O Godhead, O Krishna, deceiving cowherd boy. O handsome, charming boy. O rake, O cheater. O boy who plays the flute in the moonlight. O friend of the cows and cowherd boys.

I told Madhu I saw many cows and oxen at the fence standing close to his house. Suddenly they got a fright and stampeded up the hill. I asked if he had scared them. "No," he said, "they were waiting to hear the music, and when there wasn't any, one of them said, 'Aw, there's no music. Let's get the hell outta here!'"

They ran, they thumped and thundered up the hill. They didn't stop but kept going through the rocky path "because there was no music.

* * *

Those whose lives are free of sin come to Me. Don't go to Krishna merely for liberation, but if that's your motive, you too can come to know Him. Eventually, you'll come to love Him.

Scared of coming back next life? Chant Hare Krishna. Go to the Dark Lord.

Want your batteries recharged? Go to Him. How? By associating with His pure devotees, especially with the one to whom you have become obligated, who promised to take you all the way back to Him. "Gradually, by such transcendental association, one becomes convinced of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and at the time of death such a Krishna conscious person can never forget Krishna. Naturally he is thus promoted to the planet of the Supreme Lord, Goloka Vrndavana." (Bg. 7.30, purport)

I told you he said he wanted his guns in his next life, starting in the embryo. That's just not possible. We have to come into this world defenseless. After that, we will spend plenty of time building our defenses. But if we can carry the gun of *Krishna-smaranam*, we would need nothing more than that. We have to die anyway whenever we take birth, so if we cultivate total dependence on Krishna now, we will be born still dependent.

Consider this: such full dependence would be our subjective attitude. The objective philosophy is important, but not as important as our subjective attitude toward Krishna. That lecturer seemed to say, "If our attitude is anything less than a hundred percent acceptance of absolute truth, then we're on the mental plane and should reject those thoughts and feelings."

Well, we can't if that's not real to us. So live with the mind's passions, but use them to get to full dependence on Krishna. That's what it means to dovetail everything in Krishna's service.

Rehearsal: No one is allowed through this gate. You can't come in to see me. Get off the property.

Or: Naw, you don't wanna see *this* old building. It's just a *construction* site.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

So many intrigues going on in rupa Gosvami's drama. May my mind become entangled in *that* gossip and fear. The Vrajavasis are afraid that Abhimanyu may take Radha to Mathura. Purnamasi gives quick assurance, and then talks Abhimanyu out of it. Then Radha and Krishna play in the groves of Vrndavana. But Radha's *gopis* are intriguing against Candravali's followers. Who shall outsmart whom? The contest goes one way, and then another. We know Radha will triumph. She always does.

Meanwhile, I dress Radha-Govinda in white and pink, clothes made in Vrndavana. I cannot make Krishna look as nice as I would like. His clothes need some adjustment. My fingers are also clumsy and not fastidious enough to make the Divine Couple look perfect. I need to be more patient when I offer Him His peacock feather for His crown. "Yes, as you order, I shall do." They exit; all exit."

The Vrndavana intrigues sometimes seem unimportant, just games among the amorous girls and Krishna. But they are more important and pure than any of the so-called big doings in this world "even those of the demigods. They are more important than the philosophical deliberation of *brahmanas* or the doings of the managers of the Hare Krishna movement. They are more important even than my own affairs.

Radha runs away from Kana and hides behind an *aSoka* tree, but He finds Her. Later, He hides in a dense forest and She finds Him.

Prabhupada has a brown knit cap, and wears a scarf over a light brown *cadar*. Handsome shades for the founder-*acarya* of ISKCON. This is his movement, so let me live for it and make it a better place for others.

* * *

Some people want me to refrain from telling what I know. They would prefer I told you about something I made up. Therefore, I'll tell you about the man who went to Barnabie's Department Store in Tallaght and bought enough wool for his wife to knit a scarf for their pet elephant. Then he dreamed an angel of the Lord came and recited the Bible. He thought that must mean he was about to die, so quickly was the spool of his activities played out before him while the Bible was being recited. All at once he was twenty-six and going to the storefront for the first time "those days whipped by as he whirled along in ISKCON from one temple to another and going to Mayapur each year. It was high drama as he saw his great hope dashed, but with the demise of his utopian vision came the death of ISKCON corruption. Then it got quiet and he saw he wasn't dead.

Instead, he saw that no trucks could get up the road where he lived, and that even his neighbor risked breaking an axle every time he drove up it. But each night, that neighbor struggled up the road indeed, returning from his day's occupation.

But what about the pet elephant and its scarf?

Oh, that. I can't get into it right now because I have to preserve my energy for an 8:30 meeting with Kirtana-rasa. I'd rather tell you what our spiritual master did, because he lit the candle, fused the epics, told us that in Kali-yuga people whimsically disagree with their spiritual master. That's a sure sign that it's Kali-yuga, he said; otherwise, who would fool enough to disagree with his own spiritual master and then go away?

Not me. I'm a loyal son.

Prabhupada, you were always gentle with me, but you could correct me. I forgot ginger for your breakfast plate and you mocked my expression; I wasn't taking it seriously. You told me not to jump like a monkey. Still good advice. When one is given a good service, he shouldn't go around jumping like a monkey. Just be satisfied with what the Lord has given you and work at it until He moves you elsewhere.

Yes. So Jimmy Jonesey went to town

in alphabet soup. The Tempo taxi
Rolled over and over and
our man saw it, reflected on life and death.

A woman went to India in a cork-lined helmet and drank dry liquor wherever she
went while sitting in air-conditioned rooms.

Swamiji, everything depended upon your being here. When you left, it was very hard
to serve anymore. Very hard.

* * *

Krishna Conscious Fun
& I almost passed out. I didn't know
what to expect. We simply wanted fun
in a Krishna conscious way. We simply
wanted to be on
time with
a non-forbidden idea
of Krishna conscious fun
I said to him

* * *

we are hereby authorized to follow our
guru. But so many versions have occurred.
Now ISKCON is the solid river
and anything branching from it is suspect
although we'll always be kind to brothers
who claim allegiance to our master.

* * *

Song should be sprung private/ no
one allowed entrance but authorized
persons. You've seen signs on doors
like "No Entry" or "Employees
Only."

* * *

Fun installed on a platter
ham on rye ugh that's violence
to kill pigs and cows he doesn't know
how much sinful reaction he's
incurring. In the same way
my little deviations could
be held against me.

* * *

Noises got us. The man asked
only for a distant favor and I wanted
to give it if it didn't cost much
such as corresponding with him in jail
and me at least five thousand miles away
and not coming out.

* * *

The piano man who went his
own way with no looking back
at anything that was like
an original tune.

* * *

So much classical training.
This makes good sense I think
I'll buy the three of them I've got
the power to dovetail

* * *

Krishna consciousness makes sense you go
to eternal glory of service and
even if you have to come back
you'll know what to do "
chant God's names
and seek shelter for quiet work
and give out good advice for
people who ask for it.

* * *

Jumpin' punkins!
Why, it's as easy as pie
for a pie-eater
but for the crooked it's
woe betide. Take your choice
I want Krishna. "

* * *

Love and Freedom For All
& He's singing a song (Irish) below and I'm on the
top floor becoming more introverted while singing
my own traditional ballad.

* * *

He's got his freedom cry. He wants peace
and love in the world. It can come from
one person crying out blowing his top
and returning to sane ground
got the whole gamut to cover.

* * *

We like it when he can tell the whole
world with a shout that is somehow
controlled and human and is meant for
nonviolence
except that we need
a good time.

* * *

He's caught on his nerves as long as he lives
gives out the royal treatment to sing on
behalf of seals in zoos (and jails)
mountains blowing their tops
and the cows they slaughter
politicians' lies
sex explicit on TV is no
small wrong
he wants it better
found in love guided by God
but how can we expect
much in Kali-yuga/ you go
from that to this.

* * *

Listen I'll take you home if you'll
just let me cut the throats of the animals
and we'll eat them on dainty trays
and drink until we are deranged to think

we are God-enjoyers "Radha and Krishna.
Our intelligence is *stolen*. Don't remind
us? Not needlessly no
needlessly. Just.
this.

* * *

We're seeing the dawn first light just
let it rain or not clouds
or clear just let me stay here as
long as possible enjoying the
Krishna consciousness of one soul
pump me out
cheer me clear take me to
approaching the *sastras*
in little sips praying
for freedom for all love
for all I
will help. "

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Took an Esgic to get through the one-hour interview with Kirtana-rasa. We spoke of Srila Prabhupada's expressed desire, "Yes, I want to settle down somewhere and write my books. That is my aim. So most probably it will be done by Krishna's grace." (Letter, July 27, 1971) I like to think of Srila Prabhupada, the author, hankering to live out this full-time occupation and churning out translations and purports. He gave us plenty, but both he and all of us wished there were more.

The interview took time and energy. Now, can I recoup and make my quota? I'll tell you the truth "this is not a phony persona. It's who I currently am in body, soul, and mind. The soul is so rare and pure that I've hardly met him. My self-realization is general: "I am Krishna's direct servant." I act in such capacity, but I don't know the supreme Master. I do, however, know my spiritual master.

We also spoke about Srila Prabhupada and his instructions for *Back to Godhead*. JS is carrying out that policy, although BTG faces the challenge to make the writing interesting but keep it strictly *parampara* and for general readers (no esoteric subjects). I may talk with JS about this when he comes.

I've asked to meet with the Wicklow devotees. I want to confide in them my intention that Godbrothers not enter my sacred space. They should call this house "Uddhava's house" (which it is). M. says eventually we may set it up that someone would have to ring a bell at the gate, and we could go out to meet them.

Because some people want to burn down hermit huts. They want us to get out there and *preach*. The really strict swamis blast notions of tenderness and the mind's subjective ditches. They even ban songs. They want capital punishment and kings.

George Wills Jr., they say, is an example of how *we* want to write "not this neurotic, gushy stuff.

But Sats is an exception, a borderline case. Old swamis never die, they just fade away (in saffron). Bury 'em, they say. For dogs to get at or not. Or encase them in salt. Don't worry, you won't feel a thing. You'll already be dead. There's only pain up until death. Send my forwarded mail to my next life?

No, no. Jesus was asked who would be married to whom in eternity. He said the mundane law doesn't prevail in eternity. The spiritual world is a completely different place; we can't understand it now. We hear about that in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* too. Let it transform us.

Hey, and what about those sips at the fount you promised? You said we'd take a brief look at *sastra* even if we weren't centered and didn't have much time. You said you wouldn't worry whether it fit, you would just do it anyway. Eventually, those sips would fill us up. Yes, I remember.

* * *

Dream: Prabhupada told me I could be his secretary again and travel with him. It made me happy. Earlier in the dream, there was something about people thinking a ghost lived in someone's long hair. If they kept their hair short, there was no threat. Prabhupada heard about it and was amused enough to make a little joke about it. Then we were ready to travel.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

"And whoever, at the end of his life, quits his body, remembering Me alone, at once attains My nature. Of this there is no doubt." (Bg. 8.5) Lots of commas in that sentence.

M. Rambhoru has seen quite a few devotees pass away; it's her service to care for such devotees in Vrndavana. She told the Irish devotees about it, and showed them death photos. One devotee said that after seeing the photos, she couldn't take her mind away from it "at least not for a few days. It's not easy even for devotees to think of Krishna and let go at the end, M. Rambhoru said.

But we're alive now. Let's build the garden or draw the cover. Let's . . . I know a verse. I recited it aloud in County Clare when we stayed there during Easter one year. remember that cold house? One devotee came and stayed with us for a few days, then realized he had something better to do. He left us alone to be cold and to write.

I wonder if the Irish government will allow me to become a citizen here. It's possible. Anyway, if I think about it enough, I could be born in Ireland in my next life, raised to become a roman Catholic priest, then at the right moment (about age sixteen), switch to Hare Krishna, visit Inis rath, and think, "I've been here before, maybe in a past life."

Hare Krishna dasi illustrated an EJW cover showing a photo of me in the lower right hand corner, with thought bubbles going up, one to Srila Prabhupada, one to Vyasa and GaneSa writing, and one to Radha and Krishna. Idealized. As if that's all I think about. "The Supreme Lord is the purest of the pure. Therefore anyone who is constantly Krishna conscious is also the purest of the pure . . . remembrance of Krishna is not

possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Krishna consciousness in devotional service." If we want such success, " . . . constantly, incessantly chant the *maha-mantra*."

But it's hard. There are obstacles to be tolerated. Just chant Hare Krishna.

All right, I'll go into the yard a little later and chant two extra (offered freely) rounds. I chant sixteen and give two free.

I'm jesting. A devotee should be grave.

But not in the grave. Because the only reality in this world *is* the grave. So jokes may be costly.

Unless they're jokes with serious messages, like when Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura says, "I finally found a use for my head "to bow at the feet of Radha-Krishna. It looks like one of a GaneSa's carrier carried my *Sloka* page to his master." (That was after a rat ran away with the page.)

* * *

3:00 p.m.

No logo, dear reader, but you may recognize this. It's not a love song to a woman. I just read a little *Bhagavad-gita*, so let's dedicate this to the hope that we will all remember Krishna at the end (with the commas and no jokes, and not all white-faced horror, at least not inside).

Joke, juty as duty "Mr. Chudy. remember the Swami and me, me and the Swami. Did he really say, "If you love me . . . "? Did you meet him, or is it a lie?

It's raining or I'd be out there. First thing, the headache book says, is attention, Then breathe deeply, then . . . then get an orthopedic pillow. Be self-regulated, determined to edge down headache pain, which is, after all, a benign false alarm (no real harm to the body).

Krishna, Krishna. It's so hard, and now we hear it's hard to die, but You are crystal clear. O Krishna. The self-regulation is the *sadhana*. We have to try.

I'm dreaming of something or other, not able to think here. Hare Krishna. The mantras have shape. Chant with your spiritual master. See the carved wooden Lord Caitanya? Say it *is* Him. Svarupa Damodara didn't like Lord Caitanya being compared to nonmoving, wooden Lord Jagannatha. What would Svarupa Damodara say of me, "Kick this guy out"?

"But I want to study the book *bhagavata* with the person *bhagavata*. Only then will I dare to write a poem or essay about Krishna."

Switch to smashing raindrops on skylight and Madhu chanting his rounds downstairs. Probably better I chant those rounds indoors "easier to pay attention. The headache books say we should distract ourselves from pain, but probably we should face it, especially in our chanting. We have to feel the struggle if we want to improve.

"Pretty lady driving by, I ask you to please deliver me to a Hare Krishna temple. I'm a celibate monk, so you don't have to worry about me. I won't harm you. I'm a not a philanderer but a humble monk. I've got enough spunk to avoid *maya*." So saying, he put up his sweatshirt hood and stood aside.

And down came the rain.

Little sips ""Whoever thinks of Krishna . . . " Lord Brahma said that fireflies can't light up the sky, "and my attempt to outdo You is like that." *Govindam adi-purusam*.

What's wrong with BTG? Same old. How to present it expertly? It's not just about writing but about Krishna conscious realization. But it's about writing too.

Yes, it's raining, and when I chant . . . I'll believe it when I see it, when . . .

Krishna goes out with *gopis* at night. His mother tries to put Him to sleep, but He fakes it, then escapes to meet Radha in the forest. Vrnda-devi has already decorated the particular grove or *kunja*, and although Krishna is absolutely straight, He's also absolutely crooked in all these dealings. We say, "He's the one I actually love, and I presume to love another "including my own body and soul "only because I am part of Him."

Manah-Siksa in Guyana. read again. Krishna, Vrndavana, spiritual masters. Be with devotees. Say, "Oh, I wish," and, "Let's be kind and work together and do it too."

Someone wrote me, "I'm working for a boss devotee who gave me shelter in the temple. I say, 'Aye-aye, sir' all day long, whereas in my old place, I called all the shots."

Hope I haven't taken you for a ride in this piece. Please consider each passing thought as something you can turn. It's a jewel with facets, and if you turn it to the light and to yourself at the same time, you will see the refracted beauty. Krishna is source of this jewel's illumination.

* * *

5:28 p.m.

Madhu has his pants hanging on the radiator in my bedroom. That's the only way he can dry them. I let him know when they're dry so he can come up here and take them away. And he does. I wasn't in the room when he came for his pants, but now I see he has put his sweatshirt on the radiator.

It's raining so hard the stream is roaring. Kirtana-rasa and Beth surely won't continue that fantasy of coming to live in Ireland. They hoped for some vacation days, but all they've had is cold and mist and rain. Which I am used to but they are probably not. This has become my home.

I'm ready to face those who want to know what the hell I'm doing here. If they don't like it, that's just too bad.

I don't mean that. I don't want to them to be unhappy, and I certainly don't want to demean them. I don't want to turn them into Popeye caricatures in my book. But speaking of Popeye, "I yam what I yam."

Rain "it courses, lands, strikes, pounds, and dances. The sheep shake it from their wool "at least the lambs do. I see them from my window. I love the moment when two lambs suddenly charge from a distance toward their shaggy mother. She braces herself, and they hit her at full speed, duck under her, and butt their heads against her udder. Sometimes they do it so hard that she's lifted from the ground.

I like the sound of that roadside stream. It would be nice if the house could be empty by 7 and I could try to sleep without earplugs, listening to the sound of that stream. That probably won't happen tonight, though. right now, Aniruddha is pounding away in the kitchen, thank God, putting up shelves so Madhu can be organized when he cooks.

I asked the children to make covers for my EJW every day. I gave them seven pages stamped with "Every Day, Just Write," the volume number, the date, and the day's page count (to be filled in after I write each day). I told them not to draw on the stamped material. They seem to have had fun with it. The adults are starting to do them too. It's contagious! Every day another "chapter," and every day another illustration.

* * *

5:45 p.m., Night Notes

Electric saw still going. I know I can find my way to Krishna consciousness despite it. At least I can find my way to bed. Seeking a soothing condition for my mind. From there I'll send out my drumbeat (*brhad-mrdanga*).

