

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

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Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 27

Seeking the

Easy Way

June 26 - July 16, 1998

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

Your Ever Well-Wisher

Prabhupada Nectar v. 1-5

Japa Reform Notebook

Qualities of Sri Krishna

Vaisnava Behavior/ The Twenty-Six Qualities of a Devotee

Japa Walks/Japa Talks

Japa Transformations

June 26, 1998, 12:05 A.M.

"But those who worship Me, giving up all their activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, having fixed their minds upon Me, O son of Prtha "for them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death." (Bg. 12.6 - 7)

GNP, clock ticking, EJW, GBC, daily news, book review, new week, old week "who's visiting? Is there a pure devotee around to enliven me in my Krishna consciousness? Can I . . .

*Sadhana*. You know how you get up from bed and can't remember your duties or identity right away? Well, it took me quite a few minutes this morning before I specifically remembered Krishna the person. I had to read this verse and ask myself, "Who is Krishna, and what is He saying in this verse to all souls, especially those who are His devotees?"

"For them I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death." I also forgot that I am going to die. I was just alive, as if I were an existentialist living bravely in the face of life's absurdities. Or perhaps I was more like a *karmi*, just working for my own good. Cope and live, eat and stay alive. The body ages, but just move it around for a little while longer.

Do you know what I read recently? That a devotee doesn't have to endeavor to transfer himself where he wants to go at death. The Supreme Lord will come personally and take him to the spiritual world. That means we can't save ourselves. All we can do is surrender to Krishna and become completely dependent upon Him.

Mind drifting to the mail. Still about a dozen letters waiting for me. I think one contains a request for *brahmana* initiation. In another, a devotee is probably explaining her illness. I don't know about the others. I could go and find out, but probably better I don't get into that now. Let me read a little more about Krishna. It will be harder to do that later in the day, when I feel weaker. I will also try to chant before that weakness sets in. Chanting is so simple; will I one day be able to do only that? But it's hard to chant if we don't have the mental or physical strength. We tend to dwell on pain or our other inebrieties. One of my friends tells me that she doesn't take medication for her illness, but she assures me that my case is different because my pain is so debilitating and I can't accomplish anything without the relief. I don't abuse the relief Krishna allows. I try to use it for His service.

Krishna promises in this verse that He will deliver His devotees from the ocean of birth and death. "Simply by chanting the holy name of Krishna "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare "a devotee of the Lord can approach the supreme destination easily and happily, but this destination cannot be approached by any other process of religion."

We heard the 1935 recording of W. B. Yeats reading, "I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree . . . " He had deep chanting rhythms, as if he were speaking the holiest and most profound *Sruti*, whose incantation was capable of delivering the soul to the ultimate. How powerful was his voice! But he had nothing to say compared to this one *Bhagavad-gita* verse. A man wants to leave city life and live alone; he's sure he'll find peace in a country cottage made of wattles in a "bee-loud glade," where "midnight's

all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,/ And evening full of the linnet's wings." He wrote this poem, he says, while standing "on the roadway, or on the pavements grey." Because he hears the country calling him; "I hear it in the deep heart's core."

But Krishna's words are a call to something more universal, more saving "the eternal life of personhood with Him. "Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt."

*mayy eva mana adhatsva  
mayi buddhim niveSya  
nivasisyasi mayy eva  
ata urdhvam na samSayah*

Let us simply surrender unto Krishna and no longer worry about our sins committed up until this time. The Supreme Lord will take charge of them. Can we respond?

We're not sure. Maybe we are already responding, and maybe we haven't yet begun. It's not always easy to tell, because we don't always know if we are capable of more than what we are doing at present. It takes courage to approach Krishna in truth, especially because we cannot go to Him in the crowd of devotees. We must each face Him individually, as each of the Pandavas did when they passed into the Himalayas without concern for or informing anyone else.

\* \* \*

#### Write after *Puja*

Light Green and Gold

Dear reader, we are facing Radha-Govinda and Srila Prabhupada on my altar. In the background, we hear a *kirtana* from the Radha-deSa temple playing, and the drum is particularly prominent. Our mind fills with auspicious notions: we could offer something nice to Krishna. This is the beginning of *puja*. We move out of our own heads and dress the Deity. Radha-Govinda have been dressed today in green and gold, even though I am/ was a sailor in ye old evil Navy, that company of nuclear killers and steel ships sent out to sea to bewilder the world and fill us with memories we don't want to remember.

Worship is freedom.

\* \* \*

It is *mangala-arati* time, and we're singing *samsara dava*. Our friends drop mercy on our heads. And Srila Prabhupada *murti*. This is not India, but it is the heart of the *brahma-muhurta* hour. According to the date calculated from Dublin, today is the Jagannatha Puri ratha-yatra. We are not there. But we are here.

\* \* \*

The Deity is Krishna, and this is not doll play. *Puja* is serious. If we want to understand that, we need to be with devotees who are advanced and who are of the same mind as we are (*sva-jati*), who are affectionate. Stick with such persons and worship Govinda.

I'm a creative sort, happy and filled with a bubbly life force, but my happiness and life force are Krishna. Let's ask Radha-Govinda and Srila Prabhupada to allow us to use whatever power we have to focus on their presence, because *they are really here*. We don't demand of them but want it confirmed that Krishna is our Lord, that He's present, and damn all atheistic notions.

\* \* \*

O Krishna, Your emerald earrings shine against Your body. You are sometimes compared to a sapphire column. I am Your servant, and I am pleased to be in Your presence. Please show me the different ways by which I can worship You with love.

\* \* \*

After dressing Them in the mornings I always feel worshipful, although I quickly move into another service after that, and want to write fast art with ink on paper, facing Him, saluting Him, and begging that He may be pleased with me, a *kinkari*, a little fellow working out my kinks in this haberdashery while I can.

\* \* \*

The stage is set for Karunika to be kind. He seems a hard brass Deity to one like me, but svelte too, I notice.

\* \* \*

Did you think something wondrously different would come from your pen just because it's June 27? To have the Lord's *darSana* on this day! If my Irish-American mother doesn't understand or forbids it (she said she'd have nothing to do with me if I went with the Swami), then I'm left with no choice: I will worship Govinda, hoping to purchase Him with a sigh.

\* \* \*

But it's not so easy.

Light green and gold.

Remember the Adi-keSava temple in South India?

Angus Murphy wanted friends. Oh, how painful it is to bring up the figurehead leadership I indulged in as guru of all NY State, New England, and Western Pennsylvania including Philadelphia. Not Pittsburgh, though, because someone else was the chosen savior for that city. Calculate your minions and sins.

Krishna, Your *mangala-arati* is sacred. Bow-tied Food Farm worker steals Frank Sinatra and Harry Bellafonterecords and crunches through snappy skin of hot dogs into tripe. He was a sad dog and uplifted his spirit by triumphantly drinking a soda. His back ached when he worked in that starched white supermarket jacket, but still, that jacket reminded him that he *belonged!* To something. He was a Staff Member. He could wear a

uniform, be paid wages, receive a check embossed with his name. He had a boss and coworkers, a purpose to his life "to work his ass off for seventy-five cents an hour.

O Krishna, how did I come to see You in Your beautiful emerald green earrings?

\* \* \*

People vomit every day. Some have daily migraines. They search for the magic medicine that will take it all away. Someone else searches for Krishna within the pain experience. I am relieved just to write.

Just after *puja* I bowed my forehead to the ground, gathered up the *tulasi* leaves, cotton buds, warm water, and the jewelry and clothing I had removed, and put them all away. Govinda has gone off to play. When I write after *puja*, it signals that there will be more.

-

5:20 a.m.

A ternlike bird with a long, skinny beak, jumping around. It glided, landed slowly in the open meadow, and sounded full of alarm. Maybe it was some kind of mating call. I thought at first the bird was afraid of *me*. The cows, of course, remained noncommittal, but they couldn't help noticing how this bird raised such a fuss. What was it about? Anyway, it sounded urgent, like *avant-garde* jazz or how anyone sounds when they are calling sudden attention to themselves. It certainly wasn't performing for an audience! Unless it was an audience of one, the mate. But it was a cry sincere. Again and again it was circling the meadow, that alarm cry going strong, then landing, then taking off again. If it had been afraid of me, it wasn't doing a good job at escaping me. If I were a hunter, I would have had many clear shots. The sheep looked on. Who is more helpless, them or me?

\* \* \*

Distractions

& Lester is leaping in and  
gotta hear some of that  
and get that best-seller *Into Thin Air*  
you'll learn how to be a better  
devotee  
get jumpin'!

\* \* \*

But distractions don't pay you'll  
be too hard-pressed to remember the Lord  
when it comes  
or be jumpin' out of your skin  
thinkin', "God gives me the jumps."

Krishna in the time I find in a  
corner of my mind  
I want to offer You serious  
chanting on my beads  
in some quiet spot  
or other. "

\* \* \*

9:15 A.M.

Woke from nap with sharp vise sensation on top of head. Took a Tylenol (to avoid the addictive Butalbital in Esgic) at 8:30 a.m. Forty-five minutes later, nothing but pain. I wanted to start my "*Castle* springboard" this morning, but I'm delayed.

"Thank you for returning my diary," Bhaktin Roxanne wrote in a note. That's all she said, so I didn't reply. She enclosed a Jagannatha sticker that said, "I like your smile."

I like to be pain-free. I don't want to be ashamed of that. What will I try next, which pill or strategy? I think I'll take an Esgic, even though I usually save them for right-eye pain. I'll put it off for another fifteen minutes and see what happens. I'm no different than those sufferers on the Internet "*Ronda's Migraine Journal*." They write in and vent, read each other's complaints and occasional success stories. I write mine on the inner-net, to be read by . . .

Dear reader, thank you for listening to me vent, because once again, I'm writing from the penalty box.

\* \* \*

### *The Castle* Springboard

#### 1. The Story Thus Far

K. arrives in the province of the castle and goes to an inn. The book's opening lines are great: "It was late evening when K. arrived. The village lay under deep snow." I call this great because it immediately illumines an imaginary world. To read fiction, we must suspend our disbelief and simply enter. It's a kind of game. Franz Kafka is writing somewhere out there, and there is no real K. He didn't *really* arrive, and there is no snow nor castle. Can he sustain the illusion for *hundreds of pages*?

The main reason I'm springboarding off *The Castle* is to entice myself with the possibility of writing fiction. I like the fictive touch as an aside to journal reality, and I like it to appear occasionally in poems, like a wink, a small deception. But I always like to get back to the flesh-and-blood reality of a writer's life. In the case of my own writing, I like to get back to the present moment of the writer who is an aspiring devotee "he who wants to cut through to immediate remembrance of Krishna, who feels the urge to read *Bhagavatam* now, and who doesn't want to delay giving his readers (and himself) immediate contact with *sastra* and the holy name. Sustained fiction? Well, I suppose I could write a religious story. But it would be bunk. I couldn't "create" a realistic monk who was not me. Because I am already living that experience.

Anyway, in Kafka's story, K. goes to the inn. He is permitted to lie down on a mattress in a common room. Then the landlord tells him to leave "no one can stay in the

province of the castle without permission. K. tells the landlord that he is a land surveyor and has been invited by the castle authorities to work there. K. phones the castle and hears voices that sound like angels or small children's voices. The castle is like heaven, and God is supposed to live there, I used to think, and I may still "the inconceivable, unreachable realm as it appears to an agnostic. That is, heaven exists, but a doubter suspects it is unfriendly.

The voices on the telephone tell K. that they have never heard of him, and they hang up. A moment later, they phone back and tell him, yes, they are aware of him "he's bona fide. After hearing this, the landlord and all the peasants in the common room treat K. with respect. They even give him a room to himself.

The next day, K. ventures out and tries to walk to the castle, but he can't seem to make progress. Later, his two assistants arrive. They are twins, and both fools. He treats them roughly and gives them a single name to share: "I shall call you both Artur. When I send Artur somewhere, both of you must go . . . "

Dear reader, do you like my Literature Appreciation class? See the comedy? The pathos? The dathos? The beauty of each sentence?

Huh?

Do I see it?

This is supposed to be a classic. Sit up and hear it.

Now K. makes another phone call. The castle voices tell him that he can never go to the castle. At that moment, Barnabus enters, and that's as far as I've read.

Springboard: I still have a small headache. I can't spring off this story as if it were a pool diving board. But I like the basic idea of trying. We'll see how long it lasts. It has possibilities. To do it, however, I have to assume that I have an audience. It's the idea of presenting the story to an audience, then springboarding wherever it leads me that sharpens my appreciation for Kafka's presentation. It's what makes me willing to take the train through fiction land.

So, I should feel free to say, "This is stupid "this chess game of mundane literature. Why doesn't he just tell what's happening?" But Kafka would not consider diary art; he would think it did not answer the highest calling that literature makes upon the writer. God knows, he worshiped a strange God. In his case, he wasn't writing to make money or to enjoy fame. That makes his life and writing more poignant, his novel purer.

But *why*? Why write fiction?

He had such an impossibly high standard in mind; he had to put the book aside in the end, unfinished.

Anyway, let's allow his book to vibrate in us for now and see where it can take us in our attempt to write in Krishna consciousness. The question that burns in me about this story "or any "is why not improvise characters one after another rather than giving one so much life? Why not let them come and go like mists, not made into solid people? Only one person is real, ourselves. And God. And only that one relationship has meaning worth describing. So let's see where this goes.

-

3:15 p.m.

Head vise returned after the post-lunch nap. I was pushing ahead with this new EJW volume, then bam! Pain returned. I will have to be intelligent-lazy if I wish to keep writing. Patri wrote me from the hospital where he's being examined for a liver transplant. Everyone has their own pain and their own view on it.

We watched "Abhay" just after lunch "a playlet on Citraketu. His dead son sat up and spoke his lines, telling how the soul moves on and that we should all worship the Supreme Lord. Evil persons are easily convinced by good arguments from *sadhus* in these films. Wish it were so in real life. When they speak of these profound and even basic truths about the immortality of the soul, it somehow doesn't seem as gripping as when the actors and actresses grieve over a death. Why is that? Is it because we are all too human? Maybe it's because they don't write tears into the God conscious parts. Transcendental knowledge is *spoken*, but is it . . . emoted? Yes, it should be. The film on St. Francis was good in that way. The film won an Academy Award for the best portrayal of a saint, an Oscar for bringing the spiritual world into the material.

Who can convince us, evince it? Srila Prabhupada did no magic. Look in his eye and . . . we chanted Hare Krishna together. Even the recordings are potent.

I'm not very prepared for the Sunday afternoon lecture. That's all right. I just want to be sure it's basically solid and long enough, so when I start I don't become embarrassed. It's easier to show that you don't know what you're talking about when you're in public.

\* \* \*

## Centering and Distractions

### 1. Starting Thoughts

To me, centering means going inside life free of distraction. If we did that, we would find Krishna. We would have the attention to actually chant the holy name; we would find that Krishna is our very heart. If only we were calm and centered. It is only distraction that prevents us from centering.

But that doesn't seem possible. The material body seems to mean demands coming from outside ourselves. We are not free to live purely within. And without that pure, internal, fixed attention, we fall asleep if we try too hard to concentrate, or worse, feel nothing. Thus we crave distraction even while we crave freedom from it.

Distraction and centering "sometimes we can't tell the difference between them. Lecturing to a room full of devotees could be a centering experience, and sitting alone floating in outer space is a distraction.

\* \* \*

Here comes the Pachelbel Canon "a man performing his music for us. Sound vibration can be full of distraction. Especially when we need something to tickle us to get us going. Because the world is "other." Other means distraction, unless that other is Krishna or His pure devotees.

I don't have time to learn techniques to control the mind from Mother Church, any other Christian group, or the Zen Buddhists. It just takes too long. I have Krishna consciousness to teach me such skills, but it too requires many years.

The doorknob is turning "maybe it's Mozart, no, Madhu. An interruption/ distraction as the piano in my brain tinkles something.

\* \* \*

Could there be an easy form of Krishna consciousness that I could perform from an easy chair? Because so often, I have head fog and seem to require that ease. Is there such a thing?

Sighing. I'm afraid "unable to get within myself. The cloud I ride on is magic, this little, wet cloudlike pillow that takes me high while I look below but not in. I feel the call to ease the rhythm of pain and no-pain, to sink into a meadow of spiritual thought as gently as . . .

That cloud a magic carpet. To go within myself, without distraction, and to relax from head to toe, letting the pen drop finally from my tight-clenched hand, free of the anesthesia of forgetfulness

and the banging of pots  
in the kitchen down below.

Know what I mean?

\* \* \*

In walked Bud. In walked Madhu. One life enters another as easily as that. Like husband and wife or guru and disciple.

Where's he at?

Why is she silent?

Where's my gofer?

They want to give me so much advice!

Gandhi, Indira, said to the cartoonist, "You drew my nose too long."

To the tailor "the pant legs are too short and they make fun of me in the street.

I love you but the path is a current. Other "Whitman's List.

Me and

mine

you and

George Harrison.

A bellicose Saul Bellow and

Hillaire Belloc along with

thirty-three million *devas*. The guru speaks, and the violin section whines. Dancers and those who didn't make it on stage flaunt while the audience sprawls. Who is the composer? It's an ocean of dolphins and sharks and algae.

Aspen in my backyard. Chinese poets of thousands of years ago. Yin and yang is the breath of life, or

so they say.

\* \* \*

Is this going to make sense, go somewhere?

Yes, I think so. Because we are either centered or distracted, or going from one state to the other. We generally think we are trying to become delicately attuned to the inner flow of our own voices, but we can't help but recognize that the outer world tends to contribute to it, like a gentle tinkle of rain on a skylight or a pounding hammer to break our mood. Try to center.

When we try to sleep, we want to get to the center of sleep. It comes upon us; we can't just *do* it. Now, listen . . .

\* \* \*

And pay attention. What does it have to do with Krishna consciousness? We need more time. Say we are chanting Hare Krishna on beads. So we are chanting along and "what happened? We become distracted by our own thoughts! "But I can't pay attention!" we protest. "I've tried for years. If I did pay attention in the raw, outer sense "that is, to the mantra's sound "I might be led into it, taste something, and stay there like a bee trapped in honey." Otherwise, how can we know *cintamani*? We know only how to struggle with our own discipline.

Well, that seems to be our *dharma* right now "the right of the monk. So don't abandon discipline or even dry and distracted faith. We have to settle for what we have sometimes, even if we continue to aspire for more.

\* \* \*

Can distraction be a way to center? That is the question. I've heard that's possible. A telephone rings and the meditator hears the sound and meditates upon it. Is that a too-simple peace?

-

6:10 p.m.

Close out this day. Ani still swinging that pick outside. I feel for him. I'd go out and ask him how he's doing, but I feel some head pressure and need to creep toward bed. Let me dress Radha-Govinda first. They're going to wear the favorable (I just felt like using that word) red and yellow outfits. Perhaps a good word choice may single the release of serotonin in the brain. Who knows?

Ease-oriented Krishna consciousness? I worship Radha-Govinda according to my convenience. User-friendly Deity worship; friendly, *seva*-ease. Today was good. Three kites flying. The downside was skipping morning and afternoon *Bhagavatam* reading. I could have done better if my head had been clear. Time lost forever.

\* \* \*

6:30 p.m.

Good night, Abhay, and that script writer "the makeup man too. Today I wrote in a letter, "I like my body." Instrument for Thy peace. I don't hate this flesh, ham pie that it is. Because it ain't me, ain't loverly really, but that it's strung together so delicately and holding my soul in place is amazing to contemplate. The soul is next to God, although it's tiny. O Krishna, I want to know You.

June 27, 12:01 A.M.

"Just fix your mind upon Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and engage all your intelligence in Me. Thus you will live in Me always, without a doubt." *Na samSayah* (Bg. 12.8) The previous verse and purport state wonderfully how the devotee should do some work for Krishna, should dedicate his life for pleasing Krishna, and he should chant Hare Krishna mantra. Thus he will attract Krishna, who will personally come and be the "swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death." Therefore, if we dedicate our lives to becoming Krishna conscious, we will not have to worry how to transfer ourselves to the spiritual world at death.

In his purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada assures us that the devotee has a direct relationship with Krishna: "He lives in Krishna." Such a devotee is transcendental to this world. The holy name is nondifferent from Krishna Himself. "Therefore when a devotee chants Hare Krishna, Krishna and His internal potency are dancing on the tongue of the devotee." It's the same when a devotee honors *prasadam*; we become Krishnaized. One who doesn't chant the holy name or taste the Lord's *prasadam* cannot understand this.

We say these verses describe the topmost ideal. Starting with verse 9, Krishna states in effect, "If you cannot do this best thing, then do this." But why not do the best thing? At least read and admire it. A devotee should always be thinking of Krishna; we should have reached that stage. It's transcendental love.

We do have love, because love is dormant in our hearts. It's just a matter of awakening it and letting it out. We may have even allowed some of our love to flourish. But it has not yet overwhelmed us, and it is not yet constant. I don't wake up in the morning and think immediately, "O Krishna!" Srila Prabhupada used to tell us how the cowherd boys would rest at night thinking, "I shall see Krishna in the morning." Their eagerness would help them pass the night in separation. The *gopis* can't do anything but think of Krishna in anxious love. Mother Yashoda and Nanda Maharaja too.

We're not on that standard. So, "if you cannot fix your mind upon Me without deviation, then follow the regulative principles of *bhakti-yoga*. In this way develop a desire to attain Me." (Bg. 12.9) Carefully following the practices of *vaidhi-bhakti*, we should then become aware of the goal: developing spontaneous love of God. We should be constantly watching how that goal is being achieved.

Srila Prabhupada says *bhakti-yoga* (regulative) is performed with offenses. But that's not enough. Offenses cause us to perform our regulative *bhakti* mechanically, with motives other than love, as if we are serving some material boss. "But for spiritual life, one must be elevated to the pure stage of love. That stage of love can be achieved by

practice of devotional service, performed with the present senses." If we act under the spiritual master's orders and follow the principles he assigns to us, rise early, bathe, serve the Deity, etc. "'And one should constantly hear *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* from pure devotees" "we will be successful.

Good health is certainly a favorable asset to performing regulative devotional service. I heard Srila Prabhupada say yesterday that one should tolerate very cold weather and still take his bath early in the morning. If not, he said, "you are lagging behind." Then he qualified his statement and added, "Of course, if one were seriously ill, that is different." But I got the impression that by "seriously ill," he meant an acute condition.

I mention his comment to support my attempt to free myself of the chronic pain, even if that requires using a non-abusive medication regimen. If I'm too ill to serve actively, then I will simply have to stay in bed and think of Krishna. But that seems difficult. I mean, to wait and tolerate and hope. That is more suffering than the headaches. Better I stay active. "This practice of *bhakti-yoga*, under the rules and regulations, with the direction of a spiritual master, will surely bring one to the stage of love of God."

My activities are streamlined, not filled with rituals and practices. Something reading and writing, something reading and writing "and my simple Deity worship. I conserve energy; my time is already so curtailed. Now I want to become even more careful about splaying out my interests or giving my heart to any interest other than direct Krishna conscious cultivation.

Dear Lord, I awoke before midnight and thought how I wanted to come and hear from You in *Bhagavad-gita*. I have done so only briefly. Please allow me to always think of You, even when I'm not actually reading *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Krishna dances on the tongues of chanters. I must give Him a nice reception in the courtyard of my heart. Then I'll be so eager to chant that I'll wish I had hundreds of tongues. Even this one tongue chanting in this one room (while it rains that one constant rain of Wicklow, steady as the devotion of a pure devotee) is a great boon for me. I don't expect to be fixed in spontaneous love as I chant, but to carefully count rounds and beads. Thus I follow the regulative path with my senses, as my spiritual master suggests. My goal *is* to develop my dormant love and to bring the mind to hear the holy name. *This* is why I need a clear head, a head clear of pain. Because I'm a neophyte.

\* \* \*

Write after *Puja*

White with Trim

At this time, we expect ourselves to be composed and sankirtana dancers wiggle in their happiness. This is Krishna consciousness.

The T.P. announces. The yawn opens, and some glance with envy around the room, eager to compete, to cut through.

We prepare our dramas, rehearse our lines. Sometimes intimacy is unhealthy.

Oh, cruise along the long, dark street

it's light in June just after *mangala-arati*

or before "no sun

but light.

I'm talking about Radha-deSa and a temple hardly anyone knows on a hill in Wheresphere. It's nestled in trees with cows (a few) and is refreshing in summer.

The monk plays his clavichord, and the birds sing while they fly. O heart, O mind, call out to God.

"Dream on, poor fool," says the grem, who is standing on his head. "You know you'll get a headache today if you call out too loud."

My *puja* "Radha-Govinda were wonderful. White with trim They are wearing "Hers blue, His peach. Earrings to match. My hands are here only to serve Them. "O Radha-Govinda," I sing while offering incense in winding circles.

A fly in this room is bothering me. The flowers have died. Immediately after this *puja*, the people will come up to me and ask, "Can you fix my maul today?"

I'll think about it.

And, "Make accommodations "I'll be arriving with twelve people. Two of us are dainty, so make it nice and don't forget to meet us at the airport."

Coming from *puja* "immediate distraction.

But during *puja*, I was on the altar dressing the Lord and not thinking of Auntie Panty. I want to be pure.

Right after *puja* "no rouge for Her face. She is plain like a *brahmacarini*. Our master writes to us and wishes us well, gives us orders. See this has to be true.

Write after *puja* a poem and scribble notebooks for yr own joy. I am a devotee of the Lord. *Stotra-ratna* tells us, "Don't have any attachments for family "only for Krishna." Don't be allured, smeared.

After *puja*, look forward to the next.

And the little corner to write.

I was thinking of You, Lord, my mind carrying the fragrance of Your remembrance as a garden is filled with the aroma . . . Lord, You are my body and soul.

After one *puja*, the *pujari* took off his own earrings and galoshes, and opened comic books found in a back pocket, and said, "Hey, I'm going out to the field, Henry. Want anything from the hill?"

Who said that?

They got a letter from a guru who wanted to hold meetings with his followers.

How many followers does he have, ten thousand? Is he going to curse us if we tell him to find some other place?

No, and he's got a hundred at most. It will be a mellow scene. Many are old-timers.

Oh, boy, here comes dawn and the chirping birds.

\* \* \*

At dawn we go to the temple to be submissive. Bow down "we do it there. Even if someone is not educated in studying scripture, he can bow down before the Deity and the guru and become perfect. Krishna in His form, available.

\* \* \*

Slow plover, give us Krishna conscious

cutey pie

with whipped cream

and this guy

who says he feels indifferent to food

as long as he can fill up on it.

Well, then, skip the whipped cream

and make his dessert plain

and boy will he holler.

Spumoni

tortoni and

more. Tarts

tarts "keep him filled up and he won't say no bad words.

He'll rise and grunt, "Where is the topsoil for the *pujari's* garden?"

Where is the power to stay awake? Gambol

a while.

After *puja*, may we bathe our eyes in the moonlight of a dawning sky. May we run out to meet the fresh dawn. Because life is short, even in the bright Mississippi.

Hey, where you from, anyway, Baton rouge?

No, Spencer, Massachusetts, I was born in a manger I mean

monastery amid

monks Keating and Pennington

attending. Jacob Needleman was my God Paw.

Listen, after *puja* we should be angels without hairy armpits. Where's your talcum-powder halo? Why are you speaking in broken accents? They say *pujaris* wouldn't hurt a fly or assault their wives, but

we have seen differently.

*Puja*. Poo ja.

You were with God? Can't always tell.

I knelt before the *murtis*, although I was not qualified. Except that I'm no iconoclast. I do want to love radha and Govinda in my way. I knelt to beg Them to reveal Themselves to me. Please be kind. I won't leave this for another way "no cross or Buddha "but will be Yours unalloyed.

-

5:20 A.M.

Dark and cool. It rained off and on all day yesterday. Looks like we're in for more of the same today. The mountain streams are full. The neighbor's gate is open, and his car is in the front yard. I guess he's here for the weekend. I see a white cow sitting in the wet, her brown calf beside her. Long sheets of shining puddles on the road. Birds don't care. They cry no matter what's going on. But I'm jolly from so much writing, so much God-gift. I just hope I can reciprocate.

In the "Abhay" film, Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji was lying on his back on a cot. As he spoke his last words, he said he had had the great fortune of the human form of life but

couldn't attain love of God. The actor played the death scene well "better than he did in the earlier episodes. When he spoke with such crushing humility, his bedside followers began to praise him. But Gaura-kiSora held up his hand and silenced them. It was an effective gesture.

I live on an incline at the end of a green tunnel. Plenty of rocks on my path. A roadside stream roars down the side of the lane. We try to contain it. Shiny leaves. Season for healthy weeds.

\* \* \*

Prayer to Absolve  
& We are happy in heaven  
tumbling words in praise of  
our Creator  
tumbling down when we  
forget Him for a moment.

\* \* \*

We are scared of hell  
so we praise God  
not devotees really because  
Real devotees don't fear anything  
they sing in heaven or  
hell "wherever they go.

\* \* \*

Music soothes and we  
lean on the measure.

\* \* \*

O Krishna "on high "  
eighty-foot statue  
no blasphemy just  
place coins  
at His feet, or a dollar  
or hundreds or more  
in the bulletproof see-  
through donation box.

\* \* \*

I am happy in heaven not  
walking the rain-soaked road just

before and after the next  
flood or war or famine  
stone-walled in Ireland  
drinking brown-tinted water  
carrying rocks of burdens  
still praying to Him  
to resolve  
and absolve  
and to set me straight. "

\* \* \*

Harinama is not an Analgesic  
&.. Once upon a time a chicken was  
free not to be killed by  
neck-wrenching humans when  
people were *ahimsa*-minded  
bound by good government  
who protected *all prajas*.  
Once *puja* was done in  
every home and no  
malice lived in men's hearts  
women were pure and chaste  
and children behaved. There were  
no subways or arthritis.  
Then?

\* \* \*

At any rate it is now Kali's age and  
we can simply chant the Lord's name  
to avoid the pain of arthritic knees "  
not the pain  
as if we think Hari's name  
is an analgesic  
it's not  
but to lose the pain  
of an arthritic knee  
by becoming absorbed  
in soul-solacing sound  
and waiting with *that*  
instead of Nyquil or Prozac. "

\* \* \*

8:20 A.M.

"Only the purified soul can attain the perfection of associating with the Personality of Godhead in complete bliss and satisfaction in his constitutional state. Whoever is able to renovate such devotional perfection is never again attracted by this material world, and he never returns." (*Bhag.* 2.2.31)

Head slumping, can't read at this time. He's saying the Vaikunthas are in the spiritual world, and Goloka is the best. Fish go to the sea and stay and play there; they don't come back to the small reservoirs of water on land.

The devotees attain *Santa* and *ananda*, peace and satisfaction. "The pure devotee is only favorably engaged in the service of the Lord, without any hope of emolument."

Vedic truth is perfect, and it is received and passed on by *parampara* teachers who don't change it. One may say, "I don't accept this Vedic version," but he has to accept *some* authority. Most people accept the authority of the scientists, but even scientists can't argue or know what is beyond the sky or the universe, or what is that life force that gives vitality to all living beings. "If one does not follow the authoritative version of the *acaryas*, he will vainly search after the truth mentioned in the *Vedas*." (*Bhag.* 2.2.32, purport)

"For those who are wandering in the material universe, there is no more auspicious means of deliverance than what is aimed at in the direct devotional service of Lord Krishna." (*Bhag.* 2.2.33) *Bhakti* delivers us. "The great personality, Brahma, with great attention and concentration of the mind, studied the *Vedas* three times, and after scrutinizingly examining them, he ascertained that attraction for the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna is the highest perfection of religion. (*Bhag.* 2.2.34) In this verse, Srila Prabhupada translates the word "*atmani*" as "unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna."

\* \* \*

### The Castle Springboard

#### 2. Why Enter the World of the Kafkaesque?

"As he spoke, his lips opened in a masculine but gentle way."  
He's creating a character.

I find I'm not that interested in his fiction. rather, Hare Krishna dasi is here. She brought me two roses for my altar, their stems wrapped in paper towel. I placed them at the Deities' feet and placed a third rose she produced in a vase. She also brought some terra-cotta pots filled with flowers for outside. She wrote a letter introducing these flowers. Now she is in the art room bathing Radha-Govinda. After setting her up and explaining to her how I'd like new big-mouthed jars to put my paint in, and after talking outside with Aniruddha, who is swinging a pickax and moving dirt from one place to another "come up here and open Kafka's *The Castle* and read of a person who existed once in his imagination . . . But he's a literary genius. In walks Barnabas, a mysterious new person to bewilder us "it doesn't absorb me.

I'm not inclined to it, but neither was I inclined to the *Bhagavatam* earlier today. At least not at first. It's strange how I'm less likely to fall asleep over Kafka although I'm aware that he is providing me no nourishment.

"How do you like it here?" asks K. of Barnabas. He points to the peasants, whose heads look as if they had been beaten flat and who are staring at him when they aren't looking around at objects in the room. K. then points to the assistants "who were embracing each other, cheek to cheek, and smiling, whether in humility or mockery one could not tell . . . " Then Barnabas delivers a letter from the Castle. It seems they have accepted K. as a worker, and he wants to read the letter alone. He asks Barnabas to wait and buy him a beer to encourage him. But the story contains an air of ambiguity. Anyway, it's not really happening; it's make-believe. I used to think this story had something to do with the search for God and the other world. The frustration, the little (and big) hopes K. feels, the testing of his determination "and the clash between this strain and the strain of the immediate reality with which K. has to cope at the inn "keeps one reading.

Folks, I mean, Prabhus, what do *you* think? I know, you'd rather I wrote commentary on Bhaktivinoda Thakura's book. So I can't ask you. I have to go forward or drop *The Castle* on my own. For now, I'll go on. It seems I have to read a little in order to make a go of this. What I am reading contains no Absolute Truth, so I will be expected to supply that in this writing "or else we'll have nothing! It's the opposite with reading *Bhagavatam* and writing along with that. With the *Bhagavatam* writing, even if my notes are doubtful or confused, I have presented the *sastra*. Springboarding off Kafka is entirely different. Kafka is a conditioned, miserable, living being. He can't be our guru. But he has written this book, which generations of scholars and readers consider a work of art, and which exposes the Kafkaesque consciousness. Kafkaesque is a word now appearing in dictionaries. It means "surreal, nightmarish, confusingly complex, etc." Just what we need!

We want to be simple and real, not nightmarish and surreal. But maybe life "material illusion "is Kafkaesque, and Franz managed to tap into it. The misery, I mean. He said he wanted to chop up the frozen sea of misery that existed within his readers. I know him from his diary to be a sincere, humble person. He wanted art to redeem him "his dedication to it would uplift him.

Anyway, K. goes into the room which is described in minute detail, each bit of which adds to the mood, to read the letter. Expect the unexpected; don't expect it to make sense. It's not so easy to know which are the good guys and which are the bad in this book. K. is our man, our hero, but we doubt his qualities. I mean, is he nonviolent and virtuous? Forces are against him. He's trying to get to know the people in the Castle and to be accepted by them, but they remain aloof, unattainable, powerful controllers. Nothing is clear; the story is dreamlike and surreal.

We tend to think we don't live such Kafkaesque lives in this movement, but one Godbrother described his experience of being investigated and reprimanded by the GBC as Kafkaesque.

Anyway, out of time. K. will decide to take the challenge of being accepted by the Castle. FK's thought is hundreds of times more analytical (maniacally so, you might say) than my simple analyses of events and persons. I'm only springboarding. And I am like him in some ways. I want to preach to him. I also need to write. I plan to free myself by dedicating my art to Krishna. I like my world much better than the world of *The Castle*.

Maybe we can deflect that other world, bring about a triumph in it, and become grateful to Krishna, develop a strength I may need later. (There you go again sounding like K.)

-

11:45 A.M.

Picked up a Christian book on centering prayer. It's based on the method taught long ago in *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Settle yourself in a comfortable sitting position. Choose a sacred word. Repeat it to yourself. When the mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sacred word. You want to come into the awareness of being in God's presence. Sounds like a successful *japa* session, except instead of one sacred word, we repeat sixteen words.

My "Centering and Distraction" is not a silent prayer or *japa* session; it's a writing exercise. I use thoughts, but by free-writing I cut through them and move deeper. This topic "that I want to center and I live simultaneously in a body with demands that distract me" is not only discussed in the writing exercise but demonstrated.

\* \* \*

2:52 p.m.

Bright sunlight for a change, but I'm not quite as clear as I was this morning. I can't expect anything else.

We watched Subash Chandra Bose during his college days. Abhay attended his secret meetings. He liked them, but when he grew up, he saw the consequences of their revolutionary behavior. They wound up in different places.

What am I getting at? Where will this writing lead? Can I push myself to some place? What to exclude from the path? If I could say only two things out of six, what would they be?

You and your rhetorical questions.

Then let me ask a last one before I go. This one will be both specific and concrete: "Where am I going now, Lord?"

Or better yet, "How may I serve You?"

Will the answer to those questions crush me? Sometimes I wonder about that.

The sheep bleat and bleed for their country. That's what Subash said "he wanted the young radicals to sacrifice their lives for their nation and do whatever it took to drive out the British. He was a dynamic speaker, and he was willing to pay the price, it seems.

\* \* \*

3:52 p.m.

My afternoon ship is sinking. Shouldn't expect much. Maybe take my third Esgic of the week. Tomorrow, scheduled lecture-trip to Dublin. On the city street, the red-painted storefront "it's a restaurant. In you go, all friends, upstairs. They stop singing when I enter. I take my place and sing and praise three great *mahajanas*. I hope. May have to take a pill to get me there. I'm pushing how often I take them.

Confession: I just read some pieces from the EJW volume, *Approaching Gaura-Purnima*. It warmed my heart. All I have to do now is write more of the same, ride the waves of my own reality. Krishna consciousness and the outer world provide the form and events. Our process, our *acaryas* "the world rejects what it needs most. We may be an isolated cult, but we are on the grid. We exist transcendently, yet are dependent on governments, *gardas*, food chains, and trucking companies. We are what we are.

\* \* \*

4:45 p.m.

Those who are against the conclusion that Sri Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead are *veda-vada-rata*; they may study the *Vedas*, but they don't know the conclusion. Like beasts. Like those who beat the husk after the paddy has been removed.

I'm "wounded" in my right eye and seek relief. We headache sufferers can't always get it when we want it. rebounding. So I don't have time to challenge and then take on all the opposition to Krishna consciousness. I'm looking for the easier entrance, the one marked, "For Devotees Only." That entrance is characterized by submission to the Bhaktivedanta purports. Abhay, "That great personality in whose name this monument has been built." Odd way of introducing him. While a *mataji* sings "*Gurvastakam*" Hindi style. Hey . . .

What meds you on? Does anything work for you? What were you saying about Krishna? That I could doubt, or others could doubt. But what's the *use* of that? I'd like to do a *lectio*, but even that's a struggle. I like the idea (wish it was easy) that instead of reading *about* Krishna, I could pick up the *sastra* and hear just a little in order to be with Him. That means I would be hearing *from* Him, listening to Him. Reading *sastra* becomes like having a conversation with a loved one. He talks, I listen, then I respond.

But I'm not into too much silence. I have to write my pages. That's how I prove that I'm up and around.

"O King, it is therefore essential that every human being hear about, glorify and remember the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, always and everywhere." (*Bhag.* 2.2.36) May I listen in as Sukadeva speaks: "O King . . ." Maharaja Pariksit in his last days "less than a week left for him, but I can read as long as I last.

\* \* \*

5:36 p.m.

I'm not able to write my "Centering and Distraction" today. Instead, I'll give a brief report. And that's the problem with building repertoire items in this book: unless I am entirely pain-free, I cannot sustain the twenty minutes it takes to write them. That's why I had to stop PMrB. Anyway, who will die for lack of what I would have written in "Centering and Distraction"?

Centering myself on whatever I can immediately feel. I can also conjecture, "According to *sastra*, my center is my pure spirit soul, that happy, liberated part of myself that loves nothing more than to serve Krishna." But somehow that conjecture always leads into a more general, philosophical talk, not something from the heart. Why

is that? Where is my yearning for that center? Am I that lost in distraction? right now, it is the eye twinge that is distracting me. Peel away the layers of pain and find the inner core.

June 28, 12:05 A.M.

Reading verses in the twelfth chapter about one who is dear to Krishna. I remember liking that these qualities were *sadhu*-like, brahminical. They don't say that one who is dear to Krishna distributes many books or wins many followers, that he sends the most money to the BBT or owns the most properties, or even that he is able to conquer devotees and push them around to accomplish his idea of preaching. They don't even say that those who are most dear are those who were fortunate enough to spend maximum time in their spiritual master's physical presence or have the top posts in the religious organization. It is the humble, pure servants, who have surrendered their lives to Him, who are most dear to Him. Blessed are they.

I notice I don't like to be pushed to do more than I am doing at present, particularly at this stage of my life. I want to do things in my own way. Have I lost my flexibility? Yet a devotee should be flexible. Imagine yourself a crotchety old man, unwilling to be told even by Krishna how to behave. At present, I can claim that it isn't Krishna but someone else who is trying to tell me what Krishna wants, but that it's *his* trip, his interpretation. I think I'm practicing enough austerity. I say I believe in eternal life, but I'm intent on remaining as comfortable as possible in this life.

But in my heart (chest), I feel something. I am cultivating something within myself that wants to be cultivated. It requires some privacy and self-direction. I want to enter a life of prayer, of *feeling*, not just reading *about* something, not just admitting that such-and-such devotional practice is a struggle, is dry, but to feel the dryness and the pushing past dryness. I want to taste the nectar.

Does this mean I'm hankering for spiritual sense gratification? Is that what I call "confirmation"? Sometimes we do just want enjoyment or payoffs for our efforts at reaching Krishna. At least we want freedom from pain. As I seek freedom from pain for my body, am I seeking the pain-free state spiritually?

Brother, life, whatever is left of it, you are not a bed of roses. No one will be spooning peaches and cream into your mouth at the end. Don't keep looking for new bed sheets or soft rides. You have to rise up to meet Krishna. You have to do more to qualify for that moment.

Srila Prabhupada, please help me. I know I'm crying out of selfishness, "recognize me! Say I'm good!" But I know that beyond that cry is the desire to please you and Krishna.

"A pure devotee is never disturbed in any circumstances. Nor is he envious of anyone." Srila Prabhupada recommends that we adopt saintly behavior. We should not simply examine this list of qualities as if it were something distant, belonging only to saints. A *sadhu* doesn't become his enemies' enemy. He thinks, "This person is acting as my enemy due to my past misdeeds. Better I suffer than protest."

Oh, here's one I like (and you can see how these qualities may be misinterpreted or misapplied): "He does not endeavor much to achieve something with great difficulty; therefore he is always joyful." (Bg. 2.13 - 14, purport)

This morning, I seem to be thinking of other things than this text. I'm also thinking of Aniruddha and his work on the grounds here, of when the topsoil man will come, and whether or not I should lend Ani a copy of *Writing Down the Bones*. Dozens of things to do and consider in this life of distraction.

"All these qualifications enable him to fix his mind and intelligence entirely on the Supreme Lord. Such a standard of devotional service is undoubtedly very rare, but a devotee becomes situated in that stage by following the regulative principles of devotional service." (Bg. 2.13 - 14, purport) The Lord is always pleased with him.

I'm thinking how I'd like to say the right things and inspire the devotees at the Sunday feast lecture this afternoon. I may need to take a pill for the third day in a row if I am really going to give that lecture.

Finish this page and go to *japa*. Get *that* in before this day ends. "Therefore he is always calm, quiet and patient, despite many distressful conditions. A devotee is also always kind to everyone, even to his enemy. *Nirmama* means that a devotee does not attach much importance to the pains and troubles pertaining to the body because he knows perfectly well that he is not the material body." (Bg. 12.13 - 14, purport) Tolerance, satisfaction with whatever comes by Krishna's grace.

\* \* \*

### Write after Puja

*Pujari!*

Look at Me

Reading no script for this. I did my *puja*. Yeah. You looked good, No-teeth. Be ribet! I *felt* good. Thanks for reminding me. I took my body on the altar. No kiddin'!

"I love Radha-Govinda" T-shirts. I

love . . .

I bent down, felt the fatigue settle in my chest.

Krishna says, "Unless you dress Me, I won't be dressed." But don't think He's incapable. He's quite self-sufficient, thank you.

And the Deity is Krishna.

I am now being interviewed at Gita-nagari by twenty flies and thirty sores. The low ceiling . . . remember the old Manhattan temple? They had such muscular *pujaris* "they worked out with weights and punching bags on the thirteenth floor. Stepping up to *bhakti*.

*Pujari*, how come you don't go out and preach? Do you see God only in the temple? *Pujari*, you handle only gold and pink peacock-patterned cloth, and you match that with pink bracelets for Her, dull pink earrings for Them both.

Otherwise, nothing new. Eternal joy. He couldn't sleep last night, but I could. Dreamt I was leading *kirtana* in the Navy "my dream body singing out the actual words to the Hare Krishna mantra. Please don't lose power (electrical) now.

Yes, tell us something about Radha and Govinda.

I heard that *parakiya-rasa* was highest, and among the *gopis*, Radha is topmost. When Lord Caitanya says He doesn't want this or that, He means He wants specific service to Krishna in *madhurya-rasa*. Now we know. Does it change our life? We are still plugging away at *vaidhi-bhakti*, where we belong.

*Pujari*, look at me! Did you take the *burfi* off the Lord's plate (after the offering, of course)?

It's better than drug abuse. The *pujari* eats the *maha-sugar* and becomes Krishnaized.

"You guys break up the Deity room chatter," the manager suddenly steps in to say. "I want a report on all of this as soon as possible. And I want the room scrubbed down, Their Lordships' clothes cleaned and pressed, the blue tack balled and arranged in neat little rows on the jewelry counter, and I want the curious constables arranged for."

*Bhava, seva, arcana* "all ways of knowing. But I have come to this place to write. My guru gave me a free-writing book to help, then told me to be discreet, because writing isn't for everyone. I took out the diary and wrote in it. I told everyone it was a diary "that seemed easiest "and said that I was writing down how to improve my Deity service.

And so I am.

Deity *seva* should be prayer. Don't just speak about the Deity; tell us how the *pujari* felt Krishna's presence.

But, ohhh, how I felt Govinda's presence. It was as if He were standing right there! He was strong, perfectly curvy, and had a warm, golden glow.

But I am beginning to tire. That fatigue sits still in my chest. At least I'll say this before closing: Deity service went okay. Didn't fight anything, didn't forget anything, but didn't brush the dust off the altar either. I was too tired. Anyway, I do it every day and didn't see any new dust today.

*Pujaris* are expected to clean up, then leave the temple. Today this *pujari* has an errand "he has to drive to town in his Pierce Arrow with Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati in his mind (after watching the "Abhay" video) and give the lecture. But he won't "not if he has a headache. rather, he'll lay back on the cushions and chant Hare Krishna. Waiting to be tested at the time of death. Who will take care of Radha-Govinda after he's gone? (I accidentally wrote "after he's God," but crossed that out.)

After I'm gone? Oh, don't worry about Radha-Govinda; they know how to take care of Themselves. They will give some other devotee the intelligence to approach and serve Them. Think of the spiritual world and serving Krishna and Radha there midday at Radha-kunda.

Oh, come on, *you* can't do that. You are fit only for scrubbing floors and pots, and scouring the black from your own heart. Strengthen thy character and thy chin. Work practically for guru.

-

5:28 a.m.

I've got it easy in this lifetime, especially in these mellowing years. Krishna is giving me what I want, I guess. Long, narrow roads in rural Ireland, cool, misty mornings, and L. L. Bean rain gear, including wellie boots and two hoods to cover my head. I also have a tape recorder, clicky teeth, and eyeballs that stay in place. I am taking it easy, being

sucked into consumerism by old age. I feel as if I am becoming more and more dependent on crutches, medications, rest, and other escapes from pain. The mist gets thicker, then thinner, and I wonder if I will always find my way this easy.

"Chant one round," Swamiji used to say in the mornings at the storefront. I chant one round now while walking up the hill. remember when you walked up this hill some years ago and talked about how you wanted to imitate Prabhupada, or how you *were* imitating him in little ways, like how he used his cane?

Of wild cabbages and waxy leaves "I don't know your names, all you plants growing along the stone wall or surrounding old trees. Aniruddha was happy to discover that one of the tallest trees in our yard is an aspen. He had read about aspens in a Chinese poem I had shown him. He said the Chinese poets sometimes kept aspens in their backyards.

\* \* \*

Envisioning Past Ages  
& Back in our house our  
shelter like the people before us  
the fools who live then  
die "although  
wise ones turn to God and seek  
eternal life but not only for the sake  
of safety. They seek God's pleasure  
know His plans for them or not  
but trust and love Him.

\* \* \*

In past ages, castles and  
peasant huts "cruel times of  
eating animals and killing  
with spears, armies, kings,  
bishops, popes, and the conquest  
of India "

\* \* \*

was I some species present,  
crawling perhaps? Or perhaps I played  
the violin.

\* \* \*

I can only thank Krishna  
for my present bounty  
of a *bhakti*-directed life. I  
could not take advantage

of Mathura, the Lord of,  
but let it be said that He kept  
me, my connection with the Swami  
until all fool ladies and gents  
and cattle and houses  
and cold misty mornings passed. "

\* \* \*

9:04 a.m.

I've decided not to go to Dublin this afternoon. I don't have a headache right now, but I'm tired of anticipating one. I have taken two Esgics in two days, and I'd prefer not to have to take more in order to give this lecture. I just don't want to jounce my body around in that van.

As soon as I got this unusual idea "to cancel even before the headache arrived "I felt an inner confirmation. Maybe I'll be able to make my writing quota today. Perhaps I'll avoid Esgic even if I do get a headache today. But one wonders, what's the point in that? One friend speaks of seeing his chronic pain coming straight from Krishna, but he admits that his pain is not as incapacitating as mine. Still, he sees the acceptance of pain as surrender to Krishna's will. Whether you seek relief or not is not the point, he says. One should face pain and decide what to do with it. Don't be a victim.

I guess I could feel like a victim whether one chooses to medicate pain or not. It is the awareness and the conscious choice to handle pain in one way or another than frees one from the victim mode. I often hear the phrase, "Take control of your headaches." I think it means that one should decide how to respond. Be responsible. "I will take such-and-such pills in such-and-such dosage, and no more; I will not remain sidelined and incapacitated *all* the time "not if *I* can help it." Or, "I will accept whatever pain comes as my lot, without resentment."

\* \* \*

9:30 a.m.

"O King, it is therefore essential that every human being hear about, glorify and remember the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, always and everywhere." (*Bhag. 2.2.36*)

I'd like to appreciate more the basic methods of *bhakti*. Don't compare it to Christianity, Zen Buddhism, or other spiritual paths, but think of how it coexists with them. Don't be judgmental about other paths; just learn to appreciate the heart of *bhakti*. Devotion begins with hearing, chanting, and remembering Krishna. We derive the strength and inspiration to serve actively from these activities, to make whatever we do pleasing to Krishna. Whatever we do should be performed in accordance with the instructions of the *guru-parampara*, yet we don't smother our free will, even when we are strict followers.

"But out of the nine different methods, the first one, namely hearing, is the most important function in the process of *bhakti-yoga*." All the Vedic literature exists so we can practice *Sravanam*. When we give up *Sravanam*, we become victims "to hearing

rubbish transmitted by man-made machines." The machines are useful only if they are used to support *Sravanam kirtanam*.

"Hearing is solidified by the process of chanting." My writing is chanting. I'm not likely to go for the more silent, mystical "centering" prayer. One could say that hearing scripture and writing impressions take place only on the intellectual level. Where is the process that cuts to feeling directly to the soul? That is supposed to be the purpose of silent prayer. But hearing scripture and writing don't have to remain on the intellectual platform. They can go beyond the intellectual discourse and enter the realm of submissive hearing and chanting that goes beyond mere intellectual comprehension. Prayerful reading and writing may resemble ordinary reading and writing, but they are different. We make them different by imbuing those practices with devotion. Krishna's grace allows us to do that.

"Those who drink through aural reception, fully filled with the nectarean message of Lord Krishna, the beloved of the devotees, purify the polluted aim of life known as material enjoyment and thus go back to Godhead, to the lotus feet of Him [the Personality of Godhead]." (*Bhag. 2.2.37*)

*Pibanti* (drink) the *kathamrtam*. "Srila Jiva Gosvami Prabhupada has commented on the *kathamrtam* mentioned in this verse and has indicated *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to be the nectarean message of the Personality of Godhead." This constant hearing makes life peaceful for everyone and assures that we will reach the Personality of Godhead and serve Him in Goloka.

\* \* \*

### The Castle Springboard

#### 3. I'll Go No Further

I don't think I will continue springboarding from *The Castle*. It's just not as interesting as I thought it would be. I had a purpose for picking it up again, but it's not coming together. I also thought that by reporting what I was reading and springboarding onto this page, I would develop more interest, but that's not happening either. I mean, K. just walks with Barnabas. The walk is a strain. Suddenly, K. recalls the moment of his greatest childhood triumph when he climbed the high wall of the cemetery. No other boy had ever climbed it. Is that symbolic or what? I think it's simply ambiguous. When Jung related his childhood memories in his book, it was more interesting because he remembered and confessed his inner life. Why did Kafka put K.'s childhood memory in the middle of his story?

