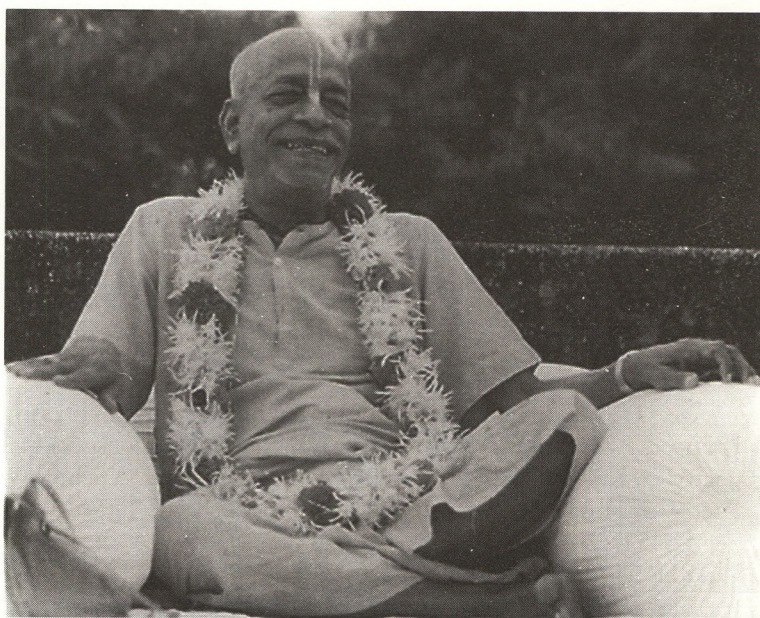


# **One Hundred Prabhupāda Poems**





# **One Hundred Prabhupāda Poems**



**Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami**

**GN Press, Inc.**

Persons interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with our secretary:

GN Press, Inc.  
R.D. 1, Box 837-K  
Port Royal, PA 17082

© 1996 GN Press, Inc.  
All Rights Reserved  
Printed in India

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Gosvāmi, Satsvarūpa Dāsa,  
One Hundred Prabhupāda Poems / Satsvarūpa Dāsa  
Goswami.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-911233-59-8

1. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, 1896-1977—  
Poetry. 2. International Society for Krishna Consciousness—  
poetry. 3. Krishna (Hindu deity)—Poetry. 4. Hare Krishnas—  
Poetry. 5. Hindus—Poetry. 6. Gurus—Poetry. I. Title

PS3557.0793053 1995

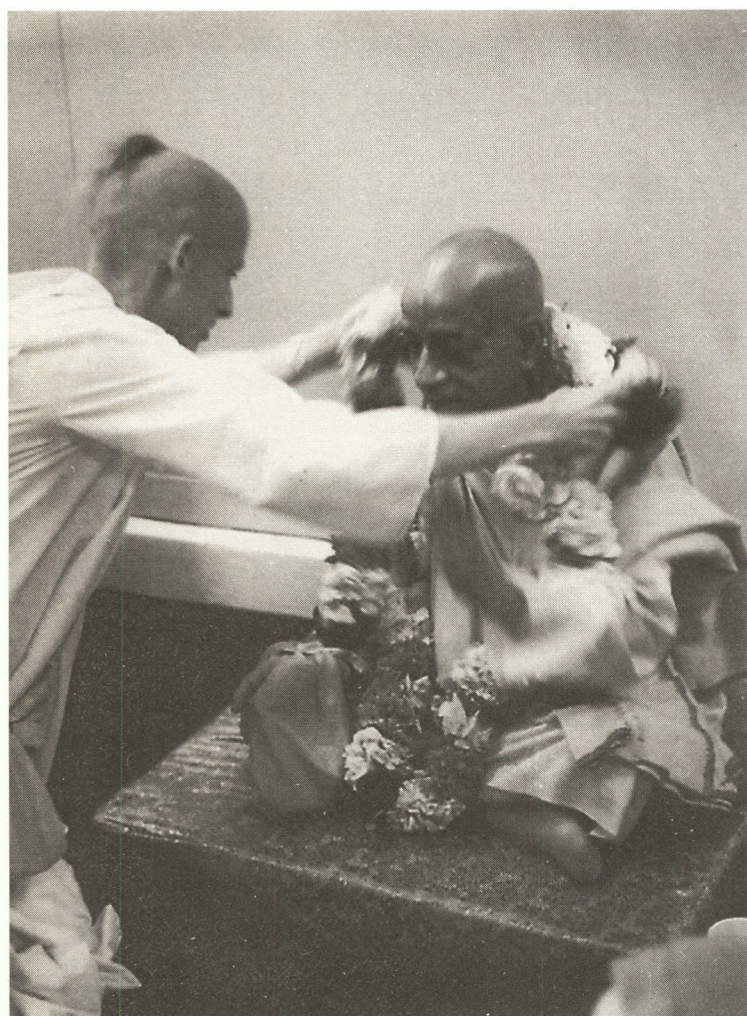
811'.54—dc20

95-6194  
CIP

Printed in India at Rekha Printers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi-110 020.







# # 1

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
Please accept this or it's worse than useless.  
You have given me spiritual life and so my time is  
yours.  
You want me to be happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You  
want me  
to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness,  
working with my brothers  
in the society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.  
Please accept these lines  
made so I can recollect you,  
made in separation from you.  
from the back of a van in Europe, ]  
two years before your Centennial.]

Each of us is alone, Prabhupāda, and we need to  
protect a little territory which is our soul.  
I mean protect it from being unduly influenced.  
We want to be entirely influenced  
and impressed by you  
and by Nārada and by Hare Kṛṣṇa vibrations,  
but you know what I mean—  
you don't want "Yes men," carbon copies,  
superficially jolly haribols.  
We're tested by action. You see whether we  
are willing to sell your books or do something  
equivalent.

What did we do for the *sankirtana* movement?  
Did we attract others to the lotus feet  
of the Lord? Do we defy the atheists,  
willing to fight them—  
what is our credit?



## # 2

I'm starting these poems while reading  
of your life. You are on the Jaladuta  
coming to America.

For 10,000 years, this act of yours stands out—  
greater than Christopher Columbus sailing to  
America.

You brought the richest freight,  
your volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.  
You braved New York City winters,  
and whatever they threw at you—  
the indifference and scorn and the thief  
who broke into your room and took  
your typewriter and tape recorder.  
I want to remember you tenderly,  
not just to look good as a Prabhupāda-praiser.

Clear the decks, clean out  
the workshop of your heart,  
search with labor for the images  
and the impressions of Śrīla Prabhupāda  
as he is now for you.  
Where do you find him?

First I find him in his books.  
The photos are helpful,  
they're required, but they certainly don't  
capture the whole person.  
The purports do more, but neither can you  
capture them—  
they are best honored by reading.  
Prabhupāda is in his books.

#3 ✓

I find Prabhupāda in his books.  
Pure love of God for anyone who will take it up.  
*Śṛṇvatām śva-kathāḥ kṛṣṇaḥ . . .*  
Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, hear about Kṛṣṇa  
and give up sinful life.  
Whoever does it will know Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa.

Can words themselves serve?  
Yes, why not? But don't cheat on the currency.  
Words should be backed by experience.  
I heard him lecture and my mind shivered  
as he cut down the representative of the Rosicrucians.  
He said he was "vague . . . had no goal . . . useless,  
bogus."  
In his books, lectures, and my response,  
find him every day.



#4 ✓

Prabhupāda without me. Is it possible?  
He walked up the hill in Moscow, yet he wrote  
me a letter about it, said selling *Back to Godhead* was  
more important than our Boston incense business.  
Prabhupāda with Hari-śauri traveling, India, America  
1975 and '76. I was not there, except in  
brief moments on the outskirts.  
But now I read the *Diary* and I can join him.

Prabhupāda is without me in his *nitya-līlā*.  
No, that doesn't sound right; he doesn't forget us.  
He has left behind the boat so we can cross  
and join him. He simultaneously exists  
in both worlds,  
wherever his sincere devotees practice.

I can go with him and think of him,  
get more information on what he is doing;  
it depends on my desire. Let me meditate on my  
*spiritual master who is always in blissful Kṛṣṇa*  
*consciousness . . .*  
don't get left behind.

Ask yourself, "Me without Prabhupāda?"  
It's your choice. Don't be so foolish.  
Stay with your teacher  
in the capacity of his student, trusting him  
and growing up to do some work for him.  
Total commitment,  
don't be without your master.

# 5

All these nondevotees, Prabhupāda, why do I listen to them? I hear how they write their speeches and I look at the lines of their poems so I can write better for you.