I forget, but did I have a right-eye headache, a mixture of incurable migraine-mild-and tension with a bit o' something else?

Intense. Write a ballad with electric saw for background.

We are in Krishna consciousness, but the day will come when we'll have to face more than that. Think of how Etty Hillesum and the *many* who have risen to the occasion.

You can't be born with guns
only a defenseless cry, gutting
it out, hoping your mom won't
kill you "and there's a good chance
you'll survive if you're already born.
Pray now for the last woman
who gave you life.
I pray before dawn.

* * *

O Krishna, even if I don't pray,
please guide me, keep me
in the realm where my
spiritual father will recognize
this Satsvarupa and give him work
to help his family of
ISKCON souls.

May 8, 2:08 a.m.

"Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of Kunti, that state he will attain without fail." (Bg. 8.6)

In 8.5, we learned that if we think of Krishna at the end of life, we will attain our transcendental Lord. If we think of something other than Krishna, however, we will not achieve the same result. "If in one's present life one lives in the mode of goodness and always thinks of Krishna, it is possible for one to remember Krishna at the end of one's life." Chanting Hare Krishna is the easiest way to achieve this.

After hearing Srila Prabhupada say we should incessantly, constantly chant Hare Krishna, we may think that it's necessary to retire from other activities, but Krishna tells Arjuna to both fight and "always think of Me in the form of Krishna . . ." (Bg. 8.7) Again in his purport, Srila Prabhupada elaborates on Krishna's words. He says we should chant and perform our other duties. "By chanting Krishna's names, one will be transferred to the supreme planet, Krishnaloka, without a doubt."

Madhu mentioned to me yesterday that he has no particular *japa* time. He's still moving in and getting adjusted. When I hear him chanting *japa* downstairs, however, he sounds attentive and awake. I chant at regulated times, usually between 1:00 and 2:45 a.m. But I need to become more dependent on the holy name. I need to chant more often. I need to chant with devotion, with the desire to go to Krishna. My life depends on this, if I could only realize it. Chanting is our main form of prayer or meditation. Lord Caitanya's followers have faith in this. Be glad that Srila Prabhupada stressed chanting and embrace it fully as his emphasis. Be glad that he emphasized chanting, and embrace it fully. He never derided those who chanted more than sixteen rounds, as long as they did not become *babajis* and give up preaching. And of course, he will not deride me if I chant in writing and frequently read his books. One thing or another, always live in Krishna consciousness.

"He who meditates upon Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, his mind constantly engaged in remembering Me, undeviated from the path, he, O Partha, is sure to reach Me." (Bg. 8.8)

Constantly think of Krishna by chanting, and our body and mind will be transformed. Then we will be able to expand our spiritual bodies, which are constitutionally the same as Krishna's. We cannot regain our spiritual nature by a superficial or offensive recitation of *hari-nama*; we have to give ourselves to it, engaging not only the tongue but the ear and mind. It's a workout.

And we need to accept what the scriptures say. People don't do that nowadays. They are reductionists, taking scripture and God as relative. But beyond nature's mechanical laws is its Lawmaker; beyond the human is God. Beyond what we know and can master is the inconceivable, the Supreme Controller.

I forgot to set my alarm this morning and woke at 12:02 a.m. A little behind this morning. Don't worry. Move on to chanting. You can come back to the pen later.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

I dressed Radha-Govinda in pink with a peacock-feather pattern on it and plenty of gold trim. It doesn't reveal His lotus feet, but this outfit is elegant.

O Kana, O black boy who herds the cows, this morning I heard about Karela, Candravali's mother-in-law, reprimanding You. She warned that Candravali's husband, Govardhana-mala, is a wrestler and is Kamsa's intimate friend. You replied, "So what?" You're not afraid. The old women interrupt Your pastimes, making them that much riskier, and therefore that much sweeter. The *gopis* speak in Sanskrit with double meanings. We have to be scholars to understand. "O host of moons, Anuradha . . ." Anuradha means "follower of Radharani," and can refer to ViSakha or Lalita. It is all

quite learned and completely steeped in *madhurya-rasa*. Which of us can actually taste it with mundane lust "even a trace of it "in our hearts?

The viola in the vase on the altar has shriveled. My head is foggy, but I must make my quota. That's how I walk on, just as Santoka walked on. It's a discipline.

Lord Caitanya's holds His right hand in benediction. Take the blessing as He sits silently in the Gambhira feeling Radha's separation from Krishna. He is sad, yet wonderfully ecstatic, and He offers the world the blessing of intimate love of Krishna. He asks us to chant the Lord's names. He is personified mercy, the perfect example of a pure devotee. I have heard this from undisturbed authorities, the great devotees of Krishna.

Srila Prabhupada said (I heard this while I was in the bathroom) that although a devotee may be incapable, he simply always tries to please his spiritual master. That attempt makes him dear to guru and Krishna. I'm relieved to hear it "I mean, that we may not succeed, that our attempts look foolish in light of the accomplishments of others, but our sincerity still counts and Prabhupada accepts that.

Got a letter from a disciple who is getting married in India. Good. It is auspicious. Now live as husband and wife and help one another.

Another disciple tells me he is living at Baladeva's house in Vrndavana, where my books are stored. Good, I say. Good. There is no need to return to America. You say you are satisfied there, so be happy in Vrndavana.

But I have to be careful that I don't give out advice that may backfire. Let me take the water from these Wicklow mountains, strain it in a simple purifier, and offer it to Krishna before sipping from the fount myself or passing it onto others. Because Krishna is the taste in pure water, the aroma of the earth, and the sound in ether, and we should always remember Him before saying anything.

* * *

Saibya and Padma say that as long as the host of moons that is Candravali is not available, then Krishna might become interested in the star known as Radha. Lalita and ViSakha reverse this and say that Radha's beauty excels thousands of moons (Candravalis). There are two camps, and we are in Radha's camp. In this way we are followers of the *gopis*. Even Lord Caitanya said that He is not a *brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vaiSya*, or *Sudra*, but a follower of the *gopis*, who charm Krishna.

Some pure devotees follow the *gopis* directly, some indirectly, and as long as we follow Lord Caitanya's teachings, we will be guided correctly. Srila Prabhupada taught what rupa Gosvami taught, but we cannot become *rupanugas* simply by studying texts. We have to please our spiritual master through service and submission. When the spiritual master becomes inclined toward us for our service, he may be inclined to inform us of more detailed truths.

O Padma, O Saibya, Krishna's walking criticizes the graceful walk of young elephants. His smile defeats the . . . the best things you can imagine. He is the biggest of the big and the smallest of the small, the oldest, the maintainer, and always a person.

One of my disciples has a P.O. Box in Kali-ghat, and I have one in Tallaght. It is pretty much the same if you are a devotee in the Krishna consciousness movement. Wherever you are, you try to do something for the Lord, and you tolerate your karma.

* * *

Take the "A" Train
& It moves so fast it's going to Krishna for sure "
it can't be going anywhere else.
'cause they are following what the master put down.

* * *

Faster uptown goes the train and it can't
be long before our solo meditation on subway
fears and lures will be interrupted
as the damn thing stops and starts "
I've been so long out of touch
with the reality of any NYC subway car
or bus "
a plus.

* * *

Anyone I once knew that rode those trains
is long since gone "vanished "or I have
and they would no longer recognize me
know only that I became a Hare Krishna and
disappeared. If we met they'd say,
"You're still with *them*?
What do you want with *me*?"

* * *

I used to eat in automats with old-lady
tourists from Staten Island
day-trippers uptown not
from ghetto where guts and death
muggings were common
but close
and we would all get on that train
you know which one "
the train of thought "and not always
to the Lord's lotus feet.

* * *

I say "A" train but I think
I've changed tracks
now on the Hare Krishna mantra
and what is "A" anyway?
Asphodel? Asinine?
No, ask the master
and clear out. "

* * *

Blessing in Disguise

1

& Let's just write I say it's my
bhajana I say it's my way to pray
as others do through music or mantra
direct service or cooking
I do in words that play
like cooking blues "it's the same thing.

* * *

But, "Words bear the burden."
Where'd you read *that*?
An original thought.

* * *

2

I paused here to think and hear
the sounds of dawn.

* * *

I am not walking home alone
I've got friends and my boss
is guru and you know the
heart is salve is valve
a first-aid kit
and I want to connect from
when I was six years younger
and that much hungrier,
my mouth seems to be shrinking
small as a baby's
and I'm not sorry I'm no Dean
at Bucknell nor
an Army private.

* * *

"Leisure," said old man Melville
is where it's at
if you can use your time for
Krishna. (He didn't say
all of that.)

* * *

Don't say "chant and read
and follow guru" if you're
not doing it with your whole heart
until it hurts
oh "where's that first-aid kit?
But to feel the sweet breeze
and thank Him
makes you the
most lucky man. "

* * *

10:05 a.m.

Spoke one hour and fifteen minutes with Kirtana-rasankirtana-rasa and I have discussed privately in letters: the fear we have of being reborn and having to go through the excruciating sufferings people meet with in this world. We agreed that as devotees, we'll do better next life. We'll have inner strength, God consciousness, and meet the sufferings inflicted by parents, teachers, peers, and the world with more dependence on God.

I talked "we talked. Now I want to return to silence, if possible. That's supposed to be my normal routine. Something permissive, relaxed, without stressers. I picked up that word in the latest headache workbook. Stressers are things that bring on stress. I've got some upcoming ones: visits by Godbrothers, travel to Dublin. Some stress is good and healthy, and we can't live without it, but too much can trigger headaches.

Oh, the sufferings we have to face and the strength we need with which to face them. It takes awareness of God, as Prahlada had. Imagine *his* stress!

Krishna, Krishna. I relax in this chair, in my world, and may no one enter. The soul selects its own society. Out of an ample nation, the heart chooses one other, then closes the valves like stone.

"With your activities dedicated to Me and your mind and intelligence fixed on Me, you will attain Me without doubt." (Bg. 8.7)

"Of this there is no doubt" "Krishna says that in Bg. 8.5 too. I close my eyes to meditate on this, but I'm tired. remember Krishna constantly. Possible? Chant Hare Krishna even in your sleep.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Reading *Krishna* book. Sip. Don't berate Lord Brahma for his mistakes. Don't berate yourself either. Appreciate sincerity, and honor the direction that turns anyone, yourself included, to Krishna.

Lord Brahma begged forgiveness for underestimating Krishna in His Vrndavana pastimes. He admitted he couldn't understand Krishna, who was standing before Him "just like a village boy, carrying Your food in Your hand and searching for Your calves." If Brahma cannot understand the Lord's form and pastimes, what can we expect?

"By understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can overcome the chain of repeated birth and death. I therefore recommend that people should not try to understand You by their speculative knowledge." (*Krishna*, p. 147) That's what Lord Brahma said: give up impersonal speculation and mystic meditation. Without devotional service, they are both a waste of time. "One should therefore engage himself in Your devotional service even in his worldly activities, and one should always keep himself near You by the process of hearing and chanting Your transcendental glories." (*Krishna*, p. 149) He said it's easy to gain entrance into Lord Krishna's eternal abode just by hearing and chanting. The concentration of the mind upon the Lord's lotus feet is called *samadhi*. "Until one reaches the stage of *samadhi*, or trance, he cannot understand the nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Lord Krishna removes the last vestiges of the enjoying spirit in the heart of His devotees. He creates a situation (a token punishment) whereby the material inclinations are eradicated. When the purifying situation comes, we should see it as Krishna's mercy, given personally by Him, to make us eligible to return to His abode.

* * *

3:15 p.m.

Now I'm going to tell you something you think you already know. I'm going to describe Krishna conscious aspirants. Such devotees always want to be better devotees. They want to fill their ears with Krishna's teachings and to come to want that more and more. They want to chant "Krishna, Krishna" as much as possible.

Now, I'll fall into that mode, and you follow. You will become entranced and so will I. We'll leave this material world behind. We'll get the strength of conviction to face the world and convert its energy in devotional service. It already *is* Krishna's energy; we simply have to learn to recognize that.

Here, have a drink of water. This isn't a bluff.

Now I will answer letters from Guyana and the one from Arcata. I'll tell them what I can, tearing it out from my chest (as Hanuman bares his chest in devotional paintings to reveal Rama in his heart). Nrsimha-caturdaSi coming up. My, my. Please tell us something you would like to do in Krishna consciousness.

We are "punished" for material proclivities, but it's token punishment. It's really purification and we should never resent it. I don't have trouble accepting that Krishna makes things happen, like taking Srila Prabhupada back when He did. But it's true He

pinches our most selfish interests in ways we cannot accommodate. We holler, all right. I'll know how I'm doing in spiritual life when I have to tolerate the loss of my nearest and dearest. If I can say, "Yes, this is Krishna's inconceivable plan," then I'll think I'm making progress.

Yes, we'll see how I do.

And now? How am I now?

I am wary, weary, wavery, and I have blue roots. I am a sensitive creature. But I wish myself and others well.

* * *

That's what I'm saying. I forget You, Lord, but I want to return to You as soon as I can. Still, I wouldn't be speaking honest and wholehearted if I didn't say I was also waiting for lunch sometimes. *sastra* says I have to be pure in heart to know You, and that explains why I don't.

* * *

Breathe in and out. Headache in remission. My audience is or isn't, but it doesn't matter, because I write alone. My hand moves by God's grace, and I only pray to use it for His pleasure. Now free-write, if you will, and see where it leads.

A locomotive was in trouble. The place he wanted to go to is known only by the Lord's devotees. Do Krishna devotees know about this? He said, "I hope I don't get reborn and have to go to *gurukula* where I'll be sexually abused." I thought, "Wow, my own parents, and the time and place in which I was raised spared me from that, but if I take birth again, there's every possibility . . ." To be a true devotee . . . spared, not traumatized. You can get some pretty negative impressions of the Krishna consciousness movement by growing up in it, sad to say. We had better work hard now to clean this place up; we might have to live here again.

Lord Brahma's prayers are important "his warning against mental speculation. I certainly welcome it when he insists we hear about Krishna submissively. Only by the Lord's mercy "he emphasizes that too.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

O Hare Krishna. That robin is singing out there, glad he's got a worm. The cattle hurry through the narrow path, the last ones like passengers at the end of a queue. They get anxious to be last, but there's no need "everyone will get through. It shows how little first and last matter. And to where are they rushing? Only to death. But it does seem to make all the difference in the world to us when we get there and how long we can endure, and although it's all relative, whether we can improve our standing of living along the way.

One devotee wrote me that he's sorry to see that the great majority of people have no idea at all what life is about and are wasting it. He would like to help them. That's noble.

Buds fatter, yet they look tighter to me. As soon as they burst, I know it will be practically summer. I love the mossy trees here.

They submitted a plan about how to design the garden, and I approved it. I also like their plan to build the *parikrama* path around the house as a wooden deck. Even though I just wrote all those sentences about people who try to improve their lot before death, I'm doing it too. Well, why not? Let me be somewhat comfortable so I can chant, hear, and write better. But I am ready to exist without such comfort too.

* * *

Don't pause too long here with thoughts about the various Irish devotees. One said another is "like the Scarlet Pimpernel" in the way he suddenly appears at Govinda's restaurant and is gone. What could he mean? Who knows. Someone else says of someone else . . .

So I had better just write my way through all this. Going to bed soon with my hot water bottle wrapped in a furry saffron cover. I feel like a little boy with a teddy bear.

Twice now, upon removing Srila Prabhupada's *cadar*, I saw a sizable spider. I didn't smash it, but I felt revulsion that it was on my spiritual master's body. It ran away both times before I could capture it. Is it warm in the folds of Prabhupada's clothes? Go somewhere else, spider, or I may not be so kind next time.

* * *

If my ankle didn't hurt so much, I'd go down and get the art room ready. There are so many things to do. There's sawdust everywhere down there. M. is cutting a board right now, and Aniruddha is pounding away. I'll clean it up tomorrow. Oh, someone's hollering down there.

In Guyana, the National Council met and decided that devotees quarrel too much. The members said there's nothing they can do to stop it. Better they each just do their own thing and try to serve Krishna in whatever they want. The fighting is getting too much, even for them.

Say something humorous and funny; say something wondrous and money; do something gruesome and chummy; forget all this runny nonsense and be a devotee true "the way he made you.

Can't you think of some enlightened brother with whom you could live? You could follow his schedule "get on airplanes with him and travel to the same sixty cities a month, sit in when he counsels others and makes all his phone calls, listen to his lectures, go on *harinama* with him, notice how he chants, how he avoids women, and then ask him, "Dear brother, what do you think I ought to do with my life?" He'd think about it and say, "Would you like to become my regional secretary or the resident *sannyasi* at the farm in Grapsburg?"

"Either" "you're docile" "but you know it's really" "Neither." Off you go to the Himalayas with the ISKCON water-collecting party and ask someone up there, some old *sadhu*, what you ought to do. He suggests you live in a cave. You know that's not right, so you go to the Gaudiya Math, then to Argentina, and finally arrive at the feet of ISKCON's recognized Giant, who refers you to the *Brahmana's* Committee. They set

you to work rewriting drafts of the ISKCON constitution. You fall in love with your typewriter and ask her to marry you. She giggles and say, "You better learn computers first. Besides, I was looking for someone younger. Maybe if you had asked fifteen years ago when you were still virile and had a big position, I would have snatched you up and changed that *sannyasi* saffron to white robes."

"Don't you love me as I am?"

And do you know what that typewriter says? "No, *non* (she was multilingual). If you loved Krishna as much as you love me, you'd be a great devotee."

With those words, you hang your head and go off to Vrndavana. You move into the *goSala* as a penance, and work for the *gurukula* alumni as another penance, and try to figure out where you went wrong.

But you never ask yourself, because that brother said not to. He said we should only consult the books. You don't even have a self practically; everything you need is in the *sastra*.

"Too much," you say, and fall under the desk to have a good cry. While you're down there, you find a GNP book someone dropped, and things start looking up.

* * *

6:30 p.m., Night Notes

One viola dead and shriveled, the other now open. They're violet with yellow flicks in the whorl. Bloom only a day or so on the altar. radha and Govinda wearing green night outfits.