Anyway, I signed no contracts to read this book, and I certainly don't feel obliged to come under Kafka's influence, making my own mock analyses of every situation. Barnabas is a mere servant from the Castle, sent to give K. a message, but K. senses something deferential in Barnabas's demeanor. He walks with him, perhaps trying to befriend him or pump him for information about the Castle. If I were to keep reading, I would probably find out what happens in this regard. Oh well, I do know K. won't discover the Absolute Truth. Kafka is actually mocking us in a sense by leading us on to discover more about the inaccessible Castle hierarchy. We begin to think it's important. In other words, we place ourselves vicariously in the role of his character, the land

surveyor K., and become just as frustrated as he is as we attempt to develop a relationship with the Castle. The more we give ourselves to this vicarious pursuit, the more disappointed we will become. The only escape is to enjoy the artistic, imaginative experience for what it is "an artistic, imaginative experience, not an attempt to uncover truth.

And that's all material life can offer anyway. Kafka is as good a guru as anyone else, because no one really knows the Absolute. He spins a web to catch our attention, and because we have nothing else to do with our attention, we willingly become caught in it. Is it worth the ride?

"No," said S., "I don't think I want to be burdened by this. I've got two other billed exercises each day, and that's enough."

-

I'm living with my resolution not to go to Dublin today. I will probably watch another episode in "Abhay," however. I also plan to try to remain calm, and will consider it a gain if I can avoid the Esgic. My body ought to take a break from that stuff.

\* \* \*

#### Abandoning Gimmicks

Webster's *New World Dictionary* defines *gimmick* as, a secret means of controlling a gambling device, or anything that tricks or mystifies. "An attention-getting device or feature, typically superficial, designed to promote the success of a product, campaign, etc.; any clever little gadget or ruse." The British Collins Dictionary gives their first definition without negative connotations: "Something designed to attract extra attention, interest, or publicity."

A similar word is contrived. Contrivance can mean simply "an ingenious device; contraption," or even, "inventive skill or ability." But also: "An artificial rather than natural arrangement of details, parts," and, "deceitful, obviously planned, forced." Webster's: Contrived: "Too obviously the result of forethought and planning; not spontaneous or natural."

Maybe these logo-billed series are gimmicks. I wanted the variety, to bring relief from the flat-out "write-whatever-comes-throughout-the-day" program. Because the "Field Work" series went well. Now I'm rebelling from gimmicks. They create too many demands in my day "I have to conform to a preplanned, preconceived structure, last twenty minutes each, remain on particular themes, and provide the appropriate data for their type. Not much room to say anything important.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

Long scene in "Abhay" where his fiancée sings a *bhajana*. M. said it was indulging Indian *matajis* to have such a long scene with a woman singing on and on and the camera flashing from her to him to him to her. Is my writing indulgent too? Too long, the audience caught in the tedium? Should I worry about this or simply keep writing?

I have managed to write every day despite headaches, so perhaps I could do something else, too, despite headaches. What? More *japa*? reading?

I think I should write for myself, of course, but not in too much of a planned way "planning to write in a way that attracts readers. Let me write to please myself, to help myself, and no gimmicks.

Does "no gimmicks" mean no art? Oh, enough of the clever and sincere songs of a conditioned soul.

But how can I stop?

No gimcracks no  
cheating devices "just natural prose.

But who will read it?

I will. Isn't that enough?

Most people don't endure self-inquiry. Out of thousands, one may consult the scriptures, "but in spite of reading and hearing such scriptures, unless one is in touch with a realized spiritual master, he cannot actually realize the real nature of the self, etc. And out of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men, someone may know what Lord Krishna is in fact." (*Bhag.* 2.3.1, purport)

A thoughtful human being (*manisinam*) fully engages in devotional service "hearing, chanting the holy name, etc.. "This action is especially recommended when one is preparing for death."

\* \* \*

3:35 p.m.

I tell you, don't harass yourself. You can't read much, you find you are too overfamiliar, you sometimes think the material too basic. Then you stop yourself and say, "It's just me!" Then you chant another round or two. Not more. You remember you have to take it easy "your head. Then you assure yourself that taking it easy is okay. What other choice do you have? But you did speak to Krishna and beg for help. You can't get to Him without His help. There's no way. You begged Him to eliminate the extras in your life and to leave only Himself.

But the day is . . .

you whirl around.

Nothing can be much different  
if it's up to you.

Maybe what you write will simply expose that you are a dull fellow.

Look out the window. See the sheep with their lambs? There is a very muddy, puddly section, and the sheep hesitate to walk through it. Their hesitation makes them appear dainty, too finicky to get their feet and ankles wet. One sheep is lame, and it appears if it steps in the wrong way, it will injure itself. Their legs are so thin, their bodies so portly. As sheep walk gingerly through their difficulties, we too. We can't always barge our way through. And we can't always achieve the prizes of lions if we have the minds and bodies of sheep. We all must learn to face our limits. Of course, with Krishna, anything is possible. He can change our hearts even while we live in these present bodies. But He

doesn't always, and to base our whole devotional service on that hope is not always practical or productive.

Then read this as the journal of a sheep who steps gingerly around the puddles but is quick to graze on the lush grass when it reaches the other side. And sheep, as you know, often lay down to chew their cud. They are afraid of the cruel men who come among them with sticks, and they tend to surrender to the concentration camp atmosphere, making do with what Krishna has given. Sheep often get bored contemplating the complexities of Barnabas and K. They prefer to live only with their own anxieties in tow.

Didn't go to town. Just as well. relatively calm. No point worrying about what I didn't do and thus bringing on pain. Just live life as it comes, even if the adventures are feeble and directions meandering. May Lord Krishna use me as He will. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare.

M. has gone to make his Sunday afternoon phone calls. He's on a brown-rice-only diet, starting today, to help with his hay fever. When he comes back, I can hear any news. Nothing dire though "I don't want to hear that kind of news.

\* \* \*

4:55 p.m.

Drawing: two-headed man, one-headed gnome (without nose), and a portrait of three tilaked persons conversing or holding *kirtana* existentially. Then my first charcoal with brittle sticks: "Be a devotee of Krishna blackish." A black outline man. Does it make me feel better? Produce something useful? Is it another gimmick? Here, drink some water on my behalf. This is what I did today instead of lecturing in Dublin. No headache for a change. raw man waiting for day to end "as it will, soon enough.

\* \* \*

5:05 p.m.

No extra stimulus to push me. When I push forward, I am usually pushed back. From the back? Hey, stop pushing! Yes, that's me, my nature, I mean. I don't like to be pushed. I want to do it my way. Krishna allows me to exert my freedom, as He allows all of us. I exert myself but don't get very far. Anyway, wherever I go I offer myself to Krishna. Or try to. That's all Krishna requires of me and my art, my prose and poems, of ISKCON and our quota of pain and death.

"I'm a genius," he said. "Just a few strokes and I'm done."

Maybe not.

"One thousand views of Mount Fuji."

Ten thousand statues of Buddha carved from a single log.

And one, one, one, and

another Vaisnava trinket,

a bracelet, a garland, a

big book of my life "why don't I surrender to that (again)?"

I'm expecting to be interrupted by M. at any moment. I'll ask for news and hold my breath. Otherwise, I would be plunging even now into the orange and yellow ochre

paints. Is that the van climbing the rock-sharp ravine (can't call it a road)? No, I guess not. Hare Krishna. In silence I pray to the holy name.

\* \* \*

5:28 p.m.

I can't think of anything to say or do right now, but I'm still pushing against the wall. I know from experience that if I push hard enough to split myself open, the wall will also open. A devotee wants that. It's harder than we think, but also easier.

M. still not back. If he comes back with disturbing news too near bedtime . . . A devotee, no matter what the distress, turns to Krishna for protection. ASvatthamatried to kill Maharaja Pariksit when he was in the womb, but Lord Krishna protected him. Therefore, Pariksit is known as Visnurata.

Choose what Radha and Govinda will wear tomorrow. These are the kinds of decisions I want to face. I'm learning not to be sorry that my life is not more dramatic than that.

Lord Krishna is squirting the *gopis* with colored dyes, and they're doing the same to Him in a picture I have taped to a box. Another photo shows Srila Prabhupada playing *karatalas*, sitting on a blue *vyasasana* with a microphone in front of him, a large painting of Sri Panca-tattva behind him.

June 29, 12:10 a.m.

The qualities of a devotee who is dear to Krishna may seem at first general or simply moral, because many of them don't specifically mention devotion to God, but Srila Prabhupada writes, "All these qualifications enable him to fix his mind and intelligence entirely on the Supreme Lord." He is not preoccupied with wanting a better chair or with the pain of a remark someone made, etc. Rather, a devotee is free and simple "and engaged in devotional service with determination, his mind and intelligence fixed on Me." We should use our freedom to achieve this state.

"Actually because a devotee is always engrossed in Krishna consciousness and engaged in devotional service, such material circumstances cannot move him." (Bg. 12.15, purport) We cannot become transcendental artificially; we have to learn to be real first.

He is pure, neutral, without cares, "not dependent on the ordinary course of activities . . . and not striving for some result." In writing, just write, and don't strive for spectacular, eye-catching results." (Bg. 12.16) Be Krishna conscious, and be satisfied with that. One of a devotee's qualities is *gata-vyathah*, which Srila Prabhupada translates as "free from all distress, free from all pains." I can't be free of pain, it seems, but it might be more possible to be free of distress.

This one is a bit beyond me: "He is never pained, because he is free from all designations; he knows that his body is a designation, so if there are some bodily pains, he is free."

A devotee sounds like he must be a superman of spiritual strength. "If he loses anything which is very dear to him, he does not lament. Similarly, if he does not get

what he desires, he is not distressed. He is transcendental in the face of all . . . prepared to accept all kinds of risk for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord. Nothing is an impediment in the discharge of his devotional service. Such a devotee is very dear to Krishna." (Bg. 12.17, purport)

Risks "that's the other side of the story regarding "no gimmicks." As a writer, he may want to make something wonderful for Krishna, so he shapes it and even uses artistic means to catch people's attention. No impediments means he may be stopped in one way "he may not be able to go to the city to lecture, for example "but he prosecutes devotional service regardless. It's not his attitude of devotion that is stopped.

Seek discretion.

So I can do the best thing.

"Silent does not mean that one should not speak; silent means that one should not speak nonsense. One should speak only of essentials, and the most essential speech for the devotee is to speak for the sake of the Supreme Lord." (Bg. 12.18 - 19, purport) He's happy whether he receives palatable food or not. He's not attached to where he lives. He doesn't have to work extraneously to achieve these qualities, "but engagement in Krishna consciousness and devotional service automatically helps him to develop them."

When you go to write  
don't take a bite  
just be pure and simple  
don't crease your dimples  
just to impress.

Do your duty for Krishna  
and that's enough.

As for writing that one big book,  
what can I say? Will it pay?

Or will it sit in a nook  
unread? Will it spin their  
heads? Or simply be dead?

\* \* \*

Write runs and  
puns and series  
and concoctions,  
but make it good *for Krishna*  
by yearning truly  
for His lotus feet.

\* \* \*

"Those who follow this imperishable path of devotional service and who completely engage themselves with faith, making Me the supreme goal, are very, very dear to Me." (Bg. 12.20) I like to have the basic faith that whatever I add to this writing fits, like those who built these Irish stone walls. They placed the rocks down once, without mortar, and they were just right, strong enough to become true walls. These walls have been here,

some of them, for centuries despite the apparent rough fit of the unhewn stones. Each section of wall belongs. They are sprawling walls that climb down into the valley, accepting whatever the earth offers as contour or curve. They move along slowly, like this book.

"Fortunately, if one develops directly a desire to engage in Krishna consciousness in pure devotional service, he does not need to undergo step-by-step improvements in spiritual realization." (Bg. 12.20, purport) By Krishna's grace, everything is carried out automatically. Have faith in this. Go on chanting mantras and sentences that come.

\* \* \*

### Write after *Puja*

#### 4. Sleepy *Pujari*

##### Slurs Speech

*Pujari*, you look so clean and angelic, but you seem tipsy as you come off the altar. Tell us what you're feeling.

Am I amid peasants and ruffians on this earth planet? No, all I know are devotee aspirants.

Yes, then listen to this. Time spent on the altar is wonderful, if you are clean and concentrated. So says our *pujari*. He was hearing Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Bhajana-rahasya* as he worshiped. He had such a beautiful selection of clothes for Their Lordships, who came from Vrndavana, along with Their clothes. This Boy and Girl. The soft blue plaid with pink-dark contrasts "my words never contain the colors themselves, those heavenly colors found only in Vrndavana. Srila Prabhupada assures us that there are no demons there. And Krishna carries a silver flute, a silver stick, a silver buffalo horn "at least today.

Yeah, I was ready to give up this sort of writing but then thought I would take the risk. I want to make something nice for the devotees and myself "a record, so it's not forgotten.

I kneeled on a little pad and washed His curvy form, soft as butter, hard as a thunderbolt, the curves of His knees and hips, His elbows, His powerful arms that could easily kill a demon . . . No one but the confidential devotees can hear of Krishna's beauty. *Pujari* . . . What it was like. Hare Krishna.

*Pujari*, you seem the most likely soul to chant His holy name while thinking of Krishna's intimate pastimes in Vrndavana at different times of the day. I mean, you are already worshiping His Vrndavana form. But relax now. Your friend wants to buy you an orthopedic chair.

That other *pujari* watches TV, grows fat, sits on a swing outdoors, talks about the managers. Saw a fat, bare-bellied GaneSa *pujari* in South India. Some of our men wear earrings. Me? I see only the things I forgot to do, should have done, but still, Prabhupada said, "The *pujari* is the most fortunate person in the universe." He's got the angle of vision.

Friend called, said he could get me a year's supply of food if I wanted, because Y2K is coming. And India and Pakistan both have nuclear bombs now. Prabhupada said the war would start there. Someone else laughed at this absurdity. And so it goes.

To take a break, the *pujari* walked up the hill. People didn't care about him one way or another, so he kept his mind on the Deity whose form he finds so pleasing, radha wearing a beautiful silver *candrika*, that flute . . .

I must tell the truth. We don't see the Deities as brass, but unfortunately, we don't yet have the *pujari* eyes of a Sanatana Gosvami. I admit it. We are not painstaking, sparing nothing for the Deity's pleasure. The fact is, we seem to live in the world between faithlessness and full realization. We're still low on the scale.

And it's so hard to stay *awake* right now!

In the riposte I enjoyed  
toasting a *pujari*, who shouldn't  
eat before His Lord  
who should clip his toenails  
and not be dipped in coconut-shaving memories  
but in *bhava*, the ointment for all  
eyes  
pure and advanced.

Advice is easy enough to give out, but what about actually serving Krishna?

To tell the truth, he was falling asleep on his feet. Dizzy, yawning in the face of his companions "they noticed. A groggy fighter. Does he want to rest? But it's *brahma-muhurta*, *mangala-arati* just ending, and he slurs his words to tell you that. I mean, he said, "Coconut clean for my Lord,"

something he remembered a *pujari* doing in *Caitanya-caritamrta*  
and neither of them  
were dreaming.

He had no dream to tell him to take the stolen sweet rice to Madhavendra Puri, no dream that said, "Worship Me always, not closed in a box." No, he simply blinked away tears, fighting for focus.

Final exam: study course, tutor wanted. O Radha-Govinda, I want more than anything to become Your servant. Please garland me with that blessing. Please give me the dust of Your lotus feet. You, Govinda, are so young.

Pickpocket! Dacoits steal Deities from temples! Flush them out. The coast is clear. This is your one chance to get out of the temple compound and hide the Deity "you had better take it.

Ah, but I prefer to sleep, and my ankle hurts. Meds, feds,  
the narcotics, don't want my medication sent in the mail.  
I worry over trouble  
probable.

Get through to undergo test of jail and

Rough guys. I'm not this body. Basic Krishna consciousness. With that, we can endure anything. If it's true to us.

And as it becomes true, that much does the beauty of the Deities manifest. Now give me a little peppermint smell under my nose, feverfew for my head, some wartweed. The blue cup will provide enough shade for a chant, so  
what else?

\* \* \*

5:25 a.m.

Talking and walking is not a substitute for prayer and reading *sastra*, but it is a form of prayer, I think. roughshod and joyous, sometimes sad, but it's actual being. In this body. With this mind. Fortunately, so fortunately, I contacted His Divine Grace.

The cows look dumb, their eyes innocent yet capable of any necessary violence. Especially these beef-for-slaughter cows. I can't bear to look at them for long. Instead, I seek out the pebbles lying in the middle of the road or the green grass on either side. The sky is gray today. The mist almost reminds me of volcanic smoke, like what you see coming out of Vesuvio. But this is Wicklow. It's too sleepy here for a volcano to survive. Pine trees line the walk. It's summer, but there's still a pleasant chill to the morning air. Never see mosquitoes in these parts. It's Monday morning, but the neighbor's car is parked. They are usually only here on the weekends. Maybe it's a bank holiday today.

O Lord, if I sometimes complain or doubt myself or my service, please know that it's just another feature of the work. Prabhupada says devotees aren't silent, but when they speak, they concentrate only on essential Krishna consciousness. May I trudge up this hill for as long as I live, remembering only You and letting everything go but You when it is time to do that.

\* \* \*

Shut Your Mouth if You Cannot Speak the Truth  
& Sigh. A lot is hyper "  
you'd better make your chest  
Lord's home our  
mentor and  
to hell with sycophants  
and Levi-panted cynics  
dope heads  
smart fiend Freuds

\* \* \*

'cause I'm on my own with a few  
faithful Hare Krishna friends "we  
are writing our way to death  
our comic tragedy. No, no  
tragedy but progress  
to the point  
of no return "to Goloka.

\* \* \*

Dear Lord, no empty mouthing  
devoid of devotion

for me I want to sway with  
the music the branches of  
that early morning tree  
in praise of You. "

\* \* \*

Come On, Pick Up  
& Come on, pick up, let  
down  
your burden.  
No more wounds  
of self-doubt.

\* \* \*

This is a trip dance "around the  
grassy meadow chanting  
grinning  
because Krishna is God. He said  
Krishna liked it when Bhishma pierced  
Him with arrows that flew like kisses.  
There are so many ways to  
express *bhakti*. "

\* \* \*

9:15 a.m.

Gene Autry. A car is coming! I hear the engine! Who could it be? I'm not expecting anyone, nothing but lunch today. Slowed right down. It's been over three hours since I last wrote. Better to write continually? Slowed down . . . My head . . . Sree La. The mare. The hen. A story. A transplant. A gelding. A compass needle that trembles its way to face north. Lord Caitanya (ahh) fell unconscious when he saw Lord Jagannatha. He appeared not to be breathing at all. Sarvabhauma placed some cotton fibers in front of His nostrils. When they shivered, he took hope.

Did Lord Caitanya get headaches? He said something about indigestion, and His ecstatic symptoms were misunderstood to be epilepsy. Sometimes He or Lord Nityananda would hide in someone's house so They wouldn't be detected.

Would you like it if someone else were writing this? I mean, like this? Maybenot. I *would* like it if it were very honest, seeking Krishna consciousness, and not just a superficial collection of words. I wouldn't like it if it weren't true.

What does it mean to take a risk? How might you risk to improve your writing? You might research some field of study, or go out into the world so that you could report on it. For example, to travel to India. Take a chance. The man who climbed Everest. Best-seller risk. Let your heart go where it will.

What else? Dr. Seuss left behind some unfinished papers and they published them, but they were so sketchy the editor had to write in what she thought the Doctor wanted to write.

Now . . . drink water and establish peace. Writing is a long, quiet highway, the do-or-die monks who vow to run and run, then meditate like that, preferring to drop dead than quit.

I keep asking "But *who will read this?* And, *Is it any good? I hope so.*" These are distractions. I could say that I will read it, and with love. Is that enough for me? And I ask, "But is that a worthy enough way to spend my time "so much of it "me writing and you reading?" Yes, if it is linked intimately to my Krishna consciousness. This reading and writing is my private prayer offering. The foundation of my prayer life is my reading of scripture, but I keep the prayer mood going all day by writing. Then be glad and free of doubt, and be humble. Krishna is kind. *Every Day, Just Write* is not just a memo summing up a day a couple of pages long; it's a marathon effort to reach my own Krishna consciousness.

Is it any good? If it isn't, it will be. I can't judge myself, and I can't wish I were doing something, more outward, or more like what my Godbrothers are doing. It's as if I were chanting sixty-four or a hundred rounds a day. My taste and my hand move more with a pen than on beads, but it's all for the same purpose, Hare Krishna.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Heartbeat movement.

I feel better now. Thank you. I actually forgot where I was, forgot my head was fogged, and went with the feelings that wanted to take me.

Why did that young girl fly the coop and travel to big-city Europe without telling her friends in the movement? Why might one feel he or she had no friends? Blow off steam in the cultural havens of *maya's* kingdom with the artists or musicians. Is that what she's doing? Then realize they don't have what satisfies us.

What to speak of people continually offering you salami sandwiches  
even though you're  
a vegetarian  
and cigarettes  
when you don't smoke.

Get high? Different kinds of friends?

No, that's not what we want.

Not really.

Distractions. Centering.

Oriental football, World Cup slowdown. I

don't want to write bad or agitating thoughts. I want  
to drift and now

to retrieve and review.

\* \* \*

9:58 a.m.

*Akamah sarva-kamo va*, "A person who has broader intelligence . . . must by all means worship the supreme whole, the Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 2.3.10) I don't

like to be told, "You must," "This is best for you," or, "You have to do this totally with nothing at all left for other interests." Or you will miss out and have to suffer from your own foolishness. I take pity on myself. I want to help myself. I don't resent the way I used to serve the mission, but now I want to be self-caring.

You mean watch out for Number One, Yours Truly?

You misunderstand me. Besides, I can't help it. It's venting to say this; it's not the whole story.

Then go ahead, read more of God's word.

"It is He only who can award liberation . . . " Impersonalists "I'm tired of hearing about them. They no longer seem relevant. I'm not one of them. I agree, though, that they are off.

The *sastra* goes on to say that everyone must seriously take up the methods of *bhakti-yoga*, no matter what he is after. We are expected to preach it to others, too. We should make ourselves instruments. It's like picking up a piece of wood (a baseball bat) to chase away an aggressive dog. Even if it comes to attack, we can hit it in the side and scare it off. If that doesn't work and it bares its fangs, we can hit it on the head. Pray for strength when chasing illusion. Because it is our natural function to serve the Supreme Lord, just as it is the hand's natural function to serve the stomach. To be desireless means to desire satisfaction only from pleasing the Supreme Lord. "This means that one should feel happy only by experiencing the happiness of the Supreme Lord." The *gopis* and *gopi-manjaris* live on that standard of happiness. "The *gopis* loved the Lord without any return, and this is the perfect exhibition of the *akamah* spirit."

We start by learning not to be selfish. The desire to help others is a tiny indication of the pure desire to serve the Lord.

"A pure devotee does not want liberation so that he may be relieved from the miseries of life. Even without so-called liberation, a pure devotee is aspirant for the satisfaction of the Lord."

May I always write down such gems of absolute instruction. Then we can all look at them later. I'm stocking up in case of war. I can survive on canned goods and private editions of EJW, although I may be pulled down anyway. But I'll be pulled down while hearing about Krishna.

Arjuna came to his senses "and realized that satisfaction of the Lord at the cost of his own satisfaction was his prime duty."

I have to admit I don't completely agree with that mood "or don't understand it fully. I can't come up to that standard. Better I keep remembering that I am a neophyte. Don't think, "Anything I haven't realized in Krishna consciousness by now must not be suitable for me to realize or not according to my taste."

This purport ends with a statement which I take to mean: even if our inner motive is not one hundred percent pure (to please Krishna), we should practice *bhakti-yoga*. *Bhakti-yoga* is so powerful that it remains pure even when practiced by the impure. Not only that, but the purity of *bhakti* enters us and we benefit. Thus, a neophyte, as long as he's not resentful, may sometimes perform pure acts in Krishna consciousness, as when he hears submissively from *sastra* and guru and then cries out when he chants.

To find purity, we need the association of a pure devotee.

2:40 p.m.

I have not written to you in awhile, said a disciple, so it may be hard to make a connection again "getting to know one another, picking up where we left off.

Headache info from doctor in U.S.A. Mix the pills, try this new one you used that other time, take another preventative. Yes, sir. Can you send it in a package, or is that not allowed? remember to use my actual name, Stephen Kennelworth, and not the affectionate appellations we know me by within our movement.

"Who is this Guru Maharaja?" Here is my name on a piece of paper. It says, "*Srimad-Bhagavatam* reader, healer of sorts . . ." Yes, I can prove I am the person in the photo taken in the Dublin chemist's shop a few years ago. You can tell by the . . .

All the different kinds of worshipers can get to the real goal, "which is spontaneous attraction unflinchingly fixed upon the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by the association of the pure devotee of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 2.3.11)

We are pure spirit souls, parts of the Lord, but when we are thrown into the material world, all we know is the struggle to survive and improve ourselves. Even basic information like this strikes me as a super-valuable eye opener when I read it in a submissive, attentive mood. This proves to me that Srila Prabhupada's purports are always potent. The fact that they are repetitive makes my mind rebel against them, but a person honestly seeking transcendental knowledge, or the mind that somehow opens without prejudice during a given reading, will appreciate that we can fully trust Prabhupada's statements and that they deftly describe the inconceivable position of the soul, the Supreme, and their relationship. The problem is that we allow the words to become so over-familiar that they no longer carry meaning to our hearts. But that doesn't make them less true. It is our willingness to hear submissively with a sense of need that allows us to hear anything at all.

No matter what we have as our means of survival (demigods' help or modern science), we cannot surpass the miseries of birth, death, old age, and disease. But human life is meant to solve these problems. The followers of the *Vedas* "have full and reasonable knowledge of God." All Vedic *acaryas* accept *Bhagavad-gita*, which informs us that all the planets and their facilities are temporary, "but one who reaches the kingdom of God gets a permanent share in eternal life."

Why is the pure devotee needed? He presents the Vedic literature with faith and realization, not like those who spoil it by giving mundane interpretations. Srila Prabhupada fed us Vedic life in many forms "books, lectures, *prasadam*, practical work, the missionary life, shelter in temples. At least when he was here, it worked for us and formed our lives and characters. The effects of that life last into today, despite so many outer changes.

Who could fail to be attached to this transcendental knowledge? rhetorical question. Plenty of people fail. Pure devotees feel bliss in Krishna consciousness, even in the practice stage, and continue up to realize their *siddha-deha*. Listen: " . . . the natural consequence of hearing such *hari-katha* is attainment of transcendental knowledge, which causes detachment from all mundane topics, for which a devotee has no taste at all." (*Bhag.* 2.3.12, purport) The devotee loses interest even in his own body and

relatives. He is not agitated by the waves caused by the material modes. It all becomes unattractive to him.

" . . . but despite his loftiness, for the Lord's satisfaction he may play the voluntary part of a preacher of the Lord's glory and dovetail all into devotional service, even mundane interest, just to give the neophytes a chance . . . " That could mean literary forms made to bring people to transcendental bliss.

As I wrote the above, I heard the engine putt-putting its way up the hill. I also heard M. lock himself in the bathroom. The tractor reached our gate and beeped his horn. The topsoil man! I called for Madhu. He hurried himself, flushed the toilet, and went out. I looked out the window and saw Aniruddha arriving breathlessly, having run in from somewhere. His shaved head and *Sikha*, turtleneck and work pants "he was talking to a stocky man wearing a golf cap. Beside them was a load of ordinary brown dirt.

\* \* \*

4:00 p.m.

Pushing my luck here. But we all have to work, right? Ani is working with the dirt man, and Madhu is climbing into the sycamore tree with the electric saw to cut off the branches that hang over his thatched roof. I didn't want him to do it, but they tell me the honey from the leaves can corrode the roof. The tree is rooted on the neighbor's property, but the branches have spread to our side. I hope it doesn't kill the tree or maim it too bad. But even more, I hope M. doesn't cut himself up there. So with all this work going on, I ought to work myself.

The doctor says I should take two preventative medications, Depakote and Imitrex. Yes, I'm joining the Imitrex club along with several illustrious Godbrothers. But I don't intend to give up Esgic. He says I can try one on one day and the other the next day. Best to take any of this stuff at the first sign of pain, or if pain is predictable, I should take it before it starts. I sometimes get a faint sign of pain that doesn't develop. I live on that kind of roller coaster.

Showed some Phil Rizzuto poetry to Ani. He liked it. I can't think of anything else to show him that won't seem like a come-down after that stuff "Rizzuto's poetry is so lively and quick-changing. It's nice to have someone with whom I can share poems.

Those two references from Srila Prabhupada today: take risks for Krishna, and mundane interests may be dovetailed in the spirit of *yukta-vairagya* in order to give the *mudhas* (and anyone else) a chance to come up to the standard of transcendental bliss. What did he mean? I think he means to catch their interest with songs or paintings or good cooking. Beautiful things. Honest things. Things that will attract them to find the truth of Krishna consciousness within themselves. Surprise!

A pure devotee loses interest in the mundane because he's so absorbed in Krishna consciousness. Well, I'm not at that stage. I do hope to open the book and be whammied. I look to ride on holy scripture, and I acknowledge that Srila Prabhupada is very potent and manages to say things that are never said by anyone else. I have developed such trust in him. Although that doesn't mean I never feel obstructed or distracted. But let me tell you something to make this clear. I read something by the Catholic expert on centering prayer. His name is Keating. What he says could be taken as profound spirituality. But I

don't have the same trust in him that I have in Srila Prabhupada. Probably because of that, his book seems somewhat theoretical. I wondered if he really knows what he is talking about, wondered how much of a pure devotee he really is, or whether he is just repeating this as any scholar might. Is he simply responding to the current social trend to meditate, trying to prove that the Catholic Church has the best form of meditation? Even if someone were to assure me that he is a realized practitioner, he's Christ-centered, Church-approved, and I am an outsider to all that. My only way "*our* only way "is with our spiritual master. I know that.

It's important, what Prabhupada said "that we can dovetail everything. The pure devotee steps down from his lofty meditation to apparently touch this world and distribute Krishna's mercy. Prabhupada said that when he described how the *maha-bhagavata* comes to the *madhyama* stage to preach. Anyway, I'm neither a *maha-bhagavata* or a *madhyama*, so this description doesn't apply to me. It is probably better for me not to consort so much with mundane things in the name of converting them to Krishna consciousness. I am already soaked in material influences, and whatever I do with them now still comes out mixed. I am only a spiritual aspirant, not one who has attained the highest platform.

One Esgic-taker to another fellow suffering from thyroidism and endemic disease, you people who kill fleas and lop off sycamore branches, who fall in love with women and have to care for your babies sleepless and crying all night, you people who worry and rant and rave, who love Lord Caitanya's teachings, who are somehow hooked on them, you are all Hare Krishna persons, and that's all there is to say about it.

Daniel O'Brien from Wexford wore a *dhoti* and *tilaka* for the first time in public. He actually rode the bus to North Ireland, and a tourist took his picture. He was riding high, then attended a conference at Inis rath. He wrote me a letter while it was going on and asked if he could recite the *pranama*, "*Satsvarupa-bhidam vande . . .*" Guess what I said?

Lofty topsoil dirt. M.'s still lopping off branches, "Don't worry," he said, "I won't cut off the branch I'm sitting on."

\* \* \*

6:23 p.m.

Since the other two were working away, electric saw singing and dirt thumping, I decided to join the spirit of work by going to the art room. I began by opening a jar of green paint to touch something up, then (since my head was clear) I jumped into my jumpsuit and was off. Listened to Srila Prabhupada on tape, a '66 *bhajana*. One jar of paint was so liquidy it ran out and down on the board, and I felt almost as if it were trickling from my own body like blood. It felt delicious. I tuned into Krishna conscious devotional feelings evoked by the *bhajan*s and painted what came. I didn't have to make the images Krishna conscious (although words popped out: *rupanuga*, Madana-mohana, Vaisnava) but simply moved my hand and arm and celebrated the colors while feeling Krishna conscious feelings. My motto is: if I am feeling Krishna conscious, then whatever I do must be right, and people will be able to see the spirit of it. If they don't, at

least I will. I will recognize the devotion I was feeling as I splashed the paint. It's another form of *bhajana*, a practice to allow myself to *feel Krishna conscious*.

Filled six drawing sheets with wet colors "first drafts. I'll have to be careful when I approach them later not to tag on too explicit forms with sharp lines. Try to preserve the original mood.

A decent day. Twenty-two pages written. Radha-Govinda. Srila Prabhupada. Live while you can in a world of suffering, relieved by transcendental knowledge.

June 30, Midnight

I could call this volume "Seeking the Easy Way." I've been thinking about that, wanting to know whether there *is* an easier way to live in Krishna consciousness with this headache syndrome. Actually, the headache state is not the worst. The worst is when I'm on the edge of getting one, the intense fragility or vulnerability that I feel. In that state, for me to read scripture, chant on beads, be Krishna conscious "sometimes those things are just too physically and mentally demanding. I can't sustain those practices when I'm feeling so fragile. And I've become interested in more direct, feeling approaches to my Krishna consciousness. Perhaps that's what I mean more than easy: finding a direct and feeling ful way to Krishna consciousness. No, that's not easy.

Anyway, "easy" is a relative term. Srila Prabhupada sankirtana "these practices are much easier than the practices we would have had to take up in Satya- or Treta-yuga. For us, the easy path is to struggle for feeling.

And look at us. Look at *me*. I need an old man's way, a way for an invalid, for one who can't spend his entire day reading *sastra* and chanting rounds. I need a way that accommodates the daydreamer, the one who imagines possibilities but can't always find his way to fulfill them. I even chant my rounds in an easy chair. I read *Slokas* on cards, hear Prabhupada's books on tape, avoid confrontation both with the material energy and with my Godbrothers. I am so weak, it seems, I can take so little. I find it hard to hear, even in letters, the outpourings of pain in other's lives. I need a way for one who wishes to extricate himself from all that he can't do and to find himself in something he has been promised he can do: love Krishna unconditionally.

Well, I like to draw and paint and use crayons, if it's easy and quickly executed. And I like to write. In writing I have developed an easy, yet strenuous, way of getting down what comes. Therefore, if I am telling you I am seeking an easy way, therefore, please know that that is a personal expression. Don't misunderstand it. But the phrase resonates in me. It doesn't suggest sloughing off or becoming a non-achiever. rather, it suggests a way in which I can actually go forward and peddle up that hill of my own *anarthas* toward a deeper, more heartfelt Krishna consciousness. So what if I have to peddle in low gear "*if that's all I can do?*" Let me be what I am. That's the easy way I seek. To practice Krishna consciousness as I am.

But let me assure you that there is still crunch, difficulty, discipline on this path. Neither can I convert the world to low gear just to make my own attempt look more worthy. All I can do is make my easy way to the top and keep moving until I get there, moving forward in Krishna consciousness toward surrender, toward the willingness to sacrifice for Krishna. I don't want to cringe when I hear that we must give up our own

interests and serve *only* Krishna's interests "as if Krishna's interests are separate from the self. But I have to find the truth of that statement and the willingness to surrender to it in myself. Why waste time beating my head against a wall that is not myself while trying to make that surrender? That's what I mean by making things easier for myself.

\* \* \*

"It should be understood that all species of life, O son of Kunti, are made possible by birth in this material nature, and that I am the seed-giving father." (Bg. 14.4) Get to know Krishna. Aspire for nothing else. Pure devotees converse with one another about Krishna. Just think, all the living entities come out according to their past deeds. It's unfortunate, the miserable lot. But within this is the good news that we are each eternal spirit soul. In the human form of life we get the chance to know who we are and who God is, and about our life's purpose. We learn about real self-interest and actual happiness.

I was thinking of speaking last Sunday to the devotees about three *mahatmas* and their prayers. I had to cancel that lecture. But would it have been relevant to most of the devotees? Is Narada too far away to consider as a friend? Srila Prabhupada? And am I and my words too little to count as important? I wanted to tell them that the fact that pure devotees have existed in history is very important to me and to all of us who want spiritual life. These pure devotees have set a standard for us and given us a path. I could say that with enthusiasm. Think of Lord Caitanya, Rupa Gosvami, Madhavendra Puri "their intense, exclusive desire to serve and love Krishna, and their renunciation of all else. That is what the transcendental path is. It's beyond us "we can't imitate it "but the great souls can be our heroes. Perhaps the devotees would agree with me while I spoke, but after the talk, would we each subside to forgetting that such souls are our best friends? Because we seem to need constant upliftment. Where is Lord Krishna in our lives, actually?

"The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (Bg. 10.9) *Mahatmas* are engaged twenty-four hours a day in glorifying the Lord's qualities and pastimes. "Their hearts and souls are constantly submerged in Krishna, and they take pleasure in discussing Him with other devotees." Srila Prabhupada states that in the preliminary stage, the devotees "relish the transcendental pleasure from the service itself, and in the mature stage they are actually situated in love of God."

Getting back to the easy way. The dictionary presents the gamut of meanings for *easy*. I like these: "Free from constraint, not stiff, awkward, or embarrassed." I don't mean this: "Fond of comfort, ease, or idleness." Although I suppose something could be said for idleness if it gives us room to think of Krishna in an otherwise busy life. "Freedom from pain, care, or anxiety." Tolerant, undemanding, easy-going, an easy disposition. It also means sexually available "again, nothing to do with me.

Therese of Lisieux speaks of the little way of spiritual childhood. She and Srila Prabhupada give the example of taking the elevator rather than walking up the stairs. Or

we can think of hitching a bicycle to the back of a truck "although that soon becomes a hazardous venture!

\* \* \*

Write after Puja

*Pujari, Pretend You are Me*

*Pujari*, where have you been? Are you better today? I heard you woke up at 10:30 p.m. last night and couldn't get back to sleep.

Oh, what does it matter, these human details? I'm spirit soul, and I can never be without the Deity of my heart. That's the nature of a *pujari*.

Your *kaupins* are hamstrung, and you look weary. You suspect your assistants. They (people in the temple) are going this way and that, pulled by the currents, but you are a steady, menial *pujari*.

Who will appreciate your work? Only a coworker aficionado worshiper. The brown and gold dresses, the exact folds of Her skirt, what you heard from Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Bhajana-rahasya* "you know your self by listening in your own mood. I'm sorry there's nothing to be added to that with a pen.

School yard in city surrounded by high metal mesh fence. Kids trade drugs on both sides of the handball court. Thoughts float up as our *pujari* worships. He pushes them aside. He prays to access his remembrance of the Lord, and he prays for purity.

Tell us, *pujari*, were you born in Kansas City, Missouri? Was your first glimpse of water the holy Mississippi? No? Then what?

It doesn't matter. Radha and Krishna and

Radha

beautiful dresses

and Prabhupada too.

O *pujari*, if the electric power stayed off . . . he reached for the old-fashioned, curved candleholder and a candle. He wanted to paint but couldn't get messed up; a *pujari* must be clean.

Lord, there's a dead rose on Your altar, and the *pujari* let it remain because it still looks pretty. There is a bookstand and a book in front of Srila Prabhupada during the hours he uses for translation. Everyone has a cup of water. There's also a small wooden carving of Gauranga, hand held in benediction, to encompass His mood in the Gambhira.

I forgot to turn on the timer, and he forgot to turn off the steam bath. I'm just being wordy, so please forgive me. This is what the *pujari* writes in his notebook while standing in front of the Deity curtain: "SDG wants to come to Gita-nagari for meetings in January. Asks permission. Write him back after consulting. Make conditions. Need more *pujaris*."

Oh boy. Ink is jet *noir*. O Krishna, You sure look nice today, You enter the forest with Balarama and the other boys. You wear a *karnikara* flower behind Your ear and play Your magical flute. The *gopis* see You as the perfection of their eyes. The demigods and sages at rajasuya said that You are the epitome of the creator's craftsmanship. *Vipralambha, purva-raga* "Your pastimes change whenever You wish to

feel another type of ecstasy. Each note in Your flute song could last a fortnight. O Krishna, please make Yourself accessible to me.

The *pujari* said to worship Govinda, Govardhana. Now the *pujari* is all right, I believe. He'll have to wrestle . . . The cowherd boys and Krishna come home early in the evening, and *prasada* is brought from Srimati Radharani. Krishna's remnants are then delivered to Her. Krishna goes to the cowshed to milk, and His mother calls Him in for dinner. I wish I may always recall such pastimes.

*Pujari* is silent in head as daylight permeates the sky and land becomes visible again. Soon it will be time to hurry out and take a walk.

But there is something he wants to say or feel but can't. All he can do, I guess, is go on with his duty. No need to let the mind branch out. In his notebook:

Krishna is God and I don't want  
to be a rascal blasphemer.

I want the easy way  
to serve  
to work  
to pray.

No doggerel "let praises flow.

See the floating logs joined in the river Fraser? I remember that sight as my plane would descend over Vancouver. I still see it in my mind's eye, and remember the feeling I had, knowing that immigration might detain me. They never stopped me, though, and several times I made it to Saranagati to write. Even if they had stopped me, I would have gone on writing. In the shelter of Radha-Govinda.

Krishna's thick, brown, see-through cloth bordered in gold *jari*. He carries that beautiful flute and stick. And I'm sorry I can't remember that dream that mixed Krishna and the devotees with other convoluted thoughts, all too far away now to make much impression on my psyche. O Krishna, Hare Krishna. It was convoluted, but Krishna, You appeared in my dream. Thank You.

Now every time I go out, I'll have to see that maimed sycamore. "He will have to come back next life as half a sycamore tree," Ani announced. *Pujari*, pretend to be me. Go out and meet the morning. Krishna says He makes everything happen, although we have individual free will. Understand it, but know too that it's past understanding. Looked at each other. "I know you are afraid to die," his eyes said. "That's why you joke about it." Amen. I mean, Hare Krishna.

-

5:24 a.m.

Lots of fat, slimy slugs on the road this morning. Imagine a boy so loving and nonviolent that he came out in the morning and carried all the slugs off the road so they wouldn't be mashed by cars. Me? I think, "Don't meddle."

Fleecy clouds moving over the bowl-shaped hills and the green-patterned, partitioned fields. Sheep and cows still lying down, their night not quite over. Foxgloves stand like erect sentinels. I clump-clump down the road thinking plenty of thoughts about people,

people, and more people. When I approach the bridge, can I offload all that just as that  
dump truck offloaded the topsoil over our wall?

\* \* \*

Do You Know What You are Doing?  
& You know I walked and talked and it  
was a pleasant way to go

\* \* \*

spying on cows who eyed me back  
pushed up against the walls to  
better study who I was. They mistook

\* \* \*

me for another as I clumped down  
the narrow macadam-topped road  
to Tralee. Down I walked  
chanting rounds as round as  
Rubber tires, thinking always  
of that chopped up tree he  
thought nothing of except  
his own nerves "precarious up there  
with an electric saw in his hands. "

\* \* \*

I Want It Easy  
& He is we, weevil we is  
want to be good. Wrote letter  
as directed by Hawaiian T.P.,  
telling a disciple to stop selling  
in their spot. I wrote that letter  
but never heard  
a word back. Not  
one.

\* \* \*

Hat and bills and  
quills and me the only one.  
My charcoal vest  
and a little man "I'll color his  
head pink. Because

we wants it easy  
easy as pie as  
cutey pie.  
O lost disciple, please write to me  
and say you'll like me and mine and  
I'll do the same for you  
thoughtfully too  
as soon as I can dig up  
some thoughts to fit with *sastra*  
"I'll send them.

\* \* \*

The vernacular ornithicular  
the fellow I mean the  
sparrow pecks at the fresh mound  
of dirt looking for worms and that's  
the way life is. No harpsichords  
playing sonatas can change it. We  
turn our backs on some (most)  
violence and call on our armies  
when we need  
to pray for relief. "

\* \* \*

8:34 a.m.

"O learned Suta Gosvami! Please continue to explain such topics to us because we are all eager to hear. Besides that, topics which result in the discussion of the Lord Hari should certainly be discussed in the assembly of devotees." (*Bhag.* 2.3.14)

Contain yourself. You'll get all kinds of reactions to things you do, such as lending nondevotee poetry books to devotees. They'll write their own poems and show them to you. They'll expect you to respond. The poems will work into your mind when you want to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Distraction.

Srila Prabhupada repeats his point as if I were about to forget it. "As we have already quoted above from *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu* of Rupa Gosvami, even mundane things, if dovetailed in the service of the Lord Sri Krishna, are accepted as transcendental." Srila Prabhupada refers to *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* as examples of writings that use mundane interest for a transcendental purpose, and adds that such books should be discussed in devotee company. I would add, "And read with his purports." Prabhupada calls the devotees *paramahamsas*, "and they are like the swans, who know the art of sucking milk out of a mixture of milk and water."

While reading, I heard M.'s *japa* vibrating through the floorboards. I asked him to stop. Silence is another challenge. Can I really be alone? Silence is golden if I can enter it without fear or doubt.

"Maharaja Pariksit, the grandson of the Pandavas, was from his very childhood a great devotee of the Lord. Even while playing with dolls, he used to worship Lord Krishna by imitating the worship of the family Deity." (*Bhag.* 2.3.15) This makes me think of the "Abhay" film and Srila Prabhupada receiving Radha-Krishna *murtis*. I thought of the little boy who played the part in the film, and wondered how they did the casting "the Indian version of the film industry "and how a boy could be spoiled even while playing Abhay because he might think of himself as a beautiful actor. His ambition and material desire would kill his spirit.

In the purport to this verse, Srila Prabhupada mentions that he learned to worship Lord Krishna by imitating his father's Deity worship. He also observed festivals, which his father encouraged him to do. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati also received inspiration from his great Vaisnava father, Thakura Bhaktivinoda. "That is the way of all lucky Vaisnava families."

Write it down. *Sadhana-siddhas* we may all become, as Narada did, through association. I was low; he picked me up. After all these years. That I am so senior in ISKCON is, in one sense, an embarrassment, because after all this time I still don't love Radha-Govinda in the way the great devotees love Them, and neither have I renounced all other interests. Face it; admit it. And admit that it's not as easy to attain as I once thought. Am I willing to admit that devotees with fewer years' service may have surpassed me? Yes, why not admit it? Because it doesn't matter, ultimately. No matter what, I still have my own ticket marked "Admit One." All I have to do is hold on to it.

The only possible topic in the conversation between two great devotees like Maharaja Pariksit and Sukadeva Gosvami was *bhakti-yoga*, and to understand *bhakti* is the only purpose of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

\* \* \*

9:45 a.m.

There is no real easy way.

Then what?

Routine hiatus.

Hyannisport.

Merry man runs out of ink and puts in a refill. Writes the saga of a man who climbed Mount Everest in his bare feet of spirit never, who climbs up one flight of stairs to rest on his orthopedic pillow.

How about from Christ to Krishna? Or I should say he climbed from Satan to Krishna "to Swamiji "he

was saved

on the Lower East Side.

Or thirty-three years after LSD, he recounts his days in the ISKCON brigade. Slow-down years of SDG, who diverts visits just like he diverts

desires

hiding amid blades of grass, waiting

for seedlings to grow

in devotion.

Hey, I could play with some of these images. But getting a good title early on when writing a new volume helps to shape it. Don't play it out all the way. Try to delay the final choice "keep trying them on before the full length mirror like sports jackets in the men's department. How about the black tweed or the houndstooth? No brass buttons! Them's for jerks! I'm a *sannyasi* and always wear the same saffron *khadi*.

I saw you walk past my house wearing your green L. L. Bean rain jacket with matching pants and wellies. You sure were outfitted for rain. But it wasn't raining. And I saw you take out that little tape recorder, the one with the red light on it. Were you interviewing yourself? Taking yourself completely seriously? Why were you talking into that machine? Are you eccentric? I mean, why should any man want to talk into a machine while he's out by himself taking a walk?

So said the man behind the blinds to his consort, Heaven McGivens. They come down from Dublin for the weekends, and in the summer, for extended vacations. What do they do when they're here? They mow their lawn. At least that's all I can see.

They didn't know that I was thinking I could become a devotee in some easy, direct-feeling way. That was what I was talking about to myself out there. They also don't know that I only have the standard methods of *bhakti* with which to work. I can't really claim that anything is easier or more difficult. I spoke about that too "and how I must both write and read in small increments. And answer letters. And watch my aches, check off my state of being in several different logs, keep the health diary, the *sadhana* journal, the calendar to be filled with blue, red, or pink checks.

O Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. The pilot light, Pilot pen, pilot who leads the great warship into the harbor channel. We've come home again. Nickel for your thoughts in port.

\* \* \*

12:33 p.m.

M. just walked in and told me that a Godbrother is in Dublin and would like to meet me. It will give me a chance to write it out honestly, as it happens, and not couch it in quaint statements suitable for publishing. Anyway, this Godbrother is a gentleman and a Vaisnava, and I'm open to see him. I don't want him to go out of his way, however. Perhaps he will come tomorrow. The last time this brother was in Ireland, we met twice over lunch and talked openly. This time I will see him only once, and I don't know what I can do to rise to the occasion. Already I feel a little spark of, "Yes, I'm an advanced soul, an older devotee. Maybe I can impart something valuable to him." Why think such crap? Why not acknowledge that he's at least equal but probably better than I am? After all, he takes on such burdens for Srila Prabhupada. He is obviously expert at getting Prabhupada's mercy.

But we won't meet in this house. Third day in a row with no headache. If one comes tomorrow, I'll pop a pill, smile (falsely), and meet him on the chin, so to speak.

\* \* \*

12:30 p.m.

Find out soon when meeting will be. I have rehearsed my opening lines.

Where do you live?

("In Your eyes," Krishna told Radha.)

At Uddhava's house.

Oh, but it's so small! You live with his family?

He has two houses.

Etc.

Your health?

Not good. On any day. I take medication to control the pain, but only three times a week. Otherwise, I suffer.

I see. Travel?

No. Except once a week to Dublin to lecture. If I'm able. I had to cancel last Sunday's lecture, though.

I'll feel my way through the sentences. Then I'll ask him about his trip to India: did it change his life? And what about that *Bhagavad-gita* book?

What personal and spiritual things could I reveal? Not my struggles to overcome distaste and doubt. What quality discussion? It's good to write like this; it leads to good.

\* \* \*

2:35 p.m.

No meeting with my Godbrother today; he can't make it out here. We're scheduled to have lunch and a meeting together in Dublin next Sunday. So, then what will I do with my day? Can I read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* or write a note to my local congressman? What, I don't have one? I reside in Ireland, although I am an American citizen. Not only that, my allegiance is to the spiritual world. Maybe I could write to Krishna.

Dear Lord, You know me better than I know myself. Some say it's babble to talk to God, since He already knows everything. Therefore, they say, the best thing we can do is to enter the silence and be with Him. That is why people practice centering prayer. The Vaisnavas have a different recommendation: call on God's holy names, hear of His words and activities from *Sastra*, and yes, speak your mind to Him. Some of it may be babble, but if we are sincerely aspiring for real affection from our best friend and Supreme Lord, He will not tell us, "Don't babble; be silent and know that I am God."

\* \* \*

3:00 p.m.

Folks, I've decided to go on writing. After all, I have a heartbeat and a pen, and I learned how to write when I was a boy. I never knew then that it would become an extremely important practice for me. I was forced to write when I was at school, but I didn't produce much. Everything I wrote was covered over in red ink by the teacher, so it wasn't very enlivening. I also had to write one or two letters a year, very short, to uncles and aunts to thank them for gifts, while my mother looked over my shoulder telling me

what to include. Now I fill up seemingly endless pages. Me and Captain Scott; me and Shakespeare; no speech writer, me, but a diarist. I'm in competition with anyone who ever wrote or who writes or who will write. I'm in league with them. I'm the only one who writes like this.

Little noises outside where they are making the garden happen. The flowers will become my followers and I theirs, and we will watch each other every day to see if we are growing. Life is that sweet.

\* \* \*

3:22 p.m.

Will you be worthy of the garden they are building and the wall that's already built? What do I have to do to earn it? Just live here, stay here, and not travel too much. I have to be a satisfied *sadhu* and give good lectures.

Do I have to get headaches?

No, we will cure you of them through this world-famous homeopathic doctor if you will only give up your allopathic pills and do what he says for the next three hundred years. Slowly but surely you will painfully recoveryour normal, dilapidated health.

Seriously, I am hoping to be on top of the situation by writing twenty pages a day. That's how anyone gets to the figurative top of Mount Everest.

Hey, you keep mentioning that. I heard there's a best-seller out there called *Into Thin Air*. Why don't you read it and satisfy your curiosity?

No, I already know what it will probably be like. It couldn't be better than that book I read years ago while preparing to write *Gurudeva and Nimai*. That book was called *Alive!*, and it was the true account of the people who survived six weeks in the snowy Andes by eating the flesh of their own dead. This book couldn't be better than that for sheer adventure, getting through, and making the decision to live or to die, the cold closing in along with one another's smells and short tempers.