Remember you once mentioned to your devotees in New York

that they could learn something—  
how to do the laundry and heat a building—  
from Jehovah's Witnesses? Even from the Ramakrishna Mission.

But best to keep clear of them, I know.

I'm reading of Priyavrata who wanted to remain *brahmacārī* with Nārada on a hilltop. The Lord ordered Brahmā, "Go tell Priyavrata that his duty is to become king."

I am happy writing on  
this hilltop and as long as no  
authorized messenger comes insisting  
that he knows better than Nārada,  
I'll stay at your lotus feet this way.

Your orders are my life-blood, life-air—  
chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, hear about Kṛṣṇa,  
think of Lord Kṛṣṇa while serving Him.  
Implicit faith in guru. *How* I serve  
is a detail. You said, "There are so many ways."  
Main thing is honest work and desire to  
serve Gurudeva with life's talents and works.

I speak to you confidently today.  
You are with me.  
But I am also trembling, unsure of myself,  
a fool before you.  
I have found you  
and yet I seek you. Kindly reciprocate with me,  
who came to you in New York City.

# 6



A brother wrote to me about reading your book,  
Śrīla Prabhupāda. He said reading was not enough, but  
deep study. I wrote back and said I am not a scholar  
who can analyze so well.

I read to be with Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa.

You as the teacher, the explainer . . .

I don't think much of biographical details  
or my memories of you, when I read.

I don't try to fix your photo image in my mind.

But I am very dependent on your purport.

It's the nicest kind of intimacy,  
listening to your teachings.

Read carefully and underline in pencil.

Take it seriously, tenderly.

I don't need to immediately apply it;

it's already applied when we are open to your words.

It will come out in other action,  
that we will see with time.

I read every day, and even

if nothing else is done by me,

this is the way to the kingdom of God.



#7 ✓

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am writing you this one from Poland. Our van is parked in the mud outside the temple farmhouse.

Just been to *maṅgala-ārati* and now I come to you in this poem—to tell you the *tulasī* plants are healthy bushes. You would be very happy to see boys and girls so serious and joyful in your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

They have Pañca-tattva Deities and they distribute your books, all translated. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your portrait is on the wall above the wooden *āsana* where the lecturer sits.

I'll sit there this morning and speak what you have written.

The verse is about transmigration and liberation. You write that a liberated soul doesn't dwell on his past mistakes which brought him to this world.

He's liberated because he is now fully engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service and he accepts whatever comes.

We are liberated, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when we accept you as our savior not just with our lips but act to maintain *saṅkīrtana* as they do in these countries.

Please let me be part of this,  
speaking what you have written, traveling  
where you want me to go  
all over the world  
and back to you.

## #8 ✓

In this temple they have a small Prabhupāda *mūrti*.  
He tilts back slightly,  
he's infant-sized,  
wears a long blond *cādar*,  
and all bow down to him.

In this temple Prabhupāda's disciples  
come and lecture.  
New generations gather.  
It's an ISKCON place, New Śāntipura.  
Prabhupāda is in his books and  
overlooking all this.

Last night I told the story of the time  
Śrīla Prabhupāda was chastised by his spiritual master  
for listening to a man beside him  
while their Guru Mahārāja lectured.  
Prabhupāda told us, "That was a brilliant day"—  
to be reprimanded by him.  
And sometimes he is annoyed with *me*.

I prattle, trying to take credit  
for a Prabhupāda poem.  
But I also write so we can have them.  
We will replace all other literature  
with Kṛṣṇa conscious books,  
so we must have many Prabhupāda poems . . .

This cold day, wiping our muddy shoes  
before entering . . . whatever happens, thinking  
of our spiritual master as we live  
in his grace a little longer . . .  
now stop this and prepare  
the lecture from his purports,  
as he wants it.



## #9 ✓

How could devotees gather  
on a farm in Poland and in cities of Poland  
except that Your Divine Grace wanted it?  
Of course, Lord Caitanya wanted it,  
but He picked you to deliver  
the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement  
which is carried on now by your followers.

Going through the *samsāra* song,  
happy to see the friendly forms  
of Pañca-tattva. We joined  
Gaura, Nitāi and Gadādhara with Their arms  
upraised,  
and then palms joined like Śrī Advaita  
and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.  
All this is due to your mercy.

Prabhupāda, I am happy,  
the *tulasīs* are green and bushy,  
the ladies are chaste, the men are  
pure and hard-working, no one cynical,  
everyone following the *sāstra*, the  
Bhaktivedanta purports are translated  
into all languages,  
*maṅgala-ārati* in every home and communes  
spotted all over forest and city.  
The dawn rising,  
even birds sound auspicious, and the leftover moon.  
This is the prediction of Lord Caitanya.  
All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

## #10

Remember us, Prabhupāda, wherever you are.  
We heard you will lead us in Goloka Vṛndāvana  
whenever we get there.  
For now there is more than enough to do  
to follow your instructions to preach  
*bhāgavata-dharma*. When we leave this ISKCON farm  
and go down the hill  
we immediately see the degraded age.  
Up here we are immune from it  
in a spiritual world  
you advised us to live in.

The temple is a farmhouse  
but because we worship here and speak *Bhāgavatam*,  
it is just like Vaikuṇṭha.

Now we must go downtown to the people  
not leaving them to their fate.  
When we preach you are with us  
because you came from Vṛndāvana  
to do this work and you're  
never affected by the noise and pollution.  
You never gave up trying.

So devotees get in cars and go  
down the hill.  
But early morning is for  
the temple room  
which you taught is absolutely necessary  
to stave off the effects of Kali and sin.  
Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

# #11



He couldn't keep the drum beat slow  
like I wanted it to sing to thee  
in "*samsāra's*" odes. So I tried  
to sing along,  
felt the aura in the  
shining Pañca-tattva.  
*Hari-nāma's* blessing on all—  
all bequeathed by Prabhupāda.

Handsome faces, the devotees circle  
around the *tulasī* in the daily ritual,  
everything at the same time,  
same prayers.  
I'm not complaining. We like it.  
Please make me a maidservant.  
*Tulasī-devī*, please make me a devotee  
singing in the temple around  
the healthy devotional plant.

Where is Śrīla Prabhupāda?  
He's in his picture over the *vyāsāsana*.  
He's in me and you and the words  
"daring and active" which describe  
the fixed devotee. He's in  
the will to cooperate among devotees.  
And in Paraśurāma dāsa's schemes  
for *pada-yātrās*, with a museum, *prasādam* distribution  
and converting a village to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our obeisances  
I'm traveling today from  
Poland to Prague in hope of representing  
you at the Sunday Feast lecture.  
I'll speak *nāyam deho deha*,  
what a father taught his 100 sons.  
You'll be in my words.  
You're our father telling  
the hard truths no one wants to accept—  
give up sin,  
Kṛṣṇa is not known by any other method.



## #12 ✓

Offer your breakfast,  
bowed head, *praṇāmas* . . .

I want to stop this tongue-only ritual.  
Put head down and think and feel,  
“Only if you accept, master,  
can we offer food to God and  
save ourselves from eating sin.  
Please take it just as if you are in  
your room in L.A. and I bring it in  
to you on a silver plate, some hot  
cereal and milk a lady prepared in the  
kitchen. We all love you and serve  
our spiritual master in his headquarters.  
And I’m so lucky to bring it to you!”

## #13 ~

Open young faces,  
big eyes in Prague  
mostly *brahmacārīs* in the room  
but girls too, and no *karatālas*,  
no drums because it's the suburbs.  
One by one they go prostrate before Prabhupāda,  
his picture on the altar.

After *maṅgala-ārati*, a reading of NOD.  
I heard these words—Raghunātha Gosvāmī, *Stavāvalī*,  
*Rādhārāṇī*, *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa,  
then Śiśupāla, Sahadeva . . . this much I know.  
And all this is possible by  
Prabhupāda in this world.  
He is very dear to Kṛṣṇa.

## #14

I want these to be poems truly for him.  
Does that mean you hoist up some flag  
with his picture on it?  
Yeah, why not? If you have it in your heart.  
When I see a boy worshipping his ISKCON guru  
I become jealous and arrogant  
and wrong.  
I'm prone to be a twerpy wise guy,  
but he washes me clean of it in a moment.  
That's his power; he brings us together.

The young men treat me with respect only because  
they heard I was his *śiṣya* from a long time ago.  
Their bosses didn't tell them different.  
Were it otherwise, I'd be cast into the street  
where Bob Dylan is coming to town,  
chased by a cold cat . . . police eyes on me . . .  
Going down to the river shivering and even thinking  
whether my old mother would give me shelter  
in New Jersey.