I did end up working on the art room. Next time, if I like, I can actually begin to splash paint.

"*Sri-Krishna-caitanya*" "Srila Prabhupada singing with Visnujana and other devotees. The sky is clear. I have a little world in which to chant Hare Krishna, remember guru and Krishna, and to live in Krishna consciousness. That's why I'm noting down the details of this night. It's a way of acknowledging I'm grateful.

May 9, Midnight

I took an Esgic fifteen minutes ago. The pain was borderline, but I trusted my judgment. I shouldn't take it unless I need it, but if I wait too long, I may get stuck with one of those twenty-four-hour headaches. Taking it underlined the importance to me of the midnight to 6 a.m. stretch. M. said yesterday, "That's what you're here for" "referring to my activity from 12 to 6 and how it shouldn't be compromised by other obligations. I even dreamt of right-eye pain. I discussed with someone in the dream whether or not it was time to take the pill.

It's good to be philosophical about pain; that is, that we understand some physical pain is inevitable. If we accept that fact, we won't have an unbalanced attitude about wanting to avoid *all* pain. If we have chronic pain, again we have to accept the facts. We have to learn to live with the pain "and learn strategies to help reduce or control it. Three days a week, I get a "free" ride out of the pain zone. I put "free" in quotation marks, because of course, having that medication in my body is not "free." It will cost

something in the long-run. In the meantime, it allows me to be active in my service. I'm not ready to retire yet. I feel I have a valuable contribution to make to Prabhupada's movement, and I can't make it if I am constantly sidelined by pain. At the same time, pain can teach endurance and tolerance; it is a friend that can drive us to take shelter of Krishna.

Now let's switch to reading Krishna's words. I just wanted to mention that I'd taken the pill and that I do enjoy the release from pain. (remember the statues of the Angels of Anesthesia in the Boston Common?)

From a letter I wrote yesterday: "EJW writing and editing "and printing "is a great solace and quiet joy in my life."

* * *

"One who, at the time of death, fixes his life air between the eyebrows and, by the strength of yoga, with an undeviating mind, engages himself in remembering the Supreme Lord in full devotion, will certainly attain to the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Bg. 8.10)

I have some fantasy (maybe because I have read so many Christian contemplatives) that I could learn to do something like this. But I can't. If I slow down and "center," I just get sleepy tired after a while. Srila Prabhupada sankirtanam visnoh smaranam is active, not "lifeless" service. And at the time of death, no other activity is possible. "A pure devotee does not practice such yoga [*ajna-cakra*], but because he is always engaged in Krishna consciousness, at death he can remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead by His grace." Again, if we practice *bhakti-yoga* during our lives, we'll have a good chance of remembering Krishna at death.

In his purports to Krishna's instructions on yoga (both in the sixth and eighth chapters), Srila Prabhupada lists the achievements of yoga (*pratyahara* up to *samadhi* and beyond) and says they can be achieved in essence through devotional service. "If one is always able to fix his mind on Krishna in devotional service, it is very easy for him to remain in an undeviated transcendental trance, or in *samadhi*."

"So if one quits his body at the end of life chanting Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare, he certainly reaches one of the spiritual planets, according to the mode of his practice. The devotees of Krishna enter the Krishna planet, Goloka Vrndavana." (Bg. 8.13, purport) Not by poor, shoddy chanting, of course, although any chanting will help immensely.

"... in pure *bhakti-yoga* the devotee desires nothing but Krishna. ... In the *Caitanya-caritamrta* the pure devotee is called *niskama*, which means he has no desire for self-interest. Perfect peace belongs to him alone, not to them who strive for personal gain." (Bg. 8.14, purport)

One can begin *bhakti-yoga* easily by chanting Hare Krishna. One engaged in full surrender to Krishna can understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead as He is.

These statements are gems. You see it that way if you read submissively. I find I'm more submissive these days at midnight than I am at any other time of the day, but I imagine I could becoming as receptive later too if I practiced. Here's another gem:

"Some say that the devotee should remain in holy places like Vrndavana or some holy town where the Lord lived, but a pure devotee can live anywhere and create the atmosphere of Vrndavana by his devotional service." (Bg. 8.14, purport)

The state where the devotee always thinks of Krishna and where "the Supreme Lord cannot forget His pure devotee for a moment" "is attained by the great blessing of chanting the *maha-mantra*.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Happy now to be able to perform devotional service during the *brahma-muhurta* and before. At this time of day, I feel like I'm swimming along in a current. I feel fulfilled emotionally, without recourse to mundane distraction. I admit to such happiness. We admit to so many discrepancies; we should also admit our happiness. Srila Prabhupada says it's not possible to fully understand Krishna, but when He is speaking *Bhagavad-gita*, if we can understand a hundredth part of it, our lives will be successful. It's an open secret.

* * *

Gauri-tirtha, Sankarsana-kunda, Govardhana Hill "rupa Gosvami knows all these places externally and internally. He wrote *Vidagdha-madhava* in the atmosphere of Vrndavana-dhama. Radharani rebukes Krishna when He addresses Her (by mistake?) as Candravali, but Radha's *sakhis* regret that Her jealous anger is cheating Her of Krishna's company. Krishna asks Vrnda-devi to pacify Radha. Krishna then decides to trick Radha by dressing as a woman and approaching Her. He calls Himself "Nikunja-vidya." Then Jatila thinks she has caught Radha and Krishna together, so she brings Abhimanyu to witness the "illicit couple." By the time Abhimanyu arrives, however, Krishna has become a beautiful woman, and he assumes she is the goddess Gauri, Lord Siva's wife. It even seems as if Radha is praying to this goddess. The play is full of wonderful intrigue and delightful surprises. It's better than any secular drama.

* * *

Krishna holds the long, gold flute that has the peacock at the end and wears shiny, emerald earrings. His dress and *cadar* are light green, as are Radha's clothes. They look beautiful side by side.

O Lord Nrsimha, please remove my false desires. We dwell in the perverted reflection of reality in this world and tend to impose our perversions on the most brilliant of Krishna's pastimes. We must simply dismiss the notion that Krishna's activities are lusty. He lives in a different category of existence; there is nothing lusty about Him. The *gopis* are also pure; their love is conjugal but not lusty. We cannot understand this as long as we feel material lust. Please, Lord, remove this lust from my heart.

* * *

The *Vedas* are for human beings. You can't teach animals about the soul or God. Srila Prabhupada spoke from *Mahabharata*, and I thought, "If Hridayananda Maharaja does print his translation, I'll read it." Srila Prabhupada ranged spontaneously over different stories in *Mahabharata*, such as Karna's birth to Kunti. When Karna died, his mother cried for him. Yudhisthira asked her why she was crying, and she admitted that Karna was her son. "Oh, you kept this a secret for so long? And we have treated him as our enemy. If we had known . . ." Karna and Yudhisthira were stepbrothers. Srila Prabhupada said there were many such incidents in the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagavatam*. Indians grow up with these stories, and we too are coming to know them. He said that even though the *Mahabharata's* teachings are not as developed as those of Lord Caitanya, it is still the root of culture and civilization.

It's almost five. Madhu will soon be up and come over here. Life is sweet here. We write poems, we serve devotees, we honor simple *prasadam*, and we live in the Wicklow community.

Prabhupada said that a man in the moon can't be seen by those who go there artificially. They go to the outer room of the moon. The most important thing is to go to the spiritual planet and enter there. Go to Krishna's planet and ask to be admitted. Actually, we don't have to ask; if we are meant to go, we will be transported. In Goloka, the pure devotee wants to serve Krishna, and Krishna wants to serve His devotees.

Vidura dasa says he likes to go out on *harinama* as much as possible. The devotees are chanting Hare Krishna and moving *maya* aside.

* * *

I'll Have to Go and See My People

& Now we're washing our faces and coming out to dance in morning air but where's Krishna? Do I have to find Him in the robin's vicious habits?

I growl and take recourse in free-writing "that's a devotee's life too. Don't brothers know or care that a leprechaun can be a devotee too?"

Oh, but that's not the question. Can a white man be a *Haribol*?

Yes, and a Guyanese black. But you gotta stop quarreling
or at least lay off the prerogatives and just do your own thing
for Krishna. The GBC man advised them like that.

He didn't want to go to Essiquibo. Because the boat went flip-flop on the water. "They won't get *me* back there soon."

But sure enough, *I'll* have to go and see my people
in those large-sized modern-day track shoes
my *dhoti* saffron

and knowing they will bring with them to the airport
some fresh fruit we can sit and eat.

We are not the more fashionable people but represent the old Indian heritage. Know what I mean?

* * *

Got a lot to say there, doncha?

Just that if we can find it "if we were to look in all the right places "we could see Krishna everywhere.

Touched the stone impression of His feet at Govardhana while the taxi driver waited. Touched the shoes and feet of a leading Mathura *sannyasi*. Ate the water chestnuts "it's all one.

No, it's not.

I didn't have to get an AIDS check because I was only there a few months.

Noise and excitement

TV getting worse

the whole thing wearing down

giving out

the man sees it because he's

a lawyer

he respects the anti-wear methods

of Krishna consciousness.

* * *

I'm sorry, Mom, I couldn't love you across the barriers that were erected. I couldn't visit Hayagriva in his last weeks either. I'm no hero superlative. The extra daring, the best thing I could have done was to have seen through the whole system and not taken disciples in 1978. But Krishna wanted it this way.

* * *

Don't Even Talk about Such Things

Don't even talk about those things

scream the behold folks

oughtn't get more *siddhanta*

across in a style . . .

no social no hermit's rights no prayer parties I approve whatever you are

doing that will help you, your *japa* group, your catering business

your caterwaul

prayer wheel.

But NO, TM is not our thing,

I can't approve but if you

do it for business

Ayurveda that's another thing

scream down the house

be quiet albeit

afterwards.

* * *

Specifics

& Just be honest but give your love
don't be neutral.

I want the

goodness transcendental which is
fixed on Krishna

holy service specific to Krishna in His two-hand form. I'll place him there in any
context I'm forced into.

It's nice to hear people say

"Krishna" in their speech naturally
when they visit you in prison even
if they are *kanisthas* or whatever
because you too are . . .

* * *

The people who don't know Krishna . . .

But those who say "Krishna" is
their religion and who act bad
are the worst influence.

Am I wrong? Or is even that
favorable because at least they
sprinkle the holy sounds

* * *

and someone lucky can figure it
out a serious soul can discern
what is false, hypocrite
show and what is essence

* * *

so rare the funnel so narrow
he questioned why God made it
so hard. I said it's our choice
whatever "He gives us what
we want.

* * *

Fade out "return to

Krishna conscious specifics

Right here with devotee friends. "

* * *

10:32 a.m.

Another seventy-five-minute meeting with Kirtana-rasankirtana-rasa has to go home.

* * *

12:07 p.m.

I haven't been getting frequent sips at *sastra* these past few days. I don't have as much control over my day as I'd like. There are some distractions, and something like prayerful reading can't be done at the drop of a hat. Or so I tell myself. It's too serious and precious a thing to plunge into when I have only a few minutes to spare. While I was writing *Cc. ASraya*, I seemed to have simplified my life enough that frequent attempts at reading could be accommodated. I had also decided that "I shall live with the *sastra* as my anchor; whatever I write will come in service of reading." That was before EJW began. I don't want to return to that; it was too demanding, not real long-term. It was an intense reading marathon. But I'm glad I did it.

I think I would like to try to focus on a *Bhagavad-gita* verse even when I have the minimum amount of time, even with less than full attention, and yet not feel I am trivializing scripture. It is, after all, supposed to be a sip. Maybe write verses on index cards? But I don't want the verse isolated from the purport.

* * *

3:25 p.m.

Running late, but lunch late too. Preparing a talk to give to Wicklow devotees tomorrow. I should be aware that Krishna won't allow me to live like this forever. Everyone dies (sorry). Narottama dasa Thakura lamented when great Vaisnavas departed. I will have to do that too. When Narottama left the world, his body turned to milk. He was yearning to go back to the spiritual world. With that in mind, he left in full consciousness. Bhismadeva left while seeing Krishna face to face and thinking of Him in devotional love. I can't expect such success, but there is no question that I won't have to follow the path leading to death. It's a narrow mountain pass that allows only one through at a time. And there are no final appeals and no proxies. As for the next life, we have already given our preferences by how we have desired and acted in this life. In the end, however, Krishna will decide our final destination; it's not in our control. You can't simply announce, "Goloka Vrndavana. *Manjari*," and expect our order to be carried out. *We* will get carried out.

Running out of ink. These thoughts prompted by the rain "not just today's. It rains off and on all the time in Ireland.

M. went to Tallaght to practice his music. Aniruddha is downstairs sawing away. Familiar scene.

I ordered a first-aid kit from Viking Office Supply, but I don't know anything about first-aid "how to treat for shock, burns, how to wrap tourniquets, when to move and when not to move an injured person, artificial respiration" and how I would actually help others who might get hurt. There's less chance in Ireland that a seriously injured person

could get to a hospital quickly than in other places. Anyway, we can always chant Hare Krishna.

(I remember hearing a Godbrother lecture to householders to break their attachments and prepare for renunciation now, before it's too late.) But how? When you're a householder, you can always take *sannyasa*, but once you're a *sannyasi*, then what? He described *vanaprastha* life at Krishna-Balaram Mandir. But what if you don't like it there? What if the management won't let you stay there? What if you don't have enough money? What if you're a woman? Who will take care of you? I am fortunate, I know, and don't face the same external difficulties others face, but that doesn't mean someone else has given up my attachments on my behalf. We each have to do that for ourselves regardless of our external situation. Some may have to work to situate themselves and through that work find their detachment; I may be situated, but the goal of life is not comfortable sunset years but preparing to go back to Godhead. What looks good on the outside may not be the best inside. That's why we should each accept what Krishna has given us.

"Make sure I go back to Godhead, please," said Barnacle Bill, the sailor.

"Can you switch topics, please?"

Sure. What do you want me to discuss?

I see your growing passion for doing the clean-up jobs around this place. Can you tell us, doctor, how you came to develop your process of psychoanalysis?

It all started when I was eleven "some boys threw me down the stairs and I hit my head. Actually, it started before that, when I was about three and dreamt of an underground temple and a god defecating from the sky onto the church spire.

"Can you tell us, Stephen, about your dreams or which life episodes led you astray to become wherever it is you are today?"

Yes, I can, but first let's ascertain what I am today. I'm in a buttoned salt-n-pepper sweater over *dhoti* and *kurta*, sitting at a used desk. I am used too, and I use others. I also use pens. The Lord, I hope, uses me to serve Him, and my Swami seems to have gotten some use out of me too.

Krishna, Krishna. I certainly got to those names by a circuitous route.

I heard it said by a brother: "Always remember, Krishna is not a position; He is a person." I liked that. He is very attractive, unique, and the residents of Hastinapura (the Pandavas and their associates) were grief-stricken when He left them. As He entered Dvaraka, the Dvarakavasis drew Him into their hearts through their eyes. None among them, of course, could match the affection of the Vrajavasis. O Krishna of unlimited names and qualities, who can appreciate even a small portion of Your glories?

* * *

5:24 p.m.

I sorted files in the new filing cabinet and labeled them all. Now I feel the first sign of head fog. I had better get in this last writing in the day and make my quota before it's too late. I'm a driven man.

Layers of clouds. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. So what did you find while going through your files? Oh, categories, documents, notes encouraging me to draw and to

write, dialogues with followers of Gaudiya Math adherents, material for Srila Prabhupada excerpt lectures, letters from last year about loyalty to Srila Prabhupada, and writing in evolution "getting to one book, EJW. I may want to go over this material again sometime.

Today was the first day I noticed fresh leaves on the trees in the yard. We think of flowers blossoming, but leaves do the same.

I am a bit entangled with the families here because I'm now a member of this community. But I don't want to play at being their father "not intensely. Not any more than I do elsewhere. One devotee here wrote me that my presence is making each devotee more inspired. He mentioned each by name and said how I have affected them. It makes me think I ought to keep it up: "What have I done recently for so-and-so?" When they languish or get sick, I'll worry about them. It's like having a family again.

Leave the man alone. I'll read them the following quote from *Light of the Bhagavata* next time we meet: "The *sannyasa-aSrama* is meant for complete freedom from all anxieties, and it is meant for uplifting the fallen souls, who are merged in materialism. But unless the *sannyasi* is free from all cares and anxieties, like a white cloud, it is difficult for him to do anything good for society." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, #32) Let me be a white cloud *sannyasi*. I want to be like that "not cold or inhumane, and not separate because I don't care for them. It's because I can give more to everyone if I'm not too intimately involved with anyone. I'll also explain how Parthasarathi Prabhu wrote me that he doesn't like to stay in one place because he forms too many attachments. Yes, I know what he means. But it doesn't have to be that way.

White clouds tend to be filled with silver light. From my place in the sky, I'll share poems and flowers.

But I hope they don't forget to feed me. They cook nice bread, *dal*, and vegetables. My Radha-Govinda "now that's a couple I'd like to become attached to. That attachment can be enhanced by staying in one place. Still, I'll watch for dangers of being a stone gathering moss. Let it not be too intense, my friends and the exchanges we have. I'll be here long-term, so let's be cool, like the Irish weather, and gradually grow accustomed to one another.

* * *

Everything in its place. When I took an IQ test as a child, I rated high in clerical talents. I like to keep things in labeled folders and drawers and boxes and shelves and check up on them from time to time. I should have been a Navy quartermaster. Maybe in the spiritual world I can keep track of the boys' ornaments and musical instruments.

No, that's not me either. Then who am I? We each ask.

Someone thinks that he's doing well by my mercy, but what can *I* do? Srila Prabhupada wrote to us in 1971, in response to our Vyasa-puja offerings, that the credit went to his spiritual master and to Lord Caitanya. He said he was only the *via medium*. We worship him because he made such statements. And he saved us. He actively came as the medium and linked us to the *parampara*. He continues to do so.