Anyway, right now I'm already giving a reading (and marking corrections) to *Sacrifice for the Bhagavatam*, written at this time last year. I'm counting it as equal to reading the *Bhagavatam* because that particular volume of EJW is mostly a writing-while-reading experience. I am not good at golf or drinking German beer or curing Irish nettle stings, but I can sacrifice my life for the *Bhagavatam*.

By the way, Willie Snipplesnort contracted hay fever and decided to live only on dry couscous for a few weeks. Then his aunt visited him from Des Moines. It caused a problem, because she expected him to eat her truffles. He wanted to behave, so he consulted the *dharma-Sastras*. In one ancient commentary he read, "Better to sacrifice the pleasure of an aunt for the higher truth of conforming to scriptural readings." Amazing how the ancient writers had anticipated his exact predicament. He showed the passage to his aunt, but she remained noncommittal. She began to talk instead about going out to see the town. Could he arrange for it?

But he didn't want to go. He took her to Govinda's, and a woman there agreed to show Aunt Trifle St. Kevin's monastery cell and other truncheons wielded by the Old Powers. Then Willie went back to his cave and drew designs on the walls.

Hare Krishna. I hear the wind. What day of the week is it? Who am I? I can write if I am willing to be silly and not as serious-faced as someone ought to be at my age. I can write if I forget, too, or if I am not afraid to add to the tons of unnecessary words already in existence in this world. I won't write if it displeases my spiritual master. A writer must learn to careen to the bottom of the page. After that, he has the afternoon to himself.

To do what?

My coach puts his arm around my shoulder and hands me my beads, saying, "You are fortunate to still have your original beads. Now go ahead and chant on them. But don't go outside. Too many people working out there. You can pace back and forth in your room if you want to walk."

Before taking the coach's advice, I open the window and make small talk with the man with the wheelbarrow and the wrist brace. I want to show him I care. Now I can't close the window. I think I broke it. That's how entanglement works.

\* \* \*

5:43 p.m.

Poem writ, O Krishna. Soaring singers despite wars, she said Baroque singers were, but as Kali-yuga progresses, more dissonance and human pain *in* the music. Kali-yuga evolves.

Good night kisses to the air. New trees planted. rest, rest. I'd like to drift off. Krishna is calling.

Why so little intake of *sastra* today? Why so unable to pray? Prayer requires poetic imagination and loving transcendental *vision* (not ordinary) "to receive and serve Krishna. Krishna, You are the ocean in which I want to drown. You are the strong boat, the carrier, the swift deliverer, and I trust You.

July 1, 12:05 a.m.

Doubts never seem to go away. Sometimes they burn like a low flame, but still they don't go away. What can I do but allow them to live? Call that an act of self-examination or self-honesty. If a Godbrother comes and I want to have quality conversation with him, I'm not likely to bring this particular point into the conversation. How would I present it? I don't want him to go away thinking, "Satsvarupa is having doubts about the philosophy." Of course, everyone acknowledges personal shortcomings. I don't claim any of us are completely transcendental. For example, the very Godbrother I am to meet on Sunday lectures to devotees that Bg. 14.26 doesn't apply to us. We are not above the modes; we are simply trying to reach the mode of goodness.

But I'm just talking about a personal lack of love, of intimacy. It's something between Krishna and me. A reader of my writing can hear the lament "it seems all right to express it here "but not over lunch with a brother. What would I say, "I'm suffering from a spiritual wound"?

I *am* able to feel good when I read in a submissive and awake mood, but that doesn't come routinely. My "wound," however, ought to be treated at any time of the day that it hurts, even if it's not a peak reading time. I have faith in hearing. Out of all the things I

could do, reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is one of the easiest. I like to find a way to tune in personally and be touched. Yet I also try to control my life so that there is as little stress as possible. I may be afraid that too much surrender would be too stressful.

\* \* \*

Madhu received his green card, but it isn't green. Still, he now has U.S. residency. He smiled and wanted to celebrate or use it, because he had worked so hard to get it. I said, "It's like so many things in the material world. Once you get it, you don't really experience satisfaction." Because we have no plan to live in the U.S. Then he blurted out that some health clinic said County Wicklow has a high rate of cancer and thyroidism because this part of the country is receiving polluted air from an atomic energy plant on Britain's west coast. Why did he tell me that? Was he trying to suggest we should move to America? And will there not be polluted air, violence, boom box noise, and increased communication within ISKCON? I guess it's right to remain detached from this residence, even as the flower beds and trees move into the garden.

\* \* \*

If we engage in Krishna consciousness, we can easily overcome the modes of nature. Krishna's forms are fully transcendental, full of knowledge, bliss, and eternity. Therefore connection to Him through service makes us transcendental.

Lament: Everything I read seems theoretical. I believe that it was experienced by Vaisnava saints, and that's why I want to read some of their prayers. I should always try, when speaking to audiences, to be aware of how a preacher may lapse into the theoretical. Make it clear that there is a difference between theory and realization. Faith is realization, experience.

I think I feel a link between the anticipation of headache (and the desire to seek relief from it) and the onset of the feeling that I don't love Krishna. Does the stress of one bring on the other?

The living being is part and parcel of Krishna, and in devotional service he acquires equality with Krishna, just as a piece of gold is equal, in a sense, with the entire gold mine. "If one is not situated in the same transcendental position with the Lord, one cannot serve the Supreme Lord." (Bg. 14.26, purport)

Hesitating to write the mix. Why? I think, "Let me at least skip lines before I jump from *Bhagavad-gita* to my hesitation." But let me not bother. It's just you and me here, and we're old friends. You already know that my intention is to become Krishna conscious in truth.

Okay. So here's what I'm thinking about: the new medicines they want to send me from America. Is it legal to send prescription drugs through the mail? June just ended, and out of eleven Esgics consumed, only six were effective. That's why we're trying something new "if it can be shipped.

Become one with Brahman? " . . . I am the basis of the impersonal Brahman, who is immortal, imperishable and eternal and is the constitutional position of ultimate happiness." (Bg. 14.27)

Imagine talking to a brother like this: "I'd like to express something to you about my Krishna consciousness. I yearn to attain something deep, but I feel it eludes me. I'm also attached to the idea of self-honesty. I feel a kind of existential *lacking*. I always enter that awareness when I see it in myself. In one sense, it spoils the possible ecstasy I could be feeling. It's like a doubt, although not an intellectual one. I just . . . maybe it's a kind of humility, but maybe not. Is this the despair we ought to feel when Lord Caitanya speaks for us, 'I don't have any love for Krishna?'"

"Perhaps we *all* feel like this. *Do* we? I know all the Godbrothers with whom I speak express awareness of personal shortcomings. That's the first and most ready perception we have of our so-called Krishna consciousness, isn't it? So what I'm saying is obvious. But I just thought I'd mention it. At the same time, I'm becoming more attached to thinking about it. I guess I could put that more positively: I don't want material consciousness. I want whatever Krishna consciousness I can get, even if it is based on despair."

Let him respond to that. Is it polite, friendly conversation among Godbrothers? I mean, usually one doesn't plunge into topics of despair over lunch with someone seen only briefly once a year.

\* \* \*

#### Write after Puja

"Live in Vrndavana!"

A *sadhu* told the *pujari* he should live in Vrndavana. "roll in the dust and ask Srimati Radharani to let you stay and serve Her there," he said.

"But . . ." Whatever argument our *pujari* gave was defeated by the *sadhu*, because who can deny that living in Vrndavana is the best thing anyone could do?

No, our *pujari* couldn't argue with a preacher like that. Still, he had a hard time giving up his other reality, the hope to avoid untruth in himself, the ISKCON vise that exists for him there, his need for privacy. He decided to write and ask his guru. He also decided to ask his doctor. The doctor told him to send blood samples; the guru didn't give a clear answer. It seemed he was willing to accept other ideas. Someone wrote from Queensland, someone else spoke rote verses. We dropped from heaven as rain, as grain. That's what he said.

Dear *sadhu*, while you're in Vraja, could you buy my radhika another *candrika*?

"Look! Look at them! Your eyes are at Krishna's lotus feet." I say the words "lotus feet," aware that they have become ISKCON jargon and that I have little concern for what they mean. Words can fall so short in the jaded mind. They fill us with smirk and innuendo, and they sometimes leave us on the verge of a vulgar double *entendre*.

Oh, leave it all behind! Go to live in harsh Vrndavana with the monkey gangs, the large Radha-kunda turtles, and the homesick guests. Where's the Swami's group? Hiccup. The essence is *bhajana*, and I can do it here just as well as there. Or so I hope.

I'm a writer, I told him.

Well, that's the *best* reason for going to Vrndavana. Even your free-writing will be in the Vraja mood. Your senses will pick up the most divine elements. You certainly can't find such impressions in Pittsburgh or Morocco. Too mundane.

See how he defeats our *pujari*? But my reality is to be in a quiet place alone, relaxed, living in a room with things just as I want them and a friendly book collection. Now they're putting in a garden. And *nobody bothers me*. Vrndavana is so social. No chance to be alone to meditate or do anything else.

"*Pujari*, would you like to join with some of us for *bhajan*s tonight?"

"All right, but let me first take off the Lord's rings and earrings.

I was saying, "I'm a writer and that *bhajana* "well, I *can* do it here too. Not only in India." But he's right, and now I'm confused.

Banging again and again on the door. They want it. repeating the mix. Hare Krishna. *Pujari*, look up to Radha and Krishna in Their maroon-pink words

I mean

words ain't colored. His turban, His

arms, a metal stain on His base.

Srila Prabhupada, it's not so cold today.

The Deity is kind, but let's not try to squeeze something out beyond our own realization. Live life as it comes and pray for depth.

I heard the sublime words of *Bhajana-rahasya* while I did the service. I also heard the *gopis* talk to Krishna as Bhaktivinoda Thakura relates it: "Our hearts are Vrndavana. We think of You always. Come back to Vrndavana." Like that. He spoke to them, then embraced them when they approach Him at Kuruksetra. Others were astounded to see just how much He loved those *gopis*. In another verse, they told Him they were only household women, not *yogis* or *karmis*. "Therefore, please come back to Vrndavana. We barely know You here."

So nice. Much of it was quoted from the verses Prabhupada has translated and given in his purports.

*Pujari*, you got

*Ujjvala-nilamani* on the brain

*japa* a train of thought

while you obey the circular. He told my disciple, "Ujjvala, quit Los Angeles, New Dvaraka, quit Mauritius, and both of you come and live in Vrndavana." But who's he to know what's best for any of us?

An alpha poem on *puja*:

\* \* \*

Please be proud.

You know happiness.

Geez, I'm a Hare Krishna

always, even in my sleep.

\* \* \*

He gives sweets to his friends. They want something substantial. Want one that rhymes?

But first I want to write this:

I went out for a dawn walk on a Gita-nagari forest lane. Thought I would be back on time, imagined I was on a Vraja *parikrama*. So much time on those walks, but thorns in the feet too. Beautiful Yamuna, Govardhana, although it's all Pennsylvania. The groundwork of a happy man.

Alpha poem on Prabhupada:

\* \* \*

Please master  
reason with us  
always we obeyed you  
but now we are old  
Hare Hare they mock us  
you want to know, "What are you doing?"  
Papa, please accept my word.  
Add it to each day  
Dad, I am your old son who  
ain't doing much but loves you.

\* \* \*

And on Krishna:

-

5:20 a.m.

I forgive Madhu for cutting the sycamore in half, but I feel offended every time I see it now. It makes me think he's insensitive. Couldn't he have protected his roof in some other way? All the attempts we are making to beautify the yard are off-set by the hideous, lopped-off limbs of the tree. The tree looks like a dismembered person, wounded and bleeding.

It reminds me of people who kill cows and eat meat but who otherwise surround themselves with niceties. They think the violence unimportant. Like Mrgari: "What you see is all right. It's how my father taught me." I forgive him, and I'll try to look the other way when I see that tree. After all, it's still alive. I haven't said much to Madhu about it, and I don't think I will until I feel I really do forgive him. I don't want to simply vent. The poor guy is suffering this morning with puffy, hay-fevered eyes. We *all* suffer. But why do we assign so much more importance to the suffering of the humans than to the plants?

\* \* \*

Calm Down  
& Calm down firefly the  
flies land on the noses  
of cows and castrated bulls,

the grasses suffer,  
bent over but not groaning,  
all entities suffering the intolerance  
of others.

\* \* \*

Those who wail those who  
make sounds harmonious  
measured music, exultant refusal to  
sorrow too much but drying  
tears or singing with them . . .

\* \* \*

Calm morning, bright lamp  
to write head in hand  
measured in service to the  
Lord. Give me more time and  
I'll write letters  
to soldiers and ladies,  
give cheer. "

\* \* \*

Grip the Earth and Guru's Teaching  
& The flower called busy lizzie is beside  
herself in the loam-padded  
earth "rich brown "and the  
begonias now have a grip. A woman  
with a green thumb  
planted them and my  
eyes have bent over and touched  
their petals, grabbed  
hold of the shrub tags and  
Read, "This is a begonia," or,  
"Pansy," because  
a man has got to  
stake out what's rooting  
in his rain-soaked yard.

\* \* \*

These flowers give me plenty of  
Reasons to stay right here  
and write the routine

sonnets flowing.  
Krishna, I found You today. You  
said, "I am the basis  
of impersonal Brahman," but  
You are also the crown of  
men, Your Radha  
the best, here  
Vrndavana  
and why should I doubt  
what I learned in Your temple? "

\* \* \*

8:24 a.m.

"Both by rising and by setting, the sun decreases the duration of life of everyone, except one who utilizes the time by discussing topics of the all-good Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 2.3.17) Let's hear how this is so. Does that mean if one constantly discussed Krishna consciousness, he'd never grow old and die? He can't mean that. Then what?

By hearing *Sastra*, we awaken self-realization. We understand that we are not the body but spirit soul.

But I can't get the sycamore tree off my mind. The ugly act, the ugly hurt, the *deformed* remains of that tree. The tree lingers on like a man who has lost an arm. Did it have to be? Maybe it did. A practical man who has gone to great effort and expense to build a splendid thatched roof can't let any old tree simply ruin it with its ooze. Anyway, the tree has to live with it now, no matter how much I discuss what might have been. I didn't oppose him enough. M. is living with it too, but without remorse. Will my telling him how I feel force him to feel it? Oh, what's the point. Why don't I just live with what he did? Don't be sentimental. If I am going to grieve over the tree's pain, there are enough such suffering entities out there to drown me in sorrow. Have I overlooked the fate of the local sheep and cows? The tree is even less sentient than those dumb animals. Still, even Srila Prabhupada was angry when we cut down the big tree in Dallas.

"Endeavors in devotional service are never baffled. Nor is there failure. A slight beginning of such activities is sufficient even to deliver a person from the great ocean of material fears." (*Bg.* 2.40 as quoted in purport)

"Aural realization of the transcendental messages implies total realization, just as fructification of one part of a tree implies fructification of all other parts." (*Bhag.* 2.3.17, purport)

It means he doesn't die; he goes back to Godhead. The time he spends in *Sravanam* goes to his eternal account.

Pain drives me to speak. But *vaco vegam*. Use the urge to speak to talk about Krishna. Srila Prabhupada said the desire one has to erect a big building can be used to build a beautiful temple for Krishna. The work will be the same, but the outcome will be different.

This *ayur harati* verse ought to convince us to spend our time hearing and chanting. If we find that difficult, then search for the easy way: "A devotee's old age or disease in the present life is but an impetus to such guaranteed eternal life." (*Bhag.* 2.3.17, purport)

*Taravah kim na jivanti*: "Do the trees not live?" (*Bhag.* 2.3.18)

"One may doubt that trees have life because they do not breathe. But modern scientists like Bose have already proved that there is life in plants, so breathing is no sign of actual life." The argument goes on: trees and humans are similar to some degree. At least they both exist, and the tree can outlive the man (unless the man cuts it down). So the real meaning of life can only be realized in the human form. That is, self-awareness leading to Krishna consciousness.

\* \* \*

9:12 a.m.

When my hand goes free to draw, I make living shapes, combinations of animals and humans. The heads are misshapen, not like any beast or human we know. I make each one different. Perhaps one will have a large mane, or a spike sticking out the top. But often it has one head, two arms, two legs. Probably ninety percent of my drawings are male. In one, artistic streaks and loops emanate from its mouth, resembling speech, song, thought, or dream. The subtle form materializes into shape. I color it brightly.

Do I draw these human-beasts because I feel human-beastish inside? I mean, I just drew a person with burnt out eye sockets "the picture of headache pain. Whatever this man sees, whatever state he is in even when free of headaches, the eye sockets still see with the eyes of a headacher. True? Then what about the beast-animals? Those are different.

But I want to say something here about seeing with the eyes of a headacher and how that comes out when I draw. Knowing that I don't have something as deadly as cancer or AIDS, I tend to belittle my condition as if it's nothing at all. I'm grateful it's not life-threatening. At the same time, I have to admit that it really diminishes my quality of life, at least externally. It confines me in many ways. I only pray that I can use it internally to expand my outlook rather than contract it.

\* \* \*

I dreamt the other day that I came out of a box. Either I was a Prabhupada *murti* or I was imitating a Prabhupada *murti*. This *murti* walked just like Prabhupada did in life. He went up to the altar and took *caranamrta*. Someone was crying excited tears, but I think it was me. Within myself I felt the urge to put an end to all this play-acting or imitating of Prabhupada and get back to my box. I wanted to return to the "real" state of being the inner statue, in the box. The only thought that comes to mind now about this dream is that it is another way of desiring to be free of sham. Imitative feelings of appreciation for Prabhupada by myself and many followers "where do they lead us?

\* \* \*

I had another dream too. This time, I was a schoolteacher. I criticized one of the children, and he began to cry. I hugged him and told him that it's hard to take such instruction, yet sometimes a teacher has to give difficult instructions to students. It doesn't mean the teacher doesn't love them. I told the child he had nice qualities and that I liked him. I meant it. I didn't know this boy in real life, but I woke up while I was smelling his head. I could still almost smell his head while I was awake. Because this young child did have good qualities. He was faithful, serious, and always prepared for his lessons. No nonsense.

\* \* \*

9:44 a.m.

Twinge in eye. Waiting for it to build before I take a pill. Frequent urination these days; the urge comes not from the kidneys but the prostate gland.

Yeah? So what? Keep writing.

Mastercard, Visa "credit cards both. Charge it up! Nice sensations: pain going down. reading and feeling it's entering into my blood. *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, I mean. Expressing something in writing. Hunger and knowing lunch is coming. Comfort of no meetings or obligations. (These are mental states rather than sensations.) Okay, capturing a dream and wanting to, getting on to something like a little perkiness to write. Satisfaction that a manuscript of mine reads substantially and easily. Another drawing.

\* \* \*

12:40 p.m.

Proofreading the eighth volume of EJW, *Sacrifice for the Bhagavatam*. I was reading more in those days. Now I'm doing more writing. Shrunk up. More pills now, more pain then, and more sidelined. We all go through cycles.

Waiting for lunch. It takes no more than a minute to say the prayers three times before the Deities. Often I glance at what's on Their plates, then look down again. Glance at Them instead. Krishna's broad face, handsomeness, Radha's attractive "inner" look "They are both charming and well-dressed. My day is about to turn the corner. Only a few hours left in the afternoon. M. goes into town this afternoon for his weekly singing night at Govinda's.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

"One who has not listened to the messages about the prowess and marvelous acts of the Personality of Godhead and has not sung or chanted loudly the worthy songs about the Lord is to be considered to possess earholes like the holes of snakes and the tongue like the tongue of a frog." (*Bhag.* 2.3.20)

Devotional service is rendered with all the senses and bodily parts. The Supreme Lord has senses just like His devotees. Using the senses means total service. But our senses must be purified. We purify them by *using* them (under the direction of guru, *sastra*, and *sadhu*) in His service. We use them in a service mood, and not in a

mood of sense gratification. A nice challenge for us, and an invitation to go all-out for Krishna. Don't accept these words blindly; understand them logically and with your heart. Engage all you have and all you are in Krishna consciousness.

By hearing about Krishna, we can realize that His *arca-murti* in the temple is Krishna Himself. Then we will agree to bow down before Him.

The perfectional stage of devotional service is attained by taking the foot dust of a pure devotee onto your head, or in other words, by serving and following his instructions. "The person who has not at any time received the dust of the feet of the Lord's pure devotee upon his head is certainly a dead body." (*Bhag.* 2.3.23)

Sounds to interrupt silence. The neighbor (cattleman) is driving around the border of our land in a tractor with an attachment that pokes holes in the ground. He's preparing to put in a new electric fence. So I am being treated to the sounds of pounding and a tractor. Why? So this man can keep his curious and intelligent animals from escaping their lot. He needs them to stay where they are until he can get around to killing them when they are in the right condition for the demands of the beef market.

\* \* \*

3:41 p.m.

Here we are in Ireland, and doubts can creep in. What am I doing here? Suddenly I can feel I am in the wrong place. I act (think) as if I have no bar from headaches and say, "Well, why don't I plan an extensive preaching tour? Start with Russia. Get GBC permission. Or at least tour all the temples in England. Then fly to America." Yes, and why confine myself to temples? Go into the wilds of the land and convert the people there. Or go back to the colleges. I can relate to the younger generation, can't I? I'm only sixty years old. Get out there and go. risk everything for Krishna."

These doubts, these voices arise because I don't want to be one of those who retires from active devotional service. I certainly don't want to be like Dhrtarastha, an old man who wanted only material comfort in his last days no matter how much that taxed his honor. Vidura pulled him out. Will someone pull me out? No, probably not, because I wouldn't listen. Maybe I'm too proud.

But why am I saying such things? They are unfair self-accusations. I know I can't go running around all over the place. I just can't. I'd collapse. I am forced to "retire." So excuse me for venting my frustration at that truth. It comes sometimes because I feel uneasy, knowing I live in the heart of the land of cow slaughter. Ireland is not a pious country being grazed by the skinny white cows of Vrndavana. These cows are fat and healthy "and destined to die.

Krishna, Krishna, let me not go on and on about my weak condition. Write something else. What am I reading in *Bhagavatam*? That's what I want to ask my Godbrother when I meet him on Sunday. I am reading the Second Canto "those verses spoken by Sukadeva Gosvami where he condemns the materialistic way of life. His words are strong: if we don't serve Krishna with our senses, we are like some animal or other, or a dead person. He concludes that if our hearts don't move in ecstasy when we chant Hare Krishna, then our hearts are steel-framed.

I shall make polite admittances to my brother, such as, "I find that I fit into the category of an inattentive chanter." I won't reveal the despair that admittance kindles in my heart, though. I will say that of course, one doesn't quit or despair over such a condition; one simply continues. One knows that *any* chanting is good and that the process works gradually. If I can't say these things, then what else will I say? I can't just ask him about his chanting unless I am prepared to speak about my own.

Anyway, Krishna will inspire me what to say when I meet my brother so that the exchange becomes meaningful. I'll work hard at not being too guarded. But I already know I can't be completely open, because what I have to say may be heard by another as doubt. I know what I am feeling is not bad. Or at least I know how to live with it.

\* \* \*

Dear brother, how are you? I chant my rounds. They say one shouldn't tell the details of his *bhajana* in case the telling incurs pride. But I have to say *something*, and that's a safe and serious topic. Don't fake an inquiry, though. For example, "The *sastras* say we should consult with Vaisnavas, and I consider you an advanced devotee. Do you have any advice on how I might surrender myself totally to Krishna?" I can't express all the hairy and scary things that pass through my mind. Or tell how much I enjoy the solitary life. I can't praise my contributions, as I see them, although the books I publish are my preaching. But if I don't tell about what I'm doing and don't inquire from him, then what will we discuss? Maybe off this page I'll make a possible agenda.

Sunshine free-write "that guy is still pounding out there with his post-hole driver. Hey, old farmer, don't bother this skirted man, this Hare Krishna Yankee alone in this house. He may even put on his jumpsuit later if he feels up to it, and release his emotions while hearing a Prabhupada *bhajana*. But he won't eat. He'll drink brown-tinged water flowing from the hills. He will begin to answer his mail brought from the Dublin P.O. Box when M. returns and he sees him in the morning.

I felt good about some of the letters I answered today. I told one young man not to despair. I told another man, who had written over-confidently in his first letter to me that he knew what Krishna consciousness was and had decided that I should be his initiating spiritual master, that we would have to get to know one another.

July is the month of midges. Don't go out there and you won't be attacked.

Free-write express "lonely men out there without women, men full of computers and hearts that won't beat properly. Life seems to go on forever and ever for some of those men.

They wrote and said they went to Vrndavana and that it was overwhelmingly crowded with Russians in March. She said she went by herself and read *Here is Srila Prabhupada*. She hoped it wasn't a negative thing to do. Was it *maya*?

"No," I replied, "it's good to be alone when Vrndavana is overwhelmed by Russians. reading *Here is Srila Prabhupada* "that's okay. It is not *maya*."

Then the angels descended and the monkeys did too. She said she fasted all day and realized that Vraja is Krishna's land. After that, she bought a Band-Aid and some *kacauris* and felt better when she saw Govardhana and Srila Prabhupada's Radha-Damodara room. I was glad to hear it. I will go there myself again one of these days.

Until then, I will serve in separation. Radha-Govinda, Radha-Syama, Radha-ramana "she visited all the temples.

All right, let's drink water and declare that Krishna is in our hearts, that one Krishna who manifests Himself in *everyone's* heart and in ours alone. He is inconceivable. Are you feeling empty? Welcome to the club. Chant Hare Krishna. Don't give up just because you feel empty. Krishna wants to see how sincere we are. It's up to Him. Don't complain or demand. Understand your service. Just keep going. Don't mind the emptiness and that it's already 4:00 p.m.

\* \* \*

5:38 p.m.

Pencil shavings. I painted. Then I went outside, but the neighbor was in sight, yelling to his son as they built their new fence. Back inside. Mindless *gayatri*. Alone. read a short chapter in *Life, Paint, and Passion*. They sankirtana figure with hands upraised or a person with praying hands comes, good. Probably I steer too much for the recognizable. But even that's a stage and a good one "to give recognizable, tilaked people to the viewer. I'll have to see where my hand wants to go over time.

Straining with my ears to follow every sound I hear. I tell myself not to be nervous. This is a simple country, with simple people who are not interested so much in thieving. And I can trust in Krishna to protect me no matter what happens.

O Krishna, Hare Krishna. Go over the *gayatri* again and this time pray to guru, Lord Caitanya, and Krishna. Keep yourself simple. The sun is setting. *Gopi-bhava aSrayaha svaha*.

July 2, 12:10 a.m.

We understand a lot if we know Brahman, Paramatma, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate realization of the Absolute Truth. Please stop for a moment and feel your awareness and acceptance of these truths. Who else knows this? Even if we know it only theoretically, that's something great, beyond all other religions in clarity. The fact that we can conceive of these teachers in our minds "even that helps us to appreciate Bhagavan's supremacy. He is the source of all.

Association with material nature entangles us in the three modes. We desire to dominate the material world. But devotional service brings us to the transcendental position; we lose our unlawful desire to control matter. This freedom is supposed to come over each of us. Whether it is or not, keep practicing. We may question our degree of realization, but the main thing is to continue practicing as fully as possible, trusting Krishna's process.

Now we are turning to the fifteenth chapter. My list of verses where Krishna speaks directly to us to invite us to perform *bhakti*, includes 15.1 - 5. I think, "Oh, that banyan tree example again. How is that *bhakti*? How will it help me in my desire to be with Krishna as I read?" One must cut himself free of the tree of material existence, the field of activities. "Therefore, one must seek that place from which, having gone, one never returns, and there surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom

everything began and from whom everything has extended since time immemorial." (Bg. 15.4)

Mind drifting. I didn't hear M.'s van come in last night. I was awake after 9:00 p.m. Felt head vise. Got up and read something about Tylenol and the rebound effect in two headache books. I decided not to take one, although it was permissible. I managed to fall asleep despite the pain. The farmer was still pile-driving those fence posts. That thudding didn't help my head. I put in ear plugs. Now thinking, "What if M. didn't return?" Imagined myself calling ISKCON's National Council in Ireland for a new secretary. If he wasn't here, would I decide to return to America and a different way of life?

Right now I am not in the mood to study about the banyan tree. I am in the mood, however, to hear about Krishna. The banyan tree is the false reflected world in which we live. We must learn detachment from our experiences on this tree. The cause of the tree is God, the Supreme Father. We learn of Him from those who know Him. By understanding and being attracted to Him, we become detached from sense gratification and worldly work. We then surrender to Krishna and go to Him. "To gain favor of the Personality of Godhead, one has only to surrender, and this is a result of performing devotional service by hearing, chanting, etc."

The words may strike me as too demanding if I let them. Why should God want me to surrender to Him? Is this some unfair situation? Is He a tyrant? This is the rebel's mentality, born of bad association and negative experience with worldly lords and tyrannies. Most of us seek freedom through independence, without reference to transcendence. We don't really believe in Krishna's shelter. Our history of living in a world with false priests oppresses us.

But all of that has nothing to do with Krishna's request that we surrender unto Him or with His ability to protect us. For me, whenever this rebellion enters my mind, I must go back to my acceptance of Krishna through Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada was a pure devotee; he neither struck me as oppressed nor oppressive. He offered Krishna consciousness to us humbly, kindly, yet with power. Only a year before I met him, he had stood on the Boston pier and prayed to His Krishna, "How is it possible to convince the Westerners?" Lord Krishna assured him by his words in the *Bhagavatam*: chanting and hearing would cut the knot of attachment to the material world for *anyone*. We too could come to know Krishna's shelter. It didn't matter that we were Westerners. And so it has proven true. We saw something appealing in "transcendental loving service to God," in the "transcendental sound vibration." Many of us adopted the basic, revolutionary concepts easily. We were ready and open, having already escaped from the heavy, materialistic influence of our parents and into the world of "hippies."

"As soon as one surrenders to Krishna, one becomes detached automatically from this material extension."

Krishna next discusses what it actually takes to surrender and go to Him. Actually, it's not easy to get out of this world. Once we enter, *maya* will keep us here as prisoners in her fort. "Those who are free from false prestige, illusion and false association, who understand the eternal, who are done with material lust, who are freed from the dualities of happiness and distress, and who, unbewildered, know how to surrender unto the Supreme Person attain to that eternal kingdom." (Bg. 15.5)

Now my little reading session time is up. I hear a car slowly climbing the rocky ravine. Must be Praghosa returning from the restaurant. We are deluded by pride. That's why it's so difficult to surrender to the Supreme Person. Do I want to consider this problem and give up my pride?

\* \* \*

I dreamt that black activists were sacrificing to save their people from a white supremacist government. Then among themselves, the activists began to accuse a man who had white splotches on his skin, challenging him to strip down so they could see whether he was white or black. Others criticized the challengers, because it was so obvious that this man was dedicated to the cause of black people. The main point, they said, was that each of them identifies as a black person, and that they each sacrifice for their race. Then the activists attempted to go beyond black and white and to see that all oppressed people should work together.

\* \* \*

#### Write after Puja

In Walked Bud, or *Pujari* Forgets Himself

*Pujari*, can you tell us "would you like to?" "what it's like?"

I can't. The feeling itself is not accessible to me. Sometimes I see beyond it, deeper. I mean, under the surface. Sometimes not. But Deity worship is an absorption in Krishna.

Today in *Bhajana-rahasya* I heard things I am not eligible to hear. I was left only with a prayer filling my mouth: "Please accept me." I knew I had to go to Prabhupada.

I don't do my *puja* according to the book or with the devotion of a great lover. Therefore, I am simply grateful that I can do it at all.

This *pujari* gives a few clues, then opens his notebook for some post-*puja* jottings:

O moon of Gokula

I hear of Your pastimes with

the *gopis*, and how the *manjaris*

serve radha so carefully

with no thought for their

own pleasure. And still

You allow me to touch

Your Deity form . . .

Now with the *puja* over, the *pujari* steps back and his alterego (altarego?) steps forward. His initials are FW. They stand for Frances Weinstein. Is he bewitched? If he couldn't write, what would he do?

Head for the wildflower meadow before the midges woke up, even if it were raining. He'd probably forget who he was, but I doubt he'd forget to chant Hare Krishna. If he couldn't . . . if he had to die "Oh, he'd think of Krishna. He's an alter-ego after all, not an enemy.

Krishna wences, Senior

Wences, one forgets his ego "he

Is *siddha-deha* at that stage.

Beyond the *asakti* we can meditate on our eternal service in Goloka, but not before or the imitation will hurt us.

Lord, if I (we) have to return, it'll be too hard to be forgetful of You, lost, and prey to all the lures of a false life. Please let me come to You as soon as possible in my next life.

Is he sincere? Getting there. Gettysburg. You see, the allusions don't add up, the only good free association is from one chapter of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to another. That's what I believe. Krishna science alters our grip on material nature. It detaches it.

*Pujari*/ Frances eating with teeth glued in. He washed his dentures and thought of John Franco, and the naked statue in his waiting room in Brescia. We used to wait outside in our van until John got there. Will he one day again sit in that dentist's chair and grope for Italian phrases while looking at pictures on the wall as his mouth is probed and prodded?

You asking *that*? Better to be asking in which spring you will go to God. See? Krishna is talking to you right here in the *Gita*. Ask Him now.

Handsome *pujari*, where are you going now?

I'm going to the mailbox. I hope to find a letter from a man from Gumsworth and the blue tack I ordered and maybe a book on farming and Zen and weeds.

Weeds?

Oh, don't suspect me. I do only those things that Krishna approves. You know I'm not

...

Then in walked Bud. We've got to hand it to him. He's a man alone. He's the one I remember. Krishna,

Krishna the golden . . .

Hold Him closer to me "my eyesight is so poor and my *anarthas* plenty.

I wish to be on top. But I've got bad things. I'm sensitive to pain. He's the only one. Krishna is freeing me to go home, if I can parrot "branch "monkey "air conditioner "chauki "chaukidar" bell (what's he doing?)

Vrndavana

Real.

I don't like

to be forced. Want my own morning program.

But *pujari*! You are on the schedule.

For this reason "I must be aware that Krishna is telling me for this reason. The Eucharist, the pennysmith.

The men embraced, the girls approved, the children too. The moment was . . . I said, "*Pujari* means freedom, but he has to follow the rules." At last that scratching is the pen and not chickens in the yard, although this land is cursed to slaughter.

-

5:20 a.m.

Plenty of weeds by the side of the road. With one variety, the flowers have heavy heads and a faint purple hue. The berry bushes are filled with small, white flowers. The foxgloves are still the main attraction, though, but less are blooming now. Actually, there

are fewer flowers altogether. Now the world is mostly green, and something beyond green "the fuzzy weed tops are becoming gold-tipped. Pink coming through the clouds this morning.

Just before coming out, I greeted Madhu. His Wednesday night singing was a success, he said. I told him about the pile-driving noise last night. He said, "It's all right, it's just a fence."

"For a concentration camp."

He repeated the words, "For a concentration camp," then added a slow, "Yes." In his hands he held a plastic bag bulging with mail.

\* \* \*

Let's Go Home  
& Quick or slow we have to  
be with the Lord I am sad  
to say . . . little fellow got  
to answer mail it's  
getting late already people  
moving slowly  
wishing they could  
go home.

\* \* \*

Mom and dad could take me home  
in their '53 car when I  
was younger, sleepy, pulling  
on my mother to leave wherever  
we were but  
it was never time, Stevie, because they wanted to drink  
more highballs and joke more jokes  
smoke more with uncles and aunts in  
hot rooms after the dishes  
had been cleared. "

\* \* \*

Driving Out Kaliya  
& Can I think of Krishna in the  
midst of moving emotions?  
Of course!

\* \* \*

Krishna is the dance on  
Kaliya's heads while

his wives plead for Kaliya's life  
they didn't know  
what pious deeds he  
had done enough to deserve being kicked  
by His lotus feet.

\* \* \*

O origin of all, please spare  
this snake or we'll become  
widows. The Lord agreed  
and banished the serpent from  
His lake. Whoever bathes at the  
lake, fasts for the day, and  
hears the pastime with Kaliya will  
never be bitten by snakes.

\* \* \*

Russian devotees swarm over  
the Indian *dhamas*, me swarming  
over this house in Eire  
where the streets are lined with foxgloves  
and weeds and no other human walks  
but the beef-killing tractor man.

\* \* \*

Only me. A correspondent in  
Puerto Rico tells me things are  
going along but another man  
needs a doctor "for my  
hurts of body and mind."  
I advise him to chant. "

\* \* \*

7:47 a.m.

I'll have to skip reading *Bhagavatam* for now because I have to pause to feel the twinge. "All the things you lost" "sent that in writing to someone. It's all a big loss. For a transcendentalist and even an aspiring one, it's not so bad to lose a father and all your teeth but four.

But I always wonder why they read symbolism into the bits of memory I tell? Anyway, I suppose it's fun to eat a psychoanalytical meal. It's a way to play with actual life. The doughnut stands for eternity. Your friend's wife is the symbol for the goddess of words. The amber is the tamber and your

tendency to play with words  
shows you want to avoid  
painful truth.

Nevertheless, I did lose all those things and can recall them again in the ritual of writing.

And now there's nothing else left but to live the life I've chosen. I'm diminishing "everything about me "and that's one of the six changes the body goes through before the final change at death. Everything fits within Vedic knowledge. That's why we surrendered to it.

So let them play psychoanalysis with my writing. As long as they do it from a distance . . . They won't be able to touch my heart or feelings, because no one is allowed through this gate without a pass. You have to be either an employee, servant, accomplice, or a heart given to human understanding.

We have to lose everything to gain eternal life. Surrender. Give it up or He will take it away anyway. That's His kindness on us. Our precious youth, gone; our convicted misconceptions, smashed. He took them away. We feel lost after that, but what's the point of it all?

The SPCA took away my dog Mickey and gassed him to death. They were trying to be nice, told me I shouldn't lament. "They" took away Clare's long hair to help her become a nun.

So what are we losing? Only our burdens. Look at my morals and my hairy chest. What about my loopy handwriting?

Someone wrote, "I found a way not to lose anything. You write it down and put it in a vault." Yeah, Anais Nin did that. The Mormons too. Stored their stuff in a mountain cave. Nowadays we store it on disks, or print it out and publish it as books. But who will distribute them? Still, published books make it safe. Then you can die.

But where will you go after that?

Lost>

\* \* \*

It's a gray day, and I don't know if they'll come by to plant more flowers. It would be nice. I could write it up, like a report. Now let me answer the mail. Then, if I'm feeling better, I'll read some *Bhagavatam*. Srila Prabhupada said if you can tell your mind "no" when it makes its demands and direct it to Krishna, you are a swami. It's desirable to become one.

\* \* \*

"Certainly that heart is steel-framed which, in spite of one's chanting the holy name of the Lord with concentration, does not change when ecstasy takes place, tears fills the eyes and the hairs stand on end." (*Bhag.* 2.3.24) I'm familiar with this purport, but that's all right. I don't have to "comprehend" it (as on an I.Q. test) while I read it. I simply want to feel what he says. Let it revive my aspiration for spiritual life.

In the mature stage of Visnu worship, the heart is supposed to change. That means we stop our hard-hearted forgetfulness (avoidance, denial) of God and admit we are His

eternal servants. If after hearing from guru and *sastra*, engaging our senses in devotional service, and giving up unwanted habits our hearts *don't* change, then they must be framed in steel. Chanting *should* melt us down. If it doesn't, something's wrong.

Oh boy, there are lots of tears in "Abhay." We have watched all the videos available thus far. What will we do now without being able to watch (wash) all those tears from Abhay's face as he apologizes to his Radha-Govinda? He is sorry he packed Them in the box. Tears of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura at his guru's passing away, tears of Pisima when their mother died. Ganges full.

Tears are a sign of *bhava*. We don't feel such emotion because of our offenses. Although some people choose to pretend. That's what the actors do too. Maybe they remember their own fathers, so it becomes easier to cry. Or perhaps the make-up artist splashes water on the actors' faces. Anyway, one good cry doesn't seem to change us much. We need many tears, just as a plant needs to be watered throughout its life. I feel such release when I paint or draw, but then the dryness closes in again until the next time.

The little white cloud that cried. Remember, Johnnie ray?

*I went walking down by the river,  
all alone and crying inside  
when all at once I saw in the sky  
the little white cloud that cried.*

They imitate. They are detected because they are still attached to nasty habits. They do not have real ecstasy. And sometimes the topmost devotees refrain from displaying their symptoms of *bhava*. We have to judge the advanced devotee by the symptoms of steady *bhava*: utilization of time for serving Krishna, etc.

"O Suta Gosvami, your words are pleasing to our minds."

\* \* \*

10:10 a.m.

You have it in your veins. I love you. The woman who ran with the wolves, the boy who gulped down four apples, the man who lowered his eyes before the picture of Radha-Govinda because he thought himself unworthy. Slow-moving/ quick-moving sound drowned out. He is a Krishna conscious person, so you can expect him to advise you how to channel your energies in a numinous way. You should be aware that the bear is the unconscious symbol for introspection. It hibernates, see? You go to the pineal gland in the center of the head, which symbolizes Brahma's cave, and get insights. Play it out. This is the thing I wanted to say.

Cycles come and go, so if you lose something, expect it will be born again. We are out of touch with such cycles, although women are less so due to their biology. Is your animus a woman as the psychoanalysts say? Will you take responsibility for that? You lost your teeth, your father, and your youth, and even your conviction that ISKCON is going to save the world "no wonder you feel like crying. Unless you're so steel-framed the tears won't come. "O lost, and by the wind grieved, ghost, come back again."

\* \* \*

Now, I want to say hello, mister, I wanted to meet you on the street, but I didn't know you were a flesh-and-blood man. I thought you were a figment of a *sannyasi's* imagination. Now tell them about your intention to play a morning-program jukebox.

No, I want to keep that secret. This is Vrndavana, or should be. Persons who have steady *bhava* are always attached to the holy name and the holy land. They like to be prideless and use their time well. They may not cry tears or let their hair stand on end, but they are steady, and that's the truth. See the stamps on the envelope from Guyana? It's a strain to say all the things I have to say.

But all those words are in my veins, and I have a high blood count. Diseases like that don't go away easily. You have to pull them out bit by bit. And you can't expect theory to cure you either. If they tell you, "You live with a wound you received in the past. That's why you're sick," what will that do for you? The myth may be bigger than you thought it was. I do believe I am alone. It's the only thing I have left. I have lost everything else, so let me be enthusiastic about solitude. I have no other choice "my health declares that loud and clear. These are all things, others have said.

A transcendentalist is a person who sees temporary reality as unworthy of grief. He actually feels like that; and he doesn't grieve. He chants Hare Krishna and is detached from the material realm. He has the latest books but doesn't read unless his guru, that flesh-and-blood spirit, tells him he can. He remembers it all very well.

Now let us go into that good night, holding his hand.

And may we come out smiling in Krishna consciousness, with Krishna.

Vacuum your room and stairs, Stevie, it's your bit.

Okay, Mom, I'll do it in your memory.

\* \* \*

3:00 p.m.

Wouldn't it be nice if I were spontaneously attracted to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and I didn't think I needed lighter reading to entertain myself in *addition* to Sukadeva Gosvami's heavy speeches?

"Knowledge explained by the previous *acarya* like Sukadeva Gosvami and followed by the next like Suta Gosvami is always powerful transcendental knowledge, and it is therefore penetrating and useful to all submissive students." (*Bhag.* 2.3.25, purport)

After hearing their speeches, Maharaja Pariksit concentrated faithfully upon Lord Krishna. "The whole Vedic adventure is to draw one's attention entirely unto the lotus feet of Lord Krishna without any diversion, as instructed in *Bhagavad-gita* (15.15)." (*Bhag.* 2.4.1, purport)

\* \* \*

3:15 p.m.

I had to take an Esgic to bring down rising pain, because I feared it would set in and stay all afternoon. I'm increasingly unwilling to enter those long periods of downtime. I prefer to be at ease. But let me be careful about this attitude. I have to take *some* pain. They say we can see pain as coming from Krishna. I don't do that, at least not as a

practical meditation. I abort it whenever I can, although I'm not so determined that I abuse the medication.

\* \* \*

I turned down the title, *Seeking the Easy Way*. It's not ideal. I don't want people to think I'm an ease-lover, one who avoids necessary hardships. But what if the title describes me accurately? Through pain management, I do seek ease from pain. But ease in a good sense, in a natural, uncontrived sense. I'm not talking about being free of devotional restriction or anything like that. "Ease" also implies that I *need* an easier way; I am physically not up to something more strenuous. I'm looking for the way of the possible, the way that I can actually and constantly work to offer more and more of myself to Krishna. In this sense, ease and laziness are not synonymous.

But don't let me turn it into a Satsvarupian doctrine: "Creative consultant will teach you how you too can tap your inner resources the easy way." I was going to lecture on it! Tell them, "So many things seem impossible for us "chanting *japa* attentively or sometimes at all, daily *sastra* reading, etc. That may be because we are doing it the *hard* way. I suggest we find a way that's easier for us."

Well, that's pretty good. Maybe it isn't central enough to become a main theme over these twenty-one days. But I am embracing the concept more lately, permitting myself to take it easy in that good sense, without guilt. Daring myself.

\* \* \*

4:49 p.m.

But the easy way may be wrong. Maybe it's running away as much from truth as I run from pain. I say I want to tap the "unconscious" as quickly as any young Stevie who can raise the head of his death and drag out sorrow ahead of him. He didn't want to enter the Navy. Poor guy. remember his tears then? The wind blowing overhead. I ain't dead yet. Wasn't then, either. It wasn't over for me at all. I hadn't even met my guru yet.

What photos do you have in that album? Oh, they're all of me and the Swami. I was a Krishna Conscious Man. See, here's me and the Swami in 1971. I was a nice sort of skinny goof-off in those days, entirely dependent on the Swami in our little world. Where are those days now?

Here's a photo of Radha-Krishna looking at one another, Astaratha Prabhu gave it to me. Here's you and me, Lord Buddha and Lord Caitanya, Christ and Krishna, a brother in jail

Reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*

*Caitanya-caritamrta*

and me again

in Quandary.

(Is that a place?)

Hot and bothered.

\* \* \*

5:36 p.m.

I have to use my eyes for most of my activities "writing and reading and moving about "but when I sleep . . . I *could* learn to chant on beads by touch alone. I doubt that would help me escape the dryness, however. They say it's normal. Should I listen to those who say that?

I just got knocked off my train of thought and off my high-horse ass.

Now, now, be kind  
even to yourself.

You paid for ease, and now you're nervous about whether you're doing anything worthwhile with the purchased time.

Chanting, chanting all these years "like that Russian pilgrim. The holy name. I think we *do* have to be patient. We should (say it) listen to what our guru says about this. He says his father was a pure devotee and taught him to love Krishna. Now we have to follow him, along with listening to our own hearts. You know, that heart that led us to the Swami in the first place, that self he engaged in the service of Lord Caitanya's mission.

That self "part and parcel  
of Krishna, who has to keep asking himself,  
"What is integrity for me?"

Drink water and contemplate.

Is this a religion, or what is it? How to break through artificial practice? Is everything contained in Krishna consciousness and nothing outside can profit us? No help exists? We simply have to go through it. There are no other choices. Each case is different, though, so who can advise all these individuals in this movement? O Krishna, please save us all.

Hare Krishna. We are not the horse's . . .

bunch of . . . We are and are

not "*neti, neti*. All the big talk of void and impersonal sources. But Krishna is the source of all that too. They deride Him without investigating Him properly. Brains too dogmatic for that. As if God must be a member of the world of the relative and the false.

But why? Voidist dogma. Krishna is the supreme source, and *bhakti* is ultimate.

\* \* \*

5:50 p.m.

No, take those pictures out of the album, the ones of you and Srila Prabhupada. Just one is enough. Don't show off. No one is interested in the angle of your discipleship.

Okay, I took them out. Now what?

Stand up straight. Why didn't you stretch and exercise today? Why no zazen, don't you know? And did you chant *gayatri*? Attentively?! You don't even know. Or rather, you think it doesn't matter. You are an utterly impossible case.

That's the way Abhay's British-Scottish college professor dressed down the Bengali students: "You asses! You can't rule your own country. Get into class!" But Mr.

Urquhart was kinder. Not all Englishmen were bad.

Hare Krishna mail express. Say goodnight.

Remember mother in the kitchen at night sprinkling water on the clothes and ironing them? I ironed my own uniform inside out. Didn't ask her to do it. She would launder it, though.

I suspect you been trying to avoid pain today. Oh, well, it might be true.

July 3, 12:00 a.m.

Cut free from the material world. "Surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything began and from whom everything has extended since time immemorial." Freedom is achieved by performing devotional service, especially hearing and chanting. Someone could ask, "Where is Krishna that I should surrender to Him?" They want to experience Him for themselves according to their own process. Sometimes these people are atheistically disposed through bad association. Some people think God is irrelevant to their salvation. The Vaisnavas, of course, know differently. Thank God we're in this camp. God is the source of all, from the time of creation and before that, eternally. He is our sustenance and our goal. We can know Him, because we can know His pure devotees, and they know Him.

Then what are the obstacles to surrender?

I'll tell you in a minute.

Two books here on Zen. We are told not to read or hear Mayavadi doctrine; it could damage our devotion to Bhagavan. Lord Caitanya strongly criticized any of His associates who listened to the Mayavadis. Then how could Zen teaching be acceptable? The drawing of the Buddhist in the *Caitanya-caritamṛta* is ugly, the heavy plate falling from the sky and hitting him on the head.

I looked at the books to see something about meditation, or to find an approach that might help me in my long-standing inability to chant with attention. They call Zen "the religion before religion," which can be practiced even while one maintains faith in another doctrine. They teach shock treatment. But Zen doesn't teach us to call out to God the father, even God in the heart. O Krishna, please give me a drop of mercy. I beg You for the nectar of the holy name.

The first qualification of one who wishes to surrender is to attain freedom from pride. We must first understand that we are not God, Krishna is God. Srila Prabhupada states that we must become free of "all dual conceptions such as happiness and distress, pleasure and pain. He becomes full in knowledge; then it is possible for him to surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Bg. 15.5) I still distinguish between pleasure and pain, and I choose pleasure over pain, but if I were enlightened, I might not avoid pain so much. I could better tolerate whatever came. I wouldn't be unnecessarily alarmed by it, or feel the need to control it. I would accept that physical and mental activity are out of the question during a bout of intense pain.

Enlightened. But I looked back at my 1997 medical journal, which I began in January, when I was in India. I had long, intense, sharp headaches, and spent many days in bed. What was the point? I stayed in my room, canceled lectures and travel plans, and seemed to have no defence against the pain. I tried to tolerate, and lived both up and down. Surrender? I've been forced to surrender to my fallible flesh and blood because of my desire to remain in action.

Now Lord Krishna speaks of the existence of His Supreme abode. Srila Prabhupada says that Lord Buddha did not really deny the Lord or His abode, or the spirit soul. He simply didn't address them. His concern was with an issue that comes before the question of God's existence: liberating the false self from entanglement with matter. Therefore, he didn't want his followers becoming confused by "theoretical" or "abstract" questions of theology.

In my case, I accept Krishna and the soul, but I seem to have to work simultaneously with an issue that comes before the question of God's existence: how can I develop my desire to love Him, to trust Him, and to surrender my heart to Him? I may have to use some techniques to focus my attention that are not exactly *bhakti*, but at least I can use them to perform *bhakti*.

*Bhakti* can be performed in all my activities. I don't have to say, "I'll approach Krishna later. First, let me learn how to meditate." Any breathing or awareness technique can become a way to think of Krishna. I just need to find something that will help me focus my mind.

Lord Krishna says, "That supreme abode of Mine is not illumined by the sun or moon, nor by fire or electricity. Those who reach it never return to this material world." (Bg. 15.6) Have faith even in that which you have not experienced. Devotion begins and grows when we hear submissively.

We cannot go to the spiritual world through mundane means. Not even *yogis* can enter the spiritual world. To go to Goloka, we need to develop our service attitude. That mood of service is the key to our becoming one of the Lord's associates. "One should be captivated by this information. He should desire to transfer himself to that eternal world and extricate himself from this false reflection of reality." Detachment from this world comes by attachment to Krishna consciousness.

\* \* \*

3:55 a.m.

"But if you are doubtful, God says, Krishna says, 'You try to understand Me in this way: *tapa apanodah*, the water.' Everyone drinks water. Very easy. So *raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*. Then in the beginning, if you do not do anything . . . Just I am trying to convince you about the easy process of *bhakti-yoga*. Anyone, everyone, at any place, any condition of life "he can become a *bhakta*." (Srila Prabhupada lecture, January 18, 1975, Bombay)

\* \* \*

Write after Puja

*Pujari*, Where Are You Now?

I am coming out of the sanctified atmosphere of the altar, happy. We all have to taste this sanctified air in one way or another. I am a free-writer too.

How did Radha-Govinda look to you?

Fine, fine. They are not embarrassed by Their beauty. I am a blank.

The *pujari* is blathering. It makes us unsure of what he was up to. Was he just listening to the silence around him?