## #15

My Prabhupāda. Find him in the  
temple room of the rented house.  
They expect me to sing “*saṁsāra*”  
because I’m the oldest.  
Okay, but sometimes I’m not going to  
lead as they expect. I’ll be silent  
and think of him in my own way.

The Prabhupāda 12-inch *mūrti*  
leans slightly backward,  
a spotlight from the ceiling shining down upon him.  
These Czech *bhaktas* prostrate  
themselves fully before him—  
they furiously distribute his books, I don’t  
dare make fun of them.  
Just serve and be simple.  
Your master is in every line  
of the “*saṁsāra*” song.



# #16



Dear Prabhupāda, in about an hour  
we start in our van for  
the farm somewhere in the hills  
of Czech Republic.

I hear they go out early there and work  
in the fields, stop at 3 P.M.  
for their daily *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class.

I guess you would approve.

Can I do some good there?

Please visit me, or rather,  
never leave me.

I'm counting on writing my way to you,  
it's my festival of preaching,  
my obedience, the way

I command,  
the way I face the opposition.

I offer it all at your feet.

Let me go all out as you did  
in those years in India  
after your spiritual master's disappearance.

You didn't care to develop buildings  
or manage the institution—you  
wrote with pen or typewriter,  
you wrote without even knowing  
who would publish or read it.

You wrote *Science of Devotion* and  
*Talks With Rāmānanda Rāya* and  
*Īsopaniṣad* and King Kuṣaṣekhara's *Prayers*  
and many BTG essays and  
*Easy Journey*.

I can't write like you but  
still it is writing,  
I am yours,  
please don't disown me,  
this thing I'm writing is  
a raid on the inarticulate, a  
stab at the demons' stronghold.

On your order  
I used to place the letters in the sign  
announcing your evening lecture  
at 26 Second Avenue.  
I think I still have that service.  
Please don't reject me.

## #17

Sweet morning *ārati*, dimmed lights  
in an old Czech farm building,  
men on one side,  
women and children on the other.

The *pūjārī* is a woman about six feet two inches tall.  
Little Gaura-Nitāi Deities are before us  
and the visitor from America  
leads the singing. Lots of guests from a nearby town,  
friends of Kṛṣṇa,  
varnished floors,  
light arising outdoors over the forest hills.  
The train comes by very close and warns by horn—  
keep those horses away!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I will speak of you  
to these devotees today. I'll tell them  
of the old days in New York City,  
tell them you wanted this farm.  
We couldn't grasp your vision,  
couldn't see the future when there would  
be *maṅgala-ārati* in a farmhouse in Czech.  
We only knew the Lower East Side.  
But now I'm here to see it:  
everyone bows down to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Tell them  
how he looked to me that summer,  
how he drew me to him.  
We will sit under the tree in the evening,  
the devotees in their work clothes.  
Tell them about the Swami,  
the funny stories  
of the beginning.



## #18

I was worried  
that when I give my talk on Prabhupāda  
they might not laugh at the funny parts,  
something will get lost in the translation  
and I'll be left pulling a huge horse cart  
all alone and I won't even know  
I need their help.  
But I'm ready if it happens.  
I'll keep diving into the memories.

I gave Prabhupāda a mango every day  
because he spoke of them.  
He said, "This is love, this is Kṛṣṇa consciousness."  
I said to him I am feeling hopeful  
and this Kṛṣṇa consciousness seems very strong.  
I said I have to go for the weekend to my parents  
home, but not without telling you  
because you are my guru and you ought to  
approve of my movements or at least know  
why I am missing from your sight  
for a few days.  
Yes, he smiled, that is all right.  
And he let me go and come back.

If they don't laugh, that's all right.  
Maybe it's not even funny.  
Just tell it, what you said and what the Swami said.  
I said the buildings don't frighten me anymore.

Swamiji, I saw a man drunk or maybe crazy in the  
street  
he was directing traffic. That same man  
had attended the temple *kirtana* the night before.  
“Oh, he was a madman?” Swamiji said.

He lived in New York  
above the noises, anger,  
a lotus floating on the water,  
plain transcendental goodness he wanted from us—  
respect the holy name, no meat or intoxication,  
no illicit sex. Just chant with us.  
Maybe the devotees here know all this  
from *Prabhupāda-lilāmṛta*.  
But I'll tell it again.  
Under the tree at 6 P.M., they can laugh  
or listen or look off and  
think of their own work.  
I will tell and be satisfied.  
I will desire that someone  
become a pure devotee of my spiritual master.

## #19

Prabhupāda, I am confident  
that you will never leave me. I am also  
confident that I will never leave you.  
Also, I think no matter where  
I start a poem on any morning  
it can be genuine meditation on you.  
You are going for a morning walk  
and I will join you.

Today I returned to the temple after 30 hours  
of headache. They accepted me back without a word.  
I don't speak Czech so what is there to say?  
I wasn't up to singing *samsāra* but drifted in it  
while another sang. I drifted in memories and feelings,  
standing in place, swaying with the rest  
to the soft beats of *kirtana*.  
Prabhupāda is here.

I was thinking of you  
and coming here to write.  
The important thing is to write for myself,  
to actually think of you and not make a  
show only.

This van, plastered with so many pictures  
of His Divine Grace, is an insider place.  
It is not for the public. They could not understand  
when I put up a poster for His Divine Grace in  
Harvard Divinity School; a student wrote mocking  
graffiti. This is not for them.

I am confident that  
you remember me.  
You live and I can live with you.  
You lift me over the imperfections of my service.  
You accept me.



## #20

Prabhupāda, I'm well enough to give the class.  
I've got my notes and memories of things you've said.  
I can represent you.

Today, class is about the ten divisions of the  
*Bhāgavatam*.

The first nine are meant to set apart  
the tenth which is Kṛṣṇa,  
the *summum bonum*.  
I'll stick to what you've said.

These are farmers but I want to tell them  
we all need to know the philosophy  
and that's done by hearing and repeating.  
That's how Śukadeva and Sūta Gosvāmīś  
got such perfect knowledge.  
The first item is creation.  
It doesn't happen by chance:  
Life comes from life.

I will also raise the question, "Why not go at once  
to the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs*  
which are sweeter than anything?"  
I have your answers  
and I have adopted them as my own.  
I don't want to jump over.

I will end the lecture by saying,  
“What is Kṛṣṇa doing in Vṛndāvana?”  
I’ll sing the stanza you taught us  
*cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu . . .*  
it’s a window on the spiritual world.  
Kṛṣṇa returns from cowherding  
and all Vrajavāsīs strain to see Him,  
the boys tell what wonderful acts He did,  
and the *gopīs* embrace Him with their eyes.

I’m well enough to give the class  
and sobered. Material nature can take away my power.  
Please let me live this brief chance.

## #21

Last night they asked me  
“When you missed the first initiation,  
what happened so you decided  
to take it?”  
I said, “I went to the wedding,  
Swamiji invited me,  
and saw the boys with new red beads  
around their necks . . .” As I said it,  
I took out my own,  
like magic out of the bead bag,  
28 years later still shining, I  
put them around my neck . . .  
“And they had new names like Jagannātha  
instead of Jim and Mukunda instead  
of Michael. And the *samosās* were  
so good—cooked by Swamiji—at  
that wedding feast that Brahmānanda  
decided on the spot to become a devotee.”  
My Czech farm audience laughed.  
I told them I went to you,  
Swamiji, and asked to be initiated  
at the next ceremony on  
Rādhā’s birthday.  
“But you’ll have to be a strict  
vegetarian,” you said.

Is that how it happened? At  
least those are the events, the  
red beads, the feast, Swamiji in  
his room . . . I can’t remember more.  
He brought me to him.

Now this morning, I cannot bring to me  
a disciple as you dragged us.  
I don't have that power.  
I sang in *maṅgala-ārati*,  
thinking that "everything"  
must be offered to you.  
My life is in your care as we  
drive off to Germany.



## #22

Ran through those memories quickly  
then stopped and said I can't remember more.  
Fortunate. Funny stories now.  
Brief flame rises when I tell.  
Most of these boys and girls weren't even  
born then. LSD, Lower East Side,  
even the Swami is another world.

Went through those memories and  
I can do it again, just ask me.  
I can tell it and it's jolly and sad  
and primitive . . . never mind, it is  
what it is. No one can judge it.  
They live in their own in  
an imagined memory state—  
Swamiji in summer with  
no *kūrta* just *dhoti* and *sannyāsa* top  
piece . . . no photograph can capture  
the inner state. He said my name  
means inner form of truth.  
Another time I entered when  
they were burning birthday candles  
and sticking them to the table top  
"To increase your devotion"  
during autumn, Kārttika.  
He said, "Here comes the truth  
personified." He gave me typing.  
He gave me life to break away from  
most degraded habits.