May 10, 5:28 a.m.

I missed my midnight rising and reading because of a headache. Feel like I'm behind and trying to catch up. I also feel no desire to do the things that constitute my daily hope "reading, writing, and prayer. I'm here anyway. I've heard that oxen like to work once they get going, prodded by the ox man. "Come on, Burf, pull the plow." I'm like that too.

Dawn has turned the sky a first blue. The first week of May is over. This is prime time "my *only* time. Don't miss out because you don't quite love it just now.

My fingers felt extra stubby and inept as I put on Srimati Radharani's earrings and *cadar*. But I did it in the end. Dressed Srila Prabhupada too. Today is Nrsimha-caturdaSi, and we're fasting. All glories to Lord Nrsimhadeva. May He (I don't really mean this) chase away people from my front door. (Don't ask Him to chase devotees.) Krishna is not my doorman. All right, may Lord Nrsimha always reign supreme in the presence of His beloved devotees. May I stand with them sometimes and receive His *darSana*. I pray to the Lord that by remembering Him, I can banish my fears and the demon of *anartha* that still owns territory in my heart. When the Lord kills my demons, I'll be eligible to turn to Radha-Madhava and the *gopis*.

While dressing the Deities, I listened to Narottama dasa Thakura's prayers. He prays, "When will that day come when I will be able to directly serve the Divine Couple?" but I wasn't able to pay attention. Only a few words drifted through my mind. "Those feet . . . those lotus feet." He is referring to the lotus feet of Rupa-manjari. I heard him lament "the author's fallen condition." He says he could not worship the great devotees of Lord Caitanya, "not even for half a moment." He hankers to have better days and to be raised "to the highest point." "Please be merciful to me. Please allow me to live in Vrndavana."

* * *

I'm scheduled for my talk to the Wicklow devotees. Tell them how the Native American had names like Sitting Bull, Black Elk, Crazy Horse. In that mood, I'd like to be called White Cloud.

But will White Cloud turn to Radha and Krishna? Narottama dasa Thakura laments that he doesn't like to associate with Vaisnavas. It's not enough to refrain from blaspheming devotees; we ought to be joyful when we see them. We should serve them. Is it that I don't like to associate with devotees? No, I have already explained it.

My choice of lifestyle has been determined by chronic illness. I have simply accepted my fate cheerfully. I find that the illness has secondary gains. I'm not a people-hater or a cold person, but the illness gives me a chance to live out my nature and to preach in the way that seems most suited to that nature. That's all there is to it; nothing more.

I am going cancel this morning's interview with Kirtana-rasa. We are finished now after six good sessions. Headache today, so give this guy a break.

Oh yes, and now I have to prepare myself "save myself "for meeting JS on Tuesday. And build my gate, And post a watchman to tell would-be guests, "Go away." It makes me think of Dracula's castle. Everyone was afraid to go there. A friendly hermit is no Dracula, but neither does he tend to offer a seat or allow guests to stay for the night, or give them words of wisdom over a cup of herbal tea in his kitchen. He's busy inside doing his thing "painting, but never mixing red and yellow in such a way that it looks

like pizza. Oh, and he's chanting Hare Krishna and praying to serve. May Krishna protect this hermit's *sannyasa* vows and his loyalty to Srila Prabhupada.

* * *

10:17 a.m.

Meeting with Wicklow devotees went okay. Afterwards, I walked outside in the daylight, realizing that I have now chalked out my life's plan. Let's see now what Krishna desires.

* * *

11:20 a.m.

Vanaprastha "that Godbrother told them that as soon as they reach fifty, they should renounce, take up *vanaprastha*, get ready for *sannyasa*. It sounded like a crusade against anyone remaining *grhastha* into their old age.

Oh, be quiet. It's just that the words he uses and the concepts he applies are so strong. Ultimately, however, my opinion will not change such heavy preaching.

What did I renounce at fifty? I threw out words. Today, I found scattered garbage "a crushed soda can, a flattened container, debris, fragments of this and that. I also found a disused garbage bag, so I put all the trash into it.

Hare Krishna. I can't seem to find anything to say because my day feels dismantled after it got off to a slow start. Why not, then, look quickly at *Bhagavad-gita*?

"For one who always remembers Me without deviation, I am easy to obtain, O son of Prtha, because of his constant engagement in devotional service." (Bg. 8.14) The Lord is easy to attain for the devotee, because all a devotee wants is to serve Krishna for His own pleasure, not for any material reward.

This pen feels like a corn cob. It makes me think of how Alice must have felt when she suddenly found that the croquet mallet was a goose. Things change on you suddenly like that sometimes. Hare Krishna. Is it the fasting that's making me so tired?

"After attaining Me, the great souls, who are *yogis* in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries, because they have attained the highest perfection." (Bg. 8.15)

* * *

1:05 p.m.

Please, sir, the lion-man God killed the demon on this day. You want to tell us about it? I mean, you're not a householder but a *sannyasi*. Shouldn't you be preaching as much as possible? Okay, well here goes.

Prahlada was the best boy and didn't cave in. He was preaching up a Krishna conscious storm to those other boys, but the teachers reported him to his dad, the best of *asuras*. His dad said, "You rascal son!" Prahlada defied his father, got tortured, but Krishna protected him from getting hurt. Finally the Lord intervened, just when Hiranyakasipu was at his most threatening, and appeared as Narahari to kill Hiranyakasipu.

Yeah, but Prahlada wasn't afraid. He prayed to the Supreme Lord in beautiful and philosophical prayers that covered a broad spectrum of understanding regarding how the materialists waste their lives, how life is meant to serve Visnu, what it means to be a pure devotee, and thanking his spiritual master, Narada, for guiding him. He also asked to have all his material desires removed, and wanted to go back to Godhead. I do too.

I want that
scream for it
in your fasting hours
ask Lord Hari what can be made of me. Don't forget I have headaches almost every day. I can't be a circuit preacher and feel what I'm doing is even better (for me)
that is "if I could
reach regulated goodness and do all the projects I envision, paint too, reach out in letters. Hare Krishna.

* * *

Krishna, Krishna. "Be kind," he said. "Please be kind. May Radha cast Her sidelong glance at me."

Krishna sonnet. Sonic rocket/ he went
haywire. I didn't.
I didn't disappear I
just got wacky, I mean,
wary. Am I so suspect
because I live here?

The GBC thinks any guy who lives by himself will get into trouble. Be a socializer and they'll trust us to get by. And don't forget to run through the liturgy at least once a day

minimum
and answer all our survey questions.

But at death
who will decide? Will Lord Hari
be like a GBC reactionary or
a liberal man? Who *is* He?
He incorporates left and right only
He's always right absolutely
Right.

Lord Caitanya's hand blessing His devotees from
Gambhira. So please be kind and

may I attain taste. Please let me break through the barriers of my self-inflicted darkness. I want eternal service. I'm on this road. Perhaps it will be exposed that I have taken a wrong turn, but I have to go with what I feel right now and trust Krishna to guide me.

* * *

2:02 p.m.

Passing the time before breaking the fast. reading a book compiled and translated by DaSaratha-suta about Vishvanath Cakravarti and other great Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura lived in various places around Vrndavana and wrote his books here and there. He usually mentioned where each book was composed at the end of the work. He enlivened the residents of Radha-kunda (and Govardhana, Yavat, Gokulananda Mandir, etc.) by living in the area.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

* * *

Just read of Ramacandra Kaviraja's offenses and how he contracted leprosy and became a ghost. He offended a great Vaisnavi who was attending his *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lecture at Radha-kunda. He told her, "I don't know how you can pay attention to my lecture while at the same time chanting *hari-nama*." I have also said this to devotees who chant *japa* while I'm lecturing. The woman, Krishna-priya, replied that it was the habit of her tongue to always chant Krishna's names, but it didn't distract her at all from hearing about His pastimes. Ramacandra Kaviraja's own fury ruined him.

I should be careful not to offend Vaisnavas. This morning I told my disciples that I want unbroken privacy. Did I speak offensively to or about anyone? O Krishna. I have a right to stay alone, that I don't question, and I can't help but think that some devotees would not honor or understand my needs. There seems to be such an absence of love and trust in our society. I myself don't trust. I'm afraid of the institution's power to force me to act in more stereotypical ways "how the institution defines the proper behavior for a preacher. If I didn't conform, what would happen? So much criticism and counter-criticism goes back and forth. I need to be out of that crossfire for a while. Still, let me honor my brothers and not feel that I should not associate with any of them. Let me learn to honor those who would misunderstand me from a distance, and make friends with those who do relate to my feelings and predicament.

* * *

Just read a description of Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura wearing beautiful Vaisnava *tilaka* and I realized I'm not wearing it. After my noon bath I often don't put it on again because I often use a wet cloth on my forehead when I have head fog and it gets wiped off anyway. But it's not good to be without the ornament of the Vaisnavas, beautiful *gopi-candana*.

Great devotees in this great lineage wandered always between Gauda, Jagannatha Puri, and Vrndavana, sometimes dreaming of previous *acaryas* and being instructed by them. And then there's foolish me. All right. Here is a truly fallen soul. Let me not dwell on myself. Just immerse yourself in service to Srimati Radharani.

Could *Every Day, Just Write* evolve to become more spiritual? But it must also be honest. Could I become a nectarean devotee? Could I help others? Anything is possible if I can receive the Lord's mercy.

* * *

3:08 p.m.

M. has just returned and is getting the *prasadam* next door. I was about to say "my *prasadam*." I'm very fallen. I offer all that I eat to Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda, but I lust after it. May the Lord forgive me and improve my mentality so that I may actually make an offering to Him.

* * *

I pray that Lord Nrsimhadeva may protect my *sannyasa*. I pray to Srila Prabhupada to keep me in his shelter despite my faults. I *thank* him for the great gifts he has given me already.

* * *

3:55 p.m.

We hanker to eat, go at it voraciously, then it's over. The pleasure is so brief. We're quickly satiated. A certain keenness of mind when we fast. Found a picture of Madhavendra Puri shedding tears and accepting a pot of *ksira* from the Ksira-cora gopinatha's *pujari*. Also found Rupa Gosvami's "original drawing." I put them both up on my wall. Walk amid the *acaryas* and pray to follow in their footsteps.

* * *

4:38 p.m.

Heavy sound of wind. Talked with M. and read him the section about Ramacandra Kaviraja's offense to Krishna-priya Thakurani. He assured me that I didn't offend my Godbrothers or anyone else by what I said this morning. If anything, I gave a moderate version of opinions the devotees themselves already hold. But he agreed that we should both be careful in how we treat guests. As for thinking it's an offense to want to meet guests some place other than this house "it's not an offense. This is the house where I can come alone and endure pain when I have to, and have freedom when I'm not enduring pain. I'm not even used to the idea of living here yet; let me develop it into a sacred and creative space.

* * *

This man is allowed to smoke a cigar. But not devotees. They are restricted in every *aSrama* in some way or other. Devotees practice detachment. They listen to preachers and do what they say. They are strictly *parampara*.

Bhurijana Prabhu has done me (and many others) a favor by immersing himself in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and giving us the verses and purports in a flow. We are now hearing the prayers spoken by the ladies at Hastinapura while Krishna was leaving. They are important prayers, and filled with the nectar of their pure love. I am grateful that my

brother has presented them so well and that I can hear them easily even while honoring *prasadam*.

Devotees are restricted "no burgers, no ciggies, no women, no dwarfs (except the ones who try to capture the moon) "and try to dovetail everything in the Lord's service. We should celebrate our freedom from all these things. We may still be bound as long as we live in material bodies, but our relative freedom is worth celebrating. And especially worthwhile is our ability to partake in *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam*.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

Joe's back aches (after all, he's an old, frail guy) from off-loading and shelving art supplies. Had to work with his coat on because it's so cold down there. For what? I ask the mind to move according to instinct and find its way to Krishna consciousness.

Reflective (think over), descriptive (narrate what happened), cathartic (all kinds of outpourings, free-writing), and others like drawing-come-words, etc., are the modes of diary writing as I recall them. Tristine rainier made that list in her book. This is how a Krishna conscious person transforms the world and frees himself. Believes it's true. Sets the example "*yat karosi*: whatever you do (and you can do plenty), do it for Krishna. Use your body, mind, and words to the fullest.

Living alone in such headache-prone shape, I have learned *how* to use everything in Krishna consciousness, and I have finally become free of most distractions. But the body can't work so hard anymore. Whatever I do now, I hope it's wiser, and while the right arm swings, and if necessary the left and the foot and the voice and the shoulder, it is the prayer-heart that gets the most exercise, small as that heart is.

A devotee wrote me, "My wife thinks it's 'small-time' that I milk a cow and grow crops. I think it's Krishna conscious and it's what I do. I wish she could be inspired to work with me. She likes to travel . . . and hear from her guru."

Put the word "headache" within quotation marks when talking about problems other than actual head pain. Muscular-skeletal "shove it all into the dump pile. Soul, spirit soul, no one can see, but it's the driving force.

Pens and ink, crayons and colored pencils, felt tips and Tombos, paints and brushes, Bristol boards and drawing paper "they're already down there. All I need is a hale and hearty fellow who's willing to mess around with them all and dare to dive for Krishna.

* * *

Swami, Good night, you don't
wonder if you deserve that title,
Goswami?

All I know is he gave it to me
mention it if you like, he said
I hereby order you to preach and
add Goswami to Satsvarupa dasa.

* * *

That was in '72 I remember
now the kind fatherly
absolute spiritual mentor who
accepted a few dollars and coins that
Hridayananda (Goswami) and I collected
in the L.A. neighborhood.

* * *

And our intention to become
ISKCON *sannyasis*,
whatever he wanted "and he
was kind enough not to demand
the impossible.

* * *

This morning Madhumangala placed this note on my desk:

"I just wanted to say happy *sannyasa* anniversary. It must have been a big change and relief in your life. Your wife might have been more of a drain on your energy than a help, so Srila Prabhupada gave you the freedom to pursue your spiritual life. You also have a gentle, reflective nature and a need to be alone, so over the last number of years you have been able, as a *sannyasi*, to develop that.

"I was thinking how this is the anniversary of your being offered freedom "a freedom which you are now beginning to take more and more. . . . I am very happy for you."

May 11, Midnight

Avoid the ISKCON guilt trip about being happy. Being happy is preaching. Why should a senior devotee be morose? "The *sannyasa-aSrama* is meant for complete freedom from all anxieties, and it is meant for uplifting the fallen souls, who are merged in materialism. Unless the *sannyasi* is freed from all cares and anxieties, like a white cloud, it is difficult for him to do anything good for society." (*Light of the Bhagavata*, #32)

As for why I don't savor face-to-face intimacy on these subjects "friends don't agree with me. They attempt (and maybe succeed) to dismantle my approach to life. I don't have time to waste getting knocked off course. Just chant Hare Krishna and be happy.

* * *

Lord Krishna is so direct in *Bhagavad-gita*, but His main points are not difficult to understand. Srila Prabhupada is also there to clarify them. Now it's up to us to take them seriously.

In the Introduction, Srila Prabhupada states that we should at least theoretically accept Lord Krishna as the Personality of Godhead. It's time, however, that we went beyond theoretical understanding. "For one who always remembers Me without deviation, I am

easy to attain, O son of Prtha, because of his constant engagement in devotional service." (Bg. 8.14) Death awaits, but if we are Krishna conscious, death means the attainment of the ultimate goal. real liberation means to desire only to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "Therefore the Lord says that for anyone who is unflinchingly devoted to Him, He is easy to attain." A pure devotee is always engaged in devotional service. *That's* why I'm in this house "alone" "because it gives facility to be always engaged in devotional service. I contend that a life of travel, debate, socializing, etc., produces too many distractions for me. Let me concentrate on the essence here: "constant engagement" (*nitya-yuktasya*) and "without deviation of the mind" (*ananya-cetah*).

There's an especially strong wind blowing out there this morning. Rathdangan is known as a place of strong winds. If I hear it, I can think that this wind is blowing away some controversy in our religious movement. It comes and goes; it blows in from the Atlantic and out to the Atlantic. It blows away, but it does not blow me away. Krishna protects me.

I ask myself, "Why even go to the *dhamas* in India right now?" Even Narottama dasa Thakura exclaimed that going to the holy places only bewilders the mind. I can concentrate better here. "Some say that the devotee should remain in holy places like Vrndavana or some holy town where the Lord lived, but a pure devotee can live anywhere and create the atmosphere of Vrndavana by his devotional service." (Bg. 8.14, purport)

The Supreme Lord can't forget the pure devotee, and the pure devotee can never forget the Lord. The devotee quits the miserable material world and attains Krishna's blissful abode. Thus although the devotee's goal is not personal salvation, by his constant desiring and acting to please Krishna, he goes to Krishna. That is the Lord's repeated assurance in these verses. "After attaining Me, the great souls, who are *yogis* in devotion, never return to this temporary world, which is full of miseries [*duhkhalayam aSaSvatam*] because they have attained the highest perfection." (Bg. 8.15)

The supreme planet is described in Vedic literature as *avyakta*, *aksara*, and *param gati*. In other words, "it is," beyond our material vision, and it is inexplicable, but it is the highest goal, the destination for the *mahatmas* (great souls)." (Bg. 8.15, purport)

While reading and writing this morning, I thought I'd like to read some of the more accessible portions of *Krishna-bhavanamrta* and *Govinda-lilamrta*. Nothing else "no Christian mysticism, no centering prayer, no mundane poet "can help me attain the ultimate goal. Let me hear Krishna's pastimes.

* * *

4:32 a.m.