O *pujari*, that silence can be your teacher. You can breathe in it and enjoy its merits. Silence can stir up joy.

Beribbet, Bethomas toasted St. Thomas "my middle name, Stephen T.

The author.

"Did you romance her?" the doctor asked.

"Sir, don't ask me private questions. I never even imagine such things."

Yes, our *pujari* is gradually becoming free of those old, old days. Instead, he plans to ask devotees going to India to bring things back for his Radha-Govinda. He wants *candrikas* for Radha, and if possible, more outfits, dresses, whatever you want to call them "matching *kurtas* and *dhotis* and *cadars* for Krishna, more skirts and blouses and veils for Radha. And necklaces "many new necklaces for Them both. That's all that satisfies him "he's so greedy "because he has waited over thirty years to worship Radha-Govinda. He told them that, those India-going pilgrims.

They only asked him why his prose seemed to limp through his notebook.

Will we still chant when we go to the spiritual world?

No, no, chanting is eternal, and although the *jiva* is extremely tiny, his bliss is ever-increasing, like the waves in the ocean. His love grows like the moon, blooms like the lotus. On EkadaSis in this world, we increase our rounds in hopes that we can go there to that world. The saints are our crutch. We need them; we cannot go to Krishna without them.

Radha-Govinda are wearing Their cream-colored outfits decorated with blue patterns. *Pujari* hung up on his cubicle wall some pictures he drew. Art. O *pujari*, the bicycle will take you to town. I feared he might get in trouble, but the Judas tree is dead and the ox power unit is now silent. We have nothing left to do but believe.

\* \* \*

If our *pujari* gets pain today, he'll take medication for it "his third day in a row. That will complete his medication routine for the week. Any more pain this week and he will have to suffer it out, depending on Krishna. Won't that be brave?

Will it even be sensible?

He shouldn't be such an existentialist that he thinks he can't have pain or it will ruin his life. Pain, after all, to an existentialist, is completely meaningless. But then so is pleasure. What pain is real. It's not "invalid time" but time to think of Krishna. Keep that in mind when it comes and you have no painkillers to smash it with.

Besides, it's not good to take painkillers three days in a row. Or, if the game is to allow three pills a week, then he could take one today and gamble he'll be clear tomorrow.

Our *pujari* measures out the risks like this every day. And he's a blues specialist. Did you know that? He's on the beat when he writes books and answers letters.

"I'm delighted, I'm pleased," someone said, "but concerned about the corns on my feet. Worse are the ones on my mind."

"When do we eat?" asked a *bodhisattva*.

When do we get more time to believe in what we are doing? There is so little time, it seems.

When no one knows what I'm thinking, Krishna sees and judges me. Perhaps He thinks I'm a go-getter bobbysoxer and should stay in the material world for another round of sorrow.

Oh, Krishna is kind to all *jivas*, so why not me? You know the story about Jiva Gosvami suffering terribly while living in a log? Now there's someone accepting pain for no apparent reason "just because Rupa Gosvami was displeased with him. Jiva didn't say, "Well, I don't care what that man thinks. I'm not going to ruin my life over him." I'm afraid as I write this that M. is going to come and end my midnight stretch of solitude.

Those who fought in WWII are all stepping off into their next life. That's the way it is "read how my own generation is almost finished doing whatever it was they wanted to do with their lives, or what their lives forced them to do.

Me too. I'm almost finished. I feel that. I want only to return to my Krishna conscious focus. My breath is impartial. Spatters on the clipboard. Inject Krishna. He's in the grain of our lives if we can only see Him there "in our hands, in our present moments, in the scrawls from A to Z. And in Goloka.

Hey *pujari*, can you breathe? Yes, breathing is an autogenic process. I thank the Creator when I can use my breathing in His service.

In her home, she says, she wants the assignment of being quiet, free of lust, to read *sastra*, to sell a few of Prabhupada's books now and then, and to avoid politics. "Do you know what I mean?" Sure I do. Go for it.

*Pujari* fading out. Falling asleep on his bunk, notebook and pen falling to the side. Just before he passed out, I picked up his notebook and read this: "Buy bow ties. Buy Janmastami sweets. Remember to light votive candle before you fan them out. Get matches. Be calm. Chant your rounds before going on altar. Don't belch or fart or dream, especially on the altar, and don't belabor prose or pantyhose. Be smart and clean and keep this notebook out of their hands."

-

All is Not Naught  
& I was out in the green under sky a  
childhood moment  
thinking how a Zennist suggested I enter  
the raw moment of life and become as nothing as everything  
as all that I am "then added, "Nothing."

\* \* \*

Nothing? I don't buy that out here  
under the trees and sky  
the leaves the air filled with grains  
of pollen wheaty weeds blowing in the breeze.  
Nothing? No, always  
a person. Not "All is naught."

\* \* \*

Krishna's music, the violin strings  
announcing God's devotees "they  
can uproot Death  
but for those who are nothing  
Death will come and filch their  
breath their practices of counting  
the stars and seeing only moments  
on wicker chairs outside huts  
as if they imagined it all.

\* \* \*

As for me I decided  
not to speak on my walk  
but entered a kind of unconscious  
or at least non articulated passage  
in which I could utter *gayatri*  
prayers other words silenced  
then walked up to our gate on  
time and couldn't see over the wall. "

\* \* \*

You Ought to Work  
& Our workout didn't flow so naturally  
but told myself, "Come on, man,  
you ought to work and fill up a  
page." Paint the hall, unroll  
the scroll.  
What you like and what  
you must.

\* \* \*

Dance a dance on the stairs.  
The hounds moving down  
the Irish road after  
Brer Fox dashed into the drain pipe.

\* \* \*

I'll be with you, I promise,  
but I'm so tiny and uncontrolled  
seeking to give that up and surrender

before the clouds move in  
or I am dispersed in a shower  
of rain. "

\* \* \*

9:07 a.m.

Sitting here close to an hour dazed and dosed. Can't remember what I was doing. Is this my life story? No, sir, it is not. Then? It is a rendezvous. Some English devotees wanted to come to Wicklow, but the devotees here couldn't pick them up at the ferry terminal "too many demands.

What to do?

Hare Krishna. Did I read something about Krishna in a dream? Maybe, but now I'm awake, facing emptiness. A man said that Hare Krishna is for intellectuals. He thought it was for scholars and children. Does that make sense? Even if we can't read, we can chant Hare Krishna. Get it? No one can hand it to us on a silver platter. We have to work for it, even on this easy path.

Still, it's easier to attain Goloka in this age than it was in Satya-yuga. The problem now is that our life duration is so short and our powers of attention reduced.

Why won't anyone pick up the devotees when they land? Who *are* those funny-looking people with you? Are you one of *them*? Is this some weird minority religion or what?

Yep, that's what we are, a weird cult where men shave their heads and wear bed sheets (no pants allowed) and we treat the women like slaves. We believe in Krishna, the Hindu god of love. Well, He's more than a Hindu God "He's your God too. We know that because we chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, etc. We also believe we will go to the spiritual world when we die. All those who are not Hare Krishna devotees are demons. Krishna will kill all the demons.

Oh, we are not so strange really. We're such normal people. Many of our members hold regular jobs.

Write something important here. When he was sleeping, an angel protected him so that his soul didn't leave through his mouth and no ghosts or hobgoblins were able to enter his body. Sky gray today.

Flowers in pots. Ani is dividing our yard into small walkways. You can't get from place to place unless you walk on the paths. I suppose that's nice. I'll find out when I get out there. The flowers haven't been planted yet, and the vines haven't grown up, of course. Neither has there been enough time for moss to cover anything. By the time all of that happens, the hoarfrost will be upon us.

It occurs to me that the post of initiating guru is often taken superficially by disciples. Puts me in an awkward position when I am offered a distant sort of respect but my instructions are not followed. Since the instructions I give come from Krishna . . . Anyway, I tell the people who gather at meetings that I too am incapable of following every one of Srila Prabhupada's instructions and that I don't love God totally. I tell them that to give them relief from the pressure they might be putting upon themselves, and to give them momentary hope that they might improve one day. I am not saying it to

encourage them to relinquish their strict discipleship even more than they already have. Most of these devotees do at least identify with Krishna consciousness as their religion. Often, they want to step back so they can focus more on raising their children, make money, and have decent places to live. The struggle to do these things seems to consume their energy. I try to understand that, but I don't always understand why they have to give their lives to something that can't last, even if it is important, and therefore give up their vows.

In the meantime, who among your disciples actually loves you? Who even knows you except as the distant guru-priest? Makes it all seem so unreal. Therefore, I write to myself in an attempt to be more real. When I meet other *sannyasis* I think of asking, "*Aihistam yat tat punar janma jayaya?* How are you doing in your attempt to conquer birth and death?"

"Not bad."

I think of asking certain devotees, "How are you doing in your attempt to enjoy the material nature and offset its miseries?"

"*Comme si, commesa. Que sera sera.* It's Kali-yuga "what can we expect? It's all right, but when I laugh, my stitches hurt. Life's a beach otherwise. I like your smile. Love animals, don't eat them. I'd rather be chanting."

The angels descended when we weren't watching. They hoped the doomsday predictions wouldn't come true because I for one don't like to share a room, want my lunch on time, and depend on a source of up-to-date medicine.

\* \* \*

9:50 a.m.

Maharaja Pariksit constantly concentrated his mind on Krishna's lotus feet, and this made him perfectly chaste in devotional service. Make you feel guilty to hear it? Take heart. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* advises us to worship Lord Krishna even if we have material desires. Devotional service is powerful and will purify us no matter what our condition. It's advantageous to be born in a family of devotees, but even if we are not, we can still contact a bona fide spiritual master and receive his blessings.

Maharaja Pariksit had everything in his favor, but do we? We have no good lineage and we are weak. We have not been raised in nor are we now surrounded by a God conscious society. Still, Lord Caitanya has come, and Srila Prabhupada arrived to pick us up on His behalf. Maharaja Pariksit gave up his household attachments; most people live inside self-created cocoons of material desire and karmic reaction. They don't want to come out, and couldn't even if they did. The *Bhagavatam* advises them to at least begin by hearing about Krishna and becoming attracted to Him. Let them learn to dovetail their resources in Krishna's service until they lose their affinity for them. It's a good plan.

Yes, the *Bhagavatam* is addressing most people, but somehow I manage to feel that I am unique among them. I'm not described in any of these books. I don't feel on the spot when I read what they say. rather, I read only descriptions of general conditions, of the general masses, of ideas how to help all those generalities.

O Krishna, that's why you sent Srila Prabhupada to look me in the face and say, "I know you. I know what you were, what you lost, what you are now, and I have compassion for you "and power *over* you. I order and cajole and beg you to surrender to Krishna, for your own sake. Here's how we're going to accomplish that . . . " Yes, Srila Prabhupada was Your mercy on this not-so-unique soul.

Srila Prabhupada tells us that in ages past and later, there have been many *mahatmas*, although they are rare in the world. These *mahatmas* abandoned their worldly connections. I say I want to speak about three of them and read their prayers. I want to assert that their existence is vital to my own spiritual aspirations. Does following the *mahatmas* fit in with our sense of wanting the easy path to Krishna consciousness? We are most interested in learning how we can qualify for mercy. The path of the *mahatmas* seems fraught with difficulty. They take such extreme positions. But my point is that the presence of *mahatmas* assures us of the reality of God. Lord Caitanya says He loves Krishna unconditionally. Srila Rupa Gosvami says, "O Lord of the poor [Dinabandhu], I have no one but You to look to. Please give me mercy or punish me." Madhavendra Puri says he's not going to perform any religious rituals; he's simply going to always remember Krishna. He realizes that people will accuse him of neglect, but "still my mind does not budge an inch from the determination to serve the lotus feet of Govinda, though I am unable to do it." (*Bhag.* 2.4.4, purport) These *mahatmas* don't care for the materialistic understanding of religion. They are in touch with the real Krishna.

\* \* \*

2:50 p.m.

"Maharaja Pariksit said: O learned *brahmana*, you know everything because you are without material contamination. Therefore whatever you have spoken to me appears perfectly right. Your speeches are gradually destroying the darkness of my ignorance, for you are narrating the topics of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 2.4.5) Please don't ruin what you have going for you as chaste hearer of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, disciple of A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Don't revert to voidism or go crazy or water it down. Don't make radical changes in anything. Stay on the path of hearing *hari-katha*. Ignorance will dissipate, although perhaps it takes time before we notice its absence. Here is a *Sloka* to live by: *yasya deva para bhaktir/ yatha deve tatha gurau . . .*

He's asking how the Supreme Lord creates the universes. He assumes there is a Creator. Don't be bewildered and think there is no Creator. First of all, know how the external energy is working under the Lord's direction, then you can try to enter the activities of His internal energies. Don't neglect knowledge of how great Krishna is.

There are spiritual planets beyond the material universes. One has to prepare himself to transfer to them after leaving the present body.

\* \* \*

3:48 p.m.

Mindfulness in Krishna consciousness. Mindful that we are practicing Krishna consciousness. The world can be perceived as a drop of water. Maharaja Pariksit inquired about how Lord Krishna created the universes. It's good to ask that first, then

build up to inquiring about the internal energy in faith and peace. Don't waste a moment of your life. Live in the silence that's within things. Hare Krishna sounds scramble your brain and metabolism, but they take you to deeper understandings. Krishna is there.

Srila Prabhupada said Krishna is simple, easy. It is meant to be the Easy Way. Like Therese's Little Way.

Subway.

Krishna way "sometimes  
hard.

Your way, not mine.

Krishna directs this song I hear, a hymn to Him. He's the best of everything, the sound in ether, the heart of moment-to-moment awareness. He lives in the world beyond this one. How to find it? Prabhupada says we should be captivated by this information and want to go there, leaving this awkward material world behind.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. O Krishna, let me bring my attention back to You again and again, to my voice saying Your sweet name. To be mindful we have to be gentle and noncondemning of ourselves. The mind goes, we bring it back. We don't have to follow it to castigate it.

\* \* \*

4:27 p.m.

Good times in my life:

1. The half-hour when I dress Radha-Govinda and hear *Krishna-katha* from Vrndavana.

2. Writing and hurrying out for my walk.

3. The almost two hours of *japa* are hard, dry, and unsatisfactory because I always remain superficial. Still, my *japa* is a solid commitment, and in that sense, it brings satisfaction.

I am embarrassed to speak of it. When I mention the state of my *japa*, I get two kinds of responses: "You are actually chanting *japa* well. You're just being humble." Or, "It is sad to see you doing so completely poorly in *japa*. You don't seem to be able to make progress in this lifetime." Which judgment is true? Which better to hear? If my chanting is actually poor, then all it may take is one degree more of despair to force me to cry out about it with what Prabhupada called "the available cry of your heart." Krishna will help me if I really want to reach Him through His holy name. But if I am doing all right . . . I don't understand. Either way, *japa* is a good thing in my life.

4. Being able to look up through the skylight to see the dancing leaves.

Do I want to see Krishna dancing? No, the Gosvamis never say that. They say they are looking for Krishna. Maybe eventually I will get to see Him. I don't know. I'm confused. Need to be more confused. Learn a little here and there. reading again what the *Bhagavatam* says. It's not a question of how many pages I read or even how many hours I spend reading them. It's about learning to please Krishna. Prabhupada says it's important to spread Krishna consciousness too "that gives pleasure to Krishna. I have been saying that I must become Krishna conscious myself first, but like most devotees, I try to do both at the same time.

Now I'll just go ahead and write words. They don't have to be anything "cigars made in

Havana: remember them? My image for *brahma-muhurta*.

I wrote about them while living at Sant Colony.

When the monkeys came and stole cucumbers.

When my imagination fried the tense. I mean,

I was still going to Mathura in those days and

always wondering when the next trip would

take place. Everything

has changed.

I am hoping to become a devotee still, and I chant to please Krishna, but

"*Dusta mana!*" O Krishna, how can I cheat people

with a false meditation?

May I become free of lamentation. Let me share

something useful. Balm for the troubled soul

and light.

Dear friend, I'm surprised to see you moved. Are you doing better? Thank you for the photo of your wristwatch. Now let's chant Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

5:25 p.m.

This is written indoors. I want to get a chair for outside. Eventually I'll have a shed in the backyard. When I start to write outdoors, however, I can't promise not to tell you the midges are biting. A bird with a white breast and brown, swallow-shaped wings "one of a flock flitting around the house "came right up to the window while I stood there. It hit against the window, not hard, then quickly flew away.

When is time and experience Krishna conscious? The best sentences are often questions. Let me drain myself of my best again and again. Still wearing two pairs of socks and slippers indoors. That's the way I am "always cold. And sneezing. Here comes Franz Worth. He's the proprietor of this express shop. Hi, Franz!

Hi, how are you? Can I help you?

He wants me to buy something. I buy a bottle of water and say, "Franz, how's business and how's your soul?"

He fidgets and turns into a woman at the cash register staring blankly out from behind the glass wall of a store at 3:00 a.m. on the *bonne route*. She says, "We wondered when you were going to drive through on one of your inconsequential tours."

"That's why we stopped making them. They were inconsequential. Didn't really help anyone."

"I've been into Buddhism this year. I meditate."

"Hope it helps. Become peaceful and live in the present "isn't that what Buddha teaches?" I can't think of what else to say, and besides, it's time to go. "Well, got to get back on the road, Franz (or is Francine?). Supposed to get north of Paris by tonight."

\* \* \*

6:30 p.m.

Feel a little low. Depressed? No, more like let down or dull, maybe. I sense that I'm a little sad. But those words are too strong to express what I feel. Just a little . . . *lacking*. I lack real Krishna consciousness. I'm deficient.

Didn't do much today. Not on track. But when I feel more jolly and upbeat, is that more right?

Not necessarily.

I'm feeling distant from Krishna and Prabhupada. Don't have a taste for the sources of Krishna consciousness, chanting and hearing. The Vaisnava poets lament like that, and although I know it's not true for them, I feel the same way. Let me rest now. What else can I do but continue with my routine no matter how I feel? Hare Krishna.

We get what we desire. Life is not so exciting right now, but that's what I wanted: peace and quiet. Although in the morning I know I will read something familiar again, I never seem able to enter it. It will always remain a little distant. Is it because my background is so . . . what, American?

Anyway, let me not agitate the water right now. It's too late in the day. I know I'm a timid soul, but I also know my limits. I'm just happy I got through the day without a headache, but how happy can I get over *that*? Dwindling lifetime and what am I doing with it? I'm just saying.

July 4, Midnight

"The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind." (Bg. 15.7) Did I ever have better realization of this? Was I able to pause and perhaps notice my breathing and say, "I'm an eternal part of Krishna"? Can I do it now? I could do it as an exercise, with faith. Perhaps I could pray, "Please let me know You, and let me know myself." I don't want to "protect" myself from this information out of fear. The *Bhagavad-gita* describes the facts. It's up to us to accept them submissively and to eventually realize them. Krishna presents both the good and bad news. We are eternally qualitatively one with God, but we have misused our free will and are now entangled in this world. And here we continue to struggle. We have forgotten our eternal loving service to Krishna, which was the source of our bliss.

"He is bound up by the false ego, and the mind is the chief agent which is driving him in this material existence." Liberation means to lose our material coverings and to manifest our spiritual body in the spiritual world, "and in his spiritual body he can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face, he can hear and speak to Him face to face, and he can understand the Personality of Godhead as He is."

Keep this with you. Maybe you can realize it better, *even today*. recall it when you can, recite the verse with the implications given in the purport: we are of the same quality as Krishna and can revive our spiritual bodies and be with Him and the eternal associates in Goloka.

People can't understand who they are and how they are conditioned. By *jnana-caksusa*, we can come to understand this information. A devotee tries to give such

knowledge to others. "They should come out of it and be Krishna conscious and liberate themselves to transfer to the spiritual world." (Bg. 15.10, purport)

Don't neglect worship of Krishna in both His majestic power and His intimate sweetness. "The splendor of the sun, which dissipates the darkness of this whole world, comes from Me. And the splendor of the moon and the splendor of fire are also from Me." (Bg. 15.12) "These are some thoughts to provoke Krishna consciousness in the conditioned soul." The sun and moon may speak to us directly of Krishna's splendor. They are material objects, yet powerful and unadulterated.

But many things work to distract us from remembrance of Krishna. I saw on M.'s desk an illustrated book explaining different kinds of music. That was distracting. I didn't think of Krishna as I looked through it. One could think, "These varieties are forms of *maya* to bewilder us. Or they are evidence of a certain *Sakti* of Krishna manifest in different ways according to the modes of nature "music in goodness, passion, and ignorance." Whatever it is, it doesn't make me think of Krishna.

It is Krishna who makes everything happen. "I enter into each planet, and by My energy they stay in orbit." Keep this knowledge with you. Don't abandon it. This is how to become a learned man. God makes things happen. *Bhakti* for Krishna is the supreme gift.

Now finish this writing session. I like to regularly read *Bhagavad-gita*, small amounts at a time, with receptive faith. Let it go all the way into me. This body will not last forever. I don't know what my next life will be. I hope it will be one suitable for further cultivation of Krishna consciousness. While I have this one, let me keep it pure and use it only in His service.

Taking God's names, either purely with loving attention and awareness or mechanically, is the most direct way to be with Krishna. They say mechanical prayer is not prayer at all. Yet we say that at least mechanical prayer shows an attempt to direct the will to somehow touch the holy name. It may be an unsuccessful attempt, but it is an attempt. If we persist in it, we will eventually get below the covering and find Nama Prabhu (and ourselves).

Hare Krishna. In this world, moment to moment, recall Krishna. This is His material energy. The light, electricity, the ability to see anything, the ability to think of Him "the bewildering varieties that make us think of them only and not their Creator, not the more wonderful existence beyond them. O Krishna, please don't let us lose ourselves in them. We are noble spirit souls. Please don't allow us to degrade ourselves by unseemly association with matter.

Runny nose today. It's colder all of a sudden. This old body sits and feels the strain in the back of the neck. Maybe this sitting posture is not the best. But I can't live just for that, for what may be best for my physical health. Nourishment of the soul comes first. We are one in quality with God, who is all-powerful and all-pervading. But we transmigrate, lost in forgetfulness. We are meant to cut through this cycle and return to our original Krishna consciousness.

### Write after Puja

*Pujari's* Free-write; His Notebook World

*Pujari*, it was nice swimming the channel of *puja*. You don't do it so expertly, but I see you like it anyway. You don't follow all the book rules.

Deities wearing pink shocking "what do they call it? "shocking pink, black, and gold. I built up the dress. I mean, I put on one piece after another. Then pink plumes and peacock feathers on Govinda's turban. Added a gold stick. All the way, I listened to Bhaktivinoda Thakura's explanation about the glories of the holy name.

We might wonder that when the *Siksastakam* tells us that chanting brings bliss whether this is not against the simple principle that *bhakti* should be performed without motivation. Bhaktivinoda Thakura replied that Srimati radharani's pleasure is the only pleasure the *gopi-manjaris* feel. We are pleasure-seeking beings "that's our nature and we cannot escape it "but the pure devotees seek pleasure in Their worshipable Deity's happiness. Seeking personal pleasure is impure, but if that's where we're at, if we go on chanting, we'll reach a higher stage. Heard that as I washed Their bodies in warm water, then dried Them with a soft tissue.

*Puja* makes me okay. I am writing this in a . . .

thinking the whole time

in back of mind,

"Can I grow pearls and

smell flowers

in Krishna's service?"

Can I hide in a crypt? Can I

dance à la Wagner Hynes?

Huh?

Can I do this *for Krishna*?

I asked that it in the back of my mind because I was busy at the time, trying to be attentive to what I was doing. One thing at a time. At that moment, I was dressing the Lord in His *dhoti* and *kurta*, trying to contemplate my good fortune.

The *pujari* is in his notebook world. I saw the moon, the mind's eye, what I wanted in my own eye. Hare Krishna antics believe

as sore response.

Don't make sense.

When drawing, is it possible that a well-drawn picture can be Krishna conscious, even if it does not contain the form of the Lord?

The *pujari* then notes, "My kids have to go to *gurukula*, but I have no kids."

Who is this *pujari*, this

fifty-nine-year-old *sannyasi*?

Maybe he will get married when he's sixty, run away and start a new life with the woman of his dreams.

Oh no, he wants to go to Vrndavana to

Pennsylvania to hayracks

and other crazy places

to be calm and to preach.

They asked the *pujari*, "We want to present Krishna conscious science in a basic form for children. Please write a story we can include." But he declined.

Then we all ate oats and beheld the lighting of the sky. At 5:00 a.m. it was still dark with an almost-purple color running over everything and rain falling. We thought we could walk in it, if we took umbrellas. Because this is the from-scratch school and we are just poor merchants.

"No," Prahlada said, "I don't want to be a *vaniya* with You, Lord. I render my service to You not in that way. I do it for to please You." Lord Nrsimhadeva was glad. Write an upright poem to please Krishna "that's what I'm trying to do.

Down drafts. Words don't wait. My friend and I meet in time-space and hear each other out. The best way is to actually be present: give yourself to the moment and to hearing Him. That's all. And say something appropriate. A good chance to practice mindfulness. Be in your action.

The *pujari* heard the temple president's announcements. He wanted to comply and get back to his *sadhana*.

Neither goof nor assignment is your trouble bringing in things from your immediate surface existence and taping it together "you need to go deeper into the consciousness to give us something more worthy.

Messenger of love of  
Narada of Lord Narayana  
we wrote an essay taking it  
from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and  
Srla Prabhupada was pleased.

Now your shoes walk and feel a sigh of relief as ankles and feet relax. We expect you to be a devotee. A policeman stopped me (in a dream) but was friendly. He made an entry in my passport just to say he had talked with me.

The devotees were busy getting plates emptied of the early morning offering, separating the *maha-prasadam*, washing and drying the silver, getting the next offering together. If someone didn't show up for a duty, someone else would have to do it. We waved incense and ghee lamps, water in conches and handkerchiefs, flowers and *camaras*, and now it's already July 4 here in quiet Ireland. No bombs going off. At least, right now. Yesterday, more thump-thumping to put in fence posts. He's working hard to keep his prisoners penned in so they will be available for extermination. This by our friendly neighbor and his young sons. He wanted to use our electricity to run it all. Test of integrity.

Unless it's in connection with Krishna, the sages at NamiSaranya didn't want to hear it no matter *what* it was. Me too. Link me up, please. So out with the hot dogs (with or without mustard) because they can't be dovetailed. Flowers are okay, because they can be offered. God of all races and religions and nonreligions, please help me. O Krishna. I pray. On a retreat, a man could do intensive therapy on his *japa* with or without friends. The *pujari* perks up his ears. Is that a car coming up the lane? He'll be alone today. But he has already run out of paper. And time. Hellfire! Purposes will now have to bend away from this notebook. Let him chant.

5:25 a.m.

It's been raining and the road is shiny wet. Overcast low sky. Madhu is going to leave at 6:00 for his two-day trip to England. He's going to see his family. I'll be alone, and I hope that means I'll be open to more creativity. I also hope it means I'll spend some time in the art room. Will I find some new direction? I'm aware that my writing is repetitious because my life is the same day after day. I don't object to the repetition, and I don't feel threatened by it. I'm not dissatisfied by lack of variety, and neither does sameness intimidate me.

Fat, slimy slugs on the road. Fat milkweeds on thick, milky stems, their multi-blossoms forming fat pods for imaginary fat creatures to sit upon. As I walk up the hill with the July greenery turning the road into a tunnel, I see the van poised at the top, ready to catapult Madhu down and away and leave me behind. Just for a day. Tomorrow, I have to go to Dublin.

\* \* \*

Never the Same  
& I have been down this lane  
before but the rain never shone  
just like this on the blacktop.  
I never quite felt like this "so  
different from how I felt in 1989  
poised to enter a life of prayer.

\* \* \*

How could I know then what  
I know now? How could I  
have forgotten what I found then?  
Oh, splash on me why don't  
you, gentle rain? Today you'll  
leave me alone  
but I might space out or  
be side-lined "anything  
could happen in this cave  
of a country.

\* \* \*

"revolutionaries don't close their  
eyes." The meditator said we are  
just like that. But I said  
I don't want the worst thrust  
on me just yet. It will come, I  
know, so I pray to remember  
Krishna at all times and on

all occasions.

\* \* \*

O Krishna, I hold up my hands  
and You reassure me. I am no  
voidist but I am still crazy with  
false ego. Still, I want never  
to leave my Swami's shelter.  
Some words from a person in retrospect. "

\* \* \*

On the Verge of rebellion  
& We were denied our pepper we were sleepy  
and didn't want sad riotous  
dreams of the Navy sinking ships or  
me assigned to cradle heavy  
shells, bombs, in my skinny  
arms, one after another passing  
them up to the man above. I  
couldn't take it and so I slunk  
away to my office. No one objected.

\* \* \*

We were denied because we  
didn't show sufficient interest.  
The lessons were stopped when  
the teacher saw I did not  
practice. We faked out when  
we were caught. Once we wept  
to please our master face to face  
so much did we want him to respect  
us to like us and encourage us in  
a positive way.

\* \* \*

We were prepared to declare  
incompetence, or more accurately,  
complacency, when a reminder  
came that a man should try his  
best to retrieve a spirit of  
love of God.

\* \* \*

We were just on the verge of rebellion  
when He suddenly gave us  
a little strength and clarity and  
we managed to stay on course.  
O master, it's July 4, and today  
I don't want to be independent  
of your rule.  
I declare myself eager for  
the simple things you gave. "

\* \* \*

10:05 a.m.

Declared in a letter to my editor that I'm going to write without intimidation over repetition or length. I'm writing as an artist, following my process. I'm writing what comes naturally. She has her own job to do, but I can't worry about that.

Took an Esgic, but probably too late. I felt the pain rising at 6:30 this morning, but didn't take the pill until 8:00. Perhaps I thought it wasn't developed enough. Not a wise strategy. By the time I took it, the pain had developed into a more recognizable headache, so there was no doubt that I needed the pill if I wanted to stave off a long headache. But it hasn't worked. At 9:15 I took a Tylenol. Still not pain-free. My special day alone is not "free." I'm not able to go into the art room, and perhaps I won't be able to write through to my twenty-page quota. I'll have to shift gears to accept this pain that so much inhibits my activities. Krishna wants me like this today.

At any rate, I am determined to write my way through it and to make it an offering to Krishna.

\* \* \*

12:05 p.m.

Sharp enough. What to do? Lie in bed? I suppose I have no choice. Let the mind dwell gently on the pain area. Consciousness drifts, but I return it to the pain. No particular regret. Appreciating.

I thought today would be good for creative work with Madhu away. Perhaps I would do double time in the art room, hanging wet finished and half-finished paintings around the house. Not to be. But this *is* a special day nevertheless. My duty today is to have a right-eye headache and to live with it in whatever way is possible. I made my attempt to stop it with chemicals; the decision was up to Krishna.

\* \* \*

Dreamt I was one of Prabhupada's servants. He was giving us different remnants of his clothing. He was going to give us a vest and we were to make a copy of it. I stood near him as he took it off. Then he glanced at me. I forgot that I was invading his privacy

while he was undressing. I walked away and looked at something else. But I felt good I would be getting this remnant.

\* \* \*

4:16 p.m.

Squeaked a little during my pain vigil. I can tolerate it as long as I don't have to do anything else. Stayed in bed or easy chair today. I expect this headache to last through the night. The ideal attitudes I adopted earlier today are wearing thin though. My consciousness is fogged by pain. I feel dazed. I catch myself on trains of thought that aren't where I want to go. Don't know how to get on a Krishna conscious train, such as one I would want to have at the time of death. Off track.

I would like to sleep for awhile and wake up with it gone. It did dip for a moment, but now it's back full force. Mostly waiting, grateful for this quiet environment. But tired, tired, tired of the constant presence of pain and my inability to relieve it.

\* \* \*

7:24 p.m.

Sharper. Fell asleep around 5:00 p.m. for a couple of hours. Pain dreams "my persona had a headache in the dream along with two guns. One was a long-barreled pistol strapped to his right leg in a shiny black holster. The other gun was in a holster on his left side. He slept with these guns in a motor home. He was prepared to tell the authorities why he was authorized to have them. In the dream, he also received news that his father had committed a crime and been shamed. He had lost his fire-captaincy and been sent to jail.

Going to Dublin tomorrow? I'll have to see.

July 5, 8:53 a.m.

On thin ice. After twenty-four hours of headache, much of it sharp, the thing has finally gone. We're now in Dublin, Inchicore, at Bhadra and Sile's place. The little bottle of Evian is by the night table as usual. The bed here is softer than the one in Wicklow. We arrived early, as always, and are waiting for the devotees to gather for the lecture. I will give my talk and try to make it earnest. About great souls. remember that advice for a lecturer? Love the people to whom you are speaking. That's more important than giving a brilliant lecture or even handing out old wisdom. Of course, just the fact that I came despite yesterday's pain says something about my feelings for this audience.

Oh, get me the right medicine, from England, from America, from the druggist's shop, but spare me from pain. Is that my prayer? Not really.

I don't expect to write much today. To survive the lecture and the meeting with my Godbrother will be plenty. I hope to touch my brother's heart and to have him touch mine with presence, words, looks, intentions. In a sense, it will be a formal exchange between two Hare Krishna monks, ships passing one another and saluting according to seafarer's etiquette, but let it be more.

\* \* \*

11:34 a.m.

Don't ruin this wonderful opportunity Srila Prabhupada has given you. Devotional service far surpasses Zen "mindfulness" or falling in love with anyone, anything, or any place. It includes all wonders. Maybe I can learn from other things occasionally, but be sure to dovetail it.

Yes, you may use Kleenex, "one of life's little comforts." Yes, you may try pain relief and pain preventatives in moderation. Yes, you may learn the art of listening to others. Yes, you may write every day as many pages as possible. But don't ruin your connection to Krishna through your spiritual master.

I have returned from the "dead," those twenty-four hours of stinging pain. Of course, I might get stung again tomorrow, or even this afternoon. It's never really over. Hare Krishna. Chanted eight silent rounds today, a faded version of my usual *japa*. Yet I liked those rounds. I think the class went all right too. I spoke as if I were a compassionate sage, a real person, a Vaisnava, although I'm just a fool with imitative *jnana mudras*. You can't pretend to be saintly; you can only be who you are.

Observe the mind and see that its interests are temporary. Do what you do for Krishna. He's in the spiritual world as well as in every moment and in every thing in this world. We can see Him there if we have eyes of devotion and knowledge. We don't have to see mere objects but can see Krishna *murti*. If we want that.

Always windy when I'm here. Waiting now for my Godbrother to arrive so we can have lunch together. I want to be there with him, to listen while he speaks, and when it's my turn, to say something meaningful to myself and if possible, to him. I have already delivered one monologue today. Class audiences don't get a chance to speak except briefly at the end. The speaker is the honored one. But it cost me to come here. I had the sharp pain right up until a hour before I had to leave. Dared the trip as the pain ebbed in Uddhava's bouncy little car.

Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

12:20 p.m.

He should be here soon. "Take it easy" "my motto. If something is too difficult, I don't want to do it. There is usually an easier way, something more natural, simpler, less cumbersome.

What if it is difficult but good for you, will you still refuse it? Maybe. I mean . . . I mean, maybe. Because that's who I am, especially in these last ten years. I can't write a book or draw a picture the difficult way. But if you are dedicated to an easy way, that can be *tapasya* too. Because you stick to it no matter what.

Oh, I don't know. What would this Godbrother I'm about to meet say to that? Let me be mindful, earnest, and sincere. I have no agenda to fulfill in my meeting with him. The easy way means being myself. The difficult way for me is trying to be something I'm not. I want to be myself for the sake of my Krishna consciousness. It *is* a *tapasya* to stick to that conviction.

They are buying me medicines, propping up my bed, fixing the curtain to keep out the sun, bringing new sheets, and offering so many other services. Others could have lectured, but they asked me, and they often do. It's partly because I'm old, have been so many years in the movement. In that sense, old age is an opulence. But it is soon to end! In my next life, I will be a beginner again. So what is the point of claiming privileges? It's all false. Simply be the servant of the servant of the servant a hundred times removed.

My brother should be here very soon. I'll probably hear his bass voice coming up the stairs before I see him. I wonder if he changed when he went to India. Did he finish his book?

\* \* \*

When you are doing something and try to think of Krishna while doing, what's that? He said, "Oh, that's *jnana*." But I mean something different, a cutting through, not just an adding Krishna on in an intellectual or obligatory way. Love "we've got to love Him the way a woman serves her husband while meditating on her lover. Cry the available cry of the heart. Be mindful. Be that basic.

He should be here. It's past 12:30. Oh well, nothing I can do but wait.

\* \* \*

3:50 p.m.

From talk with Godbrother: He spent his time well in Vrndavana, writing about Krishna. It made me want to also go there to write, but the reality of being there is just too harsh for me. O Krishna, may I just remember Vrndavana from here and face myself? But if I go to Vrndavana, I could hear that Radhe-Govinda blues lady and step along the holy lanes. Here, I'll read books on mindfulness, from Paulist Press or Poetry Heaven.

What's that? Yeah, it's true. I'd do that anywhere, even in Vrndavana. But here in Wicklow, the essence is actually *bhajana*, prayer, and preaching through writing.

So that was stirred up in the conversation. Otherwise, not much came up. I only fear staying too long in Wicklow in case my prose becomes as bogged down as those sheep and cattle. Well, I won't let it. This is a holy place because Radha-Govinda are here. Therefore, it's a place in which I can face myself, chant *japa*, read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and surrender to Prabhupada's mission.

\* \* \*

4:10 p.m.

If you are an artist and all that, how come you keep writing about yourself? Where's your structure?

Maybe I'm not an "artist."

Just a devotee?

I am that I am

Krishna conscious in a home "a householder (with no wife). I do have a garden, and can see the low stone walls. Dear friends want to place my drawings in a book. Why not? And put my tootsies in an upper berth. Am I going back to Godhead with the finest saints leading the way? I told them I'd like to be on time at the station. Blow it in your ear.

"Your ISKCON painters, even though Krishna is a *lampat* (libertine), you make Him appear so innocent." He is an innocent boy.

I told him I struggle to read our spiritual master's books, and then the phone rang. Our talk was easy, full of Krishna, and they served us a nice EkadaSi lunch. O Lord, it's fine. I'm going home. I can't say something more Krishna conscious than this because this is who I am. I have run out of pure issues. Are you becoming more Irish? No, I said, just plain American trying to be Krishna conscious, I hope. Lingered with him in hopes.

That's all. I'm heading for *Srimad-Bhagavatam* after this page. Then I'll quiet down, I just had to sneak in here and make a few comments, my man. Thank you for listening. It's been fine.

\* \* \*

4:42 p.m.

Maharaja Pariksit said: "O learned *brahmana*, you know everything because you are without material contamination. Therefore whatever you have spoken to me appears perfectly right. Your speeches are gradually destroying the darkness of my ignorance, for you are narrating the topics of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 2.4.5) My spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, is like that "without material motives. His association should work on my heart so that I end up enlightened like him. If not, what good am I? I expressed a little of that to my Godbrother today, but he didn't reply. I'll keep it to myself then.

The Lord exists with His *dhama*, eternal and unlimited. He is *anadi*, having no creator, and *adi*, the origin of all. Whatever we can learn of this perfect knowledge comes down in disciplic succession and not by experimental knowledge. The Supreme Lord cannot be known by scholars, even scholars who study the *Vedas*. He is understood only by pure devotees. Sukadeva Gosvami was capable of speaking of Lord Krishna because he was a great devotee. We should worship him for his ability to love Krishna purely. That will be more effective for us than worshiping the Lord directly.

July 6, Midnight

A pure devotee does better than I do. He sees Krishna directly acting in his life. He thinks, "Krishna is here. He is my friend, the all-powerful Supreme Person." Or he thinks of Krishna in the spiritual world. If he absorbs himself in work, he never loses his awareness that the work has been given to him by Krishna and that it is the sweetest gift. His consciousness is always fixed on Krishna.

Then what could I mean by "just be mindful"? That's voidism, or at best *jnana*, someone told me. Oh yeah, I guess I'm wrong again. I mistook something for pure Krishna consciousness. Sorry about that. It's just that I am so much hankering to know Krishna and to remember Him. I can't seem to see Him in his *tribanga* form in

what I do, so I thought I could "feel" Him through a deeper form of remembrance and by my own "being there" in the moment. I'm talking about the difference between thinking *about* Krishna and actually experiencing His presence. We devotees are often so sentimental, and we sometimes give ourselves credit for more than we're actually experiencing. Do any of us see Krishna everywhere? Maybe. Not me. At least not directly. Anyway, let me leave this now and go to the reality of hearing Him speak *Bhagavad-gita*.

By His grace we are enjoying life. He is the fire of digestion. By His energy the planets stay in orbit. "And I become the moon . . ." Take His word and worship it. Now all I have to do is "see" everything devotionally. To see it wholly is to see it devotionally. But don't forget *Him*! For example, when we chant Hare Krishna, all we have to do is hear. He's fully present in His name. We don't have to keep telling ourselves, "Krishna's here." Simply bring the mind to hear the sound vibration which is Krishna Himself. Do it personally; do it nicely.

"I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the *Vedas*, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedanta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*." The residents of Vrndavana perfected thinking of Krishna. Let's think of them.

I am so stupid. I try anything, thinking, "Maybe Krishna's here. Maybe I'll find Him this way." What about the ways He recommends? Have I tried them fully?

God gives us knowledge of Himself and the process by which we can reach Him in the *Vedas*. He's also in our hearts. He has also given us guru, who assures us that Krishna is present in our hearts. Whatever we see, the guru teaches, is Krishna's energy. Therefore, we should think of Him no matter what we are doing.

Bg.6.29 refers to direct Krishna vision. *Bhakti* is mindfulness, attention, awareness. He is in everyone's heart. "A true *yogi* observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees Me, the same Supreme Lord, everywhere."

"A Krishna conscious person can see Krishna in the heart of both the believer and nonbeliever." We may say, "Of course, I can't look in someone's chest and see the four-armed form of Visnu shining there." Then what do we mean? Does the *yogi* see Paramatma everywhere?

For us it can mean seeing with the eyes of faith, maintaining an awareness that God is present in each creature "at least maintaining the faith that this is true. Krishna is the giver of life wherever there is life. To be mindful in *bhakti* means not only to know these things with our intellects, but to think about them, live with them, and realize them through experience.

"Outwardly, also, every living being is situated in the energy of the Lord. . . . Every living entity is situated in Him in one way or another." Everyone is a servant of God, either directly (a *bhakta* who is serving Krishna) or indirectly (a nondevotee who is serving his own senses "which are also within Krishna's energy).

"For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me." (Bg. 6.30) He sees separate manifestations "a tree, a stone wall, whatever ""but in each and every instance he is conscious of Krishna, knowing that everything is a manifestation of Krishna's energy."

"Krishna consciousness is the development of love of Krishna "a position transcendental even to material liberation. . . . An intimate relationship between the Lord and the devotee then exists. . . . To merge in Krishna is spiritual annihilation."

Prabhupada sometimes gave the example that the mother looks at the baby's shoe and thinks of her beloved baby. Anything that we look at is Krishna's and is therefore intimately connected with Him. We don't have to just see the thing; we can think of the Person who owns it, who created it, who maintains it, and who permeates it even now.

"*Premanjana-cchurita* . . . I worship the primeval Lord, Govinda, who is always seen by the devotee whose eyes are anointed with the pulp of love. *He is seen in His eternal form of Syamasundara, situated within the heart of the devotee.*" [emphasis added] The *bhakta* sees this form while the *yogi* sees Paramatma. They cannot bear to be without the *darśana*, however. It is not enough to see an essence of something or to enter that essence with only one's mind. Seeing Krishna is not a function of the material senses but of the heart. No, we cannot superimpose Krishna's form on what we see in an artificial way. What can we do? We can simply study *Bhagavad-gita*, hear from the self-realized spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, who is so expertly presenting Krishna to us, and learn to love Krishna with all our hearts. There is no quick solution. But even if we cannot immediately realize Krishna's presence, *Krishna is here* right now.

\* \* \*

### Write after Puja

#### *Pujari's Confession*

*Pujari*, after *puja*, heads for the bank of the Tuscarora Creek and hears dawn birds and crickets. He practices mindfulness. Is that wrong? Should he not twitch? Should he not grin? Is he committing *aparadha*? Too frivolous? Is he thinking of Krishna?

Yes, he says. "The bird song and frog song and cricket song are all part of Krishna's nature. I feel joy to think of Him when I hear them." He feels good. But does that mean Krishna is pleased with him? Does it?

*Pujari* says, "I heard *Muktacarita* today. It's very funny how Krishna and Subala negotiate with the *gopis* to sell them pearls."

Sketching and writing in his notebook, our *pujari* draws an owl he sees. He sees an author peeking from behind the trees. The author grunts, or someone does. Birds drop. But this is Ireland, and the land is filled with penned-in sheep. *Pujari*, what made you think you were in Pennsylvania? Imagination?

*Jnana-miśra-bhakti* "pure essential oil and incense and silk. Lord Krishna is a gentleman. He will return the pearls.

I can tell for sure you are happy by the way you tap your toes, but what I don't know is whether Krishna is satisfied with your tapping. That's the real test, you know. Krishna has to be pleased. Srila Prabhupada taught with perfect tact. Please him by following his orders. Then you'll know you're on course.

Listen, listen. Madhumangala, you outrageous cowherd boy!

He sketches anything that comes to mind, trusting the process. It's Krishna's process, after all. Then add His name to it "Krishna's process, Krishna sweet and lovely,

His *maya*, His toe-tapping servant, swift-flowing creek. But add His name with heart, not as a tack-on ending.

Still, how do I know that He's pleased?

Because He will smile, and so will your guru.

The *pujari* loves the sound of birds on mild mornings as light grows up from the water and the mosquitoes begin to come alive. O Subala, come and bargain. Be the mediator. "Or we shall simply go to Mathura to buy pearls."

Krishna and the birds.

The temple president comes out to where the *pujari* is sitting and asks, "What are you doing?"

*Pujari*: "I was thinking of writing a series of books on Krishna based on what Srila Prabhupada has done by adding my realizations in his service."

TP: "We have enough books. Any book, of course, that helps us remember Krishna may be allowed, but you ought to bounce your ideas off me first. Besides, why are you out here sitting by an imaginary creek? You listening to bird songs?"

Knowing that reason won't cut the mustard, the *pujari* decides not to comment. Then he says, "I'd like to write now, if you don't mind." The TP pulls up a rock and gets out his own gilt-leaved diary. They begin to write together in silence.

Wee weevil will make  
we need to stay awake  
and I need to take a  
cue from Krishna the sweet  
and He will be the enjoyer  
of this and then we'll all be satisfied.

\* \* \*

TP: "You know what? The birds are not Krishna conscious. They have no repast but what God sends them. Now I must go and be present to greet the Deities and do Srila Prabhupada's *puja*." *Pujari* goes with him so that this story won't become too controversial.

\* \* \*

But how can all this be true? He asked me how to solve the problem of continuing to work on the same chapter. "Or do you just write it once and let it go?"

Yes, I admitted it. I don't like to revise. Then I spoke about the editor's function, but that, of course, was a dodge. I couldn't say much about the way I write, and neither did he ask much about it but said simply, "It was nice we got to meet." And, "Would you like to go to Vrndavana for purification? You could buy clothes for the Deities while you were there."

No, I think I won't go just yet. I have something good going here. I will simply have to think of Krishna and Radha and separation from Vrndavana. Someone else can go and bring back the clothes. I'll be satisfied with whatever comes. What's the point in being a tourist to the holy land? That's all it turns out to be for me "no peace there."

Sweet and lovely. I got my grinds and stay-awake eyes. If I don't live, if I don't stay active, I won't be able to think.

List:

pissoir owned by Balzac

wine hundreds of years old

straw for Chianti wine bottle

liquor store sale

Tour de France bicycle race down Sleepy Boulevard

Krishna

Krishna

Krishna

and

the tides of June

ides

of July

and where will I be for the rest of this summer? Tell me.

Here in this house

with the *pujari* I'll

be trying to eke out a living

with no regrets

Krishna conscious

aware

hopeful

flooding myself with service but

Remaining detached

from the results. Just working for Krishna, perhaps a little shakily, as I felt while driving in Uddhava's rattly car yesterday. Maybe it won't count.

-

5:20 a.m.

No neighbors' cars. Monday "quiet joy. White clover growing down there. The nearby cow scratches her forehead with her rear foot, leaving a smear of dirt. Like an ungainly child. I talk aloud some gibberish, satisfied but looking for something more. Birds with swallow tails. The dark tunnel uphill on a misty Monday morning. Madhu's back from his weekend in England but hasn't told me yet what happened, nor have I told him of my awful Saturday.

\* \* \*

Why is There Anything?

& Merry-go-round we go the fairy

people fairy knickers powdered

wig Steve is not American

or Hindu but Maha is now

an Indian citizen "

\* \* \*

where does that leave me?  
Tell me, sorrow, *tristesse*,  
where is the sweet meadow  
and your writing harrow?  
Have you left it to rust  
in the soft rain?

\* \* \*

"Why is there anything?"  
For *ananda*, the Swami said in  
Mexico.

\* \* \*

Why is there me and hand-gripping?  
Hold on, the truth will outlast  
even my version of Saturday  
and yours, and no matter what  
happens . . . It sobered him  
to see, "My father's on the  
way out."  
Sobered. Left there thinking  
how death can disfigure *him*  
like that "more reason to  
turn to Krishna. But will he? "

\* \* \*

Happy Presto:  
I'm Always Actually Happy  
Under the Frog's Umbrella  
& Presto! We have to  
go soon, folks, to the bathroom  
little folk running under mushroom umbrellas  
for frogs.

\* \* \*

Elves, giants, the actual  
desk built for a six-foot man  
biting his fingernails.

\* \* \*

His breakfast arrives on a platter  
like John the Baptist's head  
told at the Christian school for  
Hindu Bengali "did I  
tell you my brothers are  
advancing in spiritual life and asking  
what I am doing?

\* \* \*

Sick in head and writing these  
kind of self-portraits  
"One Thousand Views of Fuji" "  
getting better, faster, only  
only able to tell what he can see an  
irksome wistful  
birthday cake of candles  
blown out and melancholy  
darkness follows

\* \* \*

I am always actually happy  
and uplifted, scarface old  
tells chilluns be happy  
in the Lord but what  
do they care  
only I care  
for the morrow. "

\* \* \*

8:48 a.m.

M. said he saw a book on Zen in his daughter's room. It had a saying like, "Unless he is also a swordsman, a swordsman should not show him his sword. Unless he is a poet, a poet should not show him his poem." M. said my writings are like that "to be shared by a small group. Yet they are selling.

The hand writes a little sonnet on his collar. The list grows: nettles, free-writes, computer bytes, peanut butter sandwiches. Too much, too contrived. Give up all gimmicks (like turning over handguns) "we noticed a bulge in his breast and 'twas a gun in Guyana (Gauranga).

Then the Krishna conscious man hurried to his purpose. M. said, "You are not writing a book like *sastra* where every word is taken as absolute truth." Agreed, but why harp on it?

Harp: a kind of beer they drink in Ireland.

"You are becoming Irish?" he asked me.

"No," I said, "I am too American." Then I mumbled something that sounded Krishna conscious "that I would like to be free of such designations.

Because these national designations do not bring peace either to myself or anyone else. The United Nations can attest to that. Better to drop the designations and acknowledge that we are all servants of the One: *nityo nityanam cetanaS cetananam eko bahunam* . . . Acknowledge that.

"One after another the Eastern European countries, after communism, first go for a bit of freedom, but are now choosing a pro-Christian nationalist form of government." I wanted to know what was favorable to our little movement, so I was interested to hear that. He said that just recently in Germany, the government declared that Hare Krishna should not be called a "sekt." That's too derisive. They proclaimed us bona fide.

Then I was excused and admitted into the back seat of my man's car, still giving reasons why it's too hard to live in Vrndavana as we sped away.

I will recall that moment with a sigh as the days go by. The poems,  
the inner secret glee of  
consciousness  
which appears in print.

\* \* \*

From *Trust the Process*, by Shaun McNiff:

I am ultimately interested in artistic expressions that emerge like images from a dream. For me art has to flow naturally from the streams of an individual person's experience . . . The experienced creator is forever intrigued with the unplanned results that emerge from faithful practice . . . Conflict and uncertainty are the forces that carry the artist to new and unfamiliar places.

Easy way. Natural. Why didn't he write what it was like to live in the dark winter bolted up in his house in Vrndavana? That did not seem important. Compiling a book of Krishna's pastimes was important. Do you understand that?

Yes, I do, and I respond with inner glee. I keep it private that one person I know writes only about what happens to him. You see, Krishna consciousness is a new culture outside of India, so we need many kinds of cultural expression. Yes, he replied, unless we give this to devotees, they will go to someone else to get it.

Yes, like Henry Rilke Ford or You-Know-Who Maharaja. So better we keep them happy with our stuff.