I became quickly  
one of the Swami's boys,  
remain so to this day.  
Remember for audiences wherever  
I go,  
call it an art, a show performed,  
my '66 monologue,  
I'll clown it, be serious,  
poeticize, it's all true,  
he really did give out ISKCON bullets,  
I really did phone him from my  
office and say, "Swamiji, this is Steve.  
Remember me? I can't come to lunch  
at one today. Can you save something for me?"  
And when I went to him he  
put the plate of *prasādam* on the floor and  
I bowed down.  
"If you love me, I will love you"  
is still in my ears.

## #23

They had to unlock the door,  
I was the first one into the temple room  
before *maṅgala-ārati*.  
No light on except one over Śrīla Prabhupāda.  
He sat high up on the *vyāsāsana*  
wearing a light wool saffron *cādar*  
and I fell at his feet  
as we all do. Secure here in this  
marble-floored temple of stout pillows and elegance,  
chanting before my master.

The verse for today's lecture tells  
of mother Yaśodā's faith in cow protection  
and the holy names of Viṣṇu.  
Prabhupāda says these Vedic ways  
are mostly forgotten today,  
yet has given them to us  
to cherish and practice.  
By his grace I will be able to expand on  
some of his points.  
By the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, I have  
breath and heartbeat to carry it out.

By his divine grace, I am a shaven-headed  
saffron monk sanctified by light  
of ghee lamps in an otherwise dark room.  
Śrīla Prabhupāda is our leader.

## #24

You write crazy in your Writing Session.  
Your hope is that He sees the inner form and  
accepts your sincerity.  
All right.

But when you speak to others  
it's straight from Śrīla Prabhupāda.  
You can have both—the private world of your own  
babbling,  
which is also a long song for him,  
and then the public speech which is  
not less important, which is the discipline  
of *vaidhi-bhakti*, the way to earn your right.

When I utter Absolute Truth  
from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,  
I couch it in my own words, "I'm happy and surprised  
to see you are studying in the Tenth Canto.  
We *sannyāsīs* get to taste many cantos as we go  
from temple to temple. In this purport, Śrīla  
Prabhupāda says—"  
Why have I come here except to speak  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and talk alone  
with one or two friendly Godbrothers?

My master is in my heart  
and the hearts of all devotees here.  
He drives the enthusiasm of the *saṅkīrtana* team,  
assures the mothers, takes pleasure in  
the baby in diapers  
who comes to our van and speaks to us in German.





Prabhupāda explains it all,  
how to worship and serve Kṛṣṇa,  
and we do it  
by serving him.

The sacred hour is consecrated to him,  
and so is *prasādam* and prayer and lecture and rest . . .  
my master sits at a height and I  
speak to the devotees  
what I've heard from him,  
my master in saffron—  
he is all I need to know.  
As he leads I follow.

## #25

I entered the temple and sat before Śrīla Prabhupāda.  
Later I got to sing, “Jaya Prabhupāda”  
at the end of the Nṛsiṃhadeva *ārati*.  
Call out the names of our spiritual master,  
how else will Lord Nṛsiṃha and Prahlāda Mahārāja  
know me? I’m afraid yet I am protected  
by the dark inner sanctum lit with ghee lamps—  
I can see the Lord’s eyes and His *bhakta*’s eyes  
and it is appropriate for me to sing out  
Jaya Prabhupāda, Jaya Prabhupāda.

He taught us to  
chant Hare Kṛṣṇa,  
don’t be attached to the mind’s demands,  
stay shaven-headed with other symbols of the  
    Vaiṣṇavas,  
stay in their association . . .  
He taught us to sing Tulasī’s song, circumambulate,  
bow to her. He says, “It is very important,”  
and so it is very important to me.  
Now that I have exclusively surrendered  
to the teachings of His Divine Grace  
everything works fine,  
when you practice with faith.

Do I see him personally  
sitting on the *vyāsāsana*?  
While singing I thought,  
“You have written a book called *My Relationship With*  
*Lord Kṛṣṇa*. Why not do another, *My Relationship*  
*With Śrīla Prabhupāda*? It could be  
about what you know,  
your own particular relationship,  
as when we say, my lord  
my spiritual master, my Prabhupāda.”

## #26

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
I am with Godbrothers Aṣṭa-ratha Prabhu  
and Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra Prabhu,  
in the ISKCON temple in South Germany.  
You have transformed many men into  
gentlemen like these.  
The younger lads too,  
clean and strong  
learning to worship the Deity.  
This morning Rādhā-Madana-mohana  
in soft green colors and yellow dresses, lotus patterns,  
a big rose offered to Them  
and then offered to you . . .  
After Tulasī songs Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra read aloud  
from *The Nectar of Devotion*, your book.  
You gave us Rūpa Gosvāmī in your own way  
and I want that. What did he say?  
He said you need a continuity of *bhakti*  
from a previous life, but even if you don't have,  
if you have a taste for these books  
you can awaken your Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Then come outside in dawning, not yet  
sunshine sky. Śrīla Prabhupāda has already gone  
back to Godhead. We linger here.  
Let us not falsely love the earth  
as if it is heaven complete  
and we can live here always.



Let me feel some ache of separation  
from my spiritual master.

Our van is gleaming white. Think of it as a  
way to serve his mission. As long as you live,  
be cheerful, as Prabhupāda was  
in separation from his Guru Mahārāja.

Do good works and get the master's blessings.

"Mold your life in such a way  
that you cannot but think of Kṛṣṇa  
24 hours a day."

## #27

Last morning here in Germany temple,  
some devotees who live here get to  
see His Divine Grace in this dim-lit  
*kīrtana* hall every morning, as they also do in  
Gītā-nāgarī or Denver or Bhaktivedanta Manor.  
But I move on. So I take extra  
fond looks this morning,  
at you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

During “*sāṁsāra*” prayers I glanced at you,  
keeping the women out of my  
peripheral vision,  
and even during Nṛsimha worship  
I peeked over to see you.  
Then while I recited the Tulasī prayer,  
I looked from the green plant over  
to our spiritual father and best friend,  
and I sensed a connection. How else  
can we aspire to be the maidservant  
of Vṛndā in the groves of Vṛndāvana  
except when we serve the pure  
devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

## #28

The window is open. It's not even  
5 A.M. but it's light outside, German  
lush foliage of summer.

Like this all over Europe now,  
almost July.

Last night Aṣṭha-ratha took the evening  
train to Berlin and after some initial  
engine trouble, Kṛṣṇa-kṣetra got his  
van onto the highway headed for Belgium.  
I lingered overnight. They handed me *The  
Nectar of Devotion* and I read our master's  
words about practicing *bhakti*.

He said it is latent in the heart of  
every living entity; even the aborigines  
recognize something wonderful in nature.  
When this consciousness is matured it is  
Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

"Keep the wheels moving," you told  
the *sannyāsīs*. I'm one of them.

May I keep in mind the regal image  
of you in saffron,

wrapped in light shawl for summer,  
and devotees coming to be with you.

I hope to read your books and  
write in my way and honor  
the vows I made before you.

That's the purpose of human life  
and you don't want me to keep it to myself  
but tell others—

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the greatest need  
for all the world.

## #29

Prabhupāda, I told it to my  
Writing Session, but now directly  
to you—we have come to a P-stop  
off the highway in South France.  
This is the frontier where  
I can assess my voluntary commitment  
to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Father, I spent time reading  
your book this morning, about  
those who live like animals.

Father, I'm sleepy and the flies are  
bothering me. Once I went to see  
a Vaiṣṇava at Sevā-kuñja.  
He was in a small  
room with no furniture, screens  
on the windows to prevent  
monkeys from entering.  
The room overlooked Sevā-kuñja.  
Monkeys crawled at the screen window  
begging for food. It didn't seem  
very pleasant or clean or peaceful  
to me with my notions.  
Why do I mention it now?  
Maybe to say only that I'm tired  
with flies bothering me in France and  
if I were in Vṛndāvana, I'd flee  
from Sevā-kuñja.  
But still you find some  
use for me.