Jaya Nrsimhadeva! You appear every day in the hearts of Your devotees. We are always in need of Your protection in this dark, demon-filled world. Thoughts, dreams drifting through, sometimes overtaking us "we can't even recall them all, those fragments of memories, emotions, fantasies . . . Please protect our devotion and help us focus it on Vraja-Krishna. Otherwise, we will be lost in a sea of disconnected impressions. The mind's stream is not clear, and dirty things float in it. They bubble up from our past, but

it is our present condition that allows them to influence us. We're helpless to stop them, and sometimes we grab hold of them, allowing them to cover our intelligence for a while "lust, anger, envy, pride, desire for prestige, sense gratification in myriad forms. These things bob up and float along as part of the stream of consciousness. And down the stream we go with them, trying to hold them back, to examine them a little closer, afraid to let them go as if they were actually parts of ourselves. Are we the captains of our own boats? remember the African Queen sailing down the river, dangerous jungles on either side? Is this the boat Marlowe captained in *The Heart of Darkness*? It would seem just as dangerous.

Radha-Govinda wear a charming light blue and pink, and rich-looking necklaces. He has a silver flute and leaning staff. Srila Prabhupada wrapped in brown with a saffron wool scarf. They are fine clothes, and I am pleased to touch them and to observe how handsome the cloth looks on the bodies of my worshipable deities. This is not sense gratification but worship.

Bit by bit I enter a Gaudiya Vaisnava life. I find more pictures and put them up on the walls. Now I have those two small framed pictures of the great writers in our line, Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami and Rupa Gosvami, and another of the great Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. When I place them on a desk, they seem to get knocked over frequently. Where should I put them then? My altar is quite full already. Bless us always to see, think, and hear about great souls.

We still don't have any kind of central heating here. There are only the two electric radiators in the two upstairs rooms. It's frigid downstairs. But we feel at home and hope to eventually heat this house properly. Today is chilly. It has been raining and blowing all night. I'll see Kirtana-rasa and his wife and child on their way to Dublin to catch their plane back to New York. Ireland is not the most glamorous place to take a vacation. I hope they weren't too disappointed.

* * *

Drop things off. End topics before they are resolved. Move along. This is a book of taking steps to go forward. This book shows how we are always being carried forward in time. It is Purnima, the calendar says, but I haven't seen the moon. I did spy a moon about two days ago between the hours of 1:00 and 3:00 a.m., but not a glimpse of it today. The planets move. O God, O body, O Lord, give us all relief. Let us praise You.

I wrote the letter I wanted to write. I piled up scones. My mother is living and won't give information about what county her parents were born in, even what country. Without that, I am not denied anything. I just need to chant with devotion, remembering our Lord. He is happy for me, and I am too, but what about the lack of love of God? Is that supposed to make us sad? O Krishna, what happens here in the distance when it thunders?

Haven't got a letter from Max Perry for a while, and remember that Armenian person on the beach near Los Angeles? He doesn't write either. And that man in Philadelphia who grows a garden in a small plot and tells people they should become gardeners, how is he doing? I'm telling you, your fingernail clippings must be hidden and thrown away. We don't want bad luck. Don't look at the *dobies*. Don't look in the mirror. Don't curse

the devotees, you will fall down. Don't remove yourself from the foot rail. Be on guard. They are not in union with you when they plan their struggles. Your planned course is an estranged man, sandwich man. The river of hope is what I sense and I chant. I'm thinking I could become like those great Vaisnavas of the past. Or, I am in the disciplic succession doing something appropriate for the present age and circumstance. I'm planning to write range rovers, plastic soldiers, Krishna conscious children, mothers and daughters who expect something Krishna conscious and interesting from the man who has given up his life. We assume a *sannyasi* is engaged in the absolute and no more family fidgeting. But what is he doing, actually?

* * *

Happy Short Puzzle

& This is a way out of the blind so hard
was the wind the tourists will be glad
to go to NY but I'll be glad to stay here
and hide out.

We go on with our *maya* our
Krishna consciousness, our getting through the *aSrama*.
Ash can halo
the crap head pee man I
was I am no longer
I am a devotee petered out
in the past.

* * *

Past hello Tomberg fedoras
words must get together on this
piecework assembly line
Detroit mansion
"Body made by Fischer."

* * *

Krishna's man blows for the Lord
a horn of plenty
ViSvambhara the Russian
is leaving South Street,
"My engagement with HaryaSva is over "
to roam a summer in U.S.A.
selling some books too."

* * *

Muted and blow out loud
oh, boy, say good-bye
another shorty
people are puzzled.
I'm happy to say
Haribol. "

* * *

Melancholy Not
& Melancholy baby I'm not turning to you
to ask how you are. We're not this body.
Go through the *grhastha-aSrama* if you like
performing all *samskaras* like
the first time your baby chewed his cud
cut his hair
and I'll go through *sannyasa*
Rituals
or else I will be melancholy too.

* * *

Come to me my melancholy gremlin
and I'll slap your face.
Come to me you who are tired
and worry, I'll give you some
halava and nectar (yogurt and orange juice).
Come to the Sunday feast and
hear from the *sannyasi* ranter. I'm
just kidding. We are normal
folks following impossible ideals.

* * *

I am responsible
for what I write but
when it comes out silly I say
"That was a breakdown
take."

* * *

Come to me, I am melancholy
not. Krishna conscious pride
is spirit light
as fleece we don't want
to go down to misery
if we can help it
it's up to Krishna. "

* * *

No End to Good Things
& Oh, it's 5:30 in the morning and he's
making porridge in a kitchen
effusive warming heat from
electric heater, hands clenched
in writing fists
so quickly push
buttons in rote.
You could be singing
Lord Hari's names.

* * *

Her tongue chanted by itself
even while she heard
the *Bhagavata*
so the speaker was wrong
to insult and accuse
her of doing two things at once.

* * *

Don't make fun
don't blaspheme
don't cream out
don't assault no one
trinkle trinkle

* * *

don't be a dolt optoid
don't take drugs
snug your feet in a lone
cold bed for nap

and up to serve.

* * *

Be a preacher and exemplar
I say here things to do:
clean your floor and toilet
be a bird-hopper happy
singer
be a serious confession-
hearer and maker
pray to Lord
for service.

* * *

Get out of world
go to Supreme.

* * *

There's no end to good things
to do anywhere you can
always remember the Lord
Is that so hard?

* * *

Refrain from cuffing a
Vaisnava. Keep to yourself
if you can.
The epic boast was
not yours.

* * *

Little person I love you too
got a minute to hear
my song
got it wrong hello?! . . . "

* * *

9:12 a.m.

Sankirtana-rasankirtana-rasa was especially happy that we did the interviews, and he said he didn't mind that I had to cancel the last one. They're going back to a new house

they bought in upstate New York. "I hope you can keep your privacy," he said, and off they went, under the arch, up the driveway. I went back up to my room and promptly chanted two rounds, pacing.

"Here is the same Supreme Personality of Godhead whose transcendental form is experienced by the great devotees who are completely cleansed of material consciousness by dint of rigid devotional service and full control of life and the senses. And that is the only way to purify existence." (*Bhag.* 1.10.23) Devotional service is achieved not by artificial sense restraint but by engaging in the more attractive activities of Krishna consciousness.

Read some *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, some *Krishna* book. Beyond Vedic (or any other mysticism) is direct devotional service. You accept the reality of Krishna as a person in the *arca-vidya*, and you serve Him. You also serve His pure devotees. Krishna says, "Surrender to Me," so on His behalf, you try to convince others to surrender to Krishna. These are ways of acting in devotional service within and without. Hear about Him and remember His activities and teachings, but act in His service.

* * *

10:04 a.m.

Remember those Hand Writs where I was letting my hand (dead matter) do the talking? Senor Wences was a show biz act in which the ventriloquist used his own hand as the dummy. His thumb was the lower lip, his forefinger the upper lip, and he put a wig over the top of his hand. He spoke in a falsetto Spanish accent on TV. It was a cute act. Hands can be so expressive. Nrsimhadeva expressed His love for Prahlada when His hands ripped out HiranyakaSipu's intestines. Krishna showed He loved the Vrajavasis when He lifted Govardhana to protect them from Indra. Hand language.

Visitor coming tomorrow. We'll probably talk about his magazine. Sri Krishna Caitanya.

A man who ate; a man who didn't eat. I know it's a little cold "less than all-loving" to let him go back to the city without breaking bread together, but I'll have to face that possible feeling bravely. I feel the aloneness myself and face it every day. A friend has to face it too. I remember that Zen friend from the Navy, how he visited me on Staten Island when we were both out of the Navy and I made him face the aloneness by getting off the subway. Or rather, he got off at his stop, and I continued and saw his face as the train pulled out, and he was alone in Manhattan. What more can we do? Krishna consciousness is meant to give us strength to face everything, including the fact that we are each alone. I face it in my life in writing, and in this form we are together more than people usually are. But I know sometimes the page is not enough. We want to be with a live body, and at least sit together. Most devotees enjoy socializing. Some are attached to it without even knowing it. I have the opposite condition.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

This *Krishna* book has nice, clear print. Sunshine today. The chair I sit in is decently serviceable. Lord Brahma considered himself the most presumptuous creature. Pause

and consider that it's good to read. You'd really like to have a taste to sustain this, or to read a little and then drift down into *Krishna-smaranam*, but that doesn't seem possible. The mind switches tracks or you become sleepy.

Lord Krishna accepts and remembers even a small service as a great deal. Lord Brahma counted on his good service record. He asked that the Lord understand him as a subordinate servant whose impudence might be excused. He frankly tried to appease the Lord to show compassion because he had made such a blunder.

This all happened so long ago. How does it relate to us? But anything in *Krishna-lila* is like that "eternal, pure, transcendental, and inaccessible to as long as we think and feel in a material way. Some pastimes seem more attractive. It also depends on factors such as what time of day it is when we hear them, our mental and physical condition. This was just a small sip. I started out with interest, but my energy waned quickly. Still, I'm grateful for the motion I made toward Him. And the points will stay with me "Brahma admitting he was presumptuous. I even know a Godbrother who stands before the Deity curtains just before they open and recites this verse where Lord Brahma asks to be accepted as a servant whose mistakes might be excused, the way a mother forgives a child's kicking in the womb. Krishna doesn't forget any service we do, but magnifies and appreciates it.

* * *

3:50 p.m.

We should be as serious as can be "death is coming and we have to be ready for it. We can enjoy passing time as it comes, improvising, but not without remembering Krishna. It's a fact that we who are alive want to be amused, at ease, have certain limits, look for the good, prefer sunshine . . . And what to speak of when we have families "all that entails. Work and enjoy. The *sannyasi* was saying how he knows family life becomes stale. His conclusion: people should become detached.

So?

I just want to point out that we don't *only* need to hear the *sastras* recited; we need to acknowledge the actual good and bad of our own lives, live them for real, and find the connection with Krishna in that everyday way. That's all I mean. And to acknowledge the fact that time is precious, but it's slipping through our fingers every day. If we love again, let it only be Krishna.

I am on this thing of trying to be all right through an afternoon, remembering how hard my brother worked. I have a few more letters to answer. Then I'll walk around (outside?). The man I am is not about to give up that easily. He wants to suck up all the dirt with his Dirt Devil, and he's happy when the floorboards shine back at him. M. is painting the bathroom walls. It will take several coats before he feels he's done.

A flash of lightning over the sea "that's the description of Lord Brahma's life in light of eternity. What about our life duration? Death, ring the bell on your way in; it's only a matter of time. The master left and we will leave after him, true to him in this short time before we join him. It only seems to be taking a long time, and *maya* plays so many tricks of one kind or another. Certain tricks are for the young; they're not the same ones she uses for older people.

Krishna, Krishna. I could walk outside, but I'm trying to preserve myself.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

Bedroom. Leaves on trees. Some mothers have sheep and all sheep have mothers. I have had many mothers and have been a mother. I am a sort of mother now. All this to confuse and broaden the issue of my own mother, and how I don't want to dwell on any guilt I may have about Catherine Guarino, that old, old lady. She's older than many Indian *sadhus*. Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura, they said, passed away at about seventy. Srila Prabhupada was eighty-two. Someone wrote to ask, "Why did your master not live longer?" They thought a sign of spiritual advancement was to live until you are very, very old, over a hundred.

The upright telephone pole holds the wires leading to this house. It's braced by a cable. Hans Christian Andersen's sentimental personification of dead things. I used to like to hear of the tin soldier talking to the doll girl. The various objects talked and talked when the human beings were out of sight. Workers probably do that too when the boss leaves for the day "say who they really are and what they really feel about their lives and jobs. Who do the souls talk to when God's out of the room? Maybe to themselves, the atheists would say. A theist would call the soul's "talking" prayer instead. Those who have seen God talk with God; those who have not learn to talk to Him. He reciprocates with both by giving hope, and with that hope we each proceed.

Srila Prabhupada gives many logical arguments in his talks, wanting us to conclude that God exists. Of course, he accepts everything based on *sastra*, but because ordinary people don't, he resorts to using logic. On the beach at Juhu, Dr. Patel was reciting the ninth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita* in a hurry to move from one verse to the next, but Srila Prabhupada had something valuable to say on each verse. When they got to the verse *mayadhyaksena prakrtih*, Srila Prabhupada said, "Krishna controls the *prakrti*. The rascals say that *prakrti* is all that is needed." Srila Prabhupada gave the example that the ocean is *prakrti* and could potentially flood Bombay, but it is not allowed to move beyond a certain margin. That margin is God's control; it keeps the ocean within bounds. A simple and convincing argument. It doesn't prove that God exists, but it helps defeat the notion that *prakrti* is sufficient in and of itself. In *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna says He controls the material nature. Then He says fools don't accept Him because He appears as a human being.

On that walk, Srila Prabhupada also told some stories about Pandit Nehru, who was his customer in Allahabad. He said he was completely Europeanized and would see any European who came to visit, but not any Indian.

* * *

Kirtana-rasa should be more than halfway over the ocean now. Thought of their family relationship and realized I want to be interested in the affair between the holy name and my tongue. What is that relationship? What is that love and intimate dealing? Please reveal it to me. Please heal our broken relationship. I know that Nama Prabhu loves me, but I am withholding. Please explain to me, some counselor, why this

dysfunctional relationship has arisen. What is the spiritual trauma, and how can I overcome it? It can't be just a matter of "working on my rounds," or "getting my rounds together." Nama Prabhu is a person. I have offended Him. I haven't shown myself earnest enough. Thus He does not reveal Himself to me in His holy name. He says in effect, "You really don't want Me. You want other things. Therefore, when you chant you allow your mind to go all over the place. You don't have strong faith that I am Krishna in name form. In fact, you are somewhat averse to Krishna in any form. I see that you are making some progress with your Radha-Govinda, but . . ." Still, He withholds. Still, I commit offenses and do not have a taste for the Lord's holy name.

I just keep batting those rounds out hoping something will happen. I hope Krishna will be kind to me some day, some lifetime. If anyone does realize the glories of the name, he can tell others. I would like to meet someone who has *nama-ruci* yet who is not a complete *babaji*, who can relate to me in my desire to do things other than chanting, such as writing and more writing.

But to have faith that Krishna is with me in this easy-to-take form is the most wonderful thing. I can tell others about *that*. I can tell them what I actually know "the struggle, the regulation, my own realization. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. I can tell them how I am learning to beg for the name.

They say it is easy to chant in Vrndavana. I haven't found that it's particularly easier there than somewhere else. It will be easy anywhere if I surrender.

Sigh. The leaves of mid-May unfurling on the backyard ash trees.

* * *

6:28 p.m., Night notes

Srila Prabhupada chanting *pranama-mantras*. Radha-Govinda in Their "Chinese" red-pink nightclothes. Bright sky, but evening approaching. Quiet here.

Been a quiet yet productive day "the kind of day I like. Just wish I could reach the actual quality of devotional service. But that's up to Krishna.

May 12, Midnight

In two different dreams last night, I and others were threatened. It seems that while I seek harmony in the day, my dreams often show the opposite at night. Strong emotions in these encounters. I could try to enter the dream and confront it again, but I won't. I am not following the way of the shaman. Better I turn to *Bhagavad-gita* and hear from Lord Krishna and my spiritual master. In this way, may I revive my actual eternal identity and give up all the strange designations that appear in dreams.

"From the highest planet in the material world down to the lowest, all are places of misery wherein repeated birth and death take place. But one who attains to My abode, O son of Kunti, never takes birth again." (Bg. 8.16)

Krishna's supreme abode. Kotovsky said, "Swamiji, after death everything is finished." The Vedic culture doesn't think like that, and since we met Srila Prabhupada, we don't either. We now have knowledge beyond matter. The materialists say that only that which can be perceived with the senses is knowledge, and we say real knowledge

begins beyond the senses. A completely different outlook. If there is an eternal nature and life is meant to attain it, then let's detach ourselves from this world and enter the next: "Yet there is another unmanifest nature, which is eternal and is transcendental to this manifest and unmanifested matter. It is supreme and is never annihilated. When all in this world is annihilated, that part remains as it is."

Are we going to the spiritual nature?

A person at the time of death: "Am I going now? Is Krishna there?" Yes, He is, mother. Have faith. We've heard it in the *Vedas*. The Swami created faith in the faithless. We are going back to Godhead. Go to Him now.

Sudama Prabhu's mother was at his side while he was dying in L.A. at the devotee community. She said, "Sudama, go to Prabhupada!" "helping him think clearly as he exited the world.

Vaisnava description of Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura's passing away: "He entered *maha-samadhi*."

He left his body. He
disappeared. He left this
mortal world.

Kicked the bucket with a last grin
and the body now a corpse.

Something as horrible as the morgue.

" . . . that which is known as the supreme destination, that place from which, having attained it, one never returns "that is My supreme abode." (Bg. 8.21)

When we go back to Godhead, it the end of a long, selfish, painful journey. O Krishna, what a day that will be.

The preacher can make good progress toward attaining Krishna's abode. Srila Prabhupada mentions at the end of the eleventh chapter of *Bhagavad-gita* regarding preachers who sacrifice their lives for Krishna: " . . . it is certain that such persons must reach the supreme planet after leaving the body."

* * *

4:40 a.m.

A little late, run along, rabbit, and flow with life. You can't orchestrate it.