There you go again, running out of ink. A man ought to regularly read the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* purports if he's really a follower of the writer of the Bhaktivedanta purports. My brother said he appreciates more how Srila Prabhupada was able to read and absorb from all the *acaryas'* commentaries, then take something from here and something else from there, sometimes touching only lightly on a point, add his own comment, then present what was exactly best for us.

Krishna, the *lampat* presented as a simple, innocent boy. Yes, yes, I want to study (read, be with) Krishna, who mixes with both the internal and external energies.

Writing a page in my diary. On a document like the Declaration of Independence. Or something similar. Now I am running out of breaths. I can keep taking them evenly for now, but the day will come . . .

Just as I was about to leave the house for good, I saw a gorgeous pink rose in the front yard. It refreshed me, it inspired me instantly! I turned back to my friend and embraced him. But no one knew I had seen the rose. It was a moment, and I immediately labeled it "Krishna conscious," because it was, even before the words "Krishna's splendor" leapt into my mind. The act of tacking on "Krishna" comes afterwards, and *that* is a *jnani* act. I'd like to claim seeing that beautiful rose and feeling it uplift me as an act of *bhakti*.

\* \* \*

9:46 a.m.

In the material world every living being is fallible, and in the spiritual world every living entity is infallible. The infallibility of souls in the spiritual world includes their freedom from old age, birth, death, and disease. "There, all exists in oneness." Their bodies don't change; and they all love Krishna.

God is greater than all living beings.

I told you I started to express yesterday my struggle in reading Prabhupada's books but got no response, partly because my presentation was interrupted when my brother had to answer the phone. When he came back, the topic wasn't pursued. I tried to present it palatably, though. I compared it to "the good fight" to attain attention during *japa*. We all admit it's a struggle, don't we? So reading may be like that, due to overfamiliarity. Some of us are also haunted by the criticism (the minimization) of Srila Prabhupada "that his books are basic and speak only of *vaidhi*. That's where we got interrupted. I know the *Caitanya-caritamrta* contains higher, *rasika* topics, but that's not what I wanted to say "or not only that. Then I felt myself bragging that I read every day at midnight because I need to approach Prabhupada's books when I am in peak condition. If he had shown interest in that, I might have even mentioned my practice of *lectio divina*. That probably would have been a mistake anyway. But it was a nice meeting. Now I'm trying to piece it together to see how I acted, how I tried to justify and defend myself, and perhaps to expose myself with the hope that a brother would help me.

Nobody mentioned that Rajarsi dasa had passed away. I wrote a letter to his widow, praising him. I especially knew him in earlier years when I would stay at his house and work on *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*. He was a nice man, committed to Krishna consciousness, and willing to risk his social and economic standing among other Hindu immigrants by daring to come out solidly as a Hare Krishna devotee and mixing with us Westerners.

God is above the fallible and infallible. I'm feeling some head pressure so won't continue right now.

\* \* \*

11:25 a.m.

Read a man's report of his wife's death by cancer.

What about *Srimad-Bhagavatam*?

I went to *Bhagavad-gita*.

I took a Tylenol.

Davy's day: "Davy took his cod liver oil."

Someone opted for no sedation despite the pain of cancer, because she wanted to stay aware and alive until the end. Mathiessen described his wife as paranoiac and extremely afraid of pain and death. What will I decide to do when that time comes? I argue now in favor of medication, because I want to stay active and write. My disease, however, is not terminal. When and if I get that terminal pronouncement, what would I do? I don't have to decide yet.

I have pretty much decided not to go to India this year or in January of next year. Maybe next Karttika. In the meantime, let me try to bring Vrndavana here by getting thrones for Radha-Govinda. Something to help me remember that place.

\* \* \*

3:00 p.m.

Head pressure persists. Makes me disinterested in writing. I also feel unable to read *Bhagavatam* right now. What's the point of the pain then? This morning, when I made a spirited defense of my kind of writing and living in Wicklow, is already only a memory. All I have left now is the present pain. And news from ISKCON Ireland. As I get each letter, I receive, each person's point of view. To one I'll reply, "Your letter was filled with tension and anxiety." Single women trying to raise families alone. But it could be worse.

\* \* \*

3:53 p.m.

Here comes cheer, I hope, on the breeze. Don't be down. Try to see the good. My Krishna is in everything. I can sing His holy names, do something easy and mellow but Krishna conscious, and know He will always protect me. I'll never be the loser, and the gain is great, Srila Prabhupada used to say. The *Siksa-guru* teaches what the *diksa-guru* teaches or he's no *Siksa-guru*. Instead, he's a demon. I heard that one yesterday.

The apartment is fixed on stilts  
when is the last time you wrote  
sassy divided lines?

O Krishna, when is the last time I looked up bright and said I'm not afraid of pain or sickness, I'm just going to write my Krishna conscious way through? Srila Prabhupada, I'm coming to you through the blues of a fog, remembering that you assured me I am not my body, and that I should go on with the work of the Krishna consciousness movement.

I'd really like to stop faultfinding. It's so nice to feel well-disposed toward those who are trying despite their idiosyncrasies. Because we all have idiosyncrasies. Faultfinding

is like having a headache; it drags you down, disables you, and you can no longer work in Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness is a positive force in the soul, not something that should drag.

This morning, three workers went at it in the yard "M. was sawing logs, Hare Krishna dasi was planting cascading flower vines, and Aniruddha was moving topsoil from the front gate to wherever it was needed.

O Krishna.

\* \* \*

4:15 p.m.

Drag-along man read this: "The devotees of the Lord, while delivering speeches and describing the transcendental attributes of the Lord, do not think that they can do anything independently. They think that they can speak only what they are induced to speak by the Supreme Lord, the master of the senses." (*Bhag.* 2.4.11, purport)

\* \* \*

4:40 p.m.

Still have fog. More Tylenol won't work, so don't waste time even taking it. Neither is the pain bad enough to waste a second-Esgic-of-the-week on it.

\* \* \*

6:15 p.m.

Good night to Deities in Their bed, and now let me go to mine.

M. was telling me some news from "out there." I said I didn't want to hear too much of it right now. He was trying to help the devotees get here from England. I won't go Doc-shopping for meds.

July 7, 12:10 a.m.

"Because I am transcendental, beyond both the fallible and infallible, and because I am the greatest, I am celebrated both in the world and in the *Vedas* as that Supreme Person (Purusottama)." (Bg. 15.18)

Hankering for things in the mail. All night with ache in wide area of the head. Dreams came and went. A farmer's tractor going back and forth nearby, even up until 11:00, its small light shining in the sky. I didn't want to wear earplugs. Had pain anyway. "It's like a crap shoot," wrote one migraineur in the Internet journal. He means that each morning when he gets up, he doesn't know whether or not he'll get a headache that day. Using meds, he added, "is like throwing dice."

Give up shame in writing. Also, pretense and preconceptions of art. I say I am an artist-devotee, yet I don't mean I want to write crafty, cute, propaganda pieces for mass consumption. I am a person, and I want to give some gist of what that means as I present the straight message from Krishna and Prabhupada.

Krishna says, "I am the greatest." That's what prize fighter Muhammed Ali used to say about himself. But time showed him to be a pitiful figure whose speech was slurred, his body diseased and finally crushed by old age. He was arrogant and foolish to declare himself the greatest. Maybe he *was* the best fighter for a while, but when the Purusottama says He is the best, it is nothing about arrogance or temporary domination. It's part of His offer to protect us, and we should respond by surrendering.

"Whoever knows Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, without doubting, is the knower of everything. He therefore engages himself in full devotional service to Me, O son of Bharata." (Bg. 15.19) The only thing we need to know is Krishna in truth, Krishna as God. Then we'll know everything. Better we start and finish with that.

How wonderful that my brother has hit upon the idea to write *Krishna-lila* "like a novel" while drawing from the *acaryas'* commentaries. He will purify himself and all who read him.

\* \* \*

Hear from *Sruti* that all living beings are always subordinate to Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The word *bhajati* aptly describes our relationship as servants to the Supreme. "If a person is engaged in full Krishna consciousness, in the devotional service of the Lord, it is to be understood that he has understood all the Vedic knowledge." According to the Vaisnava *parampara*, if one is engaged in devotional service there is no need for any other spiritual process. If we don't come to that point but continue to speculate on what is truth, we are simply wasting our time.

"I am here!" Krishna says, and if we go off in another direction, how can we say we want Him?

"This is the most confidential part of the Vedic scriptures, O sinless one, and it is disclosed now by Me. Whoever understands this will become wise, and his endeavors will know perfection." (Bg. 15.20)

Let me write down these best of sentences. Each time I write, I should shoot it all, spend it all. These verses give the ultimate truth in each expression. Krishna does not beat around the bush in *Bhagavad-gita*, even if He reveals a gradual path. Sometimes He tells us lesser things to lead us forward or to speak to us where we are at. But ultimately: "I am the Supreme Person. Surrender to Me, become my devotee, come to Me, and serve Me in the eternal, blissful spiritual world."

"O sinless one" "we have to be sinless if we hope to actually understand Krishna. Devotional service frees us of sin.

A Godbrother has been accepted for graduate work at a prestigious British university. Good for him. I have been accepted in this Wicklow house. Another brother has been given Indian citizenship. I have not been given Irish citizenship. We each do what's right for us as we run our race toward death, hoping to contribute what we can.

\* \* \*

Write after Puja

*Pujari* Talks of His Pain

*Pujari*, I heard you're not feeling well.

It's true, but I'll persevere, because I have my duty. I felt sad that a spot appeared today on Krishna's forehead and I couldn't wipe it off with a cotton bud. I shouldn't even mention it. His turban covers it. I guess it's something a *pujari* would be aware of but few others would notice. Aside from that, I want my spotless Cowherd Boy to be happy and to not be marred by some neglect on my part.

Listened to *Muktacarita* again, but my head hurt so bad I wasn't as attentive as usual. Still, I continued to hear the outrageous jokes passed back and forth between Krishna and the *gopis*.

And now I don't know where to hang my head in shame. I have committed so many sins (those things that brought me to this world), all of which make me ineligible to purely hear what the crest jewel of youths is doing in Vraja.

You mention your past sins, but I heard you say you didn't want to go to India for purification.

It's true, I did say that. I want to become purified here. It's not that I don't want to be purified.

O *pujari*, what are you looking for?

Our *pujari* eases himself out of the crossfire and sits in the corner (like a Jack Horner) and writes in his notebook.

I saw the full yellow moon low on the horizon this morning. I never seem to get out there to moon-gaze "my life is frittering away! *Pujari* indeed . . . I feel restless when I am confined.

"What's that? You don't want to live in the temple?"

No, I'm restless. I want some time to myself before I die, time alone to think of Krishna and to think of how to share His glories with others. Just think of how many pure games Krishna plays, His many jokes, how He steals butter when He is a child, and how He is nevertheless the Supreme religion. But where is He? And I'm a *pujari* asking that question.

Look, they are all busy preparing the feast menu. Let me slip off and dive back into my pocket-sized *Bhagavad-gita*. I'm reading the fifteenth chapter, where Krishna says He is the greatest, Purusottama. This is the most confidential knowledge, and He is revealing it at this very moment to Arjuna. I want to be in the audience.

Now make a poem "people  
make fun of me  
but I know Krishna is God and  
that *japa* should be done in a trance  
forgetting bodily pains and  
Remembering Krishna  
on the altar  
and in the hearts  
of all beings.

No mere *kanistha* "we want to give that up.

The rain stops and starts. *Pujari* heads out to the creek before anyone comes to interrupt him. He wants to be where Krishna is, not absent. You have to be on time with Krishna.

But he's also thinking of his pain. Don't eat trigger foods. Don't overdo the meds. Take too much, you'll get rebounds. Talk to the doctor. "See?" the doctor will say, "By taking the pill, you open yourself to pain as soon as the pill's effect wears off." So the docs pontificate, but when one has pain, what's he supposed to do, just take a bath and listen to Brahms?

O *pujari*, find your Krishna. Your ailment is not your dearest intimate subject "that ache or problem or complaint" as if Buddha or Christ asked this of you. Don't forget your love of God, and don't forget what Sukadeva says about those materialists who are lost in the dust of this world, forgetful and forgotten. But if you think you can kick out pain by tolerating, you're dreaming. You need an easier way.

But there doesn't seem to be one.

No?

Geez, let me grind my teeth.

Krishna went out with His cowherd friends. Another time, He lifted Govardhana Hill. But the *gopis* teased Him that He had since lost His good qualities. Friends, you can't expect me to be in favor of rascaldom. Our spiritual master condemned the reading of newspapers and so do I. We'll just have to scratch our way through. Srila Prabhupada, I need an easy way, because I already have a difficult way due to the pain. In the meantime, I offer my humble obeisances to all the great devotee writers of Vaisnava *smṛti*.

-

11:50 a.m.

Unable to write because of head vise. Anyway, I've lost my will to do it right now. While looking up at the curtained skylight in the bedroom, I imagined I had reached the point of no more writing in this lifetime. What would that be like? I would feel I had done enough; I would be released from the drive. Whatever I had done up until that point I could leave behind. I would be a different person, a non-writer.

\* \* \*

12:05 p.m.

Clearing up? Maybe. But maybe not. Blue ink. Krishna, Krishna. That spot on Govinda's forehead. M. refrained from using the electric saw this morning. Quiet is best, but they have work to do. A brother said that devotees want to see that leaders are capable of living like *sadhus*, staying in a holy place and performing *bhajana*. I look like I'm doing that, although Ireland is not considered a *dhama* and some may question my choice of *bhajana* practices.

The headache pamphlet referred to the "Preacher-Monday Morning Headache" "named for those clergymen who get migraines the day after suffering the stress of delivering a Sunday sermon. "The vascular system reacts not immediately but after the stress." Perhaps that's why my Mondays tend to be difficult too "I'm in Dublin on Sundays. There are so many possible factors, hereditary ones included. No one thinks meds are the answer, but most sufferers opt for them to get out of the hell. I won't take anything today, but I'm telling you about the pain because it's so much a part of my life.

\* \* \*

12:27 p.m.

Lunch is typically fifteen minutes late.

Little explosions going off in my head.

I think I can't be actively compassionate toward the suffering of others because I am too crippled by my own. Like a bird with a broken wing or a lamb with a limp. All I can think of is myself. But some souls get out of it even while they suffer, and they help others too.

Hare Krishna. Migraineurs write in to that web site and receive replies to their e-mails. "Hey, everybody, I'm sorry you all is in pain. I hope you have a happy 4th of July. Has anybody out there got an answer to when you feel like committing suicide when the Er jerk won't give you your meds? My husband doesn't understand. I have no money for meds. This is driving me crazy. There's got to be an answer. Has anyone tried Dorcet? I hate the taste of that stuff! Makes me vomit. Thanks for listening. God bless."

\* \* \*

Visualize the pain as a hat settling over your head. It's lowering past your eyebrows and down the back of your neck. I'm just thankful it's not in the right eye right now. Suffering humanity and animals. What does it matter? We're all killed by time in the end, every last one of us. Thank God I have a guru and have taken birth in this life of understanding.

\* \* \*

Waiting for his footfalls on the stairs as he carries the Deity plates up with lunch. Waiting to get down on my knees to pray. When I have head pain, I don't touch my head to the floor but simply lean in that direction. He lets me off easy.

Devotees here say "quid" when they talk about money. How much is a quid? They assume I know. I looked it up in the Collins dictionary. *Quid* is British slang for a pound sterling. A queue-jumper is "you can figure that out. He collected a hundred and fifty quid at the Sunday feast to purchase more topsoil and gravel.

\* \* \*

3:15 p.m.

Tight band in head. Makes me dizzy.

Krishna, Krishna. Think of Him naturally  
or by force  
when you hear *nama* or  
*pracar*. I tell you, brother, please  
listen.

Did I expect my life to be something more than it already is? Where's the rainbow at the end of the struggle? Hare Krishna. Decide what to do.

\* \* \*

4:16 p.m.

Outside a lamb busily chewing grass. I buzzed the intercom. No answer. I wanted to know whether someone was getting me some feverfew. I feel righteous that I have avoided Esgic since Sunday. Feverfew may arrive here on its green wings and save me on such days. But maybe not.

Krishna comes through His empowered devotees. Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja was very old. He said he had many diseases. Still, he wrote the most beautiful verses. Hope for sufferers.

\* \* \*

In all the letters I have been writing, I have been enclosing a photo of my Radha-Govinda. In return, I have asked each devotee to send me a photo he or she likes. Someone sent me a photo of my disciples gathered in Baltimore in 1997. It was a celebration of my birthday. Today I received a photo of Srila Prabhupada sitting outdoors at Kumbha-mela mixing two buckets of water (hot and cold) for his bath.

\* \* \*

5:46 p.m.

Miserable at *gayatri*. Mind off watching a lamb limp by. One of its front legs was injured, and its left rear leg was held completely off the ground, yet it proceeded, splashed with the letters "PC" in bright blue on its white, woolly hide. No medical plan for the sheep.

Radha and Krishna in the growing dark of this room. Keep writing until it gets too late. Dear Lord, I ask You to forgive me for not reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* today. I wasn't able to do it. My loss. But I want to hear some tomorrow and overcome the obstacles.

\* \* \*

5:55 p.m.

I lean forward to pray, but what comes? Oh, say one *gayatri* and then lose it again. read the suggestion in *Trust The Process* to draw quick pictures on small cards. Yeah, but . . . how to pray and make real prayer? We have to go slowly too sometimes. Man, I was a devotee, I was a saint, and I was the best of the pack. No, I was the last, the very best and last. I was sassy and shy, and on the lookout for how to carve matter into spirit. That's the way I'm meant to be. I mean, on the lookout, you see.

He told us how to make art while becoming devotees. We all served the same spiritual master but in different ways. Each group had a little leader, and some were bigger than others, yet they all vied with one another for his attention.

As for Lord Krishna, He was the leader of us all, and as long as we read His *Bhagavad-gita* and *Krishna* book, we found some basis of agreement between the

various groups. We all knew that we were His eternal sparks and were meant to serve Him, and we all had the same goal: to be happy in His company.

In the meantime, we pick up on one another's sounds and think about them. We get on the lookout. I, for example, am on the lookout in the meadow for some feverfew. I am on the lookout for becoming a better person than I ever was before. Percy view, meadow view, the got-to-get-it-through-the-school-of-art view, whatever that means.

My mother loves me, my papa too, I'd like to believe, but not true. Nothing is true except Krishna, and even He is understood differently in various churches and temples. Some understand Him less than others. No one knows Him completely. Still, Krishna is the best friend we could ever have. My prayer is to serve the Lord and to be His. He is *rasa-raja*, the king of all relationships.

\* \* \*

6:13 p.m.

Now I'm saying good night. I have my emergency first aid kit ready in case any danger comes in this pain-filled wilderness, but I'm probably too squeamish to use it. I mean, if I saw any blood or exposed innards . . . and Madhu with that power saw out there. Maybe I'm as squeamish. So better I praise the strong, brave men who drive fire trucks and rush into flaming buildings or who exchange gunfire with bandits. Better especially praise my fearless spiritual master, who preached the doctrine of Krishna consciousness under every circumstance. He was quiet when he sat at his low desk at seventy-five, eighty, eighty-one, eighty-two, but when he was in the field, he never gave up. He fought to establish this movement because he knew it was best for society. He watched it grow.

But people didn't take it seriously.

Don't tell us again what happened after he left. We don't want to hear your gut analyses. Just draw us a picture on a small card. Go ahead. Hare Krishna ramparts. Here is a picture of me with the Swami. I wish we had some from 1966. I colored this one in.

Each one of us has to learn how to become a real devotee. In that sense, we are the experts of our own lives. But only if we are honest with ourselves. And brave enough. No one knows better what we must do to surrender our body and hesitations. All we can do is share our attempt with others and take solace and inspiration. Because the spiritual master has already spoken. Seek friends who understand that and are willing to be honest together.

July 8, 12:13 a.m.

In a hurry to be a devotee. Aware I'm still making mistakes. Willing to correct them but slow to actually change. Old age and pain making me less venturesome? Or is that a cliché? Maybe I can still change. Keep hoping I can make dramatic changes even this late in life. After all, Srila Prabhupada didn't start out for America until he was almost seventy.

Devotional service is a liberated state. One who attains *brahma-bhuta* *prasannatma*, the fully joyful nature of Brahman, and who doesn't lament or hanker, is

ready for "pure devotional service unto Me." (Bg. 18.54) The pure devotee considers self-annihilation hellish, that going to heaven for sense gratification a phantasmagoria, and doesn't fear his own senses. He sees this world to be as good as Vaikuntha. Krishna, Krishna.

I still have head pressure. It cries out and tells me I can't go forward to read, write, and chant as I please. How to subdue it? Another day like the last two in store? If so, I have to learn to be satisfied with less output. But I don't like that. I want an active if quiet life. Pain seems to rule, at least externally. The whole top of my head feels like it is being crushed, like a vise sensation is spreading throughout the rest of it. Just another experience. I don't cry out against my creator because of this, as some people do in that Internet journal. Let me just keep moving, even if I am reduced, and even if some of my songs sound like they are crying.

"One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God." (Bg. 18.55) This is a great verse to contemplate. It is similar to Bg. 11.54: "Only by undivided devotional service can I be understood as I am . . . Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding." The path of speculation or material work will never reveal Krishna, and impersonalism certainly won't either. When we have unflinching faith in guru and Krishna, the Supreme Lord will reveal Himself to us.

Just now I'm thinking how I used to associate with big ISKCON leaders, most of whom later fell down. One of those leaders appeared in my dream. He was under the influences of an evil person. I tried to point it out to him, but it was a strain on little me to even associate with such a powerful, influential person. In the end, I went my way. True to life. Because someone was always trying to tell me how best to serve Srila Prabhupada, then later turning out to be grossly mistaken. Better I stick to the path as Srila Prabhupada inspires me in my heart. And keep reading and chanting and writing in a Krishna conscious way.

When we understand devotional service, we are able to enter the spiritual kingdom. The pure devotees there can be fully trusted. Hare Krishna. I am fallen and weak, influenced by others in various ways, but trying to dovetail my interests. Also, recognizing and dealing with my attachments.

Lord, please save me. Make me blaze pure (even if with a feeble, inward flame) in devotion to Srila Prabhupada. Please call me to follow him and preach on his behalf in a way that makes sense to me. Let me reach out to people and encourage them in their Krishna conscious lives.

In *Bhagavad-gita* Krishna promises us that we can get through all the impasses and difficulties by depending on Him and staying fixed in devotional service. "Though engaged in all kinds of activities, My pure devotee, under My protection, reaches the eternal and imperishable abode by My grace." (Bg. 18.56) Serve the spiritual master twenty-four hours a day. Krishna is very kind to devotees engaged in Krishna consciousness. What are the difficulties we have to pass over? The entire universe is an obstacle, in a way, because it represents a whole range of suffering, not the least of which is the ability to achieve something short of devotion to Krishna. We may be

tempted to reach more for what feels possible than what seems so outside our grasp. But we will cross over these difficulties and reach our eternal home if we only persevere.

\* \* \*

Dream: White people massacring an Indian tribe. Some of the Indians were spared. Just before they appeared in my dream, Hayagriva gave me a book containing some of Srila Prabhupada's early sayings. At the end of the massacre, I was telling someone about the value of maintaining ecumenical attitudes toward other religionists. I also received word of my father's death. Again and again in the dream, I found myself speaking against corruption and evil influence. We have to be strong.

\* \* \*

### Write after *Puja*

What Good Will

Suppression Accomplish?

Lost in the hearing. What will you say now, *pujari*? Where are you, anyway? Are you out back with the cat? He knows after he performs the sanctified *puja* he ought to remain clean in body and mind. I heard he went to the forest to look for his healing herb. We could go after him, but why bother? He seems to be determined to keep his idiosyncrasies. "What good will suppression accomplish?" Is that the quote?

So says the manager's wife, whom some people called the real Manager. But the *pujari* isn't in the forest or out back with the cat. He has gone down to the creek again at dawn's first light to sit on a rock and face the water. That notebook he writes in sure is getting full.

Ah, will we ever toast

the dawn with pure *prema*?

I for one am filled with so many

things I'd rather not mention but

each prevents me from attaining

*prayojana*. And what

good will oppression accomplish?

(Is that the quote?)

Srila Prabhupada says that the movement, with its many centers, exists to propagate the teachings of Krishna's *Bhagavad-gita*. Krishna orders us to surrender to Him and assures us that He will protect us from all calamities.

I wrote a letter to a person whose suffering was the lack of a husband-provider. We can't avoid our specific pain, none of us.

Dig deep, *pujari*! You want God? Then cry for Him! I don't know if this mild complaint will really do it.

Hark a lark. Krishna is worshiped with all paraphernalia. I can do my best, improving whatever comes to mind. Krishna from the *Vedas* "He knows we are the only ones (those of us in the human form) who can rise up from *tamo*- and *rajo*-*gunas* to goodness where we have a faint possibility of glimpsing something about the Absolute Truth. He also knows if we chant His holy name, we can associate with Him face to face right now. If

we want to. He wants us to become the best *yogis* "those who always think of Him and therefore see Him in His original form while their hearts melt in devotion. Krishna is with us now.

I like hearing this! We don't have to become a hundred percent pure, just pure enough to listen to His name. Then we will be saved *by His mercy*. I don't know anything else. Just that He will allow us, if we want Him bad enough.

*Pujari* in the forest  
chanting *japa*  
with clean hands  
and feet  
relaxed. His life  
doesn't seem to amount  
to much but  
he practices *bhakti*  
under vow  
and continues  
to hope.

\* \* \*

There was a time when we all had apples. We could write any word and be assured it would be connected to Krishna. We were always with Krishna. Only we forgot Him.

Srila Prabhupada makes returning to Him sound so easy. Just take what he says. I don't have to analyze it to death. Follow with faith.

Hare Krishna. I sent home for forty sets and ten arrived. I wanted to go to Vrndavana and Puri where they sell those "Jagannatha tongues," brittle and hard, and where I would be assured of seeing the sky over the sea and remembering Lord Caitanya. But this is Ireland, this is where I am. Nothing is guaranteed here except separation from the *dhama*.

I'd like to be a serious devotee who knows all the *sastras* and their meanings. I'd like to be the kind of devotee who has *vijnana*. Such devotees can simply reach into their realizations at any moment and say the right thing. They are always in line with Srila Prabhupada.

But I don't expect to become such a soul. All I expect of myself is to go forward in my service. This service will do me good. Gives me access to the accumulated wisdom of others. Because I still blush when I hear of Govinda's amorous pastimes. Not only that, I still love peace and production. I can't solve problems. All I can do is figure out, with the help of an assistant, how to break fast by eating stewed prunes. A small-timer. O Krishna, why can't I take You more seriously? I just don't understand it.

Someone told me that it's not enough to say, "A *brahmana* is truthful"; one actually has to become truthful. Be experienced and practiced in honesty. This place is for that. Don't cheat. Learn how not to cheat. *Pujari*, I notice you harvested no bad plants. Does that mean your heart is becoming pure? I wish it were so.

-

5:25 a.m.

Will he make it back to Godhead, Woolly Mammoth?

Who, Willie Mays?

Well, I was amazed that I could rise from the dead after a twenty-four-hour headache and go right to Dublin to preach like that. But didja hear? He got a Preacher's-Monday headache.

So what else is new, Sollie?

Look at those pretty, dangling foxgloves. If I touch them, the blossoms will fall off. See all the curled ferns? The berry bushes? At the top of the walk, through the green tunnel, I can see the cement mixer. Ani's been doing it up in the yard, building stairs, paths "where will it all lead to? Am I supposed to sit and walk in this garden like a sage content and striving? Can I find Vrndavana here?

\* \* \*

I Know Krishna a Little  
& We the people in order to  
form a better mandible have  
evoked acupressure and bio-  
Rhythm feedback to warm  
our fingers and other parts but  
those still don't chase headaches.  
"That's 'cause you want it,"  
said the headmistress of  
the university dept. on pain

\* \* \*

But what does *she* know of my  
dolors? And who knows my  
joy except He who reigns  
in my heart and the hearts  
of all moving and nonmoving entities?

\* \* \*

Yes, who can know my sorrow?  
Even I don't know it all. Yet.  
Only Krishna is *satyam param*.

\* \* \*

He took a four-armed form, but  
the *gopis* were not impressed.  
In His boyhood He stole butter  
and Ma Yashoda's cows, and when

He grew up He continued His  
stealing propensity  
stealing nectar from the lips  
of the young girls  
who loved Him more than  
anyone else.  
His flute knows Him well  
but says little other than  
to sing enchanting melodies  
that humble all the *devas*. "

\* \* \*

9:10 a.m.

Hare Krishna. Threadbare rug. I don't need to springboard off anything mundane.  
"Exaggerate," he said. "Go ahead, try it."

Okay. The *cadar* on Srila Prabhupada was fifty feet long and wrapped around him  
like the fog that blankets Mt. Wicklow.

No, just move along. Don't look now, but I feel less pressured now than I did two  
days ago.

He advised me to remain a *sadhu* and not get entangled with money. All right. I am  
proud that I have no computer. Proud, because it allows me to stay out of the rapid-fire  
exchange. I also refrain from rum and Coca-Cola and from becoming consumed by  
passion. Senor Prabhupada, Master Eckles. Stamp on passport. Stand at rail of boat as it  
crosses the sea, but don't jump overboard.

Just relax here. We hope there will be no accidents "no scalds, electrocution, stumped  
toes "although we regularly cross into the valley of headache. Because nowhere in this  
world is safe. Look how often we take advantage of having big money to control people.  
No safety.

Let me get more into solitude. If I become more alone, will I settle down to write and  
read? Would I turn more toward the *Bhagavatam*? Will I learn from what I am reading?  
Reading *Bhagavatam* is supposed to be meditation. Yes, I will try for that. May I  
remember Krishna standing in His *tribanga* form as I read.

At the same time, I'm like a forest ranger, always scanning the woods for signs of fire.  
The fire burns in my head, flaring up behind the right eye and spreading through my  
head and body in the form of pain.

I also watch out for the approach of my muse. I celebrate art as another form of  
meditation.

Anyway, I'm becoming tired of communicating too much.

\* \* \*

9:45 a.m.

I am beginning Sukadeva Gosvami's prayers for the ability to describe the Lord's  
creative energy to Maharaja Pariksit. There is a tape recording of Srila Prabhupada  
reading these prayers alone in uptown New York City in early 1966. They

begin, "*Namah parasmai purusaya bhuyase.*" Prabhupada read them in a rhythmic chant, accompanying himself with clashing *karatalas*.

He offers obeisances to the Supreme Lord, "who is the liberator of the pious devotees from all distresses . . . For the transcendentalists who are situated in the topmost spiritual perfection, He grants their specific destinations." (*Bhag.* 2.4.13)

The devotees know the Lord as a person and associate with Him, but the nondevotees don't know Him. Some know only His material energy or the impersonal Brahman. Such nondevotees always remain distant from Him and His abode. "So the Lord and His residential abode will always remain a myth or a mysterious problem, but for the devotees the Lord will always be available as an associate." (*Bhag.* 2.4.14, purport)

The importance of hearing, the stages of advancement toward voluntary and spontaneous service, eternal residence with the Lord in Goloka "yes. I accept it all. I value the *Bhagavatam's* statements and run them through my system, frame them and put them on my walls, or carry them on cards in my breast pocket. I also put them in my EJW. "Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the all-auspicious Lord Sri Krishna, about whom glorification, remembrances, audience, prayers, hearing and worship can at once cleanse the effects of all sins of the performer." (*Bhag.* 2.4.15) Surrender to Him and He promises, as He concludes the *Bhagavad-gita*, that He will deliver us from all sinful reactions.

What does it mean to surrender to Krishna? Consider the six items of *Saranagati*. "This devotional service to the Lord is always based on love of God and is distinct from the nature of routine service as prescribed in *karma-yoga*, *jnana-yoga* or *dhyana-yoga*." (*Bhag.* 2.4.16, purport)

Here is the easy way to surrender: perform lots of *kirtana*, hear as constantly as possible, and pray for the Lord's mercy. "Attainment of this perfection of life is easily available to a pure devotee of the Lord without his undergoing any difficult method of perfection. . . . One must therefore adopt this simple way . . . "

\* \* \*

10:37 a.m.

Writing is first, publishing second in terms of my making a devotional offering. Someone speaks of getting satisfaction just from the act of writing as an offering. Whether others read it or not is secondary "or should be. I want Krishna to be pleased with my service. He may be pleased when I write, but He may be more pleased when I publish what I have written and it manages to help someone. It doesn't have to be published as if it's a great prayer to the Lord. As in Deity worship, most of the writing is between the *pujari*-writer and the Lord, and has little to do with the thoughts and feelings of others toward the work. At the other end of that exchange is the devotee's understanding that the Lord wants to bring many conditioned souls back to Him. Therefore, a devotee wants to offer the loving service using his own expression to preach.

To how many people do we have to preach before the Lord is pleased? We simply have to work according to our capacity. "If you ever get money, print books." Good way to go around the world. I am at a stage where I want my books to be as sincere and free

as possible. The best way to achieve that is to avoid letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing and to keep honesty as the root.

Hey, lookout, what can you see?

I see some flashes over yonder. I will introduce Esgic Plus if necessary "if the indications become stronger. But not quite yet, sir. It is possible that such flashes could go without building themselves into anything substantial.

\* \* \*

12:17 p.m.

Took the Esgic. The lookout said, "Now! Before it's too late!" Have gone to bed.

Govinda looks fine indeed today in His purple and gold frilly dancing skirt and *dhoti*, which falls just above His beautiful bare toes. Radha standing in a posture of devotion to Krishna.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

The main thing in reading and writing is not to note the verse's eloquence or to dutifully copy out something from the purport, but to accept what it says with deep faith as true. No one can get the result they desire from any spiritual activity without dedicating themselves to the Lord's service. If we don't work in God consciousness, our qualities will become a source of trouble for us. "And to become God conscious one has to hear about the all-auspicious Lord, as He is described in literature like the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*." (*Bhag.* 2.4.17, purport)

Anyone can become the Lord's devotee "even those born in non-*aryan* races, such as the *pulindis*, *abhiras*, *yavanas*, etc. "provided he or she takes shelter of a pure Vaisnava.

The Supreme Lord is worshiped by those who are "transcendental to all pretensions" (*niskami*). May that Supreme Absolute be pleased with me. The devotee is peaceful because he has no selfish desires and is always ready to serve the Lord's desires. Interesting use of the words "pretension" and "pretensionless."

Lord Krishna is the husband of all the goddesses of fortune. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada mentions Lord Krishna's *rasa-lila*. Lord Caitanya recommends "the mode of worship preferred by the *gopis* of Vrndavana as the topmost loving service possible to be rendered to the Lord. And Srimati Radharani is the principal head of all such goddesses of fortune . . . nondifferent from Krishna." (*Bhag.* 2.4.20, purport)

\* \* \*

4:36 p.m.

Be happy the pain cleared and the afternoon is free. May I use it well.

I painted six splashy pictures. One depicts a large orange face, an old man with sagging jowls, one earring, and Vaisnava *tilaka*. He's simply there, manifest on the page, without comment.

Another started out as a simple green plant with a sunflower top. Then I took an oil stick and scratched over the painted surface until a simple face appeared. That face is also just there, a member of the painted congregation.

Another painting was of a woman, but I left her without eyes or mouth since I seemed only able to draw those features in a cartoony way, and she looked too meaningful and powerful for that. There are two faces squashed near hers, their limbs left to the viewers imagination. I wrote some holy words on this picture: *vande rupa-sanatana* . . .

I love color. "*He! radhe vraja-devike!*" Two figures, one smiling and one not, but two forms. Let me leave these behind for now. I have already washed out the brushes and palette. I want to be careful not to come back later to add some too-cute clarification to all these indistinct faces. They are already accessible in their primitive, pumpkin-faced ways.

While I worked, I heard Aniruddha outside shoveling the last of the gravel and topsoil into place. He is building small steps here and there. Hare Krishna, "I've never seen anything like it," said Mikey, the topsoil man. When Aniruddha paid him his twenty-two pounds for the last load, Mikey returned it to him and then gave another twenty-two as a donation. How about that?!

Hare Krishna. Pain-free in Innisfree. O Krishna, please save me.

\* \* \*

I have nothing whatsoever to say right now. I must have left myself behind somewhere. Lucky I don't have to write for a living or I'd be in trouble.

Living on Krishna's mercy now. If I can survive the trenches of pain without fear and by remembering only Krishna, I will have offered my love.

But I've said that before.

If we are iron rods placing ourselves in the fire, when do we start to notice that we are becoming hotter? When will we actually act as fire?

So many analogies "we struggle to make them work in our lives. Here's one: as the human body produces a small amount of water (perspiration), the gigantic body of God produces the oceans.

Another: whereas the city of Tokyo is lined with traffic lanes and the cars are ordered by law to drive within those lanes, so the order we see in the universe is obviously the result of a person's planning. The planets also stay within their lanes (orbits) and don't crash into one another. There must be a person, a brain, behind such arrangements.

Argument by analogy. Srila Prabhupada uses analogy as a tool to establish the supremacy of Krishna.

I want to use the same analogies to become fixed in loving Him. In a gentle manner, I want to repeat my convictions and understandings, such as they are, to defeat the arrogant scientists, doubters, nondevotees, and demons who live within me. Srila Prabhupada, I want to please you by repeating these arguments and implanting them in my mind and heart as well as in the minds and hearts of those who listen to me. Then we should all become devotees of Krishna.

But it's so hard to say when we actually become devotees. Or at least when we can make such a claim for ourselves. Still, I can tell you that whatever it is I am, I am

coming to love Krishna through Prabhupada's explanations of His qualities and activities. Every day I hoe my little row, weeding and moving a little further along, digging, painting, writing, reading, looking out the window at the hills and grazing fields and stone walls and cattle and sheep and thanking Krishna for this gift He has given me. Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

5:53 p.m.

Beware of mundane sound. Beware of forgetfulness of Krishna, of coming back to the material world for the attractions of the senses.

What can be used in the Lord's service? Practically anything which is not against the regulative principles.

Such a beautiful garden out there now. I want to thank Ani for his hard work and devotion. He has created a work of art.

Now, let me end this day alone and more Krishna conscious than I did yesterday. I want to do that each day. rain slashing out there.

I have to save myself. We all have that responsibility to ourselves. Krishna gives us the strength to go to Him.

\* \* \*

6:37 p.m.

We can see Krishna everywhere, but best to search for Him in the straight Vaisnava fare. That will carry us the furthest and quickest. *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Srila Prabhupada, radha and Krishna "they are all pure and unadulterated.

Now in to bed and hoping I'll be able to rise in time to read those stirring verses in the eighteenth chapter.

Krishna

Krishna

Krishna.

July 9, Midnight

"In all activities just depend on Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me." (Bg. 18.57) Act as a servant on the spiritual master's order. *Mat-para*: "One has no goal in life save and except acting in Krishna consciousness just to satisfy Krishna."

When we serve in any way, may we each think, "I have been appointed to discharge this particular duty by Krishna." Yes, that is how we should think. I may be working in a way that I like to work "in tune with *mat-karosi*: "Whatever you do, do it for Me" "but the energy can still be converted and dovetailed into Krishna's service. We can also please Him by offering Him those things that we like to do, as long as we really do them for Him. Learned circles have concluded that the goal of all works (including art and literature) is to glorify Krishna. We become absorbed in the work, but let us not work without remembrance of Krishna. Let us become absorbed in working for His pleasure

alone. Let us then offer the work and its results to Krishna. "While acting in such a way, one naturally has to think of Krishna."

Then Srila Prabhupada's warning: "After doing something whimsically he should not offer the result to the Supreme Lord." One should act according to the spiritual master's order, because this is Krishna's order coming down in *parampara*.

I hope I'm doing that. We shouldn't judge one another superficially. We may each have our whimsy, because we are not completely pure and surrendered. We can admit our folly and offer all we can again and again. "From imperfection, purity will come about." The whimsical conditioned soul shouldn't abandon his attempt to offer himself to Krishna.

"If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditioned life by My grace." (Bg. 18.58) An actual devotee enjoys freedom from anxiety. Nondevotees cannot experience this state. We're already servants (prisoners) to the laws of material nature; no one is independent of Krishna's energy. But for those who act in Krishna consciousness, Krishna becomes a friend and looks after them.

The devotee, however, although also a servant, is "free to act because everything is prompted by Krishna from within and confirmed by the spiritual master." (Bg. 18.58, purport) The nondevotee appears free superficially, because he doesn't have to follow the spiritual master's rules. Yet he's not free, because he suffers from so much anxiety and perplexity. He doesn't know his own self-interest. Neither does he know the truth. A devotee follows his spiritual master and becomes free of anxiety, perplexity, and doubt. By following, his material entanglements are relieved, and he becomes freed from the reactions to inappropriate actions.

Can we surrender and be satisfied by the freedom it brings? Or are we too restless to work closely under the spiritual master's rein? We have seen that some who follow the spiritual master later become tired of the restriction he places on their lives. They break loose and return to their whimsical life. Many have lived to regret that mistake, and try to find their way back to Prabhupada's lotus feet.

I'm refraining from going downstairs to see if Madhu left the mail. I heard him come into the house at 10:30 last night, but better I finish what I'm doing now and look for the mail later. Aniruddha and others have made this place resemble the beautiful hermitages we read about in the *Bhagavatam*. But it's no Nanda-nandana garden where one becomes lustful just looking around at the intoxicating beauty. This is a simple place, but pleasing, and the gardens add to the meditative environment. That is how the beauty is in Vrndavana, too. Aniruddha wanted to know if I would eventually try to grow *tulasi* here.

The conditioned soul forgets that he's Krishna's servant. But Krishna is present in all of our hearts giving directions, "and one simply has to act in Krishna consciousness to attain the perfection of life." (Bg. 18.59, purport) Arjuna was asked to fight and kill the enemy.

What am I being asked to do? It may sound obvious, but facing the order is no joke for any of us. I have been ordered to avoid illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling (including frivolous sports). I have been ordered to chant at least sixteen rounds of the Hare Krishna mantra daily on my beads. I have been given many other orders too. For example, I have ordered to practice the five most potent forms of *bhakti*: 1. reading the *Bhagavatam*; 2. worshiping the Deity; 3. associating with

devotees; 4. chanting the holy names; and 5. living in a holy place. Srila Prabhupada also ordered me to preach and to work cooperatively to maintain ISKCON. He ordered me to become pure, humble, and now, to care for my disciples. He ordered me to set an example of one who gives his life to the spiritual master's service, who is loyal to his spiritual master and his movement, and who does not fall down from his vows. "That will keep one safe under all circumstances." He also ordered me to write.

\* \* \*

### Write after Puja

*Pujari* reads the News

*Pujari* reads an old news magazine about India and Pakistan testing nuclear weapons. "If we really want to worry," one headline reads. And, "Loose Nuclear Warheads." India can't feed her own people, and poverty, sickness, and death are rampant, "But hey, those nuclear explosions are something!" Other countries agreeing to economic sanctions against her.

What about the Hare Krishna devotees living in India? What if a war breaks out? Is anywhere safe?

They sent me a thirty-day food supply in cartons. What after it's gone? Am I ready to withdraw my senses (*atyahara*) from the world and simply chant Hare Krishna? Hardly. I had better start learning to think beyond today's headache.

I mean, what about the rest of humanity? I say I chant and pray to God for others as well as myself, but I can't pretend to be doing that more than I actually am. We Hare Krishnas are such a tiny world power. We have no money at all, no troops, no nukes, no nothin' but dependence on God "if only we could have more of *that*. Krishna, Krishna. We cry out anyway. One hundred million dead. That's what they say will be the result of nuclear bombs going off in that part of the world, and no adequate medical treatment. Better get praying, man.

As for the joys of the peaceful world the way it exists now, I can only say . . .

*Pujari*, put aside the news. Ignore it. What else is up?

The temple president's son and dog approach him at the creek bank. He says, "This world is as dangerous as the *sastra* says it is. There is danger at every step. If we take shelter of Murari, we'll be safe."

"Uh huh." That's all he says, the boy with his dog. Then he picks up a pebble (the boy) and throws it into the swift-flowing creek. He says that ratha-yatra will go on as usual. Our routines depend, however, on peaceful operations as usual.

Krishna, please give this *pujari* the strength to remember You and to surmount pain. He wants to do something worthy in his remaining days. What good is an artist devotee? If he can simply rescue a few people from *maya* with his art, he will have done something worthy. And in his own self-interest. *That* kind of self-interest is no crime. We should want to free ourselves from *samsara* and go back to Godhead. There *is* a place above this world and the other material worlds of crime, war, and punishment. Believe in God and go there "that's worthy too. That's the standard of living we want for ourselves. Chanting Hare Krishna is the way back. Lord Caitanya. Lord Krishna. Prahlada Maharaja, all the *devas*, and the topmost devotees.

*Pujari* wants to say that Radha-Govinda are beautiful today. He worships Their form of kindness. Govinda-murti is not a brass statue but the same eternal Krishna who resides in the spiritual world. See no difference. O Govinda, You allowed me to offer You a fine white turban today to go with Your white and yellow-gold dress. Radha is wearing a white dress patterned in bright blue. All of this here in peaceful Ireland.

*Pujari* harbors no AIDS or crimes, and he's no doctor or welder. He worries about India and how she doesn't follow the *Vedas*, about how to maintain a low profile. He means, the mistake, the terrible showing . . . and why *shouldn't* Mother India join the Nuke Club? After all, she wants respect. Maybe now the other countries will take her seriously. "I can't even imagine what goes on in this world," the *pujari* sighs, "because I live in this little world of my own creation, chanting Hare Krishna and wishing to be in the spiritual world."

*Newsweek* "that's it! It's those sarcastically clever wordsmiths who write the news articles. They're the ones who polluted me today. That's why I can't sing my way through my *pujari* persona. What if they wrote an article about our little cult? They seem to vehemently despise the victims of their reportage. I can't care. We're not seriously scrutinized by their satellites.

*Pujari*, that's that world and this is another "this ISKCON world full of its own infighting and politics and sarcastic reporters. But no nukes, and our riots tend not to be bloody. Mostly petty talk, gossip, almost all of it done behind the back. It teaches us to be self-satisfied in Krishna consciousness. What other choice do we have? *Tams titiksaSvabharata*. Never abandon simple trust.

-

5:24 a.m.

Sprinkling rain obscures my vision through my glasses. Walking with thoughts past and present, the chanting comes out like a grumbling car engine. But I depend on it, live with it, even though it doesn't occur to me that I should *pay attention to that sound*. Live in the rhythm of being a devotee but not really as a devotee. Am I that concerned about India entering the nuclear age? Maybe it's that prune that found its way into my stomach this morning and gave me indigestion.

Stagger up the trail. The rain is getting more serious. Those big milkweed blossoms look like flat platforms that could launch a rocket. Perhaps it could take us up the spiritual world in a moment. A mindful moment.

Under the thickest part of the green arch, the tunnel grows smaller as I walk uphill now. He brought some interesting mail from close friends. It will require time and thought to answer it.

\* \* \*

Adagio  
& Sad-glad violin tells  
of European suffering and lone  
men, lonelier women,  
neglected children, cows

slaughtered in cold houses  
near raining-down meadows.

\* \* \*

Oh, let us return to God, who sent  
the blessed guru not Indian  
us not Americans "  
left *that* world of knowing  
behind. He clings still  
memories in the mind  
etching our Krishna conscious  
identification

\* \* \*

so slowly we learn to beseech  
Him, pray to become devotees  
some day. "

\* \* \*

Presto:  
Govinda's  
& He got in late and couldn't sleep  
Rehashing the concert he gave  
at Govinda's restaurant

\* \* \*

I'm Govinda's slave "we all are  
through *maya* in this world Yogamaya  
in the next.

\* \* \*

Krishna! Hurry along. Who  
will reach the scenic spot  
first? Who will touch  
Krishna first?

\* \* \*

The *gopis* tease and He teases  
back, all amorous language  
and pouting anger to please

the Lord of gods.

\* \* \*

"They make this  
world seem real," those  
*Newsweek* guys, but  
Krishna is with us and will protect  
His devotees from such illusions. "

\* \* \*

8:17 a.m.

Dreamt I was watching a film of young people living like we used to live in the 1960s. All of them were searching for something better in life. One young man wanted to see the Swami. He had heard of him from somewhere. He didn't know much about him, but he had a strong intuition that this meeting would save him. He was desperate, very poor, homeless, being chased by predators (of the human variety), living in a strange city. Somehow, he managed to find Prabhupada and meet him.

I was watching the film in my dream, and as I watched, I began to complain that I didn't like how they had cast Prabhupada. They showed him smoking a cigarette, bare-chested, with an almost-American face. But he was speaking the philosophy and showing compassion to anyone who approached him. One of the filmmakers said they had been careful to cast Prabhupada as a "Chicago personality." But why? It was so different from the reality we all know, and wasn't the film supposed to portray our own Prabhupada?

As the dream drew to a close, the scene shifted back to the young man who had gone to see the Swami. He had met with the Swami, but then he saw a girl with whom he was obviously falling in love. In the dream I said I was happy for him, but O was dissatisfied that I never found out what effect his meeting with Prabhupada had on his life.

Woke up thinking of those early days and of those who first came to Swamiji. He improved our lives so much that we dedicated ourselves completely to him and his movement.

I'm still clear, so let me turn again to the *Bhagavatam* and read a few more verses of Sukadeva's prayers. I also want to look at a letter or two. Then M. will come for our daily meeting. Use the time carefully.

\* \* \*

8:45 a.m.

I tried to read but found myself still thinking about India and the nuclear bombs. India comes across as a mistaken, defiant, recent nuclear power in the report that I read. The *Bhagavatam* purport was describing how Lord Krishna (who is not a Hindu god, but now Hinduism is associated with India and the nuclear bomb) is the Lord of the goddesses of fortune, of intelligence, of sacrifice, and the leader of all living entities.

The devotees think of the Lord's lotus feet at every second. "The pure devotee thinks himself fallen into the ocean of birth and death and incessantly prays to the Lord to lift him up. He only aspires to become a speck of transcendental dust at the lotus feet of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 2.4.21, purport)

"May the Lord be pleased with me."

Sukadeva knows we cannot succeed without Krishna's favor. *Sa me mukundo bhagavan prasidatam*. I cannot be a saint who always prays without Krishna's blessing. *Ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram*: "O son of Maharaja Nanda . . . please pick me up from this ocean of death . . . I am Your eternal servitor. Please place me as an atom at Your lotus feet." I seem to say idealized versions of prayers, but what's possible for me? What can come from my heart? Do I have to explore my shadow, as Jung would say, to find that real, integrated self from which I can pray? *Krishna tvadiya*. . . Let me die immediately while blissfully recalling Krishna, and not wait for painful death when remembrance of Krishna is impossible. Another saint's prayer. I can't attain such trance, although I like to hear those prayers.

Krishna gives us all kinds of intelligence, but especially the *buddhi* to know Him. He reveals Himself, as He did to Brahma at the time of creation.

Okay, so I can't do much, but at least I can read every day and take a few notes. I can also let these readings infuse my day with Krishna conscious references. Nothing great or intense, but I'm still hopeful. May the Supreme Lord be pleased with me.

By the way, I don't mean to be smug or complacent about my inadequacy. My shortcomings are just so factual that I can do nothing more than call out to Krishna for His mercy, and keep hearing and worshipping.

Scientists deal with *prakṛta* sound, vibrated from the material sky, "and therefore we must know that the Vedic sounds recorded in symbolic expressions cannot be understood by anyone within the universe unless and until one is inspired by the vibration of supernatural (*apṛakṛta*) sound, which descends in the chain of disciplic succession from the Lord to Brahma, from Brahma to Narada, from Narada to Vyasa and so on." (*Bhag.* 2.4.22, purport) That means hearing submissively and with faith. Spiritual intelligence. It jumps (leap of faith?) over reason and logic. It is not dogmatic but *Sabda*. Learn how to hear.

\* \* \*

10:08 a.m.

This is not an ordinary diary because I am not an ordinary person.

I thought you were. Are you more than Brahma?

Oh, I am a *jīva*, but . . . all right, I am ordinary in a way. But still, this is not an ordinary diary, because I have been through different genres and . . . uh, I'm doing free-writing and I'm a Hare Krishna and give little essays on important topics, and I am a writer's writer. Besides, I have features (or I used to) like ItM and "Foot Work" (I mean "Field Work"), and I play with words. Gosh, you can't say this is an ordinary diary, can you? I mean, people write to me and say they are keeping diaries, but they are coming out too negative and not very Krishna conscious. It's different from what I'm doing. I am

not one of those many diarists who write just for themselves and don't create anything worth reading except for themselves or their psychotherapists.