## #30

One time Prabhupāda called Hari-śauri  
to his room in Māyāpur and  
for half an hour told him to become a guru,  
take thousands of disciples, he said,  
qualify yourselves first but *all*  
*of you* do this and expand.  
Then he called in the GBC  
and asked Hari-śauri to tell them  
what he had just said. Hari-śauri  
was hesitant and so Prabhupāda  
said that they all had to become Kṛṣṇa conscious,  
become spiritual masters.  
It seemed to his servant that  
Prabhupāda had in mind that they should  
not be embroiled  
in controversies such as who is better—  
the saffron-dressed people or the ones  
in the white *dhotis*.

His servant told of another time when he had to  
massage  
Prabhupāda for two straight hours  
under the mosquito net, starting at 10 P.M.  
while Śrīla Prabhupāda softly snored  
and the room was thick with frankincense smoke.  
So hard to stay awake but the servant  
quoted *śloka*s in his mind and caught himself  
a few times sleeping and prayed to the Guḍākeśa  
who doesn't sleep.

“It’s very demanding,” he reflected,  
“to be the servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
but very satisfying to the heart.”  
Well said and well done, Hari-śauri,  
you’re a better man than I am.

## #31

That was a Hari-śauri poem  
and I've got more of them.  
If Prabhupāda liked to talk with him  
I should too.  
But he loved us all equally.  
He said some animals are fiercer than others  
referring to Sudāmā Vipra and Siddha-svarūpa.  
In those years I distinguished myself  
by "leading" a group who collected reviews  
from professors and sold books at colleges.  
You say this disdainfully?  
Is your present scribbling something better?

At the 1976 GBC meeting I retained the same US zone.  
What else did I do? Tried to stay out of harm's way.  
In 1977 I learned that I was  
not so prominent. I always recall in New York City  
I couldn't even fit into the car with the main leaders.  
Why bother to go on the walk at all?  
No, keep near your Guru Mahārāja  
even when they ask him absurd questions,  
"Did you know, Prabhupāda, that  
Andy Warhol and his gang  
eat human embryos?"

I knew the day would come  
when we all had to serve him  
in separation and maybe I even looked  
forward to that because I knew  
it was my strength.  
Now I'm also learning strength in keeping  
apart from squabbling and meetings.  
But more important than me  
and what I think on my own,  
is whether an action is pleasing to him.  
Those who do it are actually number one  
Prabhupādānugas  
and I should learn from them.



## #32

Prabhupāda, I was just outside under slim  
Ekādaśī moon before dawn, doing physical  
exercises to keep fit for your service.  
I don't do my own thing and tag on "for Prabhupāda."  
You are actually with me and  
you're the cause of my actions.

I try to be equipoised but  
sometimes I have to take one side and not another.  
For example, explaining something to Madhu  
about ISKCON history.  
My example is you. You also sometimes  
had to take one side and not the other.  
But you are never against anyone.  
You want to help us  
even when you call us nonsense.

So I was exercising for you, deep bends,  
push-ups and all that, ending in *praṇāmas*  
and now I'm inside, for you.  
It's to keep me close to you.  
To keep me close to you.

## #33

“You are not fit for *nirjana* or *bhajana*,” Prabhupāda  
told his disciple Śyāma dāsa  
who was chanting 150 rounds in Māyāpur.  
He said and did . . . He did and said . . .  
Let me get fresh images of Prabhupāda,  
the little things and  
big decisions noted by Hari-śauri.  
It’s a way to be with him.

Reading his books is another way.  
You fit the pieces together  
for a composite Prabhupāda.  
You are one of many  
many, many disciples and you don’t  
shoulder the most burdens.  
But he keeps a place for you  
and doesn’t forget  
you’ve been with him since  
the beginning in New York City.

He is your own  
spiritual master and you have a right  
to keep him very close.  
You can treasure the statements he made  
which make you feel special—  
go ahead and take them.

It's not that I want some illusion or  
false propaganda that I'm the best son.  
But I want my own relationship.  
I admit I'm insignificant  
but at the same time I care  
for my Prabhupāda devotional creeper.  
You do that by cherishing  
his love for you.  
Is it unrealistic to say Prabhupāda  
is always with you?  
No, he can do it.

Therefore I call them my Prabhupāda poems  
and there's nothing wrong in that.  
He is a father,  
he's got work for me to do.

## #34

“All glories to Prabhupāda,” I said and I  
meant good night, like a person might say,  
“God bless you” or “God protect us.”  
I wasn’t in a personal mood but you  
don’t have to have six Prabhupāda memoirs on  
the tip of your tongue. You just say it,  
“Jaya Prabhupāda” because you’ve  
lived through another day in his service.  
And in your way you are true to him  
and he walks with you.

A Godbrother  
was joking about the fanfare of the  
1996 Prabhupāda Centennial.  
He said people are asking him, “What are  
you going to do for the Centennial year?”  
“I don’t know,” he says to them,  
“I hope I don’t bloop!”

I say “I am waiting for the year  
1997 when the fanfare will be over.”  
We will love him on our own  
even without publicity  
and official speeches of his greatness.  
Love him by our actions and plain prose  
and print more books as Prabhupāda praise  
in 1997, even though we can’t  
sell them at Centennial prices.



“All glories to Prabhupāda.” I said it  
without thinking,  
which is the best way,  
like breathing,  
like the heart beating until death.

## #35

Prabhupāda was preaching and I am  
like a cricket by the hearth,  
listening 20 years later.  
He's talking to a professor in L.A.  
The door squeaks and more guests come  
into his room. "Hare Kṛṣṇa."  
He's telling them all, though facing the professor—  
even a little God consciousness is so valuable.  
His disciples were drug-addicted but gave it  
up at once when he asked them. "Your government  
is spending millions of dollars to stop  
the drug habit, but it is all failure."

God consciousness . . . he makes it sound universal.  
He makes it sound easy,  
which it is when you are with him.  
God consciousness, he skillfully explains  
that Kṛṣṇa is the God of gods  
as told in *Bhagavad-gītā* and by  
sages of ancient past and "most recently"  
Lord Caitanya.

Prabhupāda says, "I'm a Hindu so I may accept  
Kṛṣṇa as superstition, you may think.  
But then why these boys and girls of Europe  
and America, why they have accepted Kṛṣṇa?"  
Even the Christian priest was amazed. He said,  
"These were our boys but they didn't care for God.  
Now they are mad after God."

I'm sitting in a corner listening  
fighting off demons of sleep, inattention,  
faultfinding—they bite me like fleas . . .  
I go on listening and  
pray to be his *śiṣya* always,  
and to preach like him, fresh and innocent  
strong as iron bars and soft as a rose,  
full of life—and, secret to us,  
his eternal *rasa*.

“What do you think?” he asks the professor  
and the man's reply is lame.  
No one can stand before him.  
That's how I feel, and it's a fact.  
I pray to worship and serve him always  
with heart in the right place.

## #36

You explained your success: "I never compromised  
with anything which is not spoken by Kṛṣṇa.  
Did you mark it or not?"  
I marked it, Śrīla Prabhupāda  
and now you are marking me.  
Please keep me despite my defects,  
please don't give up training me.

He lives in his books and in the  
memories of his disciples, Professor Rochford said.  
Some devotees dream of him.  
The GBC says even an uninitiated *bhakta*  
can dress the Prabhupāda *mūrti*.  
No one is stopping anyone from going to him  
in his room in Vṛndāvana except  
at 7 P.M. on the annual observance  
of his disappearance.  
And then it's senior devotees only  
(unless you can squeeze in somehow).  
I was there, holding the *ārati* flame,  
standing by his rose-covered bed,  
blowing the conch  
in the room packed with his devotees.

And so my dear master, you have gone  
to your *nitya-līlā*, leaving us here  
quarreling (thus proving personalism).  
Sometimes the leaders get together and declare,  
"Now we are cooperating as never before"  
while others say the leadership is uninspired.



Prabhupāda left in 1977.  
It was what Kṛṣṇa wanted.  
I am finding my way  
to serve you  
in separation.

## #37

The individual and collective memories  
of his disciples,  
I want them both.  
I must remember  
that he rubbed my back when he sent  
me to Boston.  
Years later I learned  
I was not a most favorite.  
We're all his favorites and anyone  
can rise up in the transcendental competition.  
Or better yet, don't compete, cooperate.

I need to know I was alone with him.  
He said and wrote things about me,  
didn't say of me "He's a first-class *guṇḍā*."  
But even the *guṇḍā* has a place in his heart.

Collective memories I need,  
Prabhupāda nectar is everybody's.  
I will live in any memory  
and make it my own.

It's not my fault that I favor  
Prabhupāda's statements that suit my way.  
When he talks of writers and  
how we should grow up and use our own  
initiative. I like his rose-soft,  
private expressions.