Today around 9:00 a.m., I am supposed to meet JS at Daruka's house. Until then . . . I have the Esgic if I need it, but I write to tell you that radha and Govinda are wearing gold lamé outfits with contrasting purple. He has a peacock feather in His turban, and Radha's skirt is flouncy, almost like a hoop skirt. Prabhupada is wearing shades of tan, brown, and saffron.

Do you know what I heard on the grapevine? That somebody was in the south of France and will now go to Gita-nagari. Imagine that. And did you hear . . .

I also heard from the Spiritual News Network that Maharaja Pariksit could have counteracted the curse but didn't. He is not like those modern leaders who think they'll never die and never should. He simply decided to prepare himself for his next life. I also heard that Sukadeva Gosvami was chosen to speak, and that Maharaja Pariksit and the

sages agreed that whatever Sukadeva recommended, they would accept. "Friendly talks are useless," Srila Prabhupada said.

So what happened?

I'm telling you. Maharaja Pariksit got a seven-day notice. Hare Krishna. He heard about Krishna and went back to Godhead. That was that. When death comes near, may we do the same. I hope we're not afraid to die. Vaisnavas, Srila Prabhupada assures us, are not afraid of death because they don't want anything in this world. They are satisfied only to serve the Lord wherever He wants them to serve.

* * *

I could be out walking before 5 "it's light enough. Maybe I'll try that again one day a week and see what happens. I thought it was causing headaches, so I gave it up, but I did like to take those walks. They always made me feel glad to be alive. Ideas would come sometimes, or perhaps I took some time to stop and pray.

Little stones "you place one down, then prostrate your body on holy ground. That's called *dandavat parikrama*. You proceed by stretching your body on the ground, marking where your forehead touched the dirt, then getting up and moving forward from there. I heard that in India, you can hire a man to do your *dandavat parikrama* for you; you supposedly get the credit. That's for fruitive gain. I don't think Krishna accepts proxy servants though.

The bird is chirping, "Come on out!" The cow bellows. Madhu will wake to his alarm clock and make his way up here soon. He has covered the walls in several coats of mold-preventing varnish. Today he will use the actual colored paint on the bathroom walls.

The first duty of a person in the renounced order is to write books. Srila Prabhupada said that temple construction was secondary for him, but book-writing was first. The temples came automatically. "Perhaps this is the secret of my success," he said. Fence it in and put cut glass on top of the walls. Hire a *caukidara*. Fingers resting down heavy on keys. He's a sore man walking all day in the cold of Eskimo.

* * *

Where are We? I Don't Know
& Where are we? I don't know. We heard
that I got tired and the dread
headache came. No, I won't be afraid.
Medicine will stop it. You were wandering
into forests
some Vaisnavas were on pilgrimage, see,
walking to a holy *mandira*. That's good.
Yeah, they were barefoot and one of the members
was a big man with a belly.
I say this purely out of reverence
for the culture. I'm allowed to joke because
I love it. I'm not mocking.

* * *

The pilgrims? Where are we? I
don't know the answer. Wandered into
the jungle and never came out?
Drowned in a *pukkar*?
Is this the birthplace of Vrnda-
puja?
Is this the place where you have
an ancient manuscript written by a sage
about *bhakti* in Urdu and Tamil
but it's Gaudiya?
He doesn't know. For a hundred rupees
we will show you the shoe, the loom
of his father and mother who
departed for the spiritual world.

* * *

Watching TV, the *pujari* is busy
polishing His jewels.
Got a big meal, got a busload
of German tourists
with water
bottles from Japan.

* * *

2
I want only some strength to
perform at 9:00 a.m. meeting asking
an editor "where are we?
I don't know.

* * *

Sure you know, we are in Wicklow
in ISKCON, we're on top
our future is brilliant.
We are going right through.

* * *

Why do you say you don't know?
We are on the road repaired
to *bhakti*.

But I mean I personally don't
know just purely for myself.

* * *

Who cares for you?
Your guru knows all
and you should know too
stop this silly confessing.

* * *

I don't know I thought you would.
I do.
I am more sure about basics
than I let on here. The
Rest we will find out soon.
Just keep treading. "

* * *

Hold 'Em Joe
& Hold 'em, Joe. You should be on top. Get in
the car let's drive to the west and north.
We got to meet with our old brother.
This
Hindu man's land don't like
Calypso Joe.
"At de Carnival they sang Harry
Krishna" and some dopes I mean *panditas*
I mean respectable politically connected
good folks, I love them "
objected.

* * *

We took it to ISKCON and they said
we is neutral the holy name
is always good. Hare Krishna
can't be tainted
but we go on record that
we don't like wasted lives and
semen and spoiled karma in
the name of de Carnival
fun and even what you call
your proud culture of Pan.

* * *

Hold 'em, Harry
is it blasphemy or not?

* * *

We said already Hare Krishna you
can't ruin. It's backfire on
you the boomerang
now
let's make a truce
all dance with us in a
kirtana of mixed race
we're not the body.

* * *

We are hold 'em Joe
and Hindu no
we are none of that
we are that too
tat tvam asi
hold a *yajna* wave your
green and white faded
flags on long poles.

* * *

Potholes, little cars
Guinness Stout that '68
all is *maya* we are
the black Orpheus jog
going to hell and come back
alive.

* * *

Give up sin and have fun.
Give up fin and thin and
just relax you could
chant Hare Krishna in that pure
atmosphere but I
know you can't so at least you
did say Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare

Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.
Get it right.

* * *

Try now just follow
just sing after me now one
two, three
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare
Rama Rama, Rama Rama
no, you got it mixed.

* * *

9:12 a.m.

At Daruka's house waiting for Maharaja. His driver, Bhakta Leo, phoned and said that they would be a half hour late. "We got caught in traffic at Tallaght. It was a killer." JS hasn't had breakfast. I have been resting in bed, keyed up for the meeting to begin at 9:00 a.m. I have my Esgic in my breast pocket and a wet dishrag in a bowl. It is a mild, sunny day "unusual for Rathdangan. M. says we have a bad leak in the roof. If the good weather keeps up, he wants to hire men to fix it "again. Exciting letter from Madhava regarding GNP meeting and their plans to produce EJW books. I'm fortunate.

So, relax. Our meeting will be over about noon. I'll have to skip the Prabhupada *puja* today. Try to recapture my pace this afternoon. Madhava wants me to make more recordings, reading and commenting from scripture. I'd like to do that again. Now relax and wait.

* * *

12:28 p.m.

Flash of seeing me as others see me, as objective fact "a fool. But that's not more me than the subjective person I protect in solitude. I go alone and take care of him and his world. Yes, there is a danger I could be coddling and indulging myself, but it's also risky to go back to that other model. I don't disapprove of others getting married or being *sannyasi* managers or whatever. Everyone should do as they honestly see fit. That's what I'm trying to do too.

JS said there was a top-level meeting to discuss how ISKCON could be arranged so people can serve more according to their capacities within a social framework (*varnaSrama*). ISKCON devotees must be educated in this regard. Within this discussion, the leaders admitted there was room for the "sage" who doesn't really live within the social system. Such a sage would remain aloof, with no axes to grind, but loyal. Leaders may go to him sometimes to . . . ask questions?

I told JS that I would like to stay outside that social structure and yet be seen as a benign, contributing, and loyal person. I don't want to be cut off or condemned. I didn't tell him the extent of my aloofness. He said he has read some of my books and knows

that I often deliberate (and doubt) whether I'm doing the right thing. Yes, but I'm becoming more decisive.

* * *

2:27 p.m.

Here I am. Here I am. I said I flashed on how I am a fool. It's more specific than that. It's that I suddenly feel I'm wrong and ought to change "a moment of truth that often occurs when in the company of Godbrothers. We attribute that phenomenon to Srila Prabhupada coming through them. But we are exposed, naked, standing in the headlights. All we have been doing on our own is suddenly wrong. We have been developing habits and attitudes which seemed all right (mushrooms growing in the dark), but now! The dentist discovers we have six cavities. The doctor says we have cancer. And all along we thought we were better developed as a whole person than some others we have seen. A career collapses like a pack of cards.

But I no longer believe in those flash moments. I don't want to undo the quiet resolve I've worked so hard to achieve. I can't express this to my brothers or they *would* probably destroy it. The same ones who are engineering how to change the whole ISKCON society could focus on me and how to "redo" me.

You don't trust us? Who do you trust, the psychologists?

Who do you trust more than us? You have your own way of understanding? But that's crazy! reality is consensus. We say Srila Prabhupada wants such-and-such, Krishna wants such-and-such, and we can prove it by opening his books. It's printed *right here*.

* * *

Krishna, Krishna. No platitudes today. We have to . . .

Refurbish

Regurgitate.

How did the meeting go? All right.

I have to surrender gradually. I'm not one of those deviants of whom we spoke, yet I can't fully surrender to Krishna. I *admit* it. Maybe, just maybe I'm stubborn and defiant. Then Krishna *will* punish me. Oh, but . . . You can't say that the Supreme Lord cannot expose you in the headlights. He has the right. He is all-powerful. Do you want to be a rebel against God, another *Prometheus*? He's the last word in false egoism: "I don't care if you're right! I want to do it my way! You have tortured and disappointed me. I tried, and you didn't . . . reciprocate."

No, I wouldn't say all that. I'm too timid. I am only playing here.

He defied God

read a newspaper

then balled it up,

threw it in the fireplace

and it blazed out of control!

Tried to stop it and

burnt his hand.

That's karma from

on high. Serves him
right and he's glad he
got the burn
(which wasn't so painful
but was instructive).

* * *

Tell him a story. Thank him for coming and cornering you. No one can know that you live in a shoe. There was an old woman who lived in a shoe and had so many children (books to write and read, and private habits) she didn't know what to do. What's the rest of that rhyme?

And when the pot was over
the birds began to sing
five little halyards
see how they run and
when the fun was settled
he dost cried "Help!"

* * *

Maybe, he said, it will be revealed to me that I ought to be something a little different. Well, I said, I'm ahead of you there.

That's all. Cut this out "this vague writing of feelings.
I can't be more direct. Heavens to Betsy. Six pence. Ten pence.

Fix your guilty roof
it costs a thousand dollars we don't have
for sealing compound and coats of pain.

To stop a leaky roof. I misjudged him. Don't, help. I don't know what's best for our society. I can barely help myself. Howl it out. To anyone who asks, I've found a poet's loophole. The cat concert outside the window of the room in which the official history of the world is being written "but at heart I'm a simple, respectful servant. I just need to scream a little

we joked a nondevotee
therapist would say
you just need a little sex action and less Krishna
obedience.
We know.

* * *

We know.

* * *

4:00 p.m.

Reading more on the life of Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura. I think, "I too would like to be told by Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to write books." Maybe I *am* receiving some direction. I mean, maybe this is not *all* my false ego desire of how I want to serve. I hope so.

But I seem meant to scratch without much assurance of that. I will probably always remain at least a little uncertain.

As I am writing, I feel the twinge beginning. I performed well today physically, but my energy is quickly waning. Still, I'm grateful.

* * *

Yosh. Pill in. How ya doin'? recoop? Able to sleep on down quilt tonight? Dream and don't be afraid of it. I "dream" (hope against hope) that I'll be able to find my way back into innocent love for Srila Prabhupada, especially in his books. I seem to need a peak time. What about the little sips? I'm working on it.

May 13, Midnight

Yesterday I received lots of input "an hour and a half with JS, messages from GNP, letters . . . and headache. To bed by 6:00 p.m. Dreams. In one I was at a big subway station, hoping it was heading downtown, but I was afraid to ask anyone directions for the downtown train. JS was there, Hayagriva too.

* * *

The supreme abode of Krishna is described in brief in verses 8.20 and 21, and in a few other places in *Bhagavad-gita*. Srila Prabhupada writes that these references are "only a small hint of . . . Goloka Vrndavana." They're enough, however, to attract us. We can learn more detail by reading *Brahma-samhita* and the Gosvamis' literature. The *Gita* teaches us to yearn to transfer to Krishna's abode. We discover that the spiritual abode is eternal, free from anxiety, enlightened in topmost knowledge, and all the residents love Krishna and serve Him intimately. What more do we need to know?

Only how to get there.

By unalloyed devotional service. Practice it as much as possible. Chant Hare Krishna.

Krishna's abode is never destroyed. If we don't go there, we're in a dangerous, unhappy place "as in the dream with all those people at the subway station. I couldn't even ask them what was on my mind.

"The supreme abode of the Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is described in the *Brahma-samhita* as *cintamani-dhama*, a place where all desires are fulfilled." (Bg. 8.21, purport)

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. Although He is present in His abode, He is all-pervading, and everything is situated within Him." (Bg. 8.22)

The amazing, inconceivable Krishna is simultaneously the all-great Godhead and the tender young boy in Goloka. In Goloka His all-greatness is covered by *yoga-maya* because His sweetness predominates.

O Lord, please make my mind dwell on Your spiritual abode. Even if I don't live in the *dhama* in India, I can think of Your abode in Goloka by hearing descriptions of the activities there. I can know, "As far as this material world is concerned, although the Lord is always in His supreme abode, He is nonetheless all-pervading by His material energy." (Bg. 8.22, purport)

Until we actually enter Krishna's supreme abode, we can see and feel His presence in the material world through His expansive energies. He is also in this world in His spiritual forms as *arca-vigraha* and the holy name. The scriptures also represent Him. We are not bereft of Krishna here. And we have His devotees.

Looking back at 8.14, Krishna says there that He is easy to attain *if* we have no desire but to please Him. "In the *Caitanya-caritamṛta* the pure devotee is called *niskama*, which means he has no desire for self-interest. Perfect peace belongs to him alone, not to them who strive for personal gain." (Bg. 8.14, purport)

I often speak of wanting peace and equate it with being off the beaten path where e-mail controversies can't reach me, no dacoits visit, the city noises are far away, and others' demands have to arrive airmail. White cloud (*Santi, Santi, Santi*). But in the *Bhagavad-gita*, peace is described as the inner state of *niskama* "having no desire but to please Krishna. The pure devotee could be peaceful, even in a hellish situation, if he knew he was there for Krishna's purpose. Maybe someday I'll attain that kind of peace. I feel the peace I have now will help me reach that deeper inner peace.

Oh, then will you come down from your mountain?

* * *

4:32 a.m.

JS keeps his eyeglasses around his neck, tied with string. He's practicing to see without spectacles.

The beauty of the Divine Couple (English expression) . . .

Come on, man, break loose of what ties you. Just go forward. Look up and see Radha-Govinda. It's for that that I wear eyeglasses. Otherwise, I would not be able to see Them from across the room. They would be golden but hazy forms, the way Krishna said, "I see something golden, a beautiful column or a *campaka* flower," or radha says, "I see a beautiful sapphire column." Well, that's all I would see. So use the glasses, and if it means I'll eventually go blind, what can I do? We each have to use our body to the fullest at each moment. Don't abuse it; just use it. It is wearing down anyway, so get the best mileage from it. Hare Krishna. *Hrsikena hrsikeSa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*.

Picture of Madhavendra Puri taking the pot of *ksira* with tears in his eyes. Now that's honoring *prasadam*. He felt he had committed an offense by wanting to taste the Lord's offering while it was still on the altar. He thought, "If I could taste it, I could learn how to make it for my Gopala Deity." Thus he felt he had transgressed. He left the temple and sat in the marketplace through the night, chanting Hare Krishna. Then the *pujari* came and called for him, "Where is a *sannyasi* named Madhavendra Puri?

Please come forward. Lord Krishna has stolen this pot of condensed milk for you." Nice pastime.

O Lord, You give us these beautiful days. rain or wind, it is always nice chanting Hare Krishna. He said, "My mind is evil, bad," etc. We think like that. The mind is not our friend. Yet we want to make that same mind our best friend. We will do that when we think of Krishna, not when we dwell on the lower modes. It is the intelligence's job to control the mind, but ultimately, the mind is controlled by the soul's desire to love Krishna. The soul is controlled by Krishna. No one controls Krishna except Srimati Radharani, and that is because Krishna loves Her so much. Now everyone, chant Hare Krishna with us.

And the band played on "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna "led by the young female sax player and the rocking drums and guitars.

* * *

Yes, it's a convincing proposal that we should print our books with page counts of 350 - 400 pages. It's good to make all fire escapes firm. Our bathroom is blue. Are you surprised? Cleaning stations equipped, but not fully. Please write something serious. Okay, I'll write like Narottama dasa Thakura. He says, "My mind is filled with love for the Divine Couple. I don't see that at any time in the future I will be able to attain my desire of direct service to the Divine Couple." He says different things, sometimes expressing himself as fallen, sometimes as confident. He wants to become a *gopi-manjari*. Quite a rising and falling of emotion. He depends on the mercy of Lord Nityananda, Lord Caitanya, and Lokanatha Gosvami, his spiritual master. He prays for the mercy of rupa-manjari. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. He says *sadhana-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti* are the same thing, but one is unripe and the other ripe. The Lord is spread throughout His creation by His expansive energies.

* * *

One Japanese author writes about life in a hut where he stays alone "a very small place, and austere. He begins by giving the history of houses in which people try to live but get destroyed. He tells of a tremendous fire in the capital where thousands of people perished and many houses went up in smoke. Then he tells of a volcano. The impermanence of life reminds him to remain detached. It's true, we can't live for long in any house. We might build it or buy it, but someone else will inevitably come and take it over, just like ISKCON took over Detroit's Fischer mansion. I heard that the cuckoo, whose songs we hear morning and evening from my bedroom, lays its eggs in other birds' nests. The cuckoo babies are raised by other birds. Either the houses are impermanent, or they are invaded by others. It was your house, but suddenly you have to escape without your belongings. That's what happened in the great fire in Kyoto. Even as I make this place strong and nice "front gate, bell to ring before you enter, intercoms, cleaning stations, art room "it's all subject to destruction.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Taking a morning walk for the first time since we moved into "Uddhava's house." Plenty of gorse blooming. A faded full moon. Black and white cows in the pastures, calves close to their mothers. It's not so cold, but I don't feel too warm in my layers. Yes, I'm comfortable and secure that I survived yesterday's visitor. Now I'm alone again, as I should be. It's all very pleasant out here with the spring birds. Small daisies on the roadside, and grass always overgrown because of the rain "uninhabited roads.