Aside from that, it takes a quiet kind of courage to go on writing the way I write, since people expect something so different. Usually, they think I should comment on *sastra*. I *do*, but not in the usual way. Some of them see that I do, but because it's sometimes indirect or playful, they decide that I'm speaking in symbols. But I'm not. I'm just telling them what's going on in my day as it goes on. It's just me here. That's all "nothing so secretive. We followers of Prabhupada have an obligation not to shut ourselves off from others. We all have to preach. That is my way. I know I'm not blasting the rafters off a stage somewhere with thirty thousand people in attendance, electric basses screeching, Hare Krishna mantras being pounded out with Spud and the rockets. No, this is something different. Neither does this little life include a visit to the Prime Minister of India, who stops by our Hare Krishna temple to praise our Hindu god worship, then goes off to the nuclear bomb test site to strike a blow for Hindustan. I haven't rounded up lots of people for the cause; I preach to those who have already been rounded up. But I'm working hard to keep Prabhupada's temples open and to distribute his books, to be dedicated to his cause, and to do it by allowing each of us to remain our unique selves, all while sitting on this bench looking at the flowers and my crooked but aspiring self.

We regular devotees send our spiritual master our ten dollars a month. We even write him once in awhile and do our home *puja*.

Someone wrote me that I made a sudden change in my life at a certain point. I used to be Mr. Conservative ISKCON, and now I'm . . . what? He said I never showed any artistic side before, then suddenly out it came. Well, I had submerged these parts of my personality. It's healthy for me to let them out now. Before, I was living according to my own definition of an Obedient Devotee. Something began to build in me. Now it's out. It came out when I was side lined by pain. Even if I still wanted to live by that previous definition, I'm no longer able to. It's as simple as that, as simple as rain on the roof.

And what a relief. I'm no longer a manager of other people's lives. Now I know only the personal habits of one other person, my assistant, Madhumangala. And I know his personal habits because he lives with me (or in a little house next to me). Wednesday night, for example, he did his Govinda's gig. Tonight he's going for the Epsom salts again in an attempt to disgorge gallstones, the removal of which, they say, will cure all other ills, including his asthma, which can get so bad that he has to struggle to get any breath at all. He hasn't become very ill this year "yet. He's doing the Epsom salts in hopes to avoid future problems. That means he'll be running to the bathroom all night, so I had better sleep with my earplugs in.

Yes, that's it. Little life and Krishna consciousness, Sukadeva's prayers and prayers of hope. Am I an artist? Does it matter? I'm whatever I am, hoping to fall down at my Govinda's lotus feet.

Someone wrote me that he had so much credit card debt that he did something he never thought he would do again "he went out on the pick. What does *that* mean? Did he say he was representing a noble cause? Isn't that illegal? But he said he felt he had no alternative. He got into trouble.

They tell me these things, and I have to reply. What does one say?

I'm telling you about it because this is my diary.

\* \* \*

2:13 p.m.

Krishna consciousness. Friend, disciple, hoards. Someone used that word in plain speech, saying he didn't like ISKCON but only a few of its devotees. Those words hurt the truth about ISKCON also being likable. I mean, it's both. Because who knows *all* of ISKCON to dislike all of it? I like to leave room for the possibility that there are things we might know about our movement that are pleasing, such as many of the devotees and their surrender to Prabhupada.

Mister, go downstairs to the bathroom and then come back. "Write a hundred stories with a hundred titles," she suggested. I replied, "You sure can come up with some burdensome ideas."

\* \* \*

2:40 p.m.

No one allowed on this road on June 12 because of the Tour de France bicycle race. Iran defeats U.S.A. in soccer and knocks America out of the World Cup. All these competitions. Who can win under the circumstances? All the women are growing older. That competition is over. I don't have to be attached to any one of them due to physical attraction. As for me, I will always look fine and chipper. Nothing will ever sag on my body. I mean, nothing sagged on Cary Grant before he died.

Ready, get set, go! The next mile is brought to you by Eprom Cigarettes. There goes the Trinidad team pulling in front. All their fans are hollering their heads off. Oh, but now they've dropped to the end. Now the Tobago group is surging forward, and the American Airlines employees' team is creeping up along the rail. Hey, there's an entry from the Australian branch of the Hare Krishna movement doing fine. But wait a minute "here, out of the blue, comes El Nino. Who *is* he? The black spring, the pullover effect, the green warm-over, the shriveling blow, the ozone death to one and all as the Trinidadians, Tobagans, and Australian Hare Krishnas float like straws on the sea of the human race, sometimes together and sometimes apart. No cure for death. "Doctor, could you give me just four more years?" Everyone will have unfinished business at the end. All we can do is hope to leave earnestly reaching for Krishna.

\* \* \*

3:15 p.m.

"May the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . . be pleased to decorate my statements." (*Bhag.* 2.4.23) A mundane man wouldn't ask God to be pleased with him so that his words would be appreciated by readers. No, he'd be proud of his own ability. "The devotee always thinks of himself instrumental for anything successfully carried out, and he declines to take credit for anything done by himself." Although I seem to go off on my own power in a free-write dash, it's all Krishna letting me throw around a few words. Not a blade of grass moves without His will.

Great devotees like Lord Brahma receive direct dictation from the Supreme Lord. Sometimes, people imitate that, like that man who wrote the best seller, *Conversations with God*. I sweat and moan and play around and eke out but don't claim that it's all mine. Neither can I say, "I'm writing only what God tells me." Even Rupa Gosvami had to choose his words while writing *Vidagdha-madhava*. We shouldn't think about these things sentimentally.

"Sukadeva prays for the mercy of the Lord, not only for being helped personally in presenting the truth, but also for helping others to whom he would like to speak." May we hear nicely and with love, and may our Krishna consciousness be impelled.

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto Srila Vyasadeva, the incarnation of Vasudeva who compiled the Vedic scriptures. The pure devotees drink up the nectarean transcendental knowledge dropping from the lotuslike mouth of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 2.4.24)

Now I have to spend the time Krishna has given me. Let me use it to return to Him, and to render Him service.

\* \* \*

4:25 p.m.

We want to be devotees, and any stimulus should help us do that. Like sadness "we should be able to remember Krishna through sad times. They should stimulate our remembrance. I heard that philosophy long ago.

M. says the *Newsweek* editorial did not present objective news. I had naively thought it was an accurate attack on India's "medieval" backwardness, but the author had a Muslim name, and . . .

Man, I just can't write those phony letters. Better I wait until a clear voice comes through when I can write honestly. I feel sorry for Sister Salvation and how she got that way. Dig deeper into the page with this knifelike pen.

They make fun of her even though they are all in the same boat, and they, like any other clergy in this world, are meant to bring peace to others and teach love of God.

Krishna in Vrndavana and then we have to go home. Words come. Not a blade of grass moves . . . Give me . . . first aid. Dial 911 and tell them where you are, but that's in America. I don't know the equivalent number in Ireland, and I doubt there is one anyway. They let the Irish bleed to death, if they aren't being electrocuted. So why do I have a sudden, curious desire to learn how to give first aid to a serious wound?

She said she's not like me who thinks my disease incurable. My disease does seem to be incurable, but it's not fatal. The pain simply drains away my life energy without killing me.

Krishna in the forest in the heart  
take your pick.

You were saying?

I want to be the Krishna-receiver. Sukadeva said, "Be pleased with me. Come through me as the exact *Vedas* taught by the *acaryas*." But when it comes through him he sweetens it with his own retelling. All by His grace. He prayed that the reader would be moved to Krishna consciousness. He wanted that, not something selfish, to be

remembered for his virtuoso telling of the *Bhagavatam*. He was a devotee. We should want the same: to be moved by Krishna's inspiration and the words coming through the *acaryas*, and to move others in our creative preaching, feeling Krishna's energy flowing through us.

\* \* \*

5:50 p.m.

Startling, bending, light tan figure. I painted him while they planted flowers outside the house. Splashed and dribbled until a forceful monastery head appeared, resembling a *mleccha* wanting to become a devotee, ready to fight his *anarthas*. I can't expect angels to appear in my painting. Gave the whole thing a light purple bath (*abhiseka*). The Kool-Aid purple dripped down the page. "Advaita Gosai." That's what that tan man was trying to say as he bent to his task.

Persons with Vaisnava *tilaka*. Miro, Picasso "I distort things too, handing out big ears, strange noses, and mouths quickly and efficiently.

\* \* \*

6:12 p.m.

The man from the electric company suddenly arrived to fix the heater in my room, so I had to leave it. Displaced. I like this house with all its comforts and its luxury of an art room.

Reading book on village health "*Where There is No Doctor*. Underdeveloped countries. "Power to the people!" Drawings in it of village people, naked babies, etc., and instructions on how to treat diarrhea, help women birth their babies. Am I gonna read that section too? No, I guess not.

I wish I could get back into my room to put Radha-Govinda to bed and take my Trifalla. I do love to stay on schedule. Will the man even fix the heater? So often, they leave without fixing what they came to fix.

M.'s on his Epsom salt regimen, but right now he's with the electric man. The sky's getting cloudier. Good. Hare Krishna. What Krishna conscious thing could I be doing without a book or my beads, which I accidentally left in the other room? Hare Krishna "I could say Hare Krishna.

"Fair enough," the electric man said as he left. And yes, he fixed the heater. Back to my schedule.

July 10, Midnight

"One should act unhesitatingly to execute the order of the Supreme Personality of Godhead "that will keep one safe under all circumstances." (Bg. 18.59, purport) What is this claim that I don't always know what the Supreme Lord or the spiritual master wants me to do since they are not present or accessible? I mean, I can't write them a detailed letter and get a specific reply. And what is this claim that nowadays I'm limited and can't do what they might ask if it's too strenuous? But I won't hate myself for it, or worsen the

situation by comparing myself to Arjuna at the beginning of the *Gita* when he threw down his bow and said, "Govinda, I will not fight."

"No one should neglect the order of the spiritual master, who is the representative of God." Certainly I am at least a nominal follower. However, I fall short in responding to their order that I dedicate myself fully to Krishna consciousness. I say it's because my instrument is broken. I can only try my best with the instrument I have.

After waiting months for the defective heater in my room to be fixed, that man finally came last night, did whatever it is he did, and added, "Fair enough." But it's not working again. Therefore, I've had to turn on the expensive portable heater. I'll let M. know. He'll make a wry comment. Back to calling them again and waiting. Fair enough.

No, not fair enough. Same could be said of me. Lord Krishna has been asking me to surrender, and I have not responded fully. I make a *little* effort. (M. describes this electrical company as a government department. It's considered a cushy job.) I say to Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada, "Okay, I complied with your request. It took only a small adjustment. Everything is okay, I'm leaving now. Fair enough." They notice, of course, that nothing substantial has been done. They will have to call me again. For my own good.

Lord Krishna told Arjuna that he's not independent. The Supreme Lord is in our hearts directing our wanderings in these material bodies. Since this is the case, Lord Krishna then informed Arjuna, "O scion of Bharata, surrender unto Him utterly. By His grace you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme and eternal abode." (Bg. 18.62)

Vaj Payee: "We are a nuclear power." Wonderful. And Pakistan too. And probably Iran, and maybe soon Iraq, and this one and that one. Capability to "bust" whole cities and kill millions at a time. You worried about that? Who am I with my own selfish interest desiring peace to be spared? Am I so worthy or important? My life is important to *me* "each of us feels like that "and we think other people have a right to live with at least basic amenities and security, but the world is crazy. Or let's say it is controlled by karma. Thus some will have basic amenities and security, and some will not. It's Kali-yuga. "Something should be done. But what is the best cause and use of energies?" As devotees, we can only make our contribution by going to Krishna. We can also be satisfied with the simple, basic Krishna conscious duties: chanting, hearing, and remembering the Lord. Prayer too. responding to His will for us.

Again Krishna tells us the way to attain both peace in this life and in His eternal abode. After instructing Arjuna in the confidential knowledge of surrender, Krishna gives him permission to act according to his own understanding and desire. We always have our free will.

Dear Lord Krishna, please let me act in Your favor. I want to encourage devotees to do the same. Let me write that devotee assuring her that she is trying her best. She doesn't need physical (or full material) strength (*bala*) to please Krishna. I should only slightly hint to another that he or she should specifically surrender *more* to You, because who am I to know exactly how much they are already surrendering? How can I speak for another *jiva*? But surrender we all must. Phew. I want to tell myself to become extremely surrendered, however. Better that than to have to say, "Look, I can't do better myself, so I can't ask more of you." But they ought to at least chant sixteen rounds a day and follow

the four rules. What's the problem? Some of them haven't surrendered enough to chant their sixteen rounds. We can't go deeper until that initial surrender is made. In that sense, I can say, "Do as I am doing." When that is accomplished, we can find a way to surrender unto Him utterly.

\* \* \*

### Write after *Puja*

Krishna is Not a Mere Statue

Well, our *pujari* told a visitor, "The Deity is not a statue. You want to see God? He's here. Hear about God first. He's the sun, the moon, and the taste of pure water."

The guests politely mulled that over. The *pujari* rarely gets a chance to preach, so he was excited. He'd just heard Srila Prabhupada say these very words on a tape recording. Hear the sound of a car, and you'll know it's a car when the car drives into sight. Go on hearing about Krishna and you'll see Krishna first in His representative energies, then in the Deity and the holy name, then in the spiritual world.

Okay, that's good. When you feel good, that's Krishna too.

Bhakta Fred and Mary Need came forward to offer wildflowers in vases filled with cool water for Radha-Govinda's altar.

"Thank you," said the *pujari*, and he placed them nicely around the Deity. The dawn was breaking, so they all went outside into nature to discuss *Krishna-katha*.

The room was heating up, and the stockinged feet had begun to tap. First day of *caturmasya*.

"Aren't you going to shave and starve from certain foods?" they asked. *Pujari* admitted that he wasn't planning any major austerities for the upcoming four-month period, but he would try to be a good boy.

Krishna played a prank once and hid in a box of gifts Mother Yashoda had sent to radhika. I'll tell you about that some time.

Starlight coming down in sprinkles of light, tinkles, twinkles . . .

You have to look at it this way: the blank, the aura, the *anything* comes from Krishna. Unbend thy knees and see clearly.

"Look at it this way," Nandimukhi, Bhagavati, and the erstwhile *gopis* and *gopas* . . . These names are the best I can give to any living being. I want to be there with them. But if I can't earn such a blessing, at least I can hear about it again and again. Priceless gift.

*Pujari* is weary, but he puts a pack on his back and climbs into the hills to look for feverfew, anise, and flowers to bring back to the temple.

Thrum

thrum

thrum

thrum he

hums to himself. Sees a deer and many cottontail rabbits, squirrels and a snake, and climbing a tree, a toad, an empty road, cows in the distance. The *pujari* has a face with skin and pores, a perfect soul covered by an imperfect body. He knows that Krishna is the one whose figure captivates the senses, not his own.

And so it came to pass.

What?

The Janmastami celebration where the *pujari* gathered evergreens for the altar and listened to drums rolling in the hills. Krishna science erupted in his mind like goose bumps brought by an angel of mercy.

No e-mail, because this hand wants to write its own story. It tells us that it was born from its mother, a father involved, of course. It was attached to those parents, tried to serve them but mostly itself, and is grateful to have discovered devotional service. Now it serves Krishna, that hand, working day and night to do so.

The *pujari's* eyes scan the hills, sees hay in the meadow, already cut. Looking for *bhakti*. He heard Krishna say that *bhakti* is a confidential process, and that surrendering to Krishna in love and obedience is something we can do if we like. Because He's in our hearts and will direct our wanderings. If we want Him, He will direct us toward Himself. But it's up to us.

Deity is Krishna. Gave a photo to someone, and she put it on her altar and said, "Dear Radha-Govinda, You can relieve him of headaches if You like."

Don't bribe Him. Let Him play with Radha in His mock serious tones as the *gopis* negotiate to purchase His pearls. Does Krishna own Vrndavana or radharani? The mock fight ends when Krishna makes up a box of pearls for each *gopi* and inscribes her name on it. Then He sends an especially beautiful box to Radha-kunda for Radha.

Happy to walk and talk in Krishna consciousness. Yes, even the holy lands appear devastated, and Krishna has a way of testing us all. But He's taking us where He wants to take us. Are we willing to go?

The Deity is not a statue. Today He wears a red turban and carries a gold flute. His dress is red and gold today. Radha allowed me to dress Her, and Krishna stood firm. Necklaces "it's all in the devotion. They need no ornaments from me but want to see what's in my heart. How much am I willing to give and do? The mild summer day is dawning, and the birds are chirping by the creek. I'm telling you, Radha and Krishna are not mere statues.

Please, Lord, be kind. You have come here to our home. Others may not always see what I see, but You are in the core of everyone's heart. Srila Prabhupada wanted us to spread that word and give Krishna consciousness to as many people as possible. Make hay while sun shines or even while it rains. Now return to the temple, bow down to the Deities, sing, and whatever your faults or gripes, don't give up the essentials of Krishna consciousness. I know you've all got problems with liking this institution; I do too. But the state of this institution doesn't change a few solid facts: that Krishna is nondifferent from His holy name and that we have been asked to chant it for our own purification. What else is there to do with our lives? Do it yourself and tell someone what happened in the meadow.

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5:20 a.m.

Bunch of cows all seated in repose, chewing their cud. They seem accustomed enough to me now that they don't get up when I pass by. The sky is a light gray overcast with darker clouds moving through it. As I walk, I can see Daruka's house in the distance. I

walk until I've completed a round. Let me then stop for a delicious moment and see the breeze blowing through the weeds as if it's ruffling someone's hair. Unexplainable moment. Did I have moments like that in the days I used to come here for writing retreats? I don't remember.

Walking back, arms swinging, chanting. Full faith in one spiritual master and how he taught me to chant. Let me meditate on him being enthused. Let me meditate on Lord Caitanya. I offer my obeisances to Lord Krishna, the lover of the *gopis*.

Anything could trigger a headache, but I try to accept the moments as they come. And not only the good ones. For example, look at those reeds. They are as interesting as flowers once you look at them closely. Here's one that looks rough yet scalloped and heart-shaped. It's growing beside a tree covered in a rich, light green moss. Ireland is covered in moss. That's one of the first things I noticed about this country. The air here is almost always cool, too. Good for a cool brain.

Now here's the house. As I open the gate, I see the garden islands, each filled with dark topsoil and surrounded by a low stone wall. There's also a new bench I can use for writing.

\* \* \*

Krishna Is  
& Entranced by the sound of  
woodcocks the  
soft cool breeze of a  
morning gray in Eire I'll  
sing my song to You.

\* \* \*

My Lord Krishna who brought me  
to this place to  
serenade with birds and  
weeds and to feel that  
Krishna is  
in everything. "

\* \* \*

You Had Better Transfer  
& Meadow's mown a  
man lost reciting aloud  
fingering beads through gloves  
or *gayatris*  
he's nowhere as nice  
as when he says  
*guru aSraya*  
*gurudevaya vidmahe*

*aim gurave*  
*Krishnanandaya*

\* \* \*

O Lord in this recital  
I pump words while  
staggering uphill  
waiting for the triggered pain  
the fresh fruit  
the hard teaching  
to surrender  
to have effect  
in my heart.

\* \* \*

O Govinda,  
I stretch and strain but  
better I transfer my  
energy to *bhakti's*  
principle  
limbs. "

\* \* \*

8:17 a.m.

Woke from nap with fog in head. This is the time when most of my headaches begin, either now or within the next two hours. A mentality seems to accompany it, a down mentality "according to how the blood runs or gets pressured in the head." Do you expect me not to be affected by my condition?

A writing teacher friend suggested I write little stories with the proportions of myths, half truths "myths of headaches and other ideas. Do they mean something that would resemble a Greek or Norse legend?

Okay, how about this:

Once, a thunderbolt lived in a teepee consecrated to the god of headaches. He sent out his blood curse on the wind, and told him to stay with the first man he found wearing a Cross Band-Aid and carrying a gold pen. The headache wind (blood curse) traveled until it came to a yellow pond. There was Satsfer counting the *laksmi* he needed to pay for the Hare Krishna farm. He had a slight moral headache, because he was a guru, yet ordered by the temple president to preach to the women on the collecting party. He was to tell them they needed to collect forty thousand dollars a month. Sats's moral headache sent out a beam that was picked up by the blood curse. The headache wind blew into Satsfer's ear, and the rest is history.

I remember when I started taking a med prescribed by a neurologist in Puerto rico. It was called Migranol, and it contained a high dose of caffeine. Sometimes those pills

worked and sometimes they did not. I used to look diligently for The Cure. Now, it's different. One woman who suffers her own maladies told me recently, "You say you are incurable. That's an advanced realization. I'm not so advanced. I still maintain hope that I can find a cure. If I were really Krishna conscious like you, I'd know it's ludicrous to seek cures. You simply think of Krishna and death and have no illusions that you can become comfortable in this body."

But I do consider myself a headache sufferer, the way someone else might consider themselves a diabetic or a paraplegic. I don't seek cures, but I do seek better ways to manage the pain. I have only come to face the fact that my condition is chronic and is not going to go away.

And one way to manage pain is to write myths, so here's another:

One time, a cobbler reported that a headache ghost was wandering through the king's land. He mentioned it to the king, who happened to be passing the cobbler's workshop.

"Why do you tell me this?" asked the king. "What do you expect to gain?"

"I hope," said the cobbler, "that Your Majesty could banish this ghost with your prowess."

"But headaches are not a serious disease," the king said. "Why should I waste my time chasing ghosts?"

The ghost went unchecked and visited many people. They thought they were not supposed to complain, because the king had sankirtana of the holy names, and when a divine person appeared in the ether, attracted by the chanting, the king told him to banish the headache ghost. "Tell it to go fly a kite. Take a long walk off a short bridge."

Is this writing myths?

Once Myss encountered a patient with a *cakra* clogged by myths and wounds.

"Wow," she said. "This is a chancre. This person is holding onto this wound because it gives him clout." She diagnosed her patient, and the patient simply *let go*. He blessed all those who had ever hurt him, and that was the end of his disease. He lived happily ever after.

The electric heater fixed itself (no myth). It was mythical to believe that the man hadn't fixed it. It came on an hour after it was recorded that it didn't work. Now the room overheats, so I have to open the window. But when the flies come in, that won't be too nice. I ought to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* or chant my "last" (sixteenth) round, but I've got a little prelim pressure, which is why I've been penning myths instead. Still seeking the easy way.

\* \* \*

9:37 a.m.

Sukadeva tells Maharaja Pariksit what Narada wants to ask Lord Brahma (as Sukadeva heard it from Vyasa). Narada approaches his great father and said, "Please tell me that transcendental knowledge which specifically directs one to the truth of the individual soul and the Supersoul." (*Bhag. 2.5.1*)

It's important to ask the right person for transcendental knowledge and just as important to receive that knowledge properly. I think I started out pretty well in the way I inquired from the Swami at 26 Second Avenue. I want to continue inquiring sincerely

even though so much time has passed and the novelty has worn off. There are new obstacles in this old man, and I'm still stuck as a spiritual beginner. Seems hard to accept that I am still a neophyte and remain as enthusiastic about inquiry as I was when I was in my twenties. Also, I may tend to think I've tried and tried, but that I haven't seemed to make much progress toward actual realization. Another place I could get stuck: Surrender to Prabhupada implicates me in surrendering to all that has gone down and continues to go down in ISKCON. Who can swallow it all? Are we allowed to choose or interpret what it is we are surrendering to? Can I say I believe absolutely in the guru but not in everything his movement represents? Well, don't get stuck there.

An inquisitive student surrenders with submissive inquiries and service. Narada has great faith in Brahma. He says, " . . . Everything within the universe, is within your grasp, just like a walnut." (*Bhag* 2.5.3) Brahma is *tri-kala-jna*. But Narada knows that he performed severe austerities to achieve what he has achieved. That means he must have been propitiating someone higher than himself. Therefore, Narada asks, "Under whose protection are you standing? . . . What is your real position? Do you alone create all entities with material elements by your personal energy?" (*Bhag* 2.5.4)

Let's ask that question of ourselves, since it's the *jiva's* disease to imagine that he is supreme. As devotees, we serve under the protection of the spiritual master and of the Supreme Lord, the speaker of *Bhagavad-gita*. We are disciples who repeat what we've heard. Even when we add our own perspective, we're not independent. We are supported by the Lord's energy. We may think of ourselves as independent thinkers, but Krishna says that's a *mudha's* conception. When we create something, we are playing with God-given energies. What we "let go" is simply a little *Sakti* we've been given. Or perhaps the material modes are expressing themselves through us. At our best, Krishna is expressing something through us. But we are small-wattage bulbs and can convey only so much pure power.

Door blows open. Breeze passes through. Sounds from below. M. is weak. He passed fifty little green stones in his excrement. Now he's taking another dose of Epsom salts. I am concerned that he might not be strong enough to drive the van tonight to pick up the devotees coming over from England, but he says he thinks he'll be up to it by then.

Narada goes on to say how he thinks Brahma is self-sufficient. Yet the spiritual master is not equal to God. "No one becomes God by undergoing a process of transcendental realization." (*Bhag.* 2.5.7, purport)

"Lord Brahma said: 'My dear boy Narada, being merciful to all (including me) you have asked all these questions because I have been inspired to see into the prowess of the Almighty Personality of Godhead.'" (*Bhag.* 2.5.9) real devotees become enthusiastic when they are questioned about God. "That is the sign of a pure devotee of the Lord." Devotees like to see this information broadcast. They like the opportunity to do this. "This is the basic principle of missionary activities." Preaching is not something that should be forced upon us; the desire to preach will come from our own advancement.

\* \* \*

11:55 a.m.

Once a beguiled angel fell from heaven to earth by a parachute made of gossamer. He said, "What's this crap?" to the people who came to pick him up. He joined a support group for fallen angels but didn't contribute much. He thought himself better than the rest. He was very attached to the product.

"You should live the process passionately," they told him. "Never mind the product."

"That's absurd," he replied. "I want criticism to improve."

"Okay, you self-centered S.O.B, you self-loving, lazy [deleted], you don't have the guts to rewrite and rework, and you want us to praise everything you do. You should take last place. You need kicks to your rear end. Go to an authority and do what he says. rewire yourself and come back. You whimpering coward."

He didn't like that, so he flew up a lily-livered tree that grew by the bank of the willow-sucked pond, where the water was stagnant but which became clear when it rained. He liked the deluge that cleared the muddy waters. He tried to hear his spiritual master speak on a fifty-year-old tape recording, but he found himself getting moldy. He wanted to imagine himself flying back to Godhead at death, but how would it be possible in such a weak condition? He made the best of the situation. That was the story, and now here's Part Two:

\* \* \*

In another part of the universe, a risen devil rose up from the hellish planets. He met the descending angel, and they held a conversation about the Supersoul. The devil actually believed in God, but he hated Him. He was one of Kamsa's relatives. The angel didn't love God but considered himself a nominal religionist. He thought the devil more vital than himself. They didn't trade heads or fours but parted after having learned something from one another. The El Nino effect warmed everyone, and the planet stepped up its cruelty and craziness. The police tried to avert the wave of crime that was sweeping through the cities, but they had no idea how to get to its root. What would we devotees do to curb social ills?

The same thing we always do "go out on the street and chant *hari-nama*. Will it help? According to our scriptures, there is no other way. We would distribute books and *prasadam* and tell people about the glories of the holy names.

Of course, the problem is that few people actually listen.

What will happen?

What has already happened?

A minute particle of God spoke up and said, "Open the gates. Dr. Bronner is not the only one to rant about his product and love of God and universal oneness. We too must proclaim to the world the glories of the holy name. We are much better than others; we have the clearest information."

\* \* \*

Enough of that. Now tell us straight, who is going to bring you your lunch? Poor Madhu is so weak from his violent cleansing that he can barely struggle up the stairs. He says unless he does this cleansing, his asthma will build up and then he will really be suffering. He doesn't even know if he will be able to take another breath. I know it's true, because I've heard him rasp and gasp. There doesn't seem to be a direct link between bowels and lungs, but Madhu has faith in the people who push fasting and cleansing, so he's trying it out. I stand on the sidelines and watch, hoping only that he doesn't push his body over the edge. Because he is my friend.

After I thought about lunch, I packed up some stuff and smoked my peace pipe. Then I wrote some letters to some Native Americans and told them all nonsense. I didn't eat ice cream cones, or even remember them, except in this sentence. Don't criticize me. I'm too busy painting my walls with red and blue ticks to mark the flow of pain. Anyway, I don't need to be criticized; I have my own internal critic.

\* \* \*

12:45 p.m.

I haven't been recording my dreams lately because they seem too silly and mundane. Still, they haunt me. I know they mean something, and I feel their weight. Let me try again to save a few fragments. If nothing, they provide good sparks for writing.

The last dream? Something about a gathering at Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu's place. His followers were putting on skits. I was there, then left to go out on my own. Of course, I got lost in the dangerous city. Another dream of being lost among the nondevotees. Why do I dream such things? Is it that I actually fear for my life? Or for my next life? Whatever it is, these dreams remain unsolved and unresolved.

\* \* \*

2:54 p.m.

Pressure in head. This means I can't do something I want to do, at least not right now. That is, no more reading. Narada has just asked Brahma, "Is there one greater than you on whom you contemplate and from whom you get your power?" I'll have to come back to that later. I don't feel that I can pick up my beads right now and blurt out a few holy names. No jolliness in me right now, and anyway, it might hurt too much. But perhaps I can use this beginning of pain to increase my attention. I can slink along the eaves rather than entering through the usual door. No one need see me come by, not even my mind.

The electric heater in here stores up so much heat during its operative hours that the room becomes overheated later. There doesn't seem to be anything I can do about that. Having a room that's too hot creates another physical strain on my delicate system.

Imagine if in my delicate condition I had to have a meeting right now. I feel fragile, but I would feel I had to endure the pain in order to please the devotees. Do I have to endure this overheated room? If I open the window, the room fills up with flies and midges.

But why complain? I saw while I was walking that dozens of flies land on the cows and remain fixed on their backs, just out of reach of the swishing tails. That place is a

safety zone for flies, and the cows are forced to tolerate their presence "unless they want to roll on their backs and rub them off. What a torment it must be.

During lunch I heard Bhurijana Prabhu say . . . I recalled as I began this sentence, but now I forget. I opened the window and the first fly has buzzed in. My turn to tolerate.

M. broke his fast and is resting. He thinks he'll be able to leave at 6:00 p.m. to pick up the devotees at Dun Laoghaire.

\* \* \*

M. says he's learning about himself. He suffers from quick drops in his blood sugar. I've noticed the resultant behavior "if he misses a meal, he gets quite weak. Now he has eaten and feels up to driving.

I have set up a mini-art station at the top of the stairs here. I'll use my water-based paints, crayons, charcoal, and three kinds of drawings pads. I've put some paper on the floor to protect it.

Caranaravinda came over and cleaned the downstairs rooms. Thank you. A blue man, "like Krishna," holding a large umbrella over a curly-haired child appeared at my art station. Krishna consciousness. Do things a little differently.

\* \* \*

4:29 p.m.

"Whatever you have spoken about me is not false because unless and until one is aware of the Personality of Godhead, who is the ultimate truth beyond me, one is sure to be illusioned by observing my powerful activities." (*Bhag.* 2.5.10)

A frog in the well cannot estimate the size of a gigantic ocean. Similarly, materialists try to measure God or even Lord Brahma by their own calculations, but they fail, all of them.

Lord Brahma said, "I create after the Lord's creation by His personal effulgence." (*Bhag.* 2.5.11)

"One should not expect the Lord to create like a blacksmith with a hammer and other instruments." Krishna is all-powerful. *Aham sarvasya prabhavaḥ*. He is the source of all creations and creators. This world's tiny artists devise ways to tap into that ocean of creative energy, but their efforts are insignificant because they do not recognize the Source. Whatever they receive, they usually become puffed up, thinking themselves original creators. But what have they done? Only presented a small, dim reflection of an iota of original creative power. The inconceivably great Creator sports in Vrndavana according to His own will, completely independent, and enjoys taking a subordinate role at the hands of His dearest friends.

Black-ink brigade. Bleating sheep. I didn't last long reading the *Bhagavatam* just now. But what I heard was good.

\* \* \*

5:20 p.m.

Is there anything I want to say before he leaves and I am alone? No. Just drive safely, take them to their lodge, and return. Don't forget to make those two phone calls, as you promised. I will be here intending to practice Krishna consciousness.

People suspect I'm doing well with my Radha-Govinda. Sent a photo to a girl in prison. She said, "Thank you. This seems to be your personal Deity. What are Their names?"

When they speak of Them, I feel a stronger intention to be like those devotees who have actual attraction and real-life worship of Deities. Lokanatha Gosvami, for example, real *pujaris* spend a lot of time cooking for and being with their Krishna, serving Him and His Radha. I like to decide each day what They will wear. It doesn't bother me that no one else ever gets to take Their *darSana*, because this is not intended to be public worship. I wanted Him to come to me, and He has. He is allowing me to train for the spiritual world.

\* \* \*

So backward in time he  
was falling but Swami caught him  
asked only for liberation of  
his selfish ardor. Swami said  
you are soul. Serve the Supreme.

\* \* \*

6:00 p.m.

I don't have much time for the Wu Zen wa-waf. Just enough time to affix and defix (prefix, affix "that's it) the words Krishna and Hari to whatever I do. Do I just tack them on or mean them sincerely?

A poem irks and reeks of  
pretension. Somebody will say  
that's good. Give it to them to  
feel. It's as good as Hershey's chocolate bar  
in that way.

But is it what I want  
to say? I want to please Krishna  
and master  
I say that over and over  
until I become sick with yearning "  
a moment of passing nausea  
of fear and  
failure  
but then I recover.

The Supreme Lord is the source of all

and the maintainer.

He sends the rain and sun, the *devas*.

This is stated in ancient scripture.

Vital tradition.

A person wrote to tell me that ISKCON nowadays is no more than legal haggling. We have lost our spirit. Maybe we have to have something to do. I don't tend that garden closely enough to know one way or another. I just look out the window at it, like the garden here, and see the roselike flowers briefly poised on the end of stalks. We blow and sway in the wind. Here comes the rain, but it will be followed by sun, which will be followed by rain again. The leaves dance on the trees. It's July, already the tenth.

Old sod hills "they've been here longer than I can know. People were born here, and probably out of attachment are born here again and again. But probably not as people. All these cattle will have to be reborn too, and all these cattle-killers will have to take their place. The Hare Krishna movement in Ireland is providing alternatives to this cycle. Prabhupada presented much more knowledge than people can gather by ordinary means.

My fingers feel like they're flying across the keys on this old typewriter. The planets whirl through the universe, while everything on earth appears stationary by the Supreme Lord's arrangement. Hare Krishna.

O Radha-Govinda, what would You like to wear tomorrow. I will choose in Your service. Srila Prabhupada singing, "*Dusta mana*." O my mind, stop cheating. Keep flowing in Krishna consciousness.

\* \* \*

Stay away from things that are not Krishna conscious. That's the second law of *Saranagati*. The first is to accept everything favorable for our advancement. But we don't have to take just anything *maya* sends down the pike. We are allowed "expected" to discriminate. We prefer to maintain a strong hold on the spiritual master's lotus feet and the vows we took at initiation. In general, we promise not to engage in sense gratification, although we allow ourselves enough to keep our bodies and minds functional. The third law of *Saranagati* is to know that Krishna is our protector. No one is maintaining us but Him. We cannot be independent of Him. If we contemplate that, we will feel humble.

July 11, Midnight

My mental mix: I go to read Krishna's word, and the image of Prime Minister Vaj Payee wearing a *kurta* and vest (is it because he looks Vedic and comes from Bharatavarsa?) comes to mind. He is the same prime minister who attended the New Delhi temple opening. We all thought that was a great coup to get such a person there, but world opinion fears he may be a pariah. I'm afraid of censure as I write this. Images also coming to mind of an American Godbrother who accepted Indian citizenship (renouncing his American citizenship). I'm reading eternal truth, yet temporary and constantly changing images keep coming to mind.

"O scion of Bharata, surrender unto Him utterly. By His grace you will attain transcendental peace and the supreme and eternal abode." (Bg. 18.62)

"Thus I have explained to you knowledge still more confidential. Deliberate on this fully . . . "

"Because you are My very dear friend, I am speaking to you My supreme instruction," (Krishna is not the Prime Minister of India!) "the most confidential knowledge of all."

Is it just my wild mind, or is there some link between these thoughts coming and what I'm reading in *sastra*? There is a link, and that's what I call "facing the mix." We want Krishna and ISKCON to have good public relations. The Hare Krishna movement, the "Krishnas," also sometimes create bad Pr for Lord Krishna. Often it's the press and the prejudiced who create bad Pr against ISKCON or Krishna Himself (or against God known in other systems). Krishna, however, is transcendental to any mulling, meowing, and howling the *jivas* and their machinations can cause. I want to be transcendental too.

"Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My dear friend." (Bg. 18.65)

"Life should be so molded that one will always have the chance to think of Krishna. One should always act in such a way that all his daily activities are in connection with Krishna. He should arrange his life in such a way that throughout the twenty-four hours he cannot but think of Krishna." Here is Srila Prabhupada's invitation to practice mindfulness. Krishna is not "tagged on" artificially like a myth added to round out mundane reality. Krishna is the substance, the *aSraya*. With devotional eyes we can see Him always in our hearts "and in the sun, air, water, wind, and everything else. To be mindful "we could say the Buddhist has the easier job because he need only contact raw reality leading, he hopes, to nothingness. Still, such mindful attention and realization are difficult to attain. Few are capable of it. In the twelfth chapter Krishna says impersonal realization is actually harder to realize than personal realization, yet personal realization of the Supreme Lord is superior.

I try to remember Krishna again and again throughout the day, choosing to give Him my attention, bringing my mind back, but I don't want it to feel like I am superimposing Him on what I consider actual reality. Because " . . . the Lord's promise is that anyone who is in such pure Krishna consciousness will certainly return to the abode of Krishna, where he will be engaged in the association of Krishna face to face." This is the most confidential knowledge, known only to Krishna's dear friends. It is not a vague proposal. Srila Prabhupada states that "one should concentrate his mind upon Krishna "the very form with two hands carrying a flute, the bluish boy with a beautiful face and peacock feathers in His hair." Of course, a devotee can relate to God the Father, the All, as worshiped by Christians and Muslims and even to the Buddhist mindfulness. He can appreciate and share that. But his private and cherished experience is of Syamasundara.

Furthermore, Krishna is not asking us to perform a continual meditation only as a mental act. He wants us to surrender in all respects. That's His bottom line, His offer. "Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (Bg. 18.66)

Anyway, I'm going to save Bg. 18.66 for next time. I may not be in better shape, and next time may never come, but I'm going to save it anyway. I already know that Lord Krishna and Srila Prabhupada ask for immediate surrender. Don't wait; do it today.

But how? I know the sort of things a surrendered devotee would do, but I also know the obstacles within myself and the obstacles that seem imposed upon me from outside myself. How can I, in my crippled situation, surrender fully? And if I can surrender only partly, what then? O Lord, will You give me some special consideration and accept my feeble act as worthy? I've heard the phrase *bhava-grahi-janardana*. You see the good in what we do despite our shortcomings. You are *bhakta-vatsala*. But am I a *bhakta*? Here I am in saffron. Is it enough?

I hear M. arriving with the van. I'm supposed to visit with the English devotees around 9:00 a.m., but I wonder if they will be ready if they have only just arrived.

Let's think how to increase our surrender to Krishna. How do we give up all those other things we consider more important? We can begin by not selling ourselves short. We are not pure, fully surrendered souls, yet Srila Prabhupada gave us credit, sometimes even calling us pure devotees, or saying that we were manifesting *bhava*, *asakti*, or *nistha*. At other times, however, he would say our brains were filled with cow dung. Our greatest qualification will be our willingness to approach the spiritual master humbly, thinking we know nothing about the science of Krishna. And we don't, because we haven't surrendered yet. Take shelter.

\* \* \*

### Write after Puja

*Pujari* Writes a

Myth and a Poem

*Pujari*, someone said that you are sentimental. You only know, however, that you had a beautiful moment while dressing the Divine Couple in Their rough-silky gold-brown-copper dresses and hearing the astonishing *lila* where Krishna disguised Himself as Abhimanyu to fool Jatila. *Pujari*, I heard you tried to defend yourself against the charge, but even while you did so, others pretty much forgot your presence and began to discuss the myth of Sisyphus and some other tales told by Camus to explain what he understood of existentialism.

A myth can serve God too, the *pujari* says when he tries to jump into the conversation, but again he is ignored. So he leaves the Deity kitchen, where all this is going on, and starts down the path toward the forest for his little just-at-dawn reverie, which has become so dear to him.

Sri Krishna! How delightful! If only I could see You in nature and all that I do, that would be mindfulness to perfection. Our *pujari* reaches his tree-stump sitting place, takes out his now slightly crushed notebook, and writes the following:

\* \* \*

Once a ferret believed he was a god of fairy leaves midsummer. He topped his head with an elf's fedora, stuck a feather in it, and said, "Of all Krishna's creatures, we elves are never mentioned in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*."

Oh, but elves *are* mentioned. They are called by their Sanskrit name. Perhaps the ferret didn't know that. In any case, that ferret should be humble, because the Lord has

appeared in every species. Does that mean He has also come as an elf and we didn't even notice?

Then a real elf flew off to visit some mortal human scene. He alit on a windowsill and observed a young princess pining for her lover. She was a devotee of Krishna and knew that Krishna is the only lover. She read aloud a letter her spiritual master had written her on this subject. The letter also mentioned that there is no happiness in the mundane world at all except the happiness of turning to Krishna through everything.

The elf was pleased to hear it. He had been feeling restless in his own family life, even considering abandoning wife and children. Now he realized that would be a mistake. Better he stayed with them since whether going or staying, he couldn't become happy. The main thing was to practice Krishna consciousness regardless.

\* \* \*

The *pujari* puts down his pen and thinks, "This so-called myth is going nowhere." All I want to do is to write, "*Please be Krishna conscious, brother,*" to myself, again and again, and then enact it. There is no other work in this world but that.

Plink-plop "a frog splashed into the creek. recorded with blue ink.

Pink scarf. Waiting for a friend to arrive. How many friends has our *pujari* had in this life and others? Srila Prabhupada said he recalls being six months old and sitting on his sister's lap while she was knitting. We grow old, we change bodies within this life, and lifetime after lifetime we do the same. I say, "My friend," but the "my" or "I" and the "friend" keep changing as my body and false ego adjust. We are so caught up in our present identification. We should broaden our horizons a little by remembering what we have learned in *sastra*.

But there is also the truth of "my friend." He grieves sometimes. Let us spend a few moments being Krishna conscious together. Think of Radha-Govinda, for example.

"My, my," the *pujari* thinks. He opens his notebook again and writes:

\* \* \*

*Pujaris* are the most fortunate in the  
universe our master said  
*japa* experts are needed  
always but if Krishna is pleased only then  
relief comes to the errant mind  
instead of bitterness, bliss.

\* \* \*

He then inhales deeply from the diaphragm, holds his breath a moment, and exhales with a sigh. No use wasting time worrying about a material body. I know that's easier said than done. Now the hour moves toward the end of *brahma-muhurta*, although the sky remained cloudy. This is the second day of *caturmasya*. These Vaisnava days are meant to be observed. But the *pujari* will go back to the temple now to see how the

worship is getting on. He always wants to know that Their Lordships are nicely cared for.

The birds are chirping, the leaves twitching, the bees seeking the fragrance of flowers. It's the first hour of actual morning, and some people are coming to take Radha-Govinda's *darSana* and offer their homage before the day's work begins.

-

5:25 a.m.

Each day is an adventure. It would be nice to look at life like that, especially with the great advantage of knowing Krishna consciousness. We may not know much, but the day's adventures can make us face the philosophy: life is temporary, the soul is eternal, Krishna is God.

Madhu saw me photocopying a few pages of Larry Roseburg's *Breath by Breath*. I want to mail it to a couple of friends so we can all discuss mindfulness. M. said he'd like to read the book himself. I was surprised. Is that because his daughter is into Zen? Anyway, I said that maybe we could talk about how mindfulness can be used in Krishna consciousness. He said he'd read the book with a grain of salt. I thought to tell him he wouldn't need only a grain; best to be careful when reading Buddhist literature, because the whole thing is aimed at "killing" Krishna. My interest is in the techniques the author suggests for how we can learn to become more mindful, more present in our Krishna consciousness. That's my "research" angle.

Anyway, today is dedicated to seeing the English devotees. Let me be mindful about what I will say to that.

\* \* \*

Following the Vedas  
& Sad my lot I want  
the easy way I can't  
have a pain-free life a comfrey  
Rose that too shattered and  
fallen to earth. The wind  
blows the petals and  
time kills  
if not a fox  
or a hunter.

\* \* \*

But if I simply turn to Krishna  
I'll find rest there eternal  
the *Vedas* say it and I believe.  
I live according to guru's  
code hoping always to remember  
Krishna in Goloka.

\* \* \*

Beginner's way easy start  
I sing and eat  
*prasada* and bow down  
see the Lord's forms  
my master  
it's now or never  
he will tell me  
what to do. "

\* \* \*

And Be Lucky  
& The slow man bowed to the  
temple Deity and asked for favors "  
not so hard on my knees, Lord, I  
don't like to have my head banged  
and as for all this suffering . . .

\* \* \*

But the karmic ax falls and the solstice  
comes, words strewn like flowers  
after a rain of a petty duration.  
Did I expect them to last?  
As I grow older I  
see in a different way  
that nothing in my life will last  
and that I have achieved so little.

\* \* \*

I remember when I was lucky  
a time when I was obedient  
to a radiant guru  
in the old days.

\* \* \*

And if I'm lucky and  
self-reliant enough  
I'll turn to him again  
and be lucky. "

\* \* \*

12:30 p.m.

Way behind on my reading and writing quotas today. I'm likely to get behind again tomorrow too. I went to see the English devotees at their lodge, which is a fifteen-minute drive from here. Held a question-and-answer session. I felt like I was only scratching the surface, because we could have covered so many topics. I went assuming that I was the guru. They support me in that assumption. Bhakti-rasa asked me about my life goals and how my disciples could tune in to them. I said I want to *not* fall down, to make progress toward becoming a pure devotee, and to remember Krishna now and at the end of my life. It seemed like a good answer. I said I want to be open to Krishna having a plan for me that He hasn't yet revealed.

The devotees brought me some medicine, but I think I'll stick with Esgic for now, since four out of the last five worked. Be humble, yet guru. Is that possible? Pressure from that group (*rtviks*) who says it's illegal for the likes of me to act as guru. Pressure from groups (former ISKCON members who now follow Gaudiya Math gurus) to go to someone better than the likes of me. But I will stick with Srila Prabhupada, which means I also throw my lot in with ISKCON. Within ISKCON, I have my own way, my own feelings, my own purposes, but they are tied to Prabhupada's purposes. Should I speak more openly about these things?

\* \* \*

2:35 p.m.

"All different types of meditation or mysticism are means for realizing Narayana. All austerities are aimed at achieving Narayana. Culture of transcendental knowledge is for getting a glimpse of Narayana, and ultimately salvation is entering the kingdom of Narayana." (*Bhag.* 2.5.16) Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that impersonal realization of the Brahman feature is not the ultimate destination: "superior to that is the sublime association of the Personality of Godhead in one of the innumerable spiritual planets in the Vaikuntha sky." (*Bhag.* 2.5.16, purport)

Lord Brahma then says, "Inspired by Him only, I discover what is already created by Him [Narayana] under His vision as the all-pervading Supersoul, and I also am created by Him only." (*Bhag.* 2.5.17) I love this section. It's good for puffed-up creators, artists, musicians, etc., to hear Brahma's words. It is impossible to come up with something that wasn't first created by God. We are not the original creators but are being inspired by Him in our own attempts to make something original. Moreover, all artists, no matter how great, are themselves created by the Supreme Lord.

I love swimming in the *Bhagavatam's* personalism. I want to create from my soul, or let me say, from my heart, so best I pray to the Supreme Soul to direct me. He is the source of unfathomable expressions, wonders, and mysteries. Aside from that, the goal of my art is to please Him. A demon artist would not give Him any credit and would care nothing for His pleasure. I am not in that category.

Lord Krishna will empower us in the proportion that we surrender to His lotus feet. Devotees like Brahma and Arjuna don't act on their own account, "but as fully surrendered souls they always await indications from the Lord . . ." Devotees can act wonderfully under the Lord's direction.

\* \* \*

3:05 p.m.

Hare Krishna dasi is coming here at 4:00 p.m. to ask how I want the paints mixed. I'll show her how inexperienced I am in not being able to cross one fresh paint line with another. Is there a way through this?

Brigade of medicines, including a preventative called Sodium Valproate and some feverfew tinctures. Also, two medications from the Triptan family called Sumatriptan and Naratriptan. I'll hold off using them as long as Esgic works. Better put these notes in my medical journal, yet these medications are important enough to me to have mentioned them here. As I said, I work hard to control the pain.

Hare Krishna. I can write as fast as I like and go as far as I like, all the way to the periphery of the unconscious, if I want. There, I can pick up words and let them explode onto the page. But I cannot create anything not already created by Lord Narayana, and I can create nothing without His permission.

Please, Lord, since I'm using Your energy here and wish to be a devotee, let me do something that glorifies You. I want to catch the devotees' attention and bring them one by one to Your lotus feet. I guess I want a certain amount of freedom to do that. Dare I say You want me to be free? I mean, You don't want a dull automaton but a daring, active servitor. I can't go into the raw, wild, and dangerous material energy to distribute books: "Excuse me, Sir! Did you get your copy?" No use my trying to hit the Picadilly crowd on a Saturday night either. My form of daring seems to be something else. To write a poem, to wing it. But for You.

Srila Prabhupada was bold in his preaching, and he never submerged his own personality when he was with his spiritual master. rather, he came forward, despite the warnings of senior disciples, to offer service and to learn. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." "Well," he said, "I may be a fool," but in he went, and his Guru Maharaja gave him affection. Srila Prabhupada saw Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada as a great person. Our Prabhupada served his Prabhupada throughout his life. He was willing to do something bold, and his Guru Maharaja blessed him.

\* \* \*

Someone could come in at any moment now. I may make a mistake, take an overdose of passion, fall down, rush to the wrong conclusion. So I will be careful and always be guided by the one who is always safe. I will be tested, I know, but my instructors will stand by me if I stand by them. I may get hurt, but I want to remember Krishna throughout. O guides, please stay with me. This world is temporary and miserable, and I want only to practice pure devotional service.

O Lord, You are the swift deliverer. Come to me when You desire, but please let me know of You even now. Give me the strength to find solace in Your holy name. I am lost in the dark, a child, and I have nothing but the Hare Krishna mantra to protect me.

Yes, Krishna will lead us, but don't abuse His trust. Don't deliberately make mistakes. Don't overdose on any form of sense gratification He has given.

Relief comes when it comes. Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

3:40 p.m.

I have a book, *Zen Word, Zen Calligraphy*, and think how I'd like to draw pictures and mix them with words I hear Srila Prabhupada singing in his *bhajan*s. I use English or romanized spellings of Sanskrit words. If I knew *devanagari*, I could use that, even if it wasn't always accurate. In *Zen Calligraphy* it states that calligraphy "is the meeting place of art and enlightenment." The Zen master is not an ordinary writer of calligraphy. rather, he imbues his *samadhi* life into his characters. As for me, I mess around "always looking for the easy way. Still, it stands for something: "This shows the moment when the ordinary soul, having met the guru, decides to commit himself, and the eternal self is overcoming his awkwardness in getting to know the familiar self." Well, maybe not all of that every time. I mean, all that in a little scrawly picture? But I don't want to tack on words. I want the words to reverberate: Bhismaka, Bhisma, Rukma, Rukmini. Balarama, Krishna! Lord Nityananda. Ekacakra "one *cakra*. Two. Three. The divine passage. There's the way. Hare Krishna is okay. Beep, beep. The taming of an ox. return to the spiritual world "back to Godhead. Forget the other stuff.

\* \* \*

4:30 p.m.

Prabhupada is wearing a flower garland today. It's rare that he gets one. One of the devotees brought it. They also brought garlands for Radha-Govinda, but they were too thick for Them to wear, so I placed them at Their lotus feet.

I showed Hare Krishna dasi how I can't cross one color over another while the first color is wet. I thought she might know some technique to overcome this. Instead, she gave the example of Bhaktisiddhanta Prabhu in Vrndavana, whom she saw painting twelve canvases at once, going from one to the other while each layer dried. So he does it in the same way I do. You have to wait for one color to dry before you can go over it.

But I'm still not satisfied. Sometimes I want to go over it right away, and I know I can do it if the colors are soft and if I am willing to clean my brush after each application. And if I am willing to end up with the color of a mud pie as all the colors swish into one another. Madhu was with us when we met in the art room, and I told him I could use more flat spaces on which to paint. I felt heady showing them both how I make the strokes that become my paintings.

\* \* \*

In *Trust the Process*, the author quotes Picasso as saying he wanted people to drop by his studio in the morning because that started something happening in him. He said he then had something to work with in the afternoon, some energy he took from the morning meetings. Other artists prefer not to be disturbed.

I felt stirred today by going over the lecture and changing my schedule to accommodate the visiting devotees. Despite what Picasso said, I prefer the general quiet of going through a day, looking for its Krishna conscious meaning. The quiet also gives

me the opportunity to return to the *Bhagavatam* for small spells of taste. Because the more I touch base with the main limbs of *bhakti*, the more that comes out in my writing.