Don't kill the ants he says and  
he doesn't turn the girls away;  
he likes children, he remembers his  
childhood, he sits with me in the  
late-night plane terminal and when  
a kid with a toy goes by he says,  
"I used to have toys like that."

I'm guilty of not loving him.  
But I've stored up the memories.  
We live in them  
and in his books  
in his service,  
he leads us to eternal youthful Kṛṣṇa.

## #38

Prabhupāda's my father telling me what I  
must do. I don't want to be surly to this  
father. He really loves me and is  
very wise. He loves Kṛṣṇa  
and the Lord loves him dearly.  
Prabhupāda is my mother,  
makes *capātis* and *puris* better  
than peanut butter and jelly sandwiches,  
treats me tenderly,  
asks for my well-being, "Sats-var-oo?"

I am his affectionate child,  
selfish and wrong in many ways.  
Seems I can't be reformed.  
Always some lacking.  
I do some things well but  
the report card says, "Could do better."  
Prabhupāda is my teacher,  
mystical guru,  
inconceivable medium to  
all-attractive Kṛṣṇa in Goloka.

He has many concerns.  
I demand something just for me.  
I want him doting and sweet for all of us,  
like sitting around in his room at 26 2nd Avenue  
or Māyāpur in the frankincense smoke  
and talking of old days.



Prabhupāda has to wrestle with  
headstrong disciples,  
give advice to intelligent ones—  
those willing to sacrifice homeland and comforts.  
He imparts marching orders to them  
and at those times I lag behind waiting  
for the sweets.

He knows these deficiencies in me.  
He said, "Satsvarūpa is a perfect gentleman  
but he cannot manage."  
He knows me from way back  
and he has something for me to do.  
Maybe I could cook for him,  
re-learn the standard *śukta* prep,  
or maybe this poem.

## #39

Prabhupāda is moving toward the front gate  
of the Māyāpur campus surrounded  
by many *sannyāsīs* and other disciples.  
He is discoursing on his favorite theme—  
bashing the so-called scientific theory  
that life comes from matter.  
Pañcadraviḍa is playing coy.  
TKG is his right-hand man.  
We all want our place not only with  
Prabhupāda on the walk  
but in our zones of jurisdiction.  
He has given us some power.  
We think we've earned it.

He is a lion-tamer,  
sometimes a babysitter.  
He is also all alone on the front.  
He writes his books for the common man  
and for the Sanskrit scholar  
and for the practicing devotee  
and the already perfect devotee.  
He writes for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure.  
His Guru Mahārāja is proud of him.  
He gathers us and offers us  
to his spiritual master's mission.

In the distance the Bengali *gurukula* boys  
see him and shout, "Haribol!  
Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*" and sing  
their *Gītār-gaṇ*.  
He smiles and greets them, "Hare Kṛṣṇa!"

There are controversies brewing  
one about *gṛhasthas* and *sannyāsis*,  
one about *Siddha-svarūpa* in ISKCON.  
There's also a controversy in my own heart  
and even today I'm confused.  
Go on the walk with Prabhupāda,  
sit in his class, read his book.  
Don't hide from him.  
Be ready to face the truth  
and trust that he will honor your free will  
and approve of your desire to write something novel  
in *paramparā*. He's your friend.  
But he is master.

## #40

Prabhupāda, far away, coming close  
to let us preach.  
You know the life force of compassionate preaching.  
In this world it's better than contemplating  
Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on one's own.  
"Come out and preach," you say  
and if one answers, "I'm busy,  
I'm chanting and can't leave the *dhāma*,"  
you expose him as some kind of pretender.  
I want to be loved by you,  
so I try by the preacher's route.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
I have taken assignments.  
I write. I also speak lectures.  
I wander around, I read your books.  
Whenever I sit to eat, I'm always  
listening to your tapes.  
Won't you be with me  
birth after birth?  
Surely since  
Kṛṣṇa and the soul are eternal  
my link to you  
will not be broken by death.

Your servant tells  
how you get angry, how you smile.  
You sacrifice your health.



You sleep very little,  
you get up to write. When you write  
it lasts for centuries, clear and  
straight, your purports.  
I worship your picture, your name.  
I won't leave your movement.  
My link to you  
will not be broken by death.

## #41

His servants seem to know  
almost everything about him.  
Sometimes they speak when no one else is around.  
Prabhupāda told of his previous life  
according to an astrologer—he  
was a doctor who never committed sin . . .  
But his servant will be the first to admit  
although Prabhupāda shared very openly,  
treating his disciples like intimate friends,  
as if he liked nothing better than their company,  
even though they were neophytes—  
yet Prabhupāda lives alone with Kṛṣṇa  
and his Guru Mahārāja.

The first day he arrived in Māyāpur in 1976  
after the garlands  
and talk in his room, they left him,  
and Hari-śauri saw through the window  
Prabhupāda sitting upright, quiet,  
but sometimes speaking something,  
suspended for forty-five minutes.

Mostly he was with us but even then  
the depth and drive of his preaching  
couldn't be grasped. He pushed  
for the Lord, was gentle,  
was pure and wrote at least a little bit every day.  
When a disciple went to preach  
on his behalf, he was pleased  
and said, "This is life, preaching.  
All others are dead."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have read all the books about you  
and your books too. I am reading them again,  
searching for you in my own acts.

What more?

Give up my selfishness,  
cry to you for help.

In “*samsāra*” prayers  
I see you in every verse  
and you shine back to me  
from your picture.

## #42

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
you told Dr. Patel the guru's  
order is factual not a vague  
"feeling that whatever I do it's  
dedicated to Kṛṣṇa."  
Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna to kill the enemy.  
You tell us to distribute your books,  
chant sixteen rounds, four rules.  
Some orders are for all and some  
are vocational—for those  
who want to please you in  
a particular line.

Don't work without the guru's order.  
A news reporter in Delhi asked you,  
"Does a disciple ever disagree with  
a guru on a spiritual matter?" Your answer:  
"Not unless he's a fool!  
A damn fool!"

They have heard the guru has an eternal  
form, and of course that means he has  
a *rasa* in Vraja and he may  
also have an eternal *rasa* with  
Lord Caitanya in Navadvīpa.  
Maybe . . . don't speculate.

I follow you as I saw you and  
as I hear you.  
Please accept my service,  
poor as it is.



And if you ever give away another  
ring from your finger or something  
like that, I'd sure like to have  
an item to remember you by.  
But I already have, don't I?  
So much mercy and more every day.  
"If you want to know me,  
then read my books."

## #43

Each working for our master,  
now in separation.  
Where do we find you?  
Each in his own heart.  
I find you in those special purports  
when I am receptive or somehow  
I see it all clearly and my  
appreciation deepens as you  
tell us of Kṛṣṇa.

Right now I have no book,  
I'm in a rented room,  
about to leave for *sannyāsa*  
preaching. I can't quote you  
immediately but when I get  
a hold of your book . . .  
you said we should know it  
by memory not "my knowledge  
is in the book. I'll look it up."

Without your books,  
I think of your books.  
Without you answering my letters,  
I write them anyway and imagine  
your replies.  
Without love or knowledge of God,  
I depend on you completely.  
"That is theist," you said, faith  
in *Vedas*. It is not enough to say,  
"I believe in God."

Disciple of Prabhupāda is  
a tall order. Who claims it?  
Maybe I can say weak disciple.  
Anyway, disciple.  
Your *chela* ever since you  
took me  
in the old days.  
I'll still be your boy when  
I'm ancient-looking and  
when I'm a spiritual person  
I will know who I am,  
and you will give me service.

## #44

Prabhupāda, this morning I read  
your purport to *api cet su-durācāro*.  
I intended to read only the verse,  
wanted a *darsana* with Lord Kṛṣṇa.  
(Thought it would be more mystical and  
prayer-like to read only the verse.  
But I read your purport and I'm glad.)  
You've engaged the whole man, body,  
mind, intellect and soul. I want  
*darsana* of Kṛṣṇa through you.

You want us to keep our vision  
in Goloka but our feet on the ground—  
so we can answer people's questions  
subdue our own doubts.  
It's mystical too, the mercy of  
Lord Kṛṣṇa—when our intelligence  
stays fixed and we follow you  
in your purports.

As if for the first time I read  
about conditional and constitutional natures—  
and how Lord Kṛṣṇa forgives the devotee  
when he makes a mistake.  
Who would miss these words?  
“No one should take advantage  
of this verse and commit nonsense  
and think he is still a devotee.”