I hope Krishna will give me more of an indication what I can do to please Him. I know some of the standard, heroic ways to please Krishna, and I'm not asking Him to give me a phony deal "to please Him by not actually pleasing Him. I just want to do something that's possible for me. I like what He is giving me at present, and I am grateful.

* * *

A Little Freedom
& Go quick as you can for me to be with Thee
gorse I said and comfy
cumfree. Be free as a bird
we say.
No one is free, he said. We all have to die
and if you want to be God
that freedom is not yours.

* * *

You can be free for
serving the Lord that's possible
and the best thing there is

* * *

"Freedom," I said yesterday
and he said, "Hmm."
What did I mean? I was
thinking of the kind of freedom
Pharoah Sanders means "
freedom from strife
free from *maya*
and chains.

* * *

But not freedom from service

to guru. Lock me in there
with no one in my way "
just a little freedom
Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna free
the mind to
hear the holy names. "

* * *

5:45 a.m.

So, we're going to call everyone up, all reserves, and go to war against Japan. Or was it Iraq? Even old men and Hare Krishnas will get burnt up. If that's the score, we'll have to chant with earnest core of heart and tell you, man, Hare Krishna's where it's at. All devotees on street praying as bombs fall. Then he said, "Some end."

* * *

9:08 a.m.

"What would you like to do now, sir?"

"Oh, just sit here, I suppose."

"But wouldn't you like to compose a ballet score?"

"No, not much. I would like to find taste and gumption, not just for apple pie when I'm hungry, either."

"Gradually your house is becoming a home. Is there anything else I should see?"

"No."

"Is there a sound like *om* or bong! that is beyond the verbal?"

"Yes, it's Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. But a person has to feel it. He shouldn't talk too much or sleep too much if he wants to be able to write on time a series, a series . . . "

He said this and we wanted him to read some Krishna stories to us, but he seemed reluctant. We reminded him of his duty and his lineage.

We used to talk to each other on the necessity of daily reading our spiritual master's books, but now it seems like it's every man for himself. I'm not about to play elder guide, and as for him asking me such an embarrassing question, what could I say except, "I read at midnight, a bewitching hour, and fall into a mystic trance for five minutes. After that, I read comic books for the rest of the day."

"Then if it were true as you say," said the logical genius lawyer, pursuing his point, "you had better not to be snide with the people I know, because most all of them are followers of Vaisnava gurus."

"You mean I have to *pretend*? How is that possible?" Have a good laugh. This was written so you could. I like to see through a telescopic lens.

"Now I'm going to ask you again: If you can't dislike and get peeved at all the people in your life (because you so rarely see them), then what do you do for fun?"

"Oh, I practice hating the guts of demons. I mean, in our guts, I hate what they are doing, such as killing those lambs and cows out there. I don't really hate *them*. That too I do from a distance."

"Looks like you're back to the *maha-bhagavata* conclusion."

"No, a middle-class devotee loves the Lord (goody-goody), makes friends with all devotees (another impossible ideal to embrace "to kiss and hug "the family of all devotees from all nations), is kind to the innocent (after first verifying that they *are* innocent), and hates the demons (not them but their sins). Or are we supposed to just avoid them?"

"How do you know the difference between the innocent and the demons without scratching them first to see what's underneath?"

"Oh, I wait and see. If they offend guru, God, or devotees, I let them have it "kick on their faces with boots. Sometimes I just ignore them."

"You've got a fairly active life there carrying out this middle-class proposal. Let me see if I've got it straight . . . "

"Hey, don't you read your *Bhagavatam*? It's not something I have manufactured. It's all there in the Eleventh Canto, when the Nava-yogendras speak to King Nimi."

"Speaking of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, when is the last time you studied it from cover to cover? And when was the last time you walked around Govardhana? When did you last take an Esgic?"

It was yesterday, all those questions. I counted a small hearing of the word "Govardhana" to be as good as walking around it (not really).

* * *

Belabored. 9:30 in the morning is a good time to drink a little water. Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. Clear sky. Leaves that haven't opened are bulging. People who have not gone out will consider when to go. Men (and women) who believe in the unconscious will be consulting their latest emotional dream only to discover they have forgotten it.

Out of such thin material, he tries to weave a cloak, a pillowcase, a cover for his duvet (that's quilt to you).

He struggles to be happy in a silent way. Simply glad it's not me and ready to take command. "I can't believe . . . " he said. But I do believe. I am pushing the point further that Krishna is everywhere in His expansive energies. We half-shut our eyes and repeat His holy names, if we could, all day, figuring, "Why go to the material energy for Him, since He is compact and most merciful in these spiritual forms in which He descends to the material world?"

Did we cover all the points? Hardly. I didn't even mention Alice and the enormous influence she has over the likes of me.

One Vaisnava writer hinted at some blasphemer and said, "I won't mention him or I'll be advertising his foul ideas." So he disappears, drops off into oblivion, with the dead and survivors of the famous fire of Kyoto in ancient days, and with ancient fires "rome, Chicago, Germany, Japan . . .

* * *

2:31 p.m.

M. rushed off to Dublin for an interview at Govinda's restaurant with an Irish-speaking TV station. The crew will also film the devotees in the evening at their festival.

I have a flurry of messages regarding BTG deadlines and GNP production reports. In a hurry. I banged my knee against an open drawer and yelled, "Krishna!" Why all this passion and adrenaline and mishap?

If I get a quiet afternoon, maybe I'll make my debut in the art room.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

The afternoon is slipping away, but I still want to be with Krishna and remember Him. As in the scriptures, as in Goloka, as in my heart (and I don't mean Paramatma four-armed) "reach out to Him. Don't be so foolish as to promote forgetfulness of Krishna. Don't be defiant.

Who is talking to whom? Maybe my intelligence is talking to my mind, or perhaps the intelligence is being guided by Srila Prabhupada's internalized *vani*. It's good to distinguish *guru-vani* from parents' *vani* or some other *vani* that ought to be overthrown. Let me make that distinction so that I never try to overthrow the voice of God through His representative.

Why write so much? What are you, some kind of graffiti artist? Here is how a Krishna conscious graffiti artist solved his addiction to writing on walls: in Vrndavana, this man boiled down all that he wanted to say into one, sometimes two, words, "*Jaya Radhe*" or "*Radha*." Then he walked up to every blank wall he could find and let his arm and hand do the rest. It was daring, because if you know the rain doesn't stand a chance of washing your graffiti away and that many people are going to read it "and that you will have no chance to edit it "you want to think your message out.

My writing is not like that "one shot do or die, and everyone who passes reads it. Still, my hand moves and what's left behind will be read. Krishna, Krishna. Cover the earth with that.

Now what? She is working hard to pass her exams and get a job in Manhattan. That's the idea. Wants a husband too. And to work for Krishna's cause. My, my, you can't talk about nobody,

in the south of France, or
we'll demand payment.

Get off the Internet if you can't take rude exchanges and you're not willing to read what anyone wants to say who suddenly chimes in.

I'm off. That sounds like hell, not efficiency. Imagine Thoreau on e-mail, or *Cold Mountain*, or Rupa Gosvami . . . *Dhiradhira*. It gets too much for fine communication of fine points.

Krishna was playing in Goloka with His friends, and Lord Brahma appeared and misjudged the situation. He thought Krishna lesser than Himself, and lesser than the Narayana Lord Brahma knows as his father and master.

Then what happened?

Lord Brahma became presumptuous and stole Krishna's calves and boys. He came to his senses when he saw Krishna display His mystic potency. Then Lord Brahma was melted down and made his prayer: Please forgive me for kicking You. I'm like the baby in the womb. No one should speculate to know you, O Supreme Lord.

Clean between your toes and check the mailbox. Make monkey faces in the mirror. Look out for signs of sure death. resolve to rotate your neck in exercise. And the colon no longer seems the source of all good health; nor do mixing meals or nature cure. Just accept the mortal coil and relax with head on orthopedic pillow.

How many things can you reject, refrain from? How many Krishna venues can you find? The *sannyasi* of another camp accused ISKCON *sannyasis* of limiting their preaching to set-up affairs, arranged for them in temples where they visit, lecture, eat well, and leave for another place. He said (I guess) they should risk more, break new ground, be austere, go out and do something where no one has been. Or, I don't know what he meant except for certain he criticized softness and the routine of ho-hum life.

Now come to the end of this little discourse. I hope you can take Lord Caitanya's advice: *hari-nama hari-nama eva kevalam*. Believe it. The holy names of God are the only way. You can chant even in the bathroom; the chanting is always pure. You can learn to chant so that even in dreams, *hari-nama* protects you, your tongue and mind vibrate, you always hear Hare Krishna mantras and begin to understand the greatness and sweetness of God, your protector and beloved, and you keep going.

* * *

4:09 p.m.

Lord Brahma's prayer is long. He's really getting it out. His prayer is packed with philosophical understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We can learn a great deal by hearing his prayer. And it's not merely *jnana*; it's his devotional expression. God is inconceivable. We must accept that, or we can't explain anything at all. Brahma tells what he has personally seen "first Krishna alone with His friends; then Krishna expanded as the cows and calves and all of Vrndavana; then the calves and boys as four-handed Visnus being worshiped by the elements and the demigods. What a lot to see! Then he saw Krishna again as just Himself, a small boy in the land of Vraja. He concluded from this vision that Krishna is the Supreme Lord and that everything comes from Him.

I would like to see a vision of Krishna that I could never forget. Imagine seeing something that impressed His greatness, beauty, friendliness, and other qualities on you. Our close relationship "my total dependence on Him would be awakened, and my desire to serve Him would become the only thing that mattered in my life.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Art debut "with Ani out in the yard burning brush, I turned on the art room's lights and went to work splashing, applying glue, mashing, making the green-yellow liquid and brown-black-cream-tan combination. "Guys with Strong right Arms Establish Ground." I felt the wild abstract challenge but controlled it, or channeled it, until it become a recognizable Krishna conscious message.

When I finished, I hung the paintings on boards to dry and asked Aniruddha to help me clean up. I then explained to him the concept of process over product, and how not to remark for or against someone's work. He understood, I think. I spoke openly to him

about what this means to me. I also told him that I preferred the young kids' art to the art of older children. The older kids are already trying to draw realistically and to be clever. The smaller children do whatever they can "a crude Krishna, a blob, a mess of color.

"They don't deserve it," he said
the brothers conservative don't
deserve to see this art and
Mr. Boyle, the teacher of
Patri in school days can
be chucked off. We are
free now and can write
and paint as we like
to please Krishna.

* * *

I am intelligent, a guru, got a left ankle that aches after standing awhile. I am alone, but with friends. "Preach where it's favorable."

Color mad and glad. Krishna gives us these elements so we can work for Him. O strong right arm, be a Krishna conscious man in me who asserts his art. It takes that sort of force to get it going. The one yellow baby in *samadhi*, eyes closed as if sleeping peacefully and floating on a blue and green bottom "I wrote "Vaisnava" next to his head. I'm not sure of the connection. I had a Prabhupada *bhajana* tape loud in the background, but the atmosphere was sweet and mellow as I wandered around the new studio with a pallet covered in gleaming blobs of paint.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:40 p.m.

Alone in house. Krishna is not a fictional character. When I hear of Kamsa's demoniac friends telling him not to fear Krishna or the demigods, and to kill all the children born in the past ten days, I sometimes think of Peter Ustinov playing King Herod. It was a reality that was carried out by other demoniac persons in different eras. I thought also of Kierkegaard saying that belief in Christ may insult our reason, but we go beyond reason to love.

May 14, 12:10 a.m.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is greater than all, is attainable by unalloyed devotion. Although He is present in His abode, He is all-pervading, and everything is situated within Him." (Bg. 8.22) "One should be captivated by this information and desire to go there."

I'm thinking of a talk I want to give on Sunday in Dublin on "otherworldliness." The dictionary defines "otherworldly" as "impractical, naive." It means that we don't know this world where we actually live, and that we tend to get lost here. We don't have the savvy to get by. Instead, we may be absorbed in spiritual contemplation or some imaginary place.

But it needn't be like that. A devotee can be expert in dealing with this world, yet remain detached from it, his eyes fixed on Goloka. *Raganuga-bhakti* is the art of thinking about what we will do when we go to the other world.

A lecture on the spiritual world could draw remarks like this from an ISKCON audience: "Don't we just serve our guru in this world, then automatically go to the other world?"

Yes, but what *is* that service to guru in this world? It's not to forget Krishna while we enjoy here. The work means chanting and hearing about Krishna, and helping others to do the same. Yes, Krishna is here, and when we realize that, this too becomes the spiritual world. One can be living in the other world even while living in this one. We don't have to wait for death.

Hare Krishna. I can play on this theme in a variety of ways. The material world is miserable and temporary; a devotee wants to take an easy journey to that Other Planet, the one where life is eternal and full of bliss and knowledge "from where, once going, he will never return. Change worlds, change bodies, change consciousness.

The Supreme Lord is far away, but He conducts the affairs here through His energies. He never leaves Goloka Vrndavana. We can transfer to Krishna's abode only by practicing pure *bhakti*. "If we can prepare, therefore, in this life to get promotion to the kingdom of God, then surely, after quitting this material body, we will attain a spiritual body just like the Lord's." (Bg. Introduction, p. 25)

"One should desire and hanker after that supreme kingdom, for when one attains that kingdom, he does not have to return to this material world." (Introduction, p. 24)

The eighth chapter, verses 23 - 26, teaches how the *yogi* should practice to leave his body at an auspicious time so he can transfer to an eternal existence. Krishna advises Arjuna, however, not to worry about those details. "The best way to be absorbed in Krishna consciousness is to be always dovetailed in His service, and this will make one's path to the spiritual kingdom safe, certain and direct." (Bg. 8.27, purport)

In the meantime, we rush along to *japa*, then rush from bead to bead, round to round, then rush downstairs to bathe, then rushing through the rest of our lives. Can we become more timeless even now? Live in the moment with Krishna instead of worrying that another five minutes has passed.

* * *

We want to go through the steps Rupa Gosvami chalked out, from *Sraddha* to *prema*, but it seems only rare souls attain such perfection.

Oh, clear away your misgivings and become fixed in study. "Then one relishes the study of *Bhagavad-gita* and attains the state of feeling always Krishna conscious. In the advanced stage, one falls completely in love with Krishna." This enables him to be transferred to Krishna's abode in the spiritual sky, "where the devotee becomes eternally happy." (Bg. 8.28, purport)

Waiting to hear when M. will arrive back with the van "back from the Hare Krishna festival in Dublin. Praghosa and Goloka too "each day I hear their car climbing the steep rocky incline.

Time to get my own motor underway. Be quick and attentive "say the mantras. Let the sound of Krishna envelope you.

* * *

2:45 a.m.

Japa chopper I got your number
but you've got mine,
hari-nama.

* * *

Japa, japa, You are just
not allowing me "No, that's a false
accusation. It's me and my wicked mind.
Make poem agony
O bro mind, *mana*,
I'd like to *Siksa* you but
you keep ruining my good plans
for service or fantastic emotions
and visions like a defiant
head.

* * *

Japa, save me.
Give me credit for all I've done
make it come clear I belong
to Thee in devotion and
let me propagate the holy name
or just enter my cave
in madness of humble chanting
"like" Haridasa Thakura
nirantara-nama.

* * *

These little ravings after fourteen rounds done at a stretch with lights on, lights off, nowhere to go but into other duties. The rubber band relaxes. I'll do more *hari-nama* later. It's got to have a good effect. I believe that.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Beginning to hear *Lalita-madhava* again. JS says he's keeping far from the NM controversy because it could involve offenses to a pure devotee. He's intelligent to do

that. I don't want to be offensive either. Neither do I want to assume others are being offensive toward me or that I have to defend myself against something. Let me just be happy in my own little sphere. I am not building any empires anyway, so what is there to defend? My personal plan is to stay with Srila Prabhupada and his movement and to please him in that way. I aspire for nothing more.

Hearing Srila Prabhupada while drying off in our newly painted bathroom (it's the color of a blue cloud). He said this present life is like a bubble. We foolishly think we have a permanent settlement. That's especially true of modern education. People don't want to spend an evening hearing the *Bhagavatam* (as they used to do in India), but they'll go to a club or cinema and "talk unnecessarily," wasting valuable time. When this body dies, it will never exist again; the bubble will have burst. We'll start over in a new body, and sometimes, in another species. Just as he said that, I saw my image in the mirror. M. has only just hung the mirror. I saw my face and the horizontal lines on my forehead (they resemble Saivite *tilaka*), the gray, button-up sweater "a nice, thin, old guy. But this body won't exist much longer.

I gave Madhava some alternatives about how to publish two books in one. He can put both titles on the cover, or you can put only the series title on the cover. The table of contents for both books can be up front, or the table of contents for the second book can occur only where it begins halfway through. It's up to him and others to make the final decisions. I don't want to get *too* much involved in designing everything, yet I would like the books to come out as nicely as possible. We have to make these decisions now, so they will be binding for the rest of the series.

Oh? How many volumes are you projecting?

It's my opus. I can't say how many volumes; it depends on how much longer I live.

Back to *Lalita-madhava*. The story begins with what I find confusing technicalities explaining the double identity of the *gopis* and queens. Anyway, I don't have to grasp all the *jnana*. Just let me hear again and again these sweet pastimes of Krishna and His *gopis* in Nava-Vrndavana. Pour it into your ears. Then one day I may gain attraction for the Lord in Vraja.

I rarely get head pain at this *brahma-muhurta* time of day, but I'm starting to feel something now.

Kirtana-rasa left us a first-aid kit. I said, "This isn't what I wanted." It contains things like aspirin, Chapstick, and small Band-aids. I wanted something with a tourniquet for bleeding-to-death victims, and instructions on what to do to give artificial respiration when someone has stopped breathing. You have to learn how to do it. In Ireland, M. said, they have no paramedics. No one is going to come in a hurry. You either die on your own, or if it's not so bad, you bring yourself to a hospital. Chant Hare Krishna. That has happened, for example, to Patri.