Man, I've got to learn how to be a devotee, real and timid, eyes down when talking with women, just as chaste women lower their eyes when talking to men. I want to be thinking of the Supreme Lord throughout the day the way Prabhupada recommended we do, because I belong to Him and have a desire to know that in full. I don't want to experience the temporary foolish waves of desire and allurement and regret, up and down and up and down. I know that those who have to fight to make money or raise their families while competing with *mudhas* have less choice, in a sense, although they too can find ways to think of Krishna throughout the day. Somehow, Krishna has freed me from that kind of struggle, so let me not use my freedom to create another material kingdom for myself. Let me discover satisfaction in the basics of Krishna consciousness, and try to give a sense of that satisfaction to others.

\* \* \*

4:52 p.m.

Feverfew resembles a small daisy "white petals and a yellow center. Saw a photo of it.

Insular.

What are the devotees doing over at that house? Maybe resting after such a long journey. I saw so many people today. I said, "Each one is first." I don't usually like to act like the worshipable father who tells them yes, my books are important, that I'm their link to Prabhupada and Krishna, etc. Better to be . . .

Yeah, I know,

quiet and alone

Riding a bicycle in sweat pants and sweatshirt  
in the mornings. Weeds are wildflowers.

When I entered the house they pelted me with foxgloves, which then lay limp on the floor. Poor flowers. Then I sat on a saffron pillow and talked for an hour free from pain.

\* \* \*

5:04 p.m.

I'm telling you, this is where I was in my youth, this is where I was.

But they don't understand. They think it's crazy. Well, it's serious and groovy we used to write poems imitating then I lost the desire or knack of dividing lines

\* \* \*

my sister walked in on me and  
I was ashamed and so angry  
I yelled, "Get out!"

Smile you bastards at me  
in my tsk-tsk shame  
but it still hangs on me

\* \* \*

who am now a pretty-pure  
saffron monk in no disgrace  
despite my restless nature.  
I walk back and forth scrambling  
my mind when I should  
be on the citron-citrus  
Citroen.

\* \* \*

I mean, when I should be  
thinking of just Hare Krishna  
thirty-two syllables the bass line  
thumping always in the background  
of my heart and mind  
while Krishna dances  
that dance on my tongue  
and the world's rooftops.

This morning I intended to tell them "a person could pray alone that preachers be blessed. St. Therese became the patron saint of missionaries. But that's a Christian idea. Oh? Advaita Acarya prayed that the great Preacher would come into the world. Prahlada Maharaja prayed, afraid for the well-being of HiranyakaSipu, for everyone to give up their cruel nature. May all be pacified and come to *bhakti*. He prayed, and I'd like to too. O Lord, the beat-beat of the Hare Krishna mantra coming from my mouth "may it live always in my ear and heart, and in the ear and heart of the world. O Lord.

\* \* \*

5:55 p.m.

This medicine has not been tested on babies or people over sixty-five, so it's not for them. Well, what happens if and when (I hope it's when) I get to be sixty-five? You mean they don't have medicine for old coots? Don't they know I want to feel older? Jimmy Tompson wrote me that one of his elderly friends is ill, dying, I guess. He gave her *tulasi* beads, which she wears on her wrist. He said that she's a Catholic but has always been open, so he tells her some things about Krishna. He said they talk about my books too.

Give people Krishna. Give it to just one person. Tell them about Krishna, whomever you meet, whomever Krishna sends your way. We each get a chance to do that. Syamamayi got a chance when she took a walk around the estate (housing development) where she lives in Northern Ireland. As usual, she was worrying about not having

enough money, not having a husband, not having devotee association, how to give her growing daughters the best chance in life, and about her own poor health, when suddenly a woman came up to her and wanted to know about Krishna. The woman said she was going through a personal crisis and thought that Syamamayi could help her. Could she please tell her how to chant and something about what Krishna consciousness teaches? Syamamayi, who loves to preach, told her something, and the woman soaked it in. She said she would like to talk again if possible. So you see? Krishna gives us each a chance. He gave me a chance today.

Those twelve devotees so kindly traveled from England, stayed in a rented house, and while it was raining, used a peat fire to cheerfully warm the room. I sat with them and preached guru to disciple. That's one kind of preaching where the listeners are submissive. This kind seems to suit my stage of life. Krishna gave me a chance. Now I have to avoid falldown so as not to invalidate everything I said. Let me not break their trust. Hare Krishna.

One of the devotees here is the vicepresident of an ISKCON temple. He asked why we have so much lost trust in authorities in this movement. I said that leaders have to inspire trust; they can no longer demand. I spouted off about my own history in this movement, gave an analysis of ISKCON, and said other things I don't usually say in a lecture setting. I couldn't avoid the topic. We live in particular times, and we have to face where we've been together.

Oh, I ranted and railed, and told of my ISKCON traumas, most of which occurred after Srila Prabhupada disappeared. I compared it to how many American youth were traumatized by having to fight in the Vietnam war. The devotees giggled, smiled, listened, and took notes, and the peat fire was well under control. I kept going on and on and finally asked Madhu, "How long have I been speaking?" An hour. I decided to take one more question, then left. I hope they have a good day over there, resting or doing whatever it is they do. There's not so much to occupy them, and they have no car, so there they shall stay. Hare Krishna.

Madhu is busy running back and forth with our English guests. As soon as they leave, his youngest daughter is coming for a two-day visit. At the end of the week, he'll leave for two days to compete with melodeon and voice. All through that, I'll be here alone. It can be an exciting time, the extra quietness, if I can use it to good avail. But often I have pain, and then it's a different experience. I can't expect to escape having to face aloneness through pain, I suppose, although I prefer to have my energies more free.

It's already six o' clock and time to choose what Radha and Govinda will wear tomorrow. Then I'll go to bed. Someone gave me a new clock with a large digital display "big enough so that I can see the numbers at night without having to put on my glasses. I look at my clock a lot during the night, almost every half hour, rationing out the nighttime hours and hoping I have spent enough of them asleep so that I can get up again.

And so, dear folks, this is what I do with my life. Now that I am no longer writing PMrB, I have found a way to write all the time "the easy way.

EJW means Easy Just Write. It doesn't mean Easy Juice Wine.

It refers to Easy-does-it-*pada*

easy is the way to

ease into *sadhana*  
such as chanting. Will  
it please Krishna?

July 12, 12:02 a.m.

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear." (Bg. 18.66)

This is the conclusion of the entire *Bhagavad-gita*. The Lord (Srila Prabhupada uses that phrase, "the Lord," although it's a bit awkward in English with its pious, sentimental, Christian overtones. I guess it comes as a translation of Bhagavan, which sounds so natural in the Indian languages. I like "Supreme Lord" better. When he lectures, I don't think Srila Prabhupada says, "the Lord" much) has taught different kinds of knowledge and processes of religion in a gradual way. Now He says that Arjuna should give up those processes and surrender to Him. One may doubt, "But You said earlier that we have to be free of sins before we can come to You. Maybe I'm not eligible." Krishna replies, "Don't worry. If you surrender, I'll protect you. I can do it. I have the power to free you."

Srila Prabhupada: "One should unhesitatingly accept Krishna as the supreme savior of all living entities. With faith and love, one should surrender unto Him." Srila Prabhupada then quotes the verse mentioning the six principles of surrender, so when describing Bg. 18.66, it's good to look at the six items of *Saranagati*. Even if we don't memorize each item, we can follow their logic and surrender ourselves to Krishna. "That simple surrender unto Krishna will save him from unnecessarily wasting time. One can thus make all progress at once and be freed from all sinful reactions."

Srila Prabhupada then writes with inspiration: "One should be attracted by the beautiful vision of Krishna. His name is Krishna because He is all-attractive." Just to read it is good. Srila Prabhupada has left these treasures in his books, and we simply have to go after them, open them up, contemplate them, accept them, and use them while living our lives.

We should appreciate, at least theoretically, that in this verse Krishna has given the qualification to attain His mercy in the most direct way. This qualification overrules anything that appears to contradict it in any previous verses. This is the last word in *Bhagavad-gita* and in religion: All obstacles on the path are removed if we surrender to Krishna.

I'll still ask, "How can I do it? Am I doing enough now? Will You please help me to do more, since I am so reluctant and weak?" But here is the basic knowledge of surrender. The spiritual master is the one who comes to collect that surrender on Krishna's behalf. Srila Prabhupada refers to "Lord Krishna's ultimate instruction in the *Bhagavad-gita*" in his preface to *Caitanya-caritamṛta*. He tells us that "Krishna promises to take immediate charge of . . . a surrendered soul." The Supreme Lord is in charge of the maintenance of all beings by His expansion of Kṣīrodakaśayī Viṣṇu, but His maintenance is not direct, not personal. When He takes charge of a pure devotee, however, He takes direct charge. "A pure devotee is a soul who is forever surrendered to the Lord, just as a child is surrendered to his parents or an animal to its master." That's

when he presents the six guidelines for how to surrender: accept what's favorable for devotional service; reject what's unfavorable; always believe in Krishna's protection; feel exclusively dependent upon Him; have no separate interest from His; "and always feel oneself meek and humble" "and thus in need of Krishna's guidance.

Okay, let's start with surrendering now to the holy name. My inability to make a big surrender, a total once-and-for-all plunge doesn't stop me from continuing on whatever level of surrender I can immediately attain. I can surrender each day to following the rules. I can agree each day to again chant sixteen rounds. Even though I can't control my mind in a mood of devotion to the holy name, I still surrender two and a half hours or more to chanting. I give myself to it. I also surrender intellectually; that is, I don't argue against the principle of *hari-nama* as the only way. I may rebel unconsciously, but consciously I surrender. This is me counting my blessings and credits.

But we have to surrender. Time will overpower us. Why not surrender with grace and devotion? Lord, I find this world a fearful place. There are so many strange creatures fighting to survive in it. I am weak in body and mind. I *can't* survive, yet I find it hard to accept that fact and surrender to Your protection. Nevertheless, I am always under Your protection, by Your grace. Directly. You will manage my life because I am Srila Prabhupada's *cela*. This is not "wishful thinking." I am Your devotee, despite my many imperfections.

\* \* \*

### Write after *Puja*

*Pujari* rebuffs

the Critics

*Pujari*, you can't behave rightly. You seem not to have slept well last night, and you can't hear Radha-Krishna's amorous pastimes properly because you're not pure enough. As for your so-called Deity worship, how come you don't follow the *Arcana-paddhati*?

What did I do wrong? He turns away. He doesn't want to hear it. This is, after all, home worship we're talking about, and he has a right to do it in a simple way if that's what he wants. And he is happy to see His delicate Radha, His own worshipable Radha, standing on his altar next to his Govinda. He also knows other people can't see his Deities with the same eyes he uses. They wear silver ornaments today, because they go well with rose and soft blue-patterned dresses. The *pujari* defends his honor and his rights.

Sure, he had things on his mind as he did the worship, either news from troubled devotees or other things. But he does love his Deities and wishes to bring Them closer to him, to bring himself closer to Them. They are his personal Radha-Govinda.

Then he takes out his notebook and wrote:

\* \* \*

*Pujari* "pint-sized hero

knows the jury can't decide

against him

he is always

spirit soul  
unharmmed.

\* \* \*

He intends to be only a devotee of Lord Hari, Krishna. He knows Srila Prabhupada preached strongly that Sri Krishna is the only Supreme Personality of Godhead and that only the less intelligent worship the demigods. He knows *krśṇas to bhagavan svayam*. A man can't become God through meditation. So many concepts and instructions, but he is convinced. Krishna is God, and our *pujari* can therefore become fearless. *rake Krishna mare ke, mare Krishna rake ke*: if Krishna wants to kill him, who can save him? If Krishna wants to protect him, who can kill him? Fearless, because everything is in Krishna's hands. The *pujari* will stay with Krishna even that means he is killed.

O Lord Hari, please accept my service of bathing You with warm water and dressing You in the nicest clothes I could find. You have promised to protect me, and I count on You for that. This, like any other, is a day to celebrate.

\* \* \*

*Pujari's free-write:*

*Deja-vu* face "on top of the present situation. Are you tired? The others got a good job and moved to the Mideast, leaving me with all the Deity worship. I live in a small cabin in the *dhama*. I am two people, a temple *pujari* and a loner, and I only hope others see me trying to contribute and don't kick me out.

Calligraphy "another hobby. Sanskrit posts breaking through. Starry-eyed *pujari* likes his Deity. As a child, Abhay was given Radha-Krishna to play with, and his father showed him how to do the worship. He imitated his father. Later, he said he stopped worshipping the Deity, but Krishna appeared to him in a dream, "Worship Me always, not closed in a box." Prabhupada felt bad and resumed the worship. He had that much devotion that Krishna came to him.

A man ate only *prasadam*. He realized God is present in all things and can't be figured out by midget brains.

This *pujari* thinks of different things as he writes.

Pissoir I

don't care I just want  
my mother's arm.

I just want to be in my spiritual master's  
good graces.

Some want their whimsy  
but not me, no

not me. I do want to be unique

I mean  
myself.

The great Jagadananda Pandita worshiped in his own way even when Svarupa Damodara asked him to write in a more structured form. Jagadananda said he would write in whatever way the Lord appeared in his mind. Upon hearing that, Svarupa

Damodara decided to leave him alone, "knowing him to be eccentric." Vines and turtles and

the spiritual master  
will come. He will accept us as we are  
but encourage us to worship Lord Hari.

*Pujari* striving for perfection  
and Krishna willing to appear according to the desire of our hearts.  
Krishna in the vines.

I always thought you had to be a certain kind of devotee to get His fullest mercy. Now  
I think you need only be a devotee at all.

Risk  
Risk  
but try  
for His sake.  
And stay awake.

-

5:25 a.m.

I went out today in the rain and gave my new rain gear a good test. L. L. Bean says they try this rain gear out on a human dummy and only approve the gear if the dummy doesn't get wet. I'm a dummy with a difference. I have, for example, fire in my belly. I can also claim to be spirit soul. The real me can't get wet, even without L. L. Bean's rain gear. Nor can I be burned or killed or tornadoed or traumatized in any other way. Why, then, does such a spirit soul sometimes appear to be troubled? Because he identifies with the body, you see.

Is it true that if your disciples fall down and break the rules you will have to suffer?

Well, that's what it says in the books.

Do you believe it?

Why not? But I have to be kind and encourage them to get back on track. Nobody can force them. Anyway, let's enjoy this rainy walk. It's so foggy out I can't even see the hills. Or maybe it's just because my glasses are fogged over. The streams are flowing powerfully after the recent rain. No cars parked in the neighbor's yard. The foxgloves are still tall, proclaiming July 12. The roadside weeds look taller. It's becoming a jungle out here with the prickly ferns, thorns covering their fat, curly stalks. They look like high-rise apartments or the World Trade Center in Manhattan the way they layer themselves.

\* \* \*

'Twas the Lord  
& I wandered down a lane with  
flies that didn't bite and  
applied a light gel to  
skin that didn't hurt and  
saved myself for worship  
of the Lord.

\* \* \*

I danced a minuet with  
Krishna in my mind it  
was *non tanto*  
but spritely  
in remembrance of the spiritual  
sky it was just a  
dream  
imagining  
but at least the dancer  
was the Lord.

\* \* \*

This mid-July morn  
the fog was so thick I  
couldn't see joy I  
was too encased in wet  
and tired in the eyes  
from up-late talkers. Still  
I chanted my bramble bush,  
*japa*, sharp-edged leaves  
furrowed ferns of hope  
sped off to Lord Hari,  
the Lord of sweet  
and generous *rasa*. "

\* \* \*

From Consciousness to the Netherland  
& I fell asleep at the switch a  
moment falling into jungle  
violins sounding and embargoes  
words of no account as I plunged

\* \* \*

from consciousness to the netherland.  
Remembered to hold onto  
an uttered "Hari!" as sleep  
Refreshed me for when I would rise  
in an hour and tell the devotees  
how nice it is to be with Krishna.

\* \* \*

In the after-chamber beautiful  
heaven of respect  
with spirit soul and Govinda  
no you are me and I am you  
confusion but  
Govinda as God and me a creature  
of tiny limits  
but His. "

\* \* \*

10:39 a.m.

Held a slide show today showing the covers I have been drawing of EJW. Told the English devotees more about the book. A guru is responsible to be heavy, but I can't always be heavy with the same philosophy. One devotee said, "Yes, a *sannyasi* lectured recently in our temple and said that we must have Krishna conscious culture."

"That brings up the question, 'What is Krishna conscious culture?' Is it only the *Vedas* and what has been practiced in India, or can we use things from cultures all over the world?"

Smarty.

Cutey.

But I liked seeing the artwork flash across the screen and feeling relaxed as I read about reading the *Bhagavatam* (not much of the actual *Purana*, though). I have done three of these shows now. I knew to sit back and be restful so that my headache wouldn't flare "I had taken a pill at 8:00, feeling it coming on.

Now, good-bye, sweet people. I hear you will now meet among yourselves before M. drives you back to the ferry. When he goes, again I'll be alone for the afternoon. Hope to catch up on my quotas, if Krishna allows.

\* \* \*

12:25 p.m.

Krishna conscious culture, he said, means South Indian brahminism, and we should all wear wooden *sadhu* slippers and carry water pots, grow stubbly beards and chant mantras just so. Is that what *I* mean by culture? I don't think so. But I don't mean Western pop culture or classical music either. I'm talking about dovetailing who we are, where we've been, what we've seen, what matters to us in terms of imagery, with the Vedic process and goal. Something of everything.

He left the front door open. It was raining hard, but not so cold out. The trees are a shining green wetness as the wind blows through them. It was a moment, and I tried to pay attention to it. Drank it all in. Then I thought, "One should add Krishna or seek Him out in this moment." That's how much potential that moment had "to actually find Krishna in what I was seeing. O Krishna, please spare me the real rebirth horror, the horror of forgetfulness.

\* \* \*

1:00 p.m.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the controller of immortality and fearlessness, and He is transcendental to death and the fruitive actions of the material world. O Narada, O *brahmana*, it is therefore difficult to measure the glories of the Supreme Person." (*Bhag.* 2.6.18)

The Supreme Lord is immortal; He can award His followers with immortality. Happiness is found in the nature of spirit.

\* \* \*

3:07 p.m.

Where did the day go? Pain in neck. I'll soon be alone. Where are my mother and other relatives? What do I think will happen? Can I remember what it was actually like way back then?

A strong wind blowing the branches leftward. What about the Tour de France bicycle race and the Orangemen marching in the North? What about Govinda's restaurant? Man, oh man, he told me . . .

Six elves in elfin slippers, tights, and fairy ornaments fled down the long cowslip stem. They asked where was the . . . man, and we were told he went to a football rally. Where *did* he go? Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. If I am not able to read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* right now, and I can't stay awake in the chair, then how do you expect me to cater to a . . . creative act? Or to be a serious Hare Krishna devotee?

\* \* \*

I thought he'd be leaving soon. I wrote him a letter suggesting he make a scheduled time for his daily *japa*. He doesn't appear to have one right now, and that doesn't seem right for a monk.

Well, who is a monk?

Okay, call him a whatever. But a Hare Krishna person ought to give priority time to *japa*.

Established times for creative works. But if you can't find it on a particular day? If your schedule is interrupted and you are left to compulsively write anything you can in whatever time is left over? The man who wrote *Trust in the Process* said that when you force it, it'll come out contrived. Better to accept that sometimes you have to be inactive.

I'm waiting for M. to saddle up and depart. That's what's scheduled. After he leaves, I may try to pray to Krishna, "Please appear in my chanting and in my thoughts."

When he said, "We need Krishna conscious culture" (that is, "It's not only enough to listen to lectures," and, "The culture we need is from India"), I asserted a different kind of culture, one which includes art, music, and dance. Those expressions could come from any mundane or religious world culture and be grafted on to Krishna consciousness by making them an offering for Krishna's pleasure.

But what is that like? Is it going to satisfy Krishna and our spiritual master? I can't imagine Krishna always insists on Indian cooking or Indian music when *bhakti* is being expressed through other types of cooking or music. I just can't imagine. Prabhupada and Krishna want to encourage sincere Krishna consciousness in all people everywhere. We

do want, however, the culture of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, not some other "culture" of the Absolute Truth. Still, even the scripture can be presented in one's mother tongue. Let the hand and mouth move to glorify Krishna in whatever language that glorification is possible.

\* \* \*

3:48 p.m.

Dust balls. Floor hasn't been vacuumed in over two weeks. I'll get to it one of these days, but I have so many better things to do. Still, a clean environment is important. Do I actually notice the dirt? I think I do. And I like the sight of dirt being sucked into the vacuum tube. I'll get into it when I feel enough strength, and when I'm alone.

What if it's a choice between painting and cleaning the floor?

You see, that's my problem.

Or between writing one of these pages and sucking up dirt?

Cleaning the floor can lead to the other things. Ultimately, one is not better than the other in terms of offering the act to Krishna. If I am conscious in each activity of Krishna, then He will be pleased no matter what I do.

To be conscious. That's the trick. Because we have to learn to be conscious in ways that are possible, not continue to hope for things we cannot achieve. I have tried so many ways to remember Krishna "I have sankirtanas, chanted *japa*, beheld Deities, looked in the silence and in nature, but my attention rarely stays fixed for long. I have tried many methods to help me direct my thoughts toward devotional thoughts. I have even tried staying busy.

Of course, someone might say that inner consciousness is only part of the struggle. The actual accomplishment is how much we can give Krishna consciousness to others. That counts even more than giving it to ourselves. That's a more practical achievement, they say, and in some ways, I agree.

We say devotional acts are eternal, that even a small effort is never lost. Any bit of devotional service can save us from the greatest fear at the time of death. We say that. But to what does "devotional service" actually refer? Does it refer to how much dust we picked up in our vacuum cleaners? To how pure or sustained our thoughts were while we did it? We know that Krishna's pleasure with it determines an act's quality. But the practitioner's sincere effort counts too. I once asked Prabhupada how I could please Krishna. He said, "This boy gives money and types." He recognized me in that way, and also answered my question.

Alone with God,  
alone.

My eloquent criticisms of myself,  
I drink more water  
looking for peace.  
I forgive myself.

\* \* \*

4:45 p.m.

He said *all* the devotees' children are wonderful and sweet. He really liked them. I don't know them like that because I don't give them much attention. I don't know how. It takes too much effort and bending down. One young girl stayed up until midnight making me a garland because she saw one of the adults do that. M. gave it to me this afternoon, a bedraggled stringer made from foxgloves, milkweed, and leaves, the sewing needle still attached, as if to say, "I did this."

I am not mixing with anyone. Someone started circulating photos of this house and garden (they shouldn't have) and asking for donations to buy more flowers. It's stuff like that that breaks my attachment for this place. Whether I'm here or not, the house and garden will stand. He said unless he painted the wooden *parikrama* walk around the house, it would last only five years. A good paint job would make it last twenty. I immediately began calculating those numbers and am pushing now to have it painted. I think I can make it here for five years; I wouldn't want to see the path rot before I left. But twenty? I'd be almost eighty by then.

Heard a disciple tell Srila Prabhupada, "When I chant my rounds I have difficulty keeping my mind on the chanting." Prabhupada was brusque: "*Chant with the tongue and hear with the ear. What is the question of the mind?*" As if the question were ridiculous and inappropriate, as if the devotee had completely missed the point of the chanting. The discussion was dropped. "What is the question of the mind?"

But does he know how wild our minds can be? How those minds prevent us from that simple, stark act of chanting with attention he is proposing? Just hear. What is the question of the mind? My experience is more like, "Just mind. What is the question of hearing?"

Akrura dove into the dust of Vrndavana  
and I wake up to all I've missed  
I hope  
one day. Krishna lets fall a drop of dew  
on my leaf.

They admired my Wellies. Thought they were appropriate for the climate. Hare Krishna. Mittens? I keep wanting to say, "Puss 'n Boots." Bye folks. I made it through, each of us with our different point of view. Persona disciples and persona guru.

"Stop the charade," one ex-disciple wrote to me. "We thought you were a decent guy. Get down."

But I'm a castor-tree teacher. We are establishing new standards for how to think about all this. A disciple of Srila Prabhupada himself becomes a teacher, a leader, and a *servant* in the capacity of extending kindness to others. That's all. But it requires honesty on all sides.

Could have chanted a round with them, eaten in front of them, spent all afternoon with them. Could have been firmer on certain points. But we are all simply humans, and can't always remind each other that the soul is the self and Krishna is God. We have to leave room for people to deal with that themselves. Viewed those slides.

\* \* \*

Perspiring. Wind in trees. Some potted plants were knocked over by the gusts. Should I go out and set them upright again, or would that be futile since it's still so windy out there? To keep a garden here, you have to be willing to see the flowers dashed by the storms.

\* \* \*

5:39 p.m.

Too late to paint. Outside, I bunched some of the pots together to keep them upright, but a tall one insisted on falling over. I don't know how to deal with these things. I walked on the boarded walk. It is quite nice. I'm not exactly there. It's a scene in which I know I can't stay forever, just as I have never stayed part of any scene forever. But I do like it here and have decided to stick it out as long as I can. Clouds moving "the sun-god is peeping through the clouds. The spiritual master is enthusiastic, so meditate on him in his enthusiasm and become enthusiastic yourself. Krishna "*Krishnaya, kamadevaya*. What do such words mean? No time or presence of mind to consider it. Busy walking and noticing that they have planted both a blueberry and a raspberry bush. Still just canes. I'd have to stay here for years before half the stuff managed to develop. Old men go back to places and remember the saplings, now grown tall.

When Madhu was playing his Kerry and other Irish tunes on his melodeon last night, he said the devotees liked it, but one of men asked, "Could you sing Hare Krishna with it?" One of the girls interceded, "No, I want to hear the tunes." Madhu continued to play, accompanied by a *bhakta* on an African drum. Finally, a few men started dancing a version of a jig or something. Then they sat down and the women got up to dance. That's what he told me. I was here, snug asleep, while all that was going on.

I could have given them paintings to take home, but I thought I might be foisting something on them that they don't love. Instead, I stashed the paintings under my bed.

O Citraketu, O

Krishna, O Krishna memory

I did start my devotional career

with enthusiasm. We were all such young whippersnappers, ready to serve our beloved spiritual master. We thought he was the only pure devotee in the world, and so we agreed to his restrictions on our behavior and lusts. We lived within the high wall of his fortress, safe from the outside world.

And now? Dear Master, please find a way to save us. I mean, to get through to us. Although it's we who have failed to serve you.

He refused to write a poem about . . .

about who won the Irish Oaks how

it happened, about the myth.

I'll tell that later. A poem about Lord Rama

and preparing for Janmastami in about a month.

About his Naratriptan epics.

Once upon a time, an elf-dwarf named Nara Triptan came down from the Irish Little People's conference along with Suma Triptan. These brothers went to Satsfer's cottage

and said, "We are high-class medicines. Someone sponsored our coming to be with you."

Satsfer said, "Yes, I did ask for you, but since then, I have found that my Esgic is working. If you like, please stay here on reserve." Without further ado, Satsfer picked them up and placed them in his closet. So much for the high-class Triptans.

You call that a myth? I call it a short excuse for writing about a self-centered life. Quit that absorption. Tell us what is going on in the North, or tell us something from the scripture, or what we should do to sort out this mess of a Hare Krishna movement. A real saint never rests, never stops working until all the souls are emancipated. He has no material business, but still he serves Krishna with everything he is and has. I'm sure, however, that many saints sigh before they keep going.

No question of the mind. Just hear. Amazing reply. Mysterious how he brushed the mind aside as if it were insignificant. He said that chanting itself controls the mind. He has no other medicine, so don't ask for something else. It is enough.

July 13, 12:10 a.m.

" . . . even when one poses himself as a devotee of Krishna but is not engaged in Krishna conscious activities, he also cannot understand Krishna." (Bg. 18.67, purport) *Bhagavad-gita* can't be presented to those who are envious of Krishna or who have no faith in Him. "*Bhagavad-gita* is not an ordinary book written by a poet or fiction writer; it is spoken by the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (Bg. 18.72, purport) How much preferential treatment I should give to *Bhagavad-gita*. I should worship it with my intelligence, speak it to the devotees, pray with it and stay with it.

Rain during the night. It beat on the bedroom skylight. I put in earplugs but took them out once to hear whether a particular noise was M. returning. No, it was the rain. Clock flashed during the five hours designated for sleep. Now here and grateful but not much to say. Warmed by *Bhagavad-gita* and Krishna beaming His message and presence into my mind and heart. He asks Arjuna if he has heard attentively and whether his ignorance and illusion are removed. Arjuna replies that his illusion is now gone. "O infallible . . . I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions." (Bg. 18.73) Arjuna represents each of us. It's our constitutional position to serve the Supreme Lord. Free will means only that we can choose to serve Him in love or through the material nature.

If we think we can neglect Krishna's order, it means we don't know that He is the Supreme master, the proprietor of everything. "Whatever He desires He can bestow upon His devotees; He is the friend of everyone, and He is especially inclined to His devotee." (Bg. 18.73, purport) To His devotees, Krishna gives even Himself. To study *Bhagavad-gita* successfully means to understand Krishna in truth as our best friend and Supreme Lord. Successful study is not academic study. If we feel distant when we read the *Gita*, our approach is wrong. We should feel the desire to surrender to His *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto* order.

Can we resolve to fight for Him and for our devotion to Him? reaffirm what we have already achieved. Fight *anarthas*. Encourage one another to keep up the good fight. We all have battles, often daily. Hear from Krishna through the spiritual master, just as

Sanjaya properly understood the *Bhagavad-gita* by hearing it from Vyasadeva. The spiritual master knows Krishna in truth and can present Him to others. We are fortunate to be connected to Srila Prabhupada, because by his translating *Bhagavad-gita*, he has made us heirs to these teachings. This is our "Bible."

And the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the post-graduate study of everything contained in *Bhagavad-gita*. We can fulfill the goal of our life by reading these books with Prabhupada's purports. "The result of Krishna consciousness is that one becomes increasingly enlightened, and he enjoys life with a thrill, not only for some time, but at every moment." (Bg. 18.76, purport)

"O King, as I remember the wonderful form of Lord Krishna, I am struck with wonder more and more, and I rejoice again and again." (Bg. 18.77)

"Wherever there is Krishna, the master of all mystics, and wherever there is Arjuna, the supreme archer, there will also certainly be opulence, victory, extraordinary power and morality. That is my opinion." (Bg. 18.78) Dhrtarastra could not expect victory. Victory was certain for the Pandavas because Krishna was with them.

Now that I've finished the *Bhagavad-gita*, I'll have to decide whether to continue reading it at midnight or to go to something else, either *Caitanya-caritamrta* or *Krishna* book. I want to begin preparing my mind for Janmastami. May Krishna appear in my heart, and may I prepare myself to receive Him. I'm not only interested in the events leading up to His appearance in Mathura "that wonderful and recurring event with Vasudeva, Devaki, Kamsa, Nanda, and Yashoda" but in His appearance in *me*.

On to *japa*.

\* \* \*

### Write after Puja

*Pujari* Musing in the rain

Right after *puja* he went to his favorite spot and wrote for years, going home to one devotional place or another, remembering old services and hoping for new. He saw pictures of *harinamaparties* sitting on rocks and remembered how he went with his own flesh and blood to these places to chant, while people hooted and sometimes threw bottles. He knew it was for their good and his own, and he hoped to worship the Lord in that way.

*Pujari* musing about all the things he's been through in this one short life. But someone arrived and said, "I've just returned from a four-week trip to Vrndavana." It was wonderful, the man said, but he lamented that he seemed to still have his usual problems.

Oh?

Oh?

Alone again "the man wandered off still without a solution.

Stained glass windows on

old Christian churches

Krishna is no Hindu god

as the dictionaries say He is.

*He* never says that  
about Himself.

He says He is the father of all living beings, the source of all, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And Sanatana's ideal question "*Ke ami*" "settles the rest. Fish out of water, we are.

Srila Prabhupada said he met his spiritual master no more than ten times in his life, but he followed his instructions entirely. His point was that we don't have to live in a temple. He didn't. His Godbrothers told their Guru Maharaja that Abhay should be in charge of the Bombay temple. He replied, "Let him live outside. He will come forward when the time is right." Our Srila Prabhupada said that he didn't know what was expected of him, but he obeyed the order and was successful.

Abhay . . . O *pujari*, just follow that great soul, your Srila Prabhupada. remember him always. O spiritual master, you sustain us. I don't know how many followers or grand-followers you have; I know only that I wish to be counted among them. Even now I crave your recognition.

Now I seem to be thriving on the separation I feel from you and the freedom I have to develop my own tendencies, but I'm not separated. I seek always to offer whatever I do to you. You tell me, "Bring whatever it is to Krishna. It's all right." The proof that it's all right? People benefit from what I am doing and become more Krishna conscious.

Whose thoughts are these, yours, O author, or that *pujari's*?

You know. It doesn't matter. The *pujari* too is sitting on this stump and writing his alpha poems. This one:

\* \* \*

*Pujari* is a blessing we see  
U-boats in the water "our desires  
Japs and Germans in WWII  
and I mean by analogy to say  
the enemy is in the body but "  
Radha-Govinda drive them away.

\* \* \*

He's a loon.

Speaking of which, there's a heron! The banks are filled with rows of ferns. The May apples are long gone, because this is July. If I die or my friend does, we'll have to get a permanent wave "a free-write wave "to get on top of the situation. The amplifier booms. A little catch in my chest even thinking about it. Because everyone's got some sort of ailment. Those of us who are trying to be Krishna conscious also have our masters. Our masters will take us aside and instruct us. We won't be bereft.

Flowers erupt out of the earth like goose bumps. "We are not afraid to die," said a stalwart. But I am. I admit it. That's why I chatter about it so much "my teeth (false) chatter.

"I am not afraid," said Abhay.

But I am. So he said.

The *pujari* looks up from his notebook. He hardly noticed it had begun to rain. Some little people come out from under the mushrooms and look up at him. One says, "We are from a mythic land."

"Oh, I don't care," said *pujari* to himself. "I just want to follow Srila Prabhupada." Then he recalls his morning worship and decides to return to the temple. Radha-Govinda, he remembers, were dressed in light green with rich *jari* patterns, the borders gold-clustered and pearled. Yes, he thinks, let me hurry back to take *darSana* of my Lord.

No question of the mind. Disregard it and go on chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Krishna is the Lord of threes and sevens and everything else. My God. Prahlada said, "My Lord!"

"Krishna is calling you," says the *pujari's* friend. He wants him to come in from the rain. No objection. He's not that eccentric that he wants to sit out there and get wet.

Krishna, please forgive these crazy etchings. We all want love of Krishna, and most of us will get to the point where we will do anything to get it. In the meantime, some little service.

-

5:20 a.m.

On the road I saw an empty pack of Silk Cut cigarettes, then further on, an empty pack of Benson & Hedges. The air has a cold tang to it this morning. reminds me that summer will soon be over. We're between rain showers. Standing by the little iron-railed bridge looking down, I see the berry bushes are covered in blossoms. Hold on tight. Don't jump in. Don't throw anything precious away.

I heard that GNP book-sellers would like to reprint some old titles. I think I'd like to look over *Vandanam* and be sure I still want to keep the chapter, "One Man's Prayer Session." Back in those days, I was quite influenced by the Christian conception and practice of prayer "things like sitting with a special intention to go through the stages of prayer I picked up from a book. That book was based on centuries of prayer-making tradition in the West. Anyway, I'm different now from those days when I was writing and living *Entering the Life of Prayer*. Those days were tumultuous ones. I felt I was at a crossroads, I was looking for a new way to live. I very much wanted to learn how to pray. I didn't know exactly what would be involved, but I wanted a life of solitude. I thought about it quite a bit. Later, I backed down from the extreme position I imagined and opted for a more normal kind of life. Now, years later, I have come to almost the same thing by a different route. Neither have I come here just for prayer. Instead, I'm coping with pain and writing. That is one of the biggest changes: I have accepted that writing is my prayer. Funny that back then during my prayer crisis, I seemed to be ready to abandon my writing, almost the way I tried to abandon it in 1966. Too much ego, I thought. I'm more balanced and natural about that now.

\* \* \*

Looking Out, Looking Up  
& Capture us God I look

up at no church nave or  
Christian Nativity or Passion  
nor Mayapur's amateur terra  
cotta scenes, just a skylight  
Revealing a few aspen trees  
swaying in the wind.  
They're all right.

\* \* \*

No one has been hurt or died  
yet to my knowledge here  
in Santivana  
forest of peace  
but when they go let me  
know so I can act.

\* \* \*

No looking up to church steeple  
or *cakra* here . . . It's all sky leaning  
low and lower hills  
undulating while a friend plays  
tin whistle and melodeon  
and steps to the measures  
of this old land.

\* \* \*

Here, let me write "Krishna  
Krishna"  
on the wall. "

\* \* \*

9:20 a.m.

Hey, do any of you know the guy who invented drug therapy? Dear fellow sufferers, you know what it's like when you go to read and write (after a nap), and your head is in the vise? You hesitate to take medication because it's best to save that for a sharper attack, but I just wanted to say that I have a right to sing the blues.

And I am, right here on this page. Now let me turn to Plan B. I wrote myself a note at midnight. Let's see if it still makes sense. It says, "Stand looking at the ocean and wait for the swells and incoming waves. Whether they're big or small, come here and write about them."

I liked how Lord Krishna spoke to Arjuna, who in a sense, is all of us.  
The *acaryas* commented on that conversation. Srila Prabhupada looked at both

Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura's comment, and at the comment made by Baladeva Vidyabhusana before writing his Bhaktivedanta purport. It's more Krishna than Krishna Himself when it comes through the great teachers. That's what Krishna prefers "that we get it from them.

We each have the potential to make such powerful, realized commentaries, but at present, the obstacles to the flow make it come out in a trickle. Our hoses are knotted, our straws pinched. But at least we can appreciate what we hear.

A door just blew open downstairs. The wind is so strong! Hello, wind.

Hello. Who are you?

I'm an old friend.

That's good, because I don't like enemies. Who are you, old friend?

No ghost.

Good, I don't want to talk with them either. Are you a figment of my imagination?

He says he's a myth.

Are you lisping?

Are you listening?

Srutadeva?

Once, in a far away land, there were dead objects that spoke to one another in piteous voices. They felt neglected, these cups and saucers and spoons lying around.

Spoon: Hold the liquid. Spoon the porridge. He's always grabbing me and feeding his face. But I get to hear some talks and if I could read thoughts . . . he always plays a tape of his master lecturing while he shovels that porridge, or his lunch."

Cup: I get picked up and filled with water. I never complain. It's my *dharma*, and to serve in the house of a devotee is a great fortune.

Each utensil gave its opinions but had no other power. God puts us each in a particular situation, and there we will stay. Hare Krishna. If we can learn about God from the right source and hold on to that knowledge long enough to release ourselves and others, we'll be doing fine. Keep up the effort.

\* \* \*

They don't know what it's like, why we have to speak this way.

Out of the corner of our mouths, I mean. The way a headache-threatened man has to speak, or a spoon or cup, I mean.

But it's a way around the obstacles. It brings out the natural flow, makes us patient with the trickle, able to endure the apparently unlimited criticism of those who don't understand or like how we speak.

\* \* \*

10:18 a.m.

Spoke with M. about the theory that I want the headaches because they give me an excuse to live like a recluse and avoid management, socializing, or attending the ISKCON morning program. I call that a theory, a myth. The question is, "If I didn't have headaches, would I still be able to live the way I am living now? Because it's what I want for my life." I came to admit in the discussion that the "psychosomatic theory" can't

be entirely dismissed. I really don't know if I would have the strength to stand up and live this life if I didn't have the pain. M. said he wanted to see me come out more and assert my desire for a solitary life without using the headaches as an excuse. Gradually, I have begun to do that. I am living here because I want to.

At the same time, I don't believe I caused my headaches or that they are a psychological disease; they are a physical reality. They are also a large part of who I am, at least in my conditioned state. I can't wish them away with a positive attitude. So I am both a person who wants to live a quiet, reclusive life and a person who is forced to live a quiet, reclusive life.

I guess I don't have to sort it out and say, "It's only in my mind," or "It's entirely physical." At least I can speak up for my way of life as something I desire. I have dared to admit it to myself for some time. Perhaps now it's time to admit it more openly to others. Perhaps my lifestyle is not setting a "good example" by institutional standards, but I do live a life of "good example." I read scripture, I serve. It's the way I live.

\* \* \*

12:28 p.m.

M. is leaving right after he serves lunch to pick up his youngest daughter, who is now eighteen, at the Dublin airport. She'll be visiting for two days. I'll look forward to the extra quiet this afternoon. I'm stuck with a vise headache anyway. Same as last Monday, when it lasted into Tuesday. I could try to break it with a simple painkiller, but I doubt it would work at this point, and it might increase my chances of getting rebound headaches (because I'm likely to be taking three Esgics this week). I'd like to be active, but instead I have to tolerate pain. Extra sleep doesn't usually help. "It" just has to take its course. If it moves to the right eye, I will take an Esgic. That's my game plan.

\* \* \*

2:45 p.m.

A *bhakta* wrote asking how he should deal with doubts. Another wrote something else. Many have not written at all.

And where were you when all this mail arrived?

I was sitting right here in this chair, waiting. I had a good view of the skylight from the easy chair, but was a little too far from the altar where Srila Prabhupada sits and Radha-Govinda stand giving *darSana*. It's mysterious how the Lord agrees to appear. Someone asked, "Does He get tired of standing there all the time in that one position?"

Iconoclast. I could answer that if I wanted to, but I don't.

Radha and Krishna are traditionally worshiped together in this worshipable posture. It's Their mercy on me that I can see Him in *any* of the many postures He assumes. This one is particularly sweet. I meditate on Him as He is, caught in action, and refuse to quiver with doubt.

Rain sprays tinkling against the windowpane. It's a sound heard all over the world. It soothes when heard under the right circumstances. Trees swaying.

A flower blooming from my pen. Don't judge it, and don't reprove it. As for the pain, I can tolerate it, as Krishna has asked me to do. *Matra-sparsas tu kaunteya*. These things

come and go like winter and summer seasons. Learn to tolerate them, Kaunteya, and don't abandon your duty.

\* \* \*

3:23 p.m.

Which Sastric verses do you like? I like the verses where Krishna or the *bhakti*-infused sages speak something direct about Krishna and devotional service, or something about His greatness, if it's spoken in a personal way. Such verses draw me in. And when I'm well again, I'll read some of them.

Heavy winds blowing across this hill. Take your mind off the inside of your head and do something to distract yourself. If I can produce something even now, other people can be distracted from their woes or lures and receive Krishna consciousness gently. It's as if I am producing writing and drawings for fellow headache sufferers, or for people who suffer from tedium in their lives. Having pain is a kind of tedium. Look, I drew a man with a word coming out of his mouth and bird on his shoulder. Another bird flies in the sky saying, "Krishna science startles."

And what is that, may I ask?

Oh, that's an altar.

That's my spiritual master.

That's Krishna and Radha.

This Deity is worshiped all over India and in all ISKCON temples.

This is the original form of Krishna.

Just tell them. They'll have to catch it as best they can. You don't have to explain it more than that.

\* \* \*

4:04 p.m.

What am I waiting for? Do I want to push time along? Little discourses on time and inevitable demise are so ordinary and so often repeated, no one wants to hear them anymore. Why be reminded? We already know about Time's winged chariot.

Read any Andrew Marvel poems? He wrote something called, "To His Coy Mistress." He wanted to enjoy with her immediately before time consumed them both. But he bit the dust; he died hundreds of years ago. We who are now alive are proud, but we too will succumb. Think about it at your leisure, and when you do, decide on the most practical thing to do with your time. Don't pile up sins and their reactions. Get on the course of eternity.

Alone in the house. The sun was out, but now again the clouds are bringing rain and that soothing sound. Being in this house is like being on a safe ship. I'm the captain and only crew member. I roam through the rooms to make sure that everything is shipshape, then look out at the weather. The sea is outdoors, but time is also the sea, and that's everywhere. Sailing through this afternoon.

One reason I'm still inclined to record dreams is that they occur during sleep, blessed, mysterious sleep. I'm glad to fall asleep, and recalling dreams is like bringing back proof that I did so. It's usually not easy for me to sleep. But the dreams are genuine artifacts

from the world of sleep. If I went out for a walk along the beach, I could prove I had been there by returning with something that had washed up onto the shore. My dreams are as imaginative as anything Kafka could have written, but they come from my own personal "mythology," images from my unconscious.

\* \* \*

4:56 p.m.

I want to be a devotee. Say it even though I also mean that I still seem to want to enjoy the little things I do without first consulting whether or not Krishna likes them. I know the problem with that, but at least I'm trying to offer everything to Him. He's all-encompassing.

Guru-seva sent me a collection of line drawings by various artists. Here's one by George Grosz. They are mean and "realistic," drawings of people walking around in his Germany. Here's one by Miro. Miro's one of a kind. A Klee portrait. I'm not trying to be a great artist, so I don't feel challenged by these drawings. rather, they make me want to move my own pen so I can join in the fun. I also like to slip words in along the edge of the stream-dream, words from a Krishna conscious canon and vocabulary.

Thuds and rattles "occasionally, this captain thinks he should walk around the house and investigate, but he knows it's just the wind. As Poe's raven says, "Only this and nothing more."

He said that Suta Gosvami was reliable, transparent. That means he didn't change the meaning but spoke in his own voice. Of course, Sukadeva did that too. May I?

\* \* \*

Hare Krishna. No one here to massage my neck. I'm glad I haven't taken a pill but am enduring the pain. It's not yet unbearable. Light bulb, stay with me a little while longer. I want to finish recording this.

Maharaja Pariksit said now that his time was running out "every minute was being subtracted from a total of seven days' worth of minutes" he had decided to spend *all* his time hearing about Krishna. He hoped to become fixed in meditation, ready to leave his body in Krishna consciousness. He said that Sukadeva Gosvami's recitation of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* was so important that it was worth spending his dying days hearing it. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* would stand for thousands of years in Kali-yuga as the torch light of knowledge. Thus Srila Prabhupada's mercy in bringing it to the English-speaking world. Who can measure the greatness of that one act? Most don't appreciate it, but we do. I'd like to mention this to the devotees "Prabhupada's greatness in doing this" maybe the next time I lecture. Go home and read them, all you people. I know they probably won't, or at least many of them won't. Still, they should.

\* \* \*

6:42 p.m.

Right-eye pain arrived so quickly that I opted for an Esgic. As I write this, the neighbor is idling histractor engine in the next field. Seclusion can be so easily

interrupted. Try to rest now since you have taken your second pill in two days. Thoughts float. Tractor, go home.

July 14, Midnight

I have *Caitanya-caritamrta* here. I'll miss reading *Bhagavad-gita* at this hour, but maybe I'll return to it soon. I was eager to arrive here. Had to stick in earplugs because of that tractor last night. He *began* work just as I was taking rest. I managed to get some sleep but kept waking suddenly and looking at the clock. Anyway, now Lord Caitanya is calling me through His master work, *Caitanya-caritamrta*, compassionately composed by Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami and complete with Srila Prabhupada's purports. (Srila Prabhupada wrote *Caitanya-caritamrta* when he had so little time left in his life, despite the pressing duties of ISKCON management, travel, and almost constant lecturing "and even after he'd already given us *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*.)

I won't be doing a thorough reading but selecting verses, starting in the first chapter.

"These three Deities of Vrndavana [Madana-mohana, Govinda and Gopinatha] have absorbed the heart and soul of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. . . . I worship Their lotus feet, for They are the Lords of my heart." (Cc. *Adi* 1.19) Srila Prabhupada states that Bengali or Gaudiya Vaisnavas "have a natural aptitude for residing in Vrndavana." As I read it, I found myself daydreaming about Vrndavana and one of my Godbrothers who lives there. He has recently renounced his American citizenship and become an Indian. He is deep in the *bhava* of living in the holy *dhama*. I was wondering if he knows the places associated with these three Deities. Sri Srila Gopinatha, for example, "stands on the shore of VamSivata." Can we go to that place today? I remember years ago being taken to VamSivata. It was hard to see its beauty. I had to imagine how Krishna would go there and play His flute to attract the *gopis*. Govindaji's temple has been decimated. It is now filled with monkeys, bats, and even dogs. Otherwise, it's neglected "practically deserted. But those who live in Vrndavana find the nectar nevertheless. I have to read about it and enter through Prabhupada's books. It's a legitimate way to enter too. By chanting transcendental sounds and worshipping the Deity, we awaken our relationship with Krishna and learn to reciprocate by service mellows. Ultimately, we will achieve the highest goal of loving service at His feet.

Worshipping Madana-mohana nullifies our attraction for mundane beauty. May He bewilder us. regular service exchanges make the attraction stronger. Don't just sit back and meditate on having an eternal relationship with God. Come forward and offer service. The highest stage of relishing the Lord as "the pleasure Deity of the damsels of Vraja" is *prajohana*, symbolized by Sri Gopinatha. I allow myself to relish His association when I perform my daily *puja* and hear the Gosvamis' books. It's the only way I can steal any of the nectar, because otherwise, I am simply a fool trying to reach for the moon.

When my English disciples get together at monthly disciples' meetings, they read from my books. I am unworthy of the high praise they offer me among themselves, but someone wrote something to which I would like to aspire:

Someone mentioned that Prabhupada was never able to give us these kind of books, and Vidura dasa said, "Oh, actually Prabhupada is giving us these books through you." I

knew what he meant by that. You are his direct disciple and empowered by him to write in this way. You have captured the essence of Prabhupada's teachings and made them real in your life. You are now making them real in *our* lives in your own unique way. I could see from listening to all these devotees that you really are empowered by Prabhupada and the whole *parampara*, because you have really touched their hearts and changed their lives so much. I can see the happiness, love, and appreciation they have for you because of it. This is the real meaning of spiritual master "to change peoples' hearts" and especially the disciples who feel touched and indebted and just want to dedicate their lives to serving the guru and pleasing him.

Srila Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, at the beginning of his great narration, invokes benedictions by remembering the spiritual master, the devotees, and the Personality of Godhead. "Such remembrance destroys all difficulties and very easily enables one to fulfill his own desires."

He defines an invocation as involving three processes: defining the objective, offering benedictions, and offering obeisances. But it's not just a literary formula, not a ritual. You have to write the invocation sincerely.

I write without taking time at each stage to compose myself and "become sincere." I am either sincere or I am not at each session. Writing is all sincerity, continuous sincerity. That's another meaning of "every day, just write."

Did I define my objective? Yes, that writing is my main devotional service, and thus I should write as constantly as possible. In that sense, it didn't seem important for me to define the objective in my writing. The Lord has already said that devotional service must please both Him and His devotees. I try for that. I invite readers to participate in the process. What is the object? To write.

Okay, Writerji, then give us a blessing.

May you become Krishna conscious in your own life. May you become free of material pain and enter the eternal spiritual world.

I offer my obeisances to all the readers, all Vaisnavas, and all living beings. I place my head on the ground again and again.

Krishnadasa Kaviraja will go to great lengths to prove that Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He will prove all his statements by citing the *sastra*. Let us respond to his request: "I request all my Vaisnava readers to read and hear with rapt attention this narration of Sri Krishna Caitanya as inculcated in revealed scriptures." (Cc. *Adi* 1.31)

\* \* \*

I dreamt I was trying to defend a tiny house where I lived. A horse came in and drove me out room by room. Finally, I had only one room left. The horse was determined to drive me out completely. I realized I couldn't keep the space because I was afraid of the horse. Then I realized that it was *only* a horse. I didn't have to be defeated by a horse! I stood ready at the door and managed to keep my ground. In the end, the horse failed to defeat me.

I'm not sure what the horse represented. At first I thought it might be a symbol for my headaches, and that my last line of defense was bare-fisted endurance. Who knows?

Write after Puja

A Character in Progress

*Pujari*, did you hear that many people will be coming to the temple for the festival?  
Will you be able . . .

*Pujari* says, "See the temple president. I'll do my usual service and dress Radha-Govinda. Did you see how nice They look today in Their bright maroon dresses with the dainty white trim?"

Yes, we noticed. We also noticed that you were blinking your eyes, and did we see you twitching?

It is auspicious when Krishna is the prime object of worship. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, there is no word I can use. The devotees spoke like that and the *pujari* steps out the door into another dark morning.

The dog of devotees runs to greet him with its obeisances, but our *pujari* continues on alone. He doesn't feel able to think of much, then realizes that so much thinking isn't even necessary. He could keep his hands in his jacket pockets or finger his beads. "*What is the question of the mind?*" There is no mind? Just a voice uttering and an ear to hear the utterance?

He reaches his spot, aware that time is running out. Chanting Hare Krishna is the order of the day. Please hear it.

He takes out his notebook. It is more than half used. Maybe I should change my routine, he thinks. But it's okay "a little time to myself. A Godbrother had asked him, "*Pujari*, I never heard of Srila Prabhupada doing some of the things you do, like your indulging in that notebook of yours."

"Oh well. I don't even attempt to compare myself to him. I simply try to serve according to who I am."

*Puja* means offering incense but  
not without self  
just as you are  
praying that Krishna will  
accept you.

It's early morning, but it's still dark out. Drenched by the rain. Please, Hari, Lord Hari, please hear this man blowing his horn and accept his heart.