## #45

Prabhupāda, we're parked on the  
road, en route to New Māyāpur.  
You created these places—  
Māyāpur Chandrodaya Mandir in  
Navadvīpa and a castle in France.  
Places for devotees.  
In Avignon, South France, I  
lectured, "Where would we be  
without Prabhupāda?" And I asked,  
"What did we learn from Prabhupāda?"  
It was fun answering these.  
I said I had nothing new to tell  
them but together we disciples  
feel our gratitude  
for what you have given us.

You let me write. You let me  
read and speak a lecture. I  
want to serve, adjust my cause so  
it's service to you and Govinda, not  
my sense gratification.  
Here comes the sunrise, pink smudge  
at first, like in Vṛndāvana  
where there are cow dung fires.  
Dear Prabhupāda, you have protected  
us during the night. I rose at  
midnight and wrote. Now I feel  
confident. But I am just your  
little child.

## #46

Dear Prabhupāda, I'm in Normandy,  
France, in a campground  
wanting to think of you,  
wanting to be with you . . .

The Archives said they had hundreds of  
pictures of me with you so I asked  
for all of them, paid a pretty price.  
Now what shall I do with them?  
Look at me instead of you?  
Look at us both?  
Of course I was just a hanger-on  
in some of the pictures, just a  
peripheral figure in your *lilā*.



Don't knock it.

I was there and serving.

Śrīla Prabhupāda walks with his cane and still  
knocks the heads of the  
atheist scientists and I am ready  
to preach on his behalf in  
America and Europe.

Write for you now, my dear  
master. It's been fifty years since  
the Allies invaded Normandy.  
And soon a hundred years  
since your appearance in this world.

What are these little milestones?

Five thousand years since the start of Kali,  
unaccountable millennia and Kṛṣṇa  
is ever-fresh with His *pariṣad*  
in Goloka Vṛndāvana, my guru among them.

When can I go and join?

When will I give up the  
false ego and

serve for his pleasure only?



## #47

You said:

Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, follow the four rules,  
morning and evening classes attend,  
no frivolous sports or gambling.

That was 1966. You also said

I should keep my job at the welfare department,  
then go open a center in Boston

and stay there. Be on the GBC (1970),

yes I could become a *sannyāsi* ('72)

and then in '74 you called me to  
be your personal servant. So much  
for my curriculum vitae.

You—

I will read your books.

You have given us the prayers  
of Lord Śiva to Saṅkarṣaṇa praising the  
Supreme Lord's steadiness. And you gave  
us the unsteadiness of Lord Caitanya  
in ecstasy of Rādhārāṇī's feeling  
*vipralambha*.

You gave us all instructions and I don't want  
to think I have to go outside your books.

Please contain me.

Let my reading go into writing.

Give me a life in your service.



I want to be such a disciple that  
anyone who hears me or reads  
what I write can see it all  
comes from you, every line, or if  
I'm original, that's also  
surrender to you.

Murray Mednick teased  
me in 1966, "You're working  
for the Swami?" "Yes," I said. I wanted it  
to be clear to everyone and especially  
to you, that I am  
your boy or man.

Offer whatever little breakfast  
he brings in to Prabhupāda.  
Find a chink  
in the armor of your thoughtlessness,  
and slip in an earnest prayer—  
please Śrīla Prabhupāda, take the breakfast  
straight from Madhu and I.  
It's for you, your morning breakfast  
just as when you were in  
L.A. in January '74 and I brought it to you  
on a heavy silver plate.  
Please take it. I am ready to  
do your bidding and travel with you  
as your servant.

## #48

Ekalavya's fault was he wanted to become a great archer and he used his worship of guru to attain that selfish desire. The real disciple is submissive to the order of his spiritual master in essence, at once, even without the guru having to come to him and demand, "If you are actually my disciple then cut off your thumb."

I thought of these things in relation to myself. At first I was afraid that I am like Ekalavya, but then I consoled myself and said no, Śrīla Prabhupāda knows me as his bona fide, initiated disciple and I'm not motivated in a bad way. But still, it's a warning.

## #49

May I dedicate this to my spiritual master? Unless you please him you are nowhere. Only devotees can understand this. Those without a bona fide spiritual master will see it as some kind of oppression or false life.

I have a loving and sometimes stern spiritual master. He is expert and empowered by his spiritual master to spread the mercy of Lord Caitanya all over this world.

I am doing my best, I say,  
to serve him.

If my expressions are tired it's my fault. Śrīla Prabhupāda was strong up until his last breath; he said he prayed to Kṛṣṇa for enthusiasm, and the Lord gave it.

He is eternal, we are all eternal.

He has gone to his *nitya-līlā*.

We will all go somewhere.

It was a quick eleven years and the rest of life is recounting it and living out service in separation.

Separation is longer and more important than brief meeting. I want to live for him in my own way.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
I write this as rain pours down  
on our van roof. I'm dry  
under lamp light, we are about  
to leave this camping spot and head  
for the ferry to Ireland,  
a rendezvous for lots of writing.  
I pray you won't see me as a  
nonsense, or motivated like  
Ekalavya. I don't want to be a  
great writer. I write to please  
you by achieving an honest state.  
I do love it, but it's work,  
long and patient love like you gave  
to us in ISKCON.  
I don't want to write to please myself  
and just tag on "for Prabhupāda."  
But I've got to tell it honest.  
I'm trusting in your  
guidance.



## #50

Prabhupāda, I am in Wicklow. I went  
on a walk. I am your disciple.  
You know me. I heard they found a diary  
you kept from January to July 1966;  
it was a day-timer. They said I am mentioned  
as giving a donation. Maybe it was  
the \$400, my savings  
I was gonna use to go to some "green place"  
I had in mind, Canadian island where I thought  
I'd find peace and write for  
maybe six months before coming back  
to New York City.

Now by your grace I have  
as much of green places  
and writing as I desire.  
But the goal of devotional service is different—  
nothing is done for karmic gain  
or knowledge for its own sake  
without practical purpose.  
Practical means you love Kṛṣṇa  
and He is pleased with you.  
You do it by serving His servant.

## #51

I just read two poems in a book,  
*The Father* by Sharon Olds  
in which she tells how her father  
is dying and how she felt  
and how she thinks he felt.  
It reminded me that Prabhupāda passed away.  
If I were to go back to that  
it would take much effort and concentration.  
I don't want to dig up my shortcomings  
on such a painful subject.

I wasn't basically wrong.  
I sensed the end had come  
and knew we could serve you in separation.  
I was sure you would stay with us  
in *vāṇī*, and that I'd serve you.

But I fell so short  
of appropriate loving feelings.  
I remember your close servants.  
They get eternal credit, even if  
some of them went mad, and left your service.  
Probably they will never leave you  
and will remember you when they die.

I was a numbed stone.  
Went to my room in the Guesthouse  
tried to write a book on *varṇāśrama* to occupy  
myself and not think what was happening.

Actually I can't recall,  
don't want to. I prefer  
the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy that says,  
the pure soul goes on to *nitya-līlā*  
and his servants continue serving him.

And when each of his servants die,  
it won't be so horrible or painful  
because they will call to you  
and somehow they will join you.  
That's the scenario and it can work  
if we remain cool and pray for conviction.  
Until then I want to read your books  
in which you never pass away  
and in which I don't falter,  
your books, where Lord Kṛṣṇa  
creates the universes  
and plays in Vṛndāvana with His *pariṣad*.  
In those books we can go on hearing,  
guru and *śiṣya*  
and we don't need anything else.

## #52

Funny the ways of your disciples, Prabhupāda,  
spinning around without you yet always with you.  
Funny the ways we argue,  
the ways we cooperate but pursue our own ends.

You remain the center of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement  
in each of its schisms. One says, "They  
are not keeping Prabhupāda in the center."  
The other side says,  
"No it's *we* who *are* keeping him in the  
center. You are doing nothing but  
causing disruption."

Odd how I forget you and come back to you.  
Strange, we do things we wouldn't dare  
if you were here.  
But you wanted us to be on our own:  
*Go ahead, see*  
*how you can manage without me.*  
Kṛṣṇa wanted you back.  
Maybe we wanted to be controllers of your movement,  
to be "supreme" or at least top gurus.

So many mistakes and still  
you engage us and we are able to serve.  
"Don't try to see Kṛṣṇa. That is not such a  
great thing. You can see Him twenty-four hours a day.  
More important is to *do something*  
so that Kṛṣṇa will see you and be pleased."  
Prabhupāda is leading us with strong statements  
and policies  
into his presence.