Patri asked if art (writing poems as well as making pictures) is allowed in Krishna consciousness. "Oh yes," I said, "but you have to break open the dam."

Radha-Govinda in white with small pink rosebuds. I hesitated to give Her a *cadar* today "it's not so cold. Finally I decided She might like it. Narottama prays to be a *gopi* maidservant. Maybe I should go back to bed and rest. I don't want to take the pill prematurely. When I feel fragile and write about it, may my readers feel their own

fragility. A secondary benefit to my condition. When we're not frail, let's chant Hare Krishna together heartily, and together go over the falls.

* * *

5:54 a.m.

Twinge, unusual at this hour; took an Esgic. Let me tell you my little life. M. said he had a "hell of a day" yesterday. He was interviewed by a TV station, played music for them with his fiddler twice (once on the street), did the Hare Krishna festival, then played with a traditional band in a pub. M. will go back tonight to watch a top band, The Dervish. I encouraged him. And I feel as he has had a hell of a day, so have I while quietly reaping my harvest years. Process and product; write, you bastard, I tell myself. Tell Ani to do it too. I showed him how WCW divides his lines. He liked it and said, "As for poetry, I'm getting a lot from William Carlos Williams. Setting aside the words for a moment, there's a powerful mystique about his convoluted and rhythmical margin. It's a dance, a mantra. Hypnotic. For twenty-six pages of *Asphodel*. Appealing to the eye. Intense."

* * *

9:26 a.m.

My head is not coming straight to this page from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* or *Bhagavad-gita*, so don't pretend. But if I turn to writing to help me become Krishna conscious, don't mind. Krishna is my friend "the friend of all (*suhrdam sarva-bhutanam*). He's inconceivable (*acintya*), the supreme cause of all (*aham sarvasya prabhava/ sarva karana-karanam*). recite and think of Him, and tell others to do it too.

And stop criticizing Godbrothers in your mind. Tell others, "We should not become Vaisnava *aparadhis*" "and don't become one yourself. Talk about *japa*; admit your poor performance. But live with rays of hope. Tell others about hope and the need to grind out those sixteen rounds a day even without it. Write letters. But when free of them, write your own letter to the world or to the self.

O Krishna, You have been kind to me and magnified anything good about me. Srila Prabhupada has gone back to Godhead, but You have not left me without my master.

Today is my last day to sip at the fount.

But not really. I'll sip again tomorrow.

Although Srila Prabhupada said we could die at any moment "road accident, heart failure.

Surrender to Krishna, and don't be attached to anything but Him.

These pieces of advice I give today since I am active, having aborted an early-morning headache.

* * *

He's got nothing to say and I've got plenty,
truth, a plan for living.
But I can't say it outright all the

time, least in a poem aimed
for the heart, because

* * *

first of all I have to realize the
truth and second
I can't spring
it on the hard-hearted as
another sermon or it will
bounce off their stone hides.

* * *

So I act as if I don't have
an essential topic, as if I'm another
mundane poet concerned with
Eros, politics, music of verse,
myself qualifying for an old
man "like the photo on the
dust jacket of Ferlinghetti's probably
last book. Look "white
beard, clowning with a fedora
and satyr wink. All that Beat jollity and cribbing.

* * *

There you go again "
put down the non-
devotee or put down
the devotee or put
down yourself.
Ah, elf.
O Krishna.
You've got nothing to say
and I've got plenty
but I can't . . .

* * *

10:32 a.m.

You think the only kind of writing is reflective? Then unless you have something on
your mind to say, you have nothing. You sit blank.

Do you think the best writing occurs when you travel because life is full of adventure?
Then does that mean that if you stay in one place, there will be nothing to say but what

you said yesterday? More little life? Then tell us you ate a light breakfast, yet still had to take Tums for indigestion.

Do you think that writing is simply meant to break the silence? Then tap in any time without despair. With this attitude, you can never really run out of steam.

Or perhaps you think you are too bad a devotee to speak about Krishna. Or that the topics about Krishna are repetitive "we've heard them before. Which?

Cruise over all objections to a new land. Krishna consciousness is life. Krishna is a handsome boy, and we never feel we hear that too much.

We are suspect here: we receive no newspapers. We don't even have a mailbox yet. M. is on his way out again; I will stay here, as usual, and I will not want. He maketh me to walk in green pastures. Wasn't there something about the shadow of the valley of death? I remember reciting that psalm (the 23rd?) in the auditorium of PS #8 ""His rod and His staff shall comfort me. . . . I will fear no evil." Then off we went with our bubble gum and water pistols. We didn't fear the shadow of the valley of death because we knew nothing about it.

* * *

Tell me about ISKCON.

Oh, it's too much. The history is too much, and I am too much involved in it. It would take hours of therapy "and I would have to have a spiritually-minded counselor "for me to unravel everything we've been through in this movement. The counselor would have to understand the meaning of devotion to guru, what the devotees' trips were and why, be sympathetic to our definition of falldown, know who we are now. And what advise could such a person possibly give *now*? But let me say this much: ISKCON is an acronym for the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (not Jesus consciousness or God consciousness), and it is not a bad organization. It is, I have heard, not on the DA's list of dangerous movements. Still, people don't think much of it in these Western countries. Therefore, we try to affiliate ourselves with immigrant Hindus. Of course, we are already strong in India. We still have money "enough to build big temples in India "but not much in the West. Unless we find Indian donors. That's about it. Book distribution is declining, the leaders say, so they want to reorganize the whole thing so that people are doing what they are fit for. As for me, I'll be dead before I can be reassigned. My only fear is coming back next life and being thrust into an organization that is still seeking its structure. That's when tyranny happens, etc.

Worse, because I'm still subject to lust and greed, I may have to work my way up through the hierarchy again. Or I'll leave my body thinking I'm a free spirit and return to find the movement counter-productive to my free-wheeling ways. What if I were to choose something else to do with my life next time around? I would miss out on the great opportunity of the human form life "to associate with devotees and to link up again with my eternal spiritual master.

I don't know. I really should not pretend to be smart. I am fallen "if not sinful, crestfallen "and can only beg Krishna to reinstate me as He sees fit. The institution will be what it is when I come back. May I accept that fully.

Round and round we go on the merry-go-round. We reach out dangerously, leaning for a gold ring. But that's for big fellas. Who are we to succeed? Maybe I'll be born a girl next time, free from the pressure to be heroic. Or maybe not. Maybe I *will* be heroic and die at sixteen, like Abhimanyu. Maybe I will be born as sassafras and get boiled down "a rough time, but purifying. I really don't know what to expect. O Krishna, You will handle me expertly, and I have nothing to advise You on how to do it. Please simply let me cry out for You, love You, and know nothing else no matter what situation You prescribe.

* * *

From *record of the Ten-foot-square Hut*, by Kamo no Chomei:

If the mind is not at ease, then the finest horses and elements, the seven precious substances, all seem worthless, and palaces and pleasure tours hold not allure. But now I find myself loving this lonely dwelling, my one-room hut. I feel ashamed whenever circumstances oblige me to go to the capital and beg for alms, but once back on my mountain, I can only pity those who chase after the worldly. If people doubt what I say, let them look at the fish and birds. The fish never tire of the water, yet if one is not a fish, one can hardly understand what is in the fish's mind. . . . The same applies to these delights of the quiet life. Without living such a life, how can one comprehend them?

Now my term draws to a close, like the moon nearing the rim of the mountain as it sinks in the sky. Soon I will face the darkness of Sanzu river. What use now in grumbling? The teachings of the Buddha warn us against feelings of attachment. So now it must be wrong for me to love this thatched hut of mine, and my fondness for quiet and solitude must be a block to my salvation. Why have I wasted precious time in the recital of these useless pleasures?

In the stillness of the dawn I go on pondering these truths, and I put this question to myself: You say you've abandoned the world and come to live in a mountain forest so you can discipline your mind and practice the Way, but no matter how much you imitate a saint's appearance, your mind is still steeped in impurity. In your dwelling, you presume to copy the ways of the lay believer of Pure Name, but in religious attainment, you can't even equal Shuddipanthaka! [Shuddipanthaka was the dumbest and most inept of Shakyamuni Buddha's disciples.] Is this because you let the poverty that is your lot in life distract you, or have vain delusions unbalanced your mind?

At that time my mind could give no answer. All I could do was call upon my tongue to utter two or three recitations of Amida Buddha's name, ineffectual as they might be, before falling silent.

"Four Huts: Asian Writings on the Simple Life, translated by Burton Watson, Shambala Centaur Editions

* * *

2.58 p.m.

Lord Brahma says to Lord Krishna, "Unless one takes shelter of You, he cannot cross over the ocean of nescience." It's as simple as that. Surrender to Lord Krishna and accept

Him as the Supreme Truth. render service to Him with your individual affection, giving Him that which you like to do and are good at doing . . . Don't misunderstand that the Absolute is impersonal. Lord Brahma tells us straight. Don't think Lord Krishna is an ordinary person whose claims are ridiculous or too much.

I'm reading. Much of it is "philosophical" "examples with analogy and explanation, reasoning "the theology of *bhakti*. It is using logic and argument to fight for the supremacy of *bhakti*. It is also axiomatic "because in the end, there is no other way but to live by faith. If we say Krishna is God because of His unexcelled qualities and power, the agnostic will not believe us. He has no experience or interest in Krishna's qualities; they don't mean anything to him, and do not prove the existence of God. We have to simply follow the *mahajanas* who have forged this path ahead of us. We can't convince the atheists or agnostics; we can only convince ourselves. Krishna devotees have full realizations of this.

"One who has attained a little devotional service can understand Your glories. Even one striving for Brahman realization . . . My dear Lord, I pray that I may be so fortunate that, in this life or in another life, wherever I may take my birth, I may be counted as one of Your devotees." (*Krishna*, Vol. p. 160)

Lord Brahma prays more specifically to be born as a resident of Vrndavana and to render service to Krishna as do the cows, calves, *gopis*, and *gopas*. Krishna is their most intimate, lovable object. He prays to be born as grass in Vrndavana, if not in the actual vicinity, then nearby, so that the pure Vrajavasis might step on him. Then his body would be smeared with the dust of their lotus feet. The residents of Vrndavana are spontaneous lovers of Krishna who do not want anything else but direct service to Krishna. Lord Brahma's prayers become wonderful here, and even I remain attentive and pleased to hear Him praise the Vrajavasis. At the end, he admits that Krishna is inconceivable to him. Lord Brahma accepts Krishna as the master of all universes and Brahmas.

* * *

Sitting here a bit sleepy. I salvaged the day early by subduing a headache, but I'm aware it took a chemical abortion and that the problem (if I can call it that) is likely to return before too long. Is this an excuse for not pushing all out this afternoon and going outside for a walk instead? It doesn't matter: I intend to chant *japa* out there. My energy is limited, so let me chant.

M. is out doing an errand before he goes to Dublin this evening.

* * *

3:55 p.m.

So, I'm alone. I don't know who may come here. I hope no one. If I were injured, I would have to somehow walk over to the schoolhouse about a mile from here to get help.

There is nowhere to go. They kicked him out after eight bars. He didn't know why. He was playing his best "his natural, emotional best.

Now here I am, broadcasting, "Hello folks, this is not a nuclear war message. I am dressed in saffron, which relates to peace. I want to present a message of peace and affection in Krishna consciousness, and I don't stress much on detachment or telling householders that they're popped out and need reform. I believe in setting personal examples. You know, example before precept."

Now let me say this: when left completely alone, I feel a little lonely, even afraid, but I'm up to the challenge. I seek to turn to Krishna in His holy name. I think I will go out into the yard to chant. This is a big house for only one person "not like the 10'x8' hut Japanese monks used to get. I need the space, I say, and anyway, this is how big it came. They wanted to give it to me.

There is no use trying to be cute about it. I have freedom within my limits, and this is what has to be said. Krishna science, one man with Krishna seeking the answer by writing, reading, *japa*, his own self so scattered even in a quiet life.

Krishna is in all things. Krishna is in the sound of ether. Krishna is the Supreme Lord. I'm all for Him. There's no one but Krishna. In the ether. I am a monk. Keep away from my soft dissonance. This is my only way out.

The day is calming, so let me go out into the yard. Should I paint? I have less than three hours free and quiet. I shouldn't resent that M. has gone to town again and will again leave me alone here. He is wed to Irish music; what can be done? He represents a Krishna devotee in many places in Dublin where people recognize him. I represent the other side of things. Things ain't what they used to be.

Krishna said, "I tell you, Arjuna, because you are My devotee and friend." I was struggling with the scripture's axiomatic nature. We are expected to accept what is beyond us and what very, very few people in the total world population accept. That doesn't make it less true. People are almost all bewildered fools. We have to stand up to that. The truth isn't formed by the vox populi. My spiritual master on one side and the whole world on the other, I say, "I choose my spiritual master."

Still, we're a minority. Not even. Getting the Indians on our side is not really the point either; then we become identified with Hinduism and India, whereas Krishna never said He was only for Hindus. Krishna says *suhrdam sarva-bhutanam*: He is the friend of all. He's the seed-giving father of *all* living entities, and everything comes from Him.

Not just Indians. Not even *primarily* Indians.

Then which race comes first? Put them in alphabetical order "Krishna is the Lord of all of them.

Now grit your teeth, then relax. Krishna is finding us out. We can't be the best devotees "He has innumerable "best" devotees already "but He'll give us each individual attention. Now we should accept our place as tiny servitors and assist His great servitors. But never think there's no room for you; you can join too. That's it; that's what it's all about.

Pewee crying. Name this book, "Welcome Home to the Crook, to the Elbow, to the Crotch of the Tree." Welcome to the woodland path on the quarter-mile track around the inner part of ISKCON Geaglum. You can be alone there for a few moments, but that's not guaranteed. You never know.

Krishna, Krishna. You are what we want.

The titles on the covers: "Welcome Home to the Authentic Self."

Take sips at the clear fount; fill up your liter bottle. Buy spinach in town. Don't ask for special treatment. A *sannyasi* accepts what is given, even if it's rhubarb pie with whipped cream. Why ask for the spinach? This is something to show that we write separate books with separate themes. Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:44 p.m.

Some of the trees in the backyard have fully opened their leaves. I rubbed one in my hand, but didn't want to detach it from the tree and hurt it. They'd make a nice offering on the altar, but why rip them? Think about it. You'd offer flowers, wouldn't you? Srila Prabhupada said it is good for flowers to be picked. More will come. The tree I can see from my bedroom window hasn't got quite as far in leaf development as some of the others. Same with some of the taller trees in the front yard. This is little life, but I like to notice it.

I would like to chant Hare Krishna with devotion, but that is not possible. I will probably die saying that. Not like the diary about Akincana dasa Babaji published in *Back to Godhead* after he passed away. Just a few days before his disappearance, he said, "The holy name is great nectar."

From here I see the hills through a bluish haze. Pretty and soft. I like it here. I am waning, however, not finishing this day strong.

I'll rest. I often fall asleep and then wake at 9 or 10. I don't sleep much after that. That's all right. I'm really avoiding catching dreams. They seem so mundane and tangled. I ask myself, "Do you want to record this?" and reply, "No, not unless it really seems like something that will help my spiritual life." I used to assume that whatever held me emotionally must be integral to who I was, which in turn makes it integral to my spiritual life. That's why I was recording dreams. As I read them later, however, I'm not terribly moved by or interested in them. They do add spice to the book, though. I will probably never abandon them completely for that reason.

The perfect scriptures and the imperfect human beings who try to follow them. Do the sages know what we are going through in this age? I am a counselor for the poor; I am myself poor. Look up and out the window. I am not in prison. I can go out if I like, although I prefer not to. Imagine the misery of being locked up with so many nondevotees. Imagine writing EJW from prison and getting the news that it was being printed and selling well. Can prisoners receive e-mail? Faxes? Imagine . . . in hell, I'd have no presence of mind to do such things. But we have read verses from scripture that preachers in hell also chant Hare Krishna and yearn for God.

* * *

Ending *Sips at the Fount*. I started this one with many built-up repertoire items, each with its own logo, but they collapsed when I felt the weight of all that structure. Let me just write every day without so much scaffolding. I just wanted to write a little at a time in the way I would take small sips of water. I don't need gimmicks or genre titles. Everything comes from the source of Krishna consciousness "an ever-running fount.

Our main *external* theme is our gradual attempt to turn the Wicklow house into a livable home, and my resolution not to meet people here. Live with solitude.

I don't know how much the sips have been the real thing. It's not that the title captures the accumulated writing, or that it dictates to me what I should do tomorrow. All I know is that by Prabhupada's grace, I will still be aspiring for Krishna consciousness tomorrow, and eager to hear from him how to attain that.

Appendix

"Sips at the Fount" means returning for frequent free-writing of a short sort "one or one-and-a-half pages on no particular theme.

* * *

EJW 24 "steady writing times:

1. Midnight, three pages
2. After *puja*, type two pages
3. ItM before breakfast
4. Another ItM later
5. Night notes

* * *

Go into bedroom once a day, or better, twice, to type one or two pages.

* * *

In afternoon, do twenty-minute "writing in time" without the logo.

* * *

Come to *sastra* (*Bhagavad-gita* and *Krishna* book) often, even if you're not perfectly attentive, and write with Prabhupada. That's the sips at the fount.

* * *

Tips for Frequent reading in Srila Prabhupada's Books, and Writing

1. Don't worry that it's improper to read only a little and then springboard (free-write).
2. Don't worry that you're not centered enough. Allow yourself to do it.
3. It's okay if you read and write briefly (that's a sip at the fount).
4. It's also okay to keep the writing straight *sastra*, a fragment in your day's story.
5. If you read and don't write immediately, that's okay too. You're not cheated.
6. Don't worry, "This may not make good writing." Keep labeling it, if you like, as another sip.
7. Read aloud. Write down the verse or phrase, repeat it aloud, then write whatever comes to mind.

8. Promise to return for more later.