Is that the neighbor starting up his sawmill? O Basho, how faint you would be in your haikus if you had to listen to all this noise. You walked alone, wrote of fish in your pan, lived a Chinese-Japanese ethos, sought your Buddha-nature, prepared to die and live. We are better off in many ways. How I remember a spring and summer in pain being stretched out on a wooden bed for many hours. Could only get up for an hour or so to take a recuperative walk. remember the dust and creek still, and all those birds.

Now our *pujari* tries to remember Krishna as He appears on his altar. Sprightly, sprightly, the things flowing through the mind's currents, events of a life "his own.

*Pujari* finds it hard to concentrate because someone is always chanting *japa*. That might be fine for others, but he wants to find his own concentration. And they are always coughing and clearing their throats, walking around, distracting.

Inevitable

inevitable

some words.

Is he married? Have kids?

I don't know. He's

a chanter in progress.

He is like that Dutch *pujari* at Radha-deSa or any other clean fellow with freshly washed feet. Some *pujaris* shave their armpits. Most of the ones I know are fair-skinned and wear low-slung *dhotis*. *Pujari* means that his body stands up in front of everyone, including Krishna, and they all get to look at him during *arati*, how he moves the articles and blows the conch. If you don't want to be looked at, don't become a *pujari*. Unless you worship only at home.

Krishna science "give us some please. Srila Prabhupada said if we have even a pinch of material desire, we'll have to take another material body. People don't know that. He said Krishna is so kind that He will allow us to do what we want. He's even kinder because He tells us we should want to surrender to Him, that that's the best path. But *iSvara aham aham bhogi*. We have other plans.

"When I was in this Hawaii sometimes, " Srila Prabhupada recalled, "I went to the university and lectured, and a student said he would like to become a dog. No objection. He said, 'I'll forget.' So this is education. One wants to become a dog." Better to be simpler.

Sky turning a lighter blue, tree branches full of dark leaves swaying wildly. Narottama dasa Thakura laments that his heart has not softened by hearing *Caitanya-caritamrta*, although that book and *Govinda-lilamrta* can make stones melt. He laments his fallen condition. "I never remembered the Six Gosvamis, not even for half a moment."

Time is short for our *pujari*. He feels it, too. He opens the back of his notebook and makes a list of things he wants to purchase for the Deities, if he can collect the money. There's someone going to Vrndavana soon. Perhaps she could bring them back. Then he adds other things to his list:

1. The boy's doubt as to why one should free-write, since Srila Prabhupada didn't.
2. The fat, old devotee I forgive and bless.
3. The skinny, old devotee I forgive and love.
4. Inchworm.
5. Aging collies. I mean, papayas.
6. FedEx boxes.
7. Alone, pure, silent melons.
8. The right to haven.
9. Speaking up and chanting. We can't hear you. Louder, please.

10. Valentines. Sneakers. Pajamas. Centering prayer as it is taught in Hong Kong by Basil Pennington to my disciple, Tirthapada dasa, who thought it was a bit impersonal but perhaps helpful while preparing his mind to chant.

11. Apricots.

12. Tears on cheek. Erupt. Pray for peace and a charmed life, as if that is the only sign of Krishna's favor upon one.

13. *Pujari* for sale. Offer extended for one week.

-

5:20 a.m.

Madhu's youngest daughter (he has three daughters and one son) is visiting him. I asked him how it was going. He said wryly, "It's ongoing." He said she's still disturbed and angry. They don't have much money, he said. She never had a father because her father moved into the Hare Krishna movement when she was a baby. He has now lived there for eighteen years as a *brahmacari*, and is still here. I wonder if his daughter would also be angry with me, the guru living in this house, with whom the father has chosen to live. Am I supposed to feel guilty about all this? Trying to imagine our situation here from her point of view.

I don't know if I'll get another headache today or not. If I do, how can I use three Esgics in three days? You see, daughter, we also have our pains. Your father sacrificed his life for a good cause, but I understand your anger. He sometimes thinks if he had it to do over again, he might have tried to keep his family together. (skip)

With Krishna at Breakfast  
& We want to be with devotees in  
ease but realistically we will  
always have some differences

\* \* \*

like cooler morning light  
lighter than later in the day  
if it's not raining an  
adagio rain. The tree-  
tops sway in rathgorragh  
and the evening looks lopsided  
with the part-moon high and then gone.

\* \* \*

*Krishna-lila* in a twenty-four-hour cycle  
means Krishna is now at His breakfast.  
It's also time for mine so let me  
offer it to Him.

\* \* \*

I push along wearily "we all do "  
but I can't abandon my effort.

Krishna, forgive me.  
I lay my head down,  
hoping it won't grow worse. "

\* \* \*

9:07 a.m.

The reason I read scripture and then write is so that my writing will be holy. I chant my rounds because I have to. I don't want to say, "I'm not chanting my rounds today." Holy means I can remember Krishna as a person and pray to Him, feel that I am rendering Him personal service. If I am a real person while I do that, I can write of real devotional service.

Famous people get headaches. Basketball star Kareem Abdul \_\_\_\_\_ played some of his best games after having just suffered a migraine. I chant after mine and try to be Krishna conscious even through them, breathing through my nostrils with a sighing quality. remember my spiritual master? He's a real person too, not just a figurehead or abstract principle. He knew me and I bet he would remember me "I hope "favorably. "Let him come in," the teacher says. "I will give him an assignment."

Oh yes, and something about this boy, Satsvarupa, that might help you remember him: he took a party of *brahmacaris* around America to sell your books to university libraries. You once called him to be with you as your secretary and servant. He traveled and stayed with you for six months in that capacity until you sent him off to start the library party.

Yes, I think he will remember me. I'll remind him that I wasn't a good manager, but I always did what he asked me to do.

"And what has he been doing since my disappearance from the world?"

I'm not afraid to tell that. I wrote his biography, and it has been sold around the world and translated into many languages. I was among the first to initiate disciples. I'm still living as a strict disciple, writing books, getting headaches, living now in Ireland, worshiping his *murti*.

\* \* \*

"Deathlessness, fearlessness and freedom from the anxieties of old age and disease exist in the kingdom of God, which is beyond the three higher planetary systems and beyond the material coverings." (*Bhag.* 2.6.19) It's way out there. They don't know. They joke about it like cynical frogs living in a well, "Is it ten million miles away? How come we never see it in our telescopes? That's an old fashioned idea."

Srila Prabhupada explains that the Supreme Lord's energies are divided into three, *sandhini*, *samvit*, and *hladini*. Lord Krishna is the full manifestation of existence, knowledge, and bliss.

As I write, I hear the van pull up. M. must be back with his daughter, Debbie. What would I say if we met? "So you're the girl whose father ran away and joined the Hare Krishna movement? I hope you recover from that and can forgive him. Maybe you can even try to understand why he is doing with his life and try it out yourself." That doesn't seem likely, for some reason.

Only in the spiritual world can a living being realize the full measure of eternity, knowledge, and bliss as deathlessness, fearlessness, and freedom from old age and disease. I'm certainly suffering from all three defects now, with only sparks of possibility that I may become free from them. Let me hear in faith. Today I am afraid of another headache, and that's just within the controlled area of expectations. Far worse can always happen.

"The highest benefit that can be awarded to a human being is to train him to be detached from sex life, particularly because it is only due to sex indulgence that a conditioned life of material existence continues birth after birth." (*Bhag.* 2.6.20, purport) Heavy words, and probably hard for most people to accept. No sex?

No, we don't say *no* sex, but sex in marriage only to conceive Krishna conscious children.

Still, they don't like it. I like it, and I'm grateful for it. It's freedom. When I leave my body, I won't have a strong pull to return for more sex pleasure. I sure hope I don't have any significant, subterranean desires. Let my soul fly up in Krishna's carriage.

Once coming to *sannyasa*, if one again indulges in sex life, it "is the most perverted form of religious life, and such a misguided person can only be saved if, by chance, he meets a pure devotee."

"O Narada, because I have caught hold of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, with great zeal, whatever I say has never proved to have been false. Nor is the progress of my mind ever deterred. Nor are my senses ever degraded by temporary attachment to matter." (*Bhag.* 2.6.34) *Utkantha* "great zeal, great earnestness. He caught hold and never let go of Lord's Hari's instructions and service. Whatever he says is always true. *We can trust him.*

This verse has always inspired me. It contains the ingredients for success. It is a confident assertion by a fixed devotee. One may say, "But I have heard some things Brahma did that weren't so good, that were serious mistakes." Srila Prabhupada says about Lord Brahma, ". . . whatever he does normally in his mood [is] to be accepted as truth because of his direct and very intimate connection with Govinda . . ." Sometimes he may not be in his normal mood. He too may have *lilas* arranged by God. The devotees are protected by Krishna.

Keep your work and all actions connected to Lord Krishna and guru in voluntary service. Otherwise, you cannot be trusted. You can't even trust yourself. "A grain of devotion is more valuable than tons of faithlessness." (*Bhag.* 2.6.34, purport)

Despite Brahma's qualifications, he admits he cannot understand the Supreme Lord. He can know Him just a little due to his eagerness to serve Him. "*Srimad-Bhagavatam* . . . is the absolute medium by which to understand the Absolute Truth." (*Bhag.* 2.6.35, purport)

\* \* \*

2:35 p.m.

Rain again, and that familiar sound. Alive on earth. Newly made paints now standing in jars, delivered by Hare Krishna dasi "they appeared suddenly in the art room this

morning. I saw them on my way to the bathroom. Shall I take that as an invitation to go in there and use them? Why not?

For the glory of Krishna,  
I'll go into the art room  
and play Prabhupada *bhajan*s  
while creatures creep onto  
the page with those  
Sanskrit letters, sure enough.

I will know, but the hand paints as much as the brain, and even the foot expresses its gratitude. It's not just an etude to get it right, although that's there too, I guess. They say my internal critic has to be in there too, pulling along with the rest of the subpersons. Otherwise, who will say, "Get it right"?

You know, all I have to do is cry out and moan. The preacher-brother said that at death, we will slip and grope for something secure, but we will feel the worst pain of our lives and be so blind no one will be able to help us. Yeah? Okay. I ask here and now to remember You while following in the footsteps of Maharaja Pariksit and my great teacher, my spiritual father, while I paint.

\* \* \*

4:15 p.m.

Are those men you painted beautiful? Will I come down on them later? Already did. I saw them as fat and squat, short and scrawly. And where was the Krishna consciousness?

Ah, but how did I feel as I did them? I was listening to Srila Prabhupada talking about how he took *sannyasa*. He said when he was in the middle of his household life, he dreamt that his Guru Maharaja came to him and beckoned him to follow. When he awoke from his dream he said, "Oh? Guru Maharaja wants me to take *sannyasa*. How horrible! I cannot take *sannyasa*." Then he said that from his practical experience he learned that if we do what Krishna wants, we'll never lose.

I heard him say that and kept drawing my squat figures. During phase two, I cut over them with an oil stick. For me, that's the test of getting out what I really want to say. In this instance, I wanted more of the hard-cutting edge to be visible.

Now I feel better physically than when I began. Thank you for taking the risk "I might have ended up feeling worse. Thank You, Krishna, for allowing me to do it. A fun time was had by all.

Hare Krishna. I'm going to try to finish this feverfew afternoon with a *Bhagavatam* reading. I'll pay my respects to Vyasadeva by reading while I have a clear head. I want to read a little of the Tenth Canto to prepare for Janmastami. Study the ways in which Krishna appears, including in His holy name.

\* \* \*

4:46 p.m.

"Therefore it is best for me to surrender unto His feet, which alone can deliver one from the miseries of repeated birth and death. Such surrender is all-auspicious and

allows one to perceive all happiness. Even the sky cannot estimate the limits of its own expansion. So what can others do when the Lord Himself is unable to estimate His own limits?" (*Bhag.* 2.6.36)

Lord Brahma is our father. We should hear his advice for us and then follow it. He suggests we take complete shelter at the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Scientists may go on measuring and manipulating the material energy as if they can one day master it, but that's not what our lives are about.

Sure, I'm loyal to the *Bhagavatam* statements, and I join in with the others in roughing up the opposition. May it not be showy bravado. I know I'm a shallow theist, but I want to be on Krishna's side. Simple and sincere "that's about all I can try to become.

No one can measure spiritual happiness. The Lord can measure it, but His happiness continually increases, so as soon as He measures it, the happiness increases beyond His previous measurement and He has to measure it again. "There is eternally a competition." Srimati Radharani is Krishna's *hladini* potency, and it is She who is always increasing the bliss.

"Let us offer our respectful obeisances unto that Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose incarnations and activities are chanted by us for glorification, though He can hardly be fully known as He is." (*Bhag.* 2.6.38)

I'm often feeling a lack of Krishna conscious perception, but here it is stated that Krishna cannot be known. So what do I expect? We cannot know His name, form, or pastimes with our material senses. When our senses are purified by hearing and chanting, then He will reveal Himself according to our advancement. He doesn't appear just because we demand Him to.

God is known only to His pure devotees. I met such a devotee and accepted him as my spiritual master. I still serve him. Humble devotees please the Lord. If we are humble, we can know Him in part.

\* \* \*

6:05 p.m.

Heard a recording by some American poets. It put me in a different space. Come back here. Where is that? Here, this page. What is the question of the mind? Just hear. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. But, sir, *my mind exists*. It goes off! I can't even bring it back. It's absorbed in its rehashing of the past. What is the question of the mind?

Do we want to ask, when we hear Prabhupada's statement, "How can you expect me to give up thinking? How can I live in the prayer, 'Please accept me. Please let me serve You'?"

It's possible if we desperately want to serve Krishna and if we call out to Him with these words, His names, Radha's names.

\* \* \*

6:50 p.m.

Time to sleep. Dreams. I probably won't die overnight, because my paintings are drying and it's just not time to die.

Or is it? Will I be leaving this world with unfinished prayers? I hope not. Christ said, "Unto You, I commend my spirit." There was nothing else to say.

July 15, Midnight

Neighbor's tractor passing by again and again. Kept me awake. When I did fall asleep, I fell into dreaming, then awoke from that several times. I thought clearly on current issues and even reached decisions. For example, I decided not to lecture Sunday afternoon at Govinda's, since Madhu won't be here. It's too risky, it's likely I'll get a headache. I decided to opt for the simpler (easier) assignment of a morning lecture at Bhadra and Sile's. Also, I thought of something to discuss: *Saranam*, surrender.

One of my dreams raised the question of how I best learn, alone or through constant association with Godbrothers. I also thought about why I am giving a devotee here almost daily updates on my health and how to make it a practical exchange, not just a bid for sympathy. And even before going to sleep last night I decided on something else "not to ask for books on mythology (ordered with the idea of writing my own mythological or imaginative autobiography). Better to keep it simple.

I noticed from these decisions, and especially the last one, that I tend to choose a simple flailing on my own than a reaching out for help. I'm getting old, and I'm not really that interested in learning new skills or ways of being. Sixty must be a turning point for other people too. So many medications, for example, are contraindicated for people over the age of sixty. I'm almost sixty now. I guess they expect you to know it's too late for any major changes. Sixty is the real beginning of old age.

I also thought about everyone's fear of not having material or spiritual security.

Anyway, let's read and try to feel its relevancy. The *Bhagavatam* may not answer my immediate questions, such as where I can find a good neurologist or what repertoire item I should include in this writing, but it solves key issues for all souls, if only we can hear it receptively.

"I first offer my respectful obeisances at the lotus feet of my initiating spiritual master and all my instructing spiritual masters." (Cc. *Adi* 1.35) It's impossible to study this topic without getting into the controversies over time and place in ISKCON. We live with the concept that Srila Prabhupada is our "mantra" or *diksa-guru*, and that any *Siksa-guru* should entirely support and not disagree with anything he has said. This *Siksa-guru* should have the same emphasis that Prabhupada had or be rejected. Srila Prabhupada said something to this effect in his letters. The *sastras*, however, describe the *Siksa-guru* in a different way. How to reconcile? And it's one thing to talk about Srila Prabhupada as *diksa-guru*, but what about the new generations of gurus and disciples? Since Srila Prabhupada is their *Siksa-guru*, does he become the more important guru in their lives? If this happens, should it be allowed?

At least it's clear that ISKCON gurus are carrying the legacy of becoming strictly *Siksa-gurus* for Srila Prabhupada, of representing him as transparent media. But are they actually doing this? It's not an easy thing to do, because we all have our angles and motives and natures to accommodate.

Then there is the *rtvik* option, the Gaudiya Math option (including reinitiation and other understandings about initiation), the attack on Bhaktivinoda Thakura and Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura "all of which is very complicated and surcharged with emotion, politics, and power struggles. Who can discuss it without grinding his own ax or feeling compelled to write a position paper? And if someone attempts to avoid controversy and speaks about the issue only academically, how important are his words? Whatever he says will still be claimed for one side or the other.

I want to make my own life clear. When I turn sixty, I ought to know who my gurus are. Srila Prabhupada is my main guru "I want to say *exclusive* guru, but I think he wants me to recognize gurus as plural. My *Siksa-gurus* (maybe they are called *sastra-gurus*) include all the previous spiritual masters in disciplic succession from Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura to Bhaktivinoda Thakura, the Six Gosvamis and Lord Caitanya, and all the great commentators and saints described in the *Caitanya-caritamṛta* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The list includes Narada, Brahma, Krishna Himself, the *gopis*, and other residents of Vrndavana. I receive their teachings and blessings, however, through my Srila Prabhupada. Other than that, I avoid other followers of Lord Caitanya or even Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati who are not followers of my Prabhupada. Neither do I accept a casual claim of discipleship toward Prabhupada; they should read his books and understand his mood. Otherwise, I avoid them.

"If one desires unalloyed devotional service, one must associate with devotees of Sri Krishna, for by such association only can a conditioned soul achieve a taste for transcendental love and thus revive his eternal relation with Godhead in a specific manifestation and in terms of the specific transcendental mellow (*rasa*) that one has eternally inherent in him." (Cc. *Adi* 1.35, purport) Submissively listen to those who know the science of God perfectly.

The danger of going outside Prabhupada's world is that somehow we wind up with a relative and minimized version of our spiritual master. They are not teaching wrong philosophy, but they are not faithful toward the way Prabhupada taught it. We begin to feel that he didn't know everything, and certainly didn't emphasize the higher stages of *bhakti*. In order for the Gaudiya guru to become prominent and distinguishable in our lives, he has to give something substantially new (tasty), or why would we approach him? They may praise Prabhupada, but quite often they subtly or openly change the simple faith we hold toward Prabhupada by making him into a relative figure. We begin to feel more sophisticated in our relationship with Srila Prabhupada, and thus we lose our simplicity. We are assured that Prabhupada was especially effective in our early devotional lives when we were just learning about Krishna consciousness. He emphasized the preaching mission, and we followed his instruction to such a degree that we are now ready for the real cultivation of *bhakti*.

No, I won't go there. I will get whatever I am going to get from Srila Prabhupada. If my taste or needs change, I'll still find what I'm after in his books without disturbing my total dependence on him. I am getting old now. I want to have *guru-bhakti* so that I can

turn to Prabhupada at death with full faith. I want to express to him my desire for eternal service. I want to keep my devotional service channeled toward him until the end. That is my clear identity. I have so many shortcomings, I know. At least I won't add the shortcoming of a mislaid faith to the pile.

The spiritual master directs us to immediately serve Krishna. "The expert spiritual master knows well how to engage his disciples' energy in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and thus he engages a devotee in the specific devotional service according to his special tendency."

"If there is no chance to serve the spiritual master directly, a devotee should serve him by remembering his instructions. There is no difference between the spiritual master's instructions and the spiritual master himself. In his absence, therefore, his words of direction should be the pride of the disciple." Never think you are above consulting the spiritual master.

\* \* \*

Someone told me in a dream last night that my face resembled the face of Janus, unless I were rewarded "in which case, my face resembled the face of Buddha. I couldn't quite understand what he meant. The question also came up whether I learn better in company or alone. It seems it takes longer to learn things when you're on your own, but I felt unwilling to come forward and always be told what to do.

\* \* \*

### Write after *Puja*

Rumors that *Pujari's*

Days are Numbered

*Pujari*, I hear they're going to transfer you. Is it true? I think they got tired of seeing you slip out of the Deity room while the talking was head on and going to your spot so you could write in that ragged notebook.

*Puja* is sweet in any season

unusual, calm, divine, the Lord

just stands and Radha

always at His side I

Really want to be part of it

in case you wondered.

The ivy, the dark color of that creek, they can name it "Yamuna" by erecting a sign, but I don't need it. To me it is the creek I beheld when . . . Oh, never mind. You couldn't and I don't even want to attempt to remember so much pain and misunderstanding. Just the cardinal whistling and learning the other birdcalls while trying to understand. If I made progress through that, seems I should continue.

Lord Krishna at the summit "You are the Supreme One. We bow at Your lotus feet.

So we came down to see and hear the "

Boy, *pujari*, you're so mused out you can't see. The golden forms are still impressed in your vision. Srila Prabhupada suggested a simple meditation like that: see Radha-Krishna in the morning, then throughout the day close your eyes and remember Them

"it's a phenomenon that works with *anything* you see with attention, that the object will continue to appear in that dark, fuzz-edged chamber in your head. You see Their outline, and your remembrance supplies the gold.

But I don't have to close my eyes, because I'm a *pujari*, and I live with Them in this room.

Then how can you be sent away, *pujari*?

*Puja* time is sanctified you  
usually enter a divine realm  
Jesus these words fail  
always clean and forgetful of surroundings  
time I spend on the golden aerie  
integrated with the rest of a  
morning and day and I'll become *perfect*  
each time I do it.

Now for the daily myth: Once, on a tall hill, two Norse legends were vying for musical championship. The judge ate an apple and turned into a woman. He-she said that all legends descended from the *Vedas*. The melodeon player then became a devotee of Krishna, and Krishna's *bhakta* became a melodeon player.

"Listen, man, was that Jupiter or Mars doing the judging?

Doesn't matter. Saddle me up in my green Gore-tex clothes. I can withstand any weather in this stuff.

They cut up a miniature pie for Radha-Govinda. It reminds the *pujari* of pies he used to buy at the delicatessen so long ago in Great Kills. Were they really only a nickel in those days? Quite similar to the pies the devotees make now.

Oh, Miss rheingold for 1950, are you Maureen Thomson or Cynthia Brooks? Names like that are inoffensive, nonethnic, and bear no trace of Latin or African origins. People cared about that back then. Just wanted fair-skinned rheingold beauties. Anyway, let's drop this and get out of the delicatessen. We're too young to vote anyway. Besides it's rigged.

Yep, stuff like that could detain you at the time of death. Dismiss it now and remember only Krishna.

The *pujari* looks in his *kurta* pocket and finds an old pill and a small *Bhagavad-gita* filled with Sanskrit *Slokas*. Among them he finds Krishna's promise that if we think of Him, we will become His devotee and return to Him. It's true, because He told His friend so. They say the truth will out, especially among friends.

-

5:25 a.m.

Cool legs, cool day, shorn grass. So *that's* what the tractor's been doing all night. That farmer doesn't usually start work until 7:00 p.m. Poor cows. It's truly horrible. Now they have the best modern double fencing to keep them in. As if they were dangerous. A bunch of them huddle together, calm and tolerant, in the dawn. They'll all be slaughtered.

And we can't do anything about it. All this greenery in Ireland, all those famous low stone walls, the pattern of valleys, the quaint cow gates in the lanes, all the lore of Irish rural life "it's all for killing cows and sheep so people can eat their flesh. We can't do anything about it, but the cycle will go on, the killers later becoming the victims.

\* \* \*

Recalling the Mission  
& Happy bounce, the hills resound  
with Blakean pipes in  
hands of an unseen boy in a  
myth I wrote.

\* \* \*

No, the real air is cool and  
I'm protected by the *Vedas*  
and my master. He sent me  
on this mission,  
piping down  
the valleys wild

\* \* \*

to convert Boston's tough beans.  
He wrote me twice a week.

\* \* \*

I fell in love (another  
myth, a mistruth)  
but they did break  
our window and I got cut.  
We wouldn't leave  
even after that.

\* \* \*

We were sheltered by thin walls  
and Swami's order  
and affection. He came  
there too in his own  
vulnerable old body and  
preached, protected by the Lord  
and protecting us  
and I'm still here to

tell of it. "

\* \* \*

I Must Write  
& "Please make sense," the judge  
said. I repeated "I must write  
as long as I can just as Bach wrote  
even when attended by a plague  
that killed half the Europeans and  
wars were as cruel as now  
but less deadly  
he wrote exultant music  
praising God.

\* \* \*

So I must sing to my Master  
Krishna and return to Him  
in Vraja's groves or Yamuna's bank to  
Krishna who protects the cows and  
is ready to kill  
all cow-killers. "

\* \* \*

9:48 a.m.

Took an Esgic, my third this week, and it's only Wednesday. Now waiting for it to  
vanquish the headache. But its not a magic pill. Such a medication doesn't exist "I mean,  
the kind that wipes out karmic pain.

\* \* \*

11:45 a.m.

Two hours after taking the pill. I thought it wouldn't work, but I've calmed down now.  
I was in the darkened bedroom, and I feel as if I floated off to a place where everything  
harmonized. Don't make fun of that, please.

M. is walking the hills with his daughter. He will be back to serve lunch, then rush off  
to Dublin with her and quite a few other devotees who will attend his gig this evening.  
He'll be back late. Another alone afternoon. Good. Especially if I am pain-free. But even  
if I had to endure another headache, I would get something out of it. Krishna is close "in  
my heart. I know what He wants from me. Prayer is, after all, something that goes  
deeper than intellect.

I'm not such an intellectual. I mean, I'm not so capable of maintaining long periods of  
concentration. Neither am I ambitious to understand many ideas. Nevertheless, it  
occurred to me that I'm always working on the intellectual platform rather than the

platform of the heart. I think *about* God even when I'm reading the *Bhagavatam*. That's not exactly *bhakti*. I wonder how to pay attention to the mantras while chanting instead of simply loving Krishna's name. This is more *jnana* than *bhakti*.

In ISKCON, we have so much *bhakti* scholarship which doesn't concentrate on simple feeling. Feeling comes out more, I guess, in *kirtana* and Deity worship, especially if we do them properly. Feeling for Krishna. Prayer can be based on feeling if we enter it. It definitely shouldn't be intellectual discourse but feeling expressed in words. Srila Prabhupada said Krishna consciousness is both philosophy and emotion, neither sentiment, fanaticism, nor dry mental speculation.

Dear Lord, I pray to use my free time away from pain to serve You, if You will allow me to do so. I pray not to be so dependent on physical ease in my service. I don't want to be a fair-weather friend. The problem is that I chant a too strenuous form of *japa*, not a feeling *japa* but a vigorous jogging kind of *japa* to help myself pay attention. It doesn't calm me but exhilarates. It's that jogging mood that requires me to be pain-free when I chant. I'd like to learn to be with You even when I need to be calm. After all, You are the calm center in the eye of the storm, the refuge. If I could reach the devotional heart, the pain would not penetrate my practices.

\* \* \*

3:15 p.m.

I read the verse where Brahma offers obeisances to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the names of whose incarnations are chanted for glorification (*gayanti*), "though He can hardly be fully known as He is." (*Bhag.* 2.6.38)

Cleaning a pot and putting the turban on Govinda can both be mindful acts and devotional, or they can both fail to be so. The same for reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The Lord reveals Himself to purified chanters. "We must be ready to undergo the prescribed devotional duties . . ." We want it to be easy but not so easy that we leave out hearing and chanting "the prescribed duties.

We can't know Him by challenging Him. Srila Prabhupada makes it seem easy ""Simply by this process, or simply by hearing and chanting the glories of the activities of the Lord's incarnation, one can certainly see within himself the identity of the Lord" (*Bhag.* 2.6.38, purport) "but I have tried what he says and haven't gotten such immediate results.

The great thinkers can know Him when they are completely pure and sense controlled. "Otherwise, by untenable arguments, all is distorted, and the Lord disappears from our sight." (*Bhag.* 2.6.41) I don't want to make such arguments, but my devotional acts are feeble.

What do I want? What am I saying? I want a free pass for a pore old guy to enter the kingdom of God. Deferential treatment for senior citizens, to be picked up at my door in a van reserved for old cripples.

No, I'm joking. I know I have work to do. I'm just looking for mercy.

Thinking of a devotee who writes me from Russia. She's eccentric and a little sentimental. Some devotees try to blackmail me in various ways, threatening that if I don't initiate them immediately, they'll jump in the river. Phew. I imagine my

Godbrothers smiling at me, saying, "That's your congregation, Maharaja. Better preach to them and straighten them out. Otherwise, they'll go join some anti-ISKCON group."

Krishna is compared to the powerful sun because He is never contaminated. We are sterilized when we come into contact with Him. I am not like that "I can't blaze away people's stuff. I'm still working on my own stuff in this weak winter sun. Prabhupada goes over the same points: Never compare yourself to God. read ever deeper. Never give up.

"Only the *praSantas*, or the unalloyed devotees of the Ord, can know Him to a greater extent. The reason is that the devotees have no demands in their lives but to be obedient servants of the Lord . . . " Everyone else wants a reward.

Brahma says he will next discuss the *lila-avatars*: "Hearing of their activities counteracts all foul matters accumulated in the ear. These pastimes are pleasing to hear and are to be relished. Therefore they are in my heart." (*Bhag.* 2.6.46) We all want to hear pleasing messages, and therefore "almost every one of us is inclined to hear news and talks broadcast by the radio stations." But those talks don't satisfy the heart. They are incompatible "with the innermost stratum of the living soul." I believe that. "There are a thousand and one rash literatures on the market, but one who has taken interest in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* loses all interest in such filthy literatures."

\* \* \*

4:24 p.m.

Writing without structure is not easy. Each time I begin, I don't know where to go or what to say. Sometimes, I offer myself suggestions of structure just to get going. In the end, though, I always end up calling those suggestions "gimmicks," "pretense," and drop them. I go back to facing the writing without knowing.

I'm sitting outside on a wooden bench in the front garden. First time here. Midges visiting. I hear children's voices mixed with bleating sheep. Occasional car passing in the distance. Good boondocks country, except for the constant reminder of the abattoir the livestock gives. Farmer roaming with tractor to see that things are kept up, hay harvested, fences tight "the local Gestapo trooper. The hills oversee it all.

We are trying to create a beautiful environment here. Marigolds resemble real gold. What are your names, dears? "Bleat, bleat. We are the stupid and the damned." If Maharaja Pariksit were here, he would protect them.

Sober sobriquet. Another name for. He won't be here today or all day tomorrow, but I'll end up with the mail when it's over. I feel like a player who is behind in the game. I keep trying to catch up, but to no avail. Three pills already and still three days to go. It's like that every week. Often I pull through and salvage at least an average week, or sometimes the week finishes poorly. But it all averages out, I suppose. I shouldn't complain.

\* \* \*

5:00 p.m.

Krishna consciousness is very nice. I can learn for life. Then even if I don't have much realization, I can try to reach out to Krishna at the end. I am not the controller, that

much has sunk in. Yet I keep trying to control. Srila Prabhupada once said, "Some control means no control." We go under in the end. At least let it not be in the illusion that "God" is dying. You are a pretty sad God. Instead, I call out to Him as a humble devotee, not imagining that the demigods are cheering me on and the great devotees simply waiting for me to join Krishna's pastimes. We have nothing of which to be proud. When we die, we will take birth again with no memory of who we were previously. All that precious American, twentieth-century conditioning lost in a second. Meaningless.

All that counts is whatever we have done to serve Krishna, but even those particulars we won't remember. Already I have forgotten so many things, even important things, such as the details of one of Prabhupada's visits to Boston. All I remember is the feeling of those visits. General *bhakti*.

It would be nice to be allowed to remember the particulars of our previous devotional activities. I mean, the times we spent with our spiritual master. How will we meet up with him at death? And in the next life? What else are we striving for? Whatever it is, it's all part of spiritual life. We are still poor, but more hopeful.

There is another life. I became a spiritual master for some persons in this life, but next life, I will be forced into a different womb. I'll have no guru, at least not immediately. All of us will go back to the beginning and have to start over to revive our God consciousness. Maybe I'll meet someone I think I knew before, or I'll hear the eternal teachings of the *Vedas* which fortunately have spread around the world. We will become attracted to the principles even without trying to, as the *Gita* describes. Then on we go, learning to give up hostility toward others, learning surrender despite the opposition Kali-yuga offers. Who will encourage us in a life of nonviolence, celibacy, and freedom from intoxication and gambling?

It takes courage to face these questions. Will we be very different people next time around? Will I be brave enough to go out and preach to the nondevotees? Will I still be interested in writing? Or is that something only for this life? And there are so many problems to face "marriage or no marriage and how we feel about either situation, money problems, learning to cope with illness. Hostages of fortune. Where will be the time to learn to chant purely? Where will be the desire to read scripture? Who will be clever enough to avoid family entanglement the next time around? Where will he find the nectar of devotional service, such as what we read in the tear-filled poems of the Six Gosvamis? "I want to serve You personally." Where does such intense *bhava* come from? Where do we get it?

We are told we can have it if we can pay the price, if we have *laulyam*. We can only get *laulyam* by associating with a pure devotee. We try, but somehow it doesn't seem to be working for us. We just have too many bad things in our hearts "too much envy, too much pride. If we can't get the nectar, we don't want anyone else to get it either. If someone says, "I'm getting the nectar. My guru is a pure devotee. He's giving me the highest taste," we immediately suspect him and want to hear something negative about him, from which we will draw a perverted solace. We are not yet devotees. Hare Krishna. In the wild backyard where grasses grow and midges rise in thick clouds, I am still waiting to become a devotee.

\* \* \*

6:35 p.m.

Looked at the book, *Trust the Process*, the chapter, "Moving Between Worlds." The author says you shouldn't become stuck with one career, one persona. Change them, act out different roles. As I read it I thought about how I have deliberately not seen or spoken to Madhu's eighteen-year-old daughter, although she has spent two days coming and going from his house, which is right next to mine. As a *sannyasi*, I don't feel an obligation to meet her. She's not here for spiritual life but to get to know her father. After reading this, I began to feel I had failed to meet this challenge. Do I fear that I will become attracted to a young woman's body? Don't want to see that in me. It's good that I guard my celibacy, but not if I'm uptight about it, not a kind father to a young, relaxed monk and friend. Why not extend more kindness? And if it takes effort or risk, do it anyway. Extend yourself. Act in a role different than the monochrome monk who gets headaches and always stays in this house.

But another reason I haven't seen her is that I know the circumstances behind her visit. She is disturbed that her father abandoned her when she was an infant. She met him for the first time only when she was seventeen years old. I feel implicated in that somehow, although it's not really my fault. So what would I say to her? I might blurt out the wrong thing. Therefore, I avoid the emotion of the situation and accept the easy way out. Anyway, it's probably not any big failure on my part, but I just wanted to expose to myself my own limits.

July 16, Midnight

"One should know the *acarya* as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods." (*Bhag.* 11.17.27, as quoted in *Cc. Adi* 1.46)

Srila Prabhupada: "A spiritual master is not an enjoyer of facilities offered by his disciples. He is like a parent."

He is like a parent. Without his care, one cannot rise to transcendental service. I must sacrifice other interests which conflict with this role. I read in *Trust the Process* how artists should assume a variety of roles in their lives, but Srila Prabhupada said we must keep ourselves simple. We must remain the servant of the servant. Once taking on the duties of spiritual master, we cannot walk out on them. Whatever we do with our lives after taking on those duties must be compatible to the role of spiritual parents. Even if the disciples don't always reciprocate nicely, and even if we are ourselves less than ideal.

"The spiritual master is also called *acarya*, or a transcendental professor of spiritual science." Not some other kind of professor. The spiritual master teaches "Vedic knowledge with all its intricacies." That we get from Srila Prabhupada's books. I am trying to describe, in my books, the intricacies of personal surrender, survival, and how to live with oneself while undergoing the process of *anartha-nivrtti* and developing attraction for love of God.

Srila Prabhupada further says that an *acarya* is "one who knows the import of all Vedic literature, explains the purpose of the *Vedas*, abides by their rules and regulations, and teaches his disciples to act in the same way." Becoming a teacher in Krishna consciousness is a lifetime of work. We can't accept students and then later say, "I'm

going on to something else. I'm no longer interested in knowing or teaching the Vedic literature or in bothering with you Hare Krishna people. I've got other needs. Good-bye."

Thinking of those who have done that. We tend to resent what they have done, and want to tell ourselves (and others) that it was wrong. But we also understand them somewhat. They were usually looking for love of some sort. If they were *sannyasis*, however, better they married the oak tree on the farm, or found love in devotional poetry or in a wooded garden. Fall in love somewhere else, but don't walk out after initiating five hundred disciples. If we give initiation, we are locked into that responsibility for life. It becomes our persona. And we can grow and change within that identification. It *is* possible.

"Only out of His immense compassion does the Personality of Godhead reveal Himself as the spiritual master. Therefore in the dealings of an *acarya* there are no activities but those of transcendental loving service to the Lord." He's the steady devotee of whom it is worth taking shelter. Boy, he *has* to be ideal if he's really going to teach disciples. No wonder the opponents of the ISKCON gurus insist that no one is qualified these days to initiate, and that becomes especially poignant when we see all our grand failures, the bombastic worship and self-aggrandizement of persons who later left or were driven out. Who could be guru but Prabhupada himself?

But Prabhupada asked us to try, and he expected us to remain faithful to his order.

Listen to this and try it on: "The bona fide spiritual master always engages in unalloyed devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By this test he is known to be a direct manifestation of the Lord and a genuine representative of Sri Nityananda Prabhu." Don't criticize or envy such a person.

We have it easy in the sense that Srila Prabhupada fulfilled these criteria. A disciple asks, "Are you teaching us how to relate to you by how you relate to Srila Prabhupada?" Yes. We all worship Srila Prabhupada as guru. It's one and different. Srila Prabhupada's son is your guru. Is that so hard to accept? The son is not the father, but he's not different from the father either. I'm not an exalted son, but I am Prabhupada's son. We choose to have faith in the process.

Even when the road is rocky, I go on being his son. rocks at my head "outer and inner. I look for my heart (where I'm told I'll find God) but can't find it. I can quickly find heart for peace, freedom from fear, desire for self-preservation, desire to write and eat and sleep and do my basic *sadhana*, but that essential Krishna conscious heart seems to elude me, that heart that contains all the passion of a lover of God. But still I won't give up.

Some crazy, so-called gurus claim that they are God or that everyone is God. They tell us we don't need to worship Krishna. But one who is fixed as the Lord's servant can be accepted as His representative. "He is a very dear and confidential servant of the Lord."

\* \* \*

Dream: We are planning a drama about Krishna's life and have chosen the lead character. We keep introducing him to things, hoping he will take them seriously. He is a famous actor, and does his job properly. After awhile, he sees that this is not just another job but a place where he can learn prayer.

\* \* \*

### Write after *Puja*

Last One,

*Pujari* Alone

*Pujari*, you are alone. The devotees have gone to the festival. You go on your beloved Radha-Govinda's altar "how chubby are His cheeks. He gave you a little taste.

You listened to Narottama dasa Thakura's *Prarthana*. He lays it on heavy: one should leave everything and go to Vrndavana. At least twice he says he will cup Yamuna water in his hands and drink it like nectar.

Yes, Vrndavana, but not today for me. I'd die.

Oh, ye of little faith.

Narottama says to abandon comfortable bedding and to simply lie in Vraja's dust. You face yourself and see you're not up to that, can't find that dust even when you go there.

You'll have to find it here, then. And here is your Radha, your Govinda.

In this way, the *pujari* assures himself.

He listens for Krishna in local sounds, because this *is* his Vrndavana. It's what he wanted, and Govinda came to bless him.

No one is standing in the temple as the *pujari* waves the various articles before the Lord, his mind controlled. Then he leaves for his walk. It's his last one. He is about to disappear as a persona. We assume he'll do all right in his own sphere outside the ringlets of prose.

Yes, *pujari*, watch how things go in this world. A day when you can remember Krishna on your own is rare. Srila Prabhupada said he had published twenty books but would publish seventy, so read them. But if for some reason you can't read them, then chant Hare Krishna. That's a simple thing to do. No question of the mind. Just hear.

"I don't recall from one minute to the next," the *pujari* laments. Then just chant Hare Krishna. Srila Prabhupada said we boys and girls came to Krishna consciousness without designation. We were no longer Americans, and we didn't join for foolish reasons, such as to make Krishna consciousness our meal ticket. Don't waste time.

*Pujari*, the birds and bees ain't all awake yet. Give us a little prayer-poem before we don't see you again.

Here it is:

\* \* \*

*Puja* is my work

unless He tells me, "Go to

Japan with *japa* and tell them to

always remember God."

\* \* \*

But Srila Prabhupada, what if they don't have a word for God in their language? Then teach them "Krishna." Then they'll have a word, even if it's hard for them to pronounce. Don't expect many people to come to your Krishna consciousness movement. It's the

age. They're selling their own churches and no longer building magnificent buildings to God as they once did. Hare Krishna.

Where is the big success of *our* movement? We did expect big success.

Sudama went "back to Godhead? He was calling for Srila Prabhupada as he left with his mother prompting him to do so. Can I not stay awake before I die? There, I washed my face.

"Krishna!" Make that cry by the creek and scare a duck.

So our *pujari* has gone back to the temple. The last we saw of him he was smiling a crooked little smile and waving his hand. His voice was guttural. He said, "It's been good. I'm grateful to Srila Prabhupada for all these years. I want to give everything to him. What holds me back? I wish I knew. At least let me stay in his mission." That's all he said, then he was gone.

-

5:25 a.m.

Half moon. Wind in my ears. A soft sky, overcast. Ireland was deforested centuries ago. Now there are only small patches of deciduous trees here and there. The rest are replanted pine crops. Nevertheless, the foxgloves poke up and prove that the wild still exists and is beautiful. Plenty of rocks. I think I could write a story, but isn't everything a story? People choose to believe certain stories as true, that's all. The rest are make-believe. It's all relative "truth, in this world.

I stopped and took a deep breath. Heard a bird nearby purring and cooing. When I resumed walking, it became startled, and frightened, flapped away.

\* \* \*

Partita For Flute  
& Piper, pipe me a tune  
of Krishna in Vrndavana. I  
can't go there now by plane  
or boat or by calling  
a taxi-*walla* too  
headache-prone and  
bullet proofless  
in a world of  
politics and  
self.

\* \* \*

Let me hear the air  
in Eire and recall the flute song  
of a cowherd boy  
blue.

\* \* \*

He plays with the same breath  
that breathed the *Vedas*  
plays the stops, the  
*gopis* and cows  
entranced.

\* \* \*

I've heard all this about  
His flute but never heard  
the actual music, didn't hear  
except a little in the  
*traversflote* of Hazelzet  
playing Bach's *Partita fur Flote*  
in A-minor

\* \* \*

as I hurried home one day  
under a brilliant half moon  
while wanting Krishna  
to be mine. "

\* \* \*

Hearing Krishna's Flute  
& Wake up buster the  
flute is playing  
calling  
but who is  
the caller?

\* \* \*

Do you 'magine it is  
Govinda-Gopinatha-  
Vamsidhari with His  
*venu* and His name I mean  
Muralidhara because He plays  
various pipes all with enough  
music to  
capture-bind-seduce  
His perfect lovers?

\* \* \*

I heard only the air moving  
nearby soft and cool to  
the touch and  
a mourning dove  
or woodcock crooning  
close by in a tree.  
Was *that* the flute  
divine?

\* \* \*

He plays, His fingers on the stops  
such expert music that  
the demigods are puzzled  
although they are supposed to know  
everything.

\* \* \*

I'm exhausted  
but the flute plays on into my  
dreams where I go with  
Krishna, playing over grassy  
hills, dandelions that never  
Rot dotting the field and cows  
protected, demons  
far away. Such  
sleep is protected.

\* \* \*

Down the scale He calls  
and I say I am coming Krishna  
just let me hear You and  
I will not tarry. "

\* \* \*

10:34 a.m.

Madhu is again gone for the day. I like it quiet, but I can't help feeling a little resentful that my secretary doesn't give much attention to my affairs. At least I see my resentment and can refuse to act upon it. No need for sarcastic words or aloofness.

Letters in the mail "such a volume of them! So many demands for attention. I can forget my purpose when I answer too much mail at a time.

One of the devotees distributing GNP books wrote, "Sometimes I don't understand and unfortunately can't relate to what you write." But he read the first volume of EJW and found it easy to read. That was a good, candid review. He said, "EJW is the story of a simple, older *sannyasi* as he lives in ISKCON and observes things that pass him by while he works on his inner goals."

When I hear of Godbrothers writing books and pursuing their preaching careers, I sometimes feel insecure about my own contribution. I know that insecurity will eventually pass. I may also reach the stage where I stop writing or write completely for myself. Who knows? Then I will have stopped making my own bid for attention. My books are personal, yet they could be said to be a bid for recognition. But I never want to stop serving actively in some way or another, or actively pursuing the Absolute Truth. I can't just sit back and say I've tried enough, certainly not in my case, because I haven't even reached the stage of attentive hearing or the spontaneous and faithful realization that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I can never give up the search for Krishna and my relationship with Him.

Let me make more concise replies to the mail. I do like hearing from real people. I'm just irritated today, and everything feels tedious. Hare Krishna.

\* \* \*

9:55 a.m.

Last day of this volume. Why not come up with a new format or direction? But I'm waiting. Maybe an idea will come when I'm in the shower. I've learned that it's best not to try too hard for ideas. Then the writing then really does become contrived. real writing takes place as it's happening. Nothing else lasts. The main point of this writing is simple: Tomorrow, start a new volume with whatever wants to come out.

Anyway, aren't you having a good time at this party? Didn't you like those *samosas* and sparkling nectar? And did you hear M.'s music? Too loud, you say? Who is my GBC authority?

Listen, scream and jam and then wake up to your own Krishna consciousness. Broadcast silence if you have to. They sent me ear plugs, AA batteries, other things "quotes from Prabhupada. You better believe it, because he's a staunch *brahmacari*. Most of them are married. She asked if her situation was too risky, preaching in the college town. Her authority replied, "Srila Prabhupada said you have to take risks to preach. You're okay as long as you don't think you're okay."

Ask *me* to advise. I'd say, "Dear person, protect yourself. It sounds good how you care for people and sincerely want to give them Krishna consciousness, but protect yourself too."

When I get a letter and someone is still alive and things are still the same, I find that reassuring. At least one person hasn't suffered a nuclear devastation. Nothing so terrible has happened.

Am I real? I don't always know. I'm moving along, my ship plying smoothly. In fair weather I do okay, I guess, and even in stormy weather I move forward by small increments. That's all he expected of me, I'm sure. He knows me. I have to depend on Krishna. I have no other choice.

\* \* \*

10:28 a.m.

In the first verse of the Tenth Canto (how many days had passed since they began speaking it?), Maharaja Pariksit thanked Sukadeva Gosvami for giving a brief description of Krishna's activities. Now he wants to hear more. Krishna appeared in the Moon Dynasty, but actually He is eternally manifested in the Supreme abode. "That kingdom is never annihilated." The Tenth Canto describes that spiritual nature, Vrajadhama. All the *visnu-tattvas* appeared with Krishna.

\* \* \*

12:15 p.m.

Gate open, door unlocked, waiting for lunch to arrive. A slight twinge hinting. Samika Rsi invited me to stay at his house. He said the humid, gray Irish climate is not good, and that his house is isolated and quiet in New Jersey. In the same letter, however, he spoke of two of my Godbrothers who were visiting, one of whom was accompanied by thirty-five disciples. I doubt anywhere could be as quiet as it is here. But did I say I feel neglected being alone all day? No. If I did, I didn't mean it. You lack nothing essential.

My game plan: I don't like to lie supine or remain open to the passive nature pain forces upon me. Dr. Robbin's book speaks in the first chapter of the modern approach, which is to be informed about the range of headache therapies available and to employ what works rather than sit back and suffer. But it's not just a matter of taking medication and more medication. We're supposed to try biofeedback, deep breathing, and those . . . visualizations "'I'm feeling better. My little pain is becoming a white dove (a bird of peace) and flying off to the Himalayas for a refreshing bath in the Ganges."

" . . . the area of sensation behind my eye is becoming smaller and less sharp. I will notice his presence but it will not disturb me. And when I relax . . . breathing in clean, fresh air, breathing out dead, stale feelings, sigh, then even that small little ball will blow out, exhaled, as the fresh energy comes in and the dead stuff goes out . . . "

My game plan? I'm working on it.

\* \* \*

2:44 p.m.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead acts through His material energy in the creation, maintenance and annihilation of this cosmic manifestation just to deliver the living entity by His compassion and stop the living entity's birth, death and duration of materialistic life. Thus He enables the living being to return home, back to Godhead." (*Bhag.* 9.24.58) In human life, not in a lesser one, we can understand *brahma-jijnasa*. What is the creation's purpose? It's to give the *jivas* a chance to return back to Godhead. Stop the repetition of birth and death.

"To show causeless mercy to the devotees who would take birth in the future in this age of Kali, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, acted in such a way that simply by remembering Him one would be freed from all the lamentation and unhappiness of material existence." (*Bhag.* 9.24.61) "By hearing about Lord Krishna, the

devotees lose interest in material desires and acts. Lord Krishna has a beautiful human-like form which is pleasing everyone to see. . . . Whoever sees Lord Krishna sees a festival." The *gopis* appreciate Krishna's face the most.

Now I'm reading with an eye to the upcoming Janmastami festival. Lord Krishna appeared for various reasons and was exemplary in all He did. "The real purpose of Krishna's appearance, however, was to manifest how one can take part in loving affairs with the Supreme Personality of Godhead." Ecstatic affairs can be exchanged only in Vrndavana, and therefore Lord Krishna transferred there just after His appearance as the son of Vasudeva. Srila Prabhupada ends his commentary to the Ninth Canto: "Completed in Bhubhanesvara, India, on the occasion of establishing a Krishna-Balarama temple." I happened to be there, in the room next to his, in a rough hut, January '77, and heard him dictate these words.

\* \* \*

When I got up after my nap, I didn't feel much joy for living. Anything I could think of doing didn't seem interesting or enthusing. "When I'm out of the way, they won't have to bother with me." That passed through my head. Still, I woke Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda, bowed down mechanically, then went downstairs. I noticed the bathtub was dirty but had a hard time wanting to clean it. Washed the lunch dishes instead.

\* \* \*

3:50 p.m.

The sheep crying. I don't pity myself. The pain is not me. The sheep are not spiritually inspired, and they have no prayer technique. Only bleating, bleating. I don't feel much compassion for them right now.

Walking on the gravel "that crunch under my feet. Chanting on beads. What is the most direct Krishna conscious thing I could do? To what should I give my heart?

Some of the potted plants have fallen over. I picked them up, but the wind keeps blowing them over. Some of the planted flowers have also broken or fallen over. The marigolds are still sturdy and bright. Thank you, Lord, for this day. That I am pain-free right now is Your blessing. Hare Krishna.

Just give me two more pages, then close this session out. I can't do anything else, be something else. A few moments of sunshine. Distant rumble, distant cattle call. This whole land is dedicated to misuse. Wind through leafy trees.

\* \* \*

4:37 p.m.

Let me out of this funk. Nose running, probably from the pollen "hay fever. Radha-Govinda. I'm not tired of saying Their names, not tired of my life lived in Their service. Krishna's mercy.

Sit and wait, sit

and wait. Let my mind go to You,

O Krishna. Please let my mind go to You.

I don't think I can practice anyone else's method of prayer or meditation. I must approach Krishna out of my honest and basic identity as Srila Prabhupada's servant. That is the easy way out, some say, but it's real. I hereby release myself from any other task. Give me service. I beg for that again and again.

Here, chant Hare Krishna a few times, softly.

\* \* \*

Night Notes, 6:22 p.m.

I didn't have a special *darSana* but the usual. Look out the window. See that crow landing on the green meadow? It and everything else out there is supported by God. Hare Krishna.

Answer a letter, because unless I do regular work . . . I can't just sit and commune with Him. Not yet.

In this volume, I sought the easy way. I know what I meant by that. It's part of my headache syndrome; I can't seek something more difficult. For this reason as well as others, I wrote what came. And it's *not* so easy, this easy way. No, Krishna consciousness requires total surrender.

Appendix

July 8

I keep flirting with the idea of a more literary form or new series. It's like telling the "muse" or "unconscious," "If you want to send me something I'm open to it." But it doesn't come. One factor may be that any roll gets interrupted by a day of headache, which knocks off all structure. On such days, it's enough just to chart my day.

Plus I feel good writing little life "headaches, medical strategies, and all. I like to work toward my twenty-page quota; I'm satisfied with that. Even with the headache condition, I'm able to get *something* down in writing. I'm not able to sustain a series or springboarding exercise, just as I can't sustain constant reading of the *Bhagavatam*.

\* \* \*

July 12

I find strong resistance to any projects I conceive. I may be initially excited by them, but when I think out the details, I start to feel stuck in "*jnana*" and I lose my enthusiasm. I seem to always want to return to the simplest kind of writing.