## #53

Wherever I turn, Prabhupāda's wisdom.  
I find it mostly in a lack of wisdom  
the nondevotees speak and act.  
They don't even know the first lesson,  
"You are not this body."  
Prabhupāda called them for that—  
they don't know who they are yet  
they claim, I am scientist,  
I am poet, philosopher,  
I am president.  
He charged them all with rascaldom.  
We have to admit he's right.

Most people don't know you, Prabhupāda.  
They're occupied with leaders  
who don't know Kṛṣṇa.  
"Men who are like hogs, dogs, camels and asses,  
praise those men who never listen  
to the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa."  
It was Śukadeva Gosvāmī who called them hogs  
and Lord Kṛṣṇa's word is "mūḍhā."  
Prabhupāda said,  
"My way is easy, I just repeat  
like a parrot. I don't have to research  
like Dr. Frog. I can't compromise."  
That's my master. He's headlong  
further and further into Kṛṣṇa consciousness,  
daring anyone to stop him  
but no one can. No one can check  
Lord Caitanya's movement.

We are sad we couldn't keep up  
the expansion of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.  
If he were here he'd make us understand  
and feel full of hope.  
Take it he is here,  
and we can see it his way.

## #54

Your strong words, blasting  
the world's rascals,  
99% of the population.  
You do it with love as older brother.  
When scientists and professors visit you  
you tell them they are demons and  
they agree, "Yes, I am."  
"Because we can prove it to them," you say.

They say there is no God, we are all God.  
They say the cow has no soul.  
You can kill the child in the womb,  
it's all right. You don't have to  
worship Kṛṣṇa but the  
unborn impersonal within Kṛṣṇa.  
There is no next life, no transmigration.  
"All rascals and fools! They should  
not claim to be teachers! They have no knowledge!"

You say we should not simply praise  
our Guru Mahārāja. That is all right  
as domestic behavior, but better is  
to take up his work and preach.  
Do something to add to the mission  
of Lord Caitanya. At least  
keep yourself fit and alive  
by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra  
and acts of devotional service  
all day long.

Śrīla Prabhupāda will defend my right  
to make Prabhupāda poems.  
When a girl gave him an ornate bookmark  
he said, "How can I refuse their service?"  
But I should be humble  
about the smallness of my offering.

Never think Prabhupāda has left us.  
Encourage the others:  
I knew our spiritual master,  
stayed with him sometimes.  
If you like, I can tell Prabhupāda stories.



## #55

Sometimes I look at poems by nondevotees.

"What do you expect to find there?"

I guess it's the humanness

of Sharon Olds with her dying-of-cancer father.

The hard times and striving for native music

of Jimmy Santiago Baca who

believes in a god of Chicanos.

And the formal pieces of ancient China.

But you're right. They leave me

and I'm alone to praise you.

Best just to think of you as

unique in a line of gurus

in Brahmā-Gauḍīya Sampradāya.

You receive the *śakti* from Lord Caitanya.

But generic descriptions of guru

and even the statements of the singular greatness—

are not enough for me.

I look for something from the heart.

A bit of experience will suffice.

It's up to me to hear very submissively,

then any recounting will be good,

and they can accumulate.

You've said that you are giving us

ecstatic attraction to Kṛṣṇa.

"Or else why would you all come each day

to hear *Bhāgavatam*? You are

being purified."

To recall any of your words  
in the right mood  
is all that I require.

And to obey. You once said  
I was good at that.

You also said people leave their wealth to their pet dog  
and at death they will think of the dog:  
“They will become infected with his germs and  
become a dog in next life.” Then, Prabhupāda, you made  
a wonderful connection—“Think of Kṛṣṇa  
and at the time of death  
you will go to Kṛṣṇa.”  
I hear with faith and a spark,  
as if for the first time.

## #56

Prabhupāda, I was out talking about *japa*.  
At 10 A.M. I'll go to the schoolhouse  
and talk some more, about myself and  
about their rural project. Our  
opening topic is privacy and  
centralization versus decentralization.  
You, dear master, are in the background  
of all this. You are always the rest and the premise.  
We should see you more central and in  
the forefront, but . . . at least we always  
assume to follow you.  
Your word is authority.

Last night I dreamt I was part of your  
personal traveling party, along with Hari-śauri.  
You acknowledged me,  
I helped Hari-śauri who was having a problem.  
You were going somewhere and I ran after you.  
I left my *daṇḍa* behind so  
I went back to get it and got  
endlessly detained, as happens in dreams.  
One person after another advised me  
where to get a new *daṇḍa*  
and I never made it back to you.  
I felt grief of separation.  
Woke grateful for such a dream.

As I say, you are always in the background,  
like a brush fire that's ready to break out.  
You are always ready to acknowledge me  
if I can just get into the right dream or  
right action when awake.



## #57

Today I started a new practice  
called "Writing While Reading."  
I am giving more emphasis to reading  
*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*  
even at the sacrifice of writing time.  
Does it bring me closer  
to you, Prabhupāda?  
It is certainly a good thing when I  
stay with your prose of the Absolute.  
No one else in the world is saying what you say  
no matter how skillfully they write.  
The book blurb says of Sharon Olds,  
"Her radiance and daring . . .  
find their most powerful expression."  
But there's no Kṛṣṇa in her words,  
no knocking down all the nondevotees as *mūḍhas*,  
no exposé of all those who have no conviction  
about spirit soul and Supreme Lord.

So it's good for me to read your book.  
When my allotted time was up I wanted  
to read one more verse and purport.  
Exhausted, I waited for a second wind  
and it came and lifted me forward.  
It makes sense,  
Lord Kṛṣṇa is inconceivable. He is all energy  
but He is Himself in *sac-cid-ānanda* form.  
Unlike us He is never attracted to possessions.

He doesn't hanker to complete Himself by  
sex attraction. He is aloof but all-affectionate.  
He moves everywhere but no one sees Him,  
unless they have eyes of devotion for God.  
Only Kṛṣṇa consciousness will give us eternity and  
bliss.  
Why should I not sacrifice to stay with Him?  
Today I did it  
and so today is a good day.

## #58

We say those born in India are more fortunate because  
by birth they honor the guru.

But we *ex-mlecchas* are also fortunate.

We are completely dependent on Prabhupāda.

We can't claim to go on our own

straight to the *śāstra* and say

Raghunātha Gosvāmī is now my guru.

We know it's Prabhupāda

who picked us up and keeps us

in spiritual life.

I didn't love you enough and all that.

In your last days I didn't come close enough,

you know all that. I did hold your

foot and pat it with the white powder

your mother used on you when you were a boy.

I treasure and recite your

words all my life.

Nowadays I'm aware I'm failing in bolder acts.

I take solace that

I'm close to you in inward acts

like reading your books.

I am one of many many. What father

has so many sons and daughters? How can he

keep track of them?

I have a claim.  
I am mentioned in his day book  
for January—June, 1966.  
I gave a donation.  
I typed for him.

Say my name to him and I bet  
he remembers me.  
He'll call me to him and laugh a little.  
Then he'll get serious.  
I'll feel bad about the writing I've done  
just as I did that night he called me to him  
in Detroit at 10 P.M. and  
said, "Write another book."



## #59

Every day you have to come to Prabhupāda anew,  
the sound of his voice . . . you have to overcome  
thoughts that you've heard it all before  
and the ways you find fault with him.

Every day you manage.

He comes through to you  
by the force of his intelligent sayings,  
by the authority of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.  
It comes through in his conviction.

He's condemning all the *mūḍhas* . . .  
They don't know the soul in the body.  
And what else did he say?  
You find something he said,  
you read something he wrote,  
you agree to follow.  
He orders and you obey.  
Every day this happens.

He is in his pictures, yet not in them.  
In his lectures, for sure.  
Hari-śauri's diary gives us an accurate  
picture of living with him  
when he got onto the airplane  
and in answering the mail.  
He was annoyed, happy, looked tired,  
said something private and his servant noted it.

And now in this room,  
his picture over the desk, his joined palms,  
eyes closed and serene,  
saffron cotton *kūrta*,  
*tulasī* neck beads. That's our uniform too.

Every day every hour, Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
when I most seem to be alone  
when writing the Writing Session,  
you are with me then.  
I offer it to you.  
I'll be a good writer and  
knock down the nondevotees.  
I'll do it for you.

## #60

I've got hundreds of photos of Prabhupāda  
and supposedly I'm in each one.  
They are in no special order . . . 1973, 1971, 1977—  
mostly morning walks and I am  
one of the crowd.  
I went through them like a file clerk.  
There I am, there he is, there's  
someone else . . . Look at us all  
surrounding him on the beach.  
That's Europe,  
there's Bhagavān dāsa with long hair, Harṁsadūta . . .  
I look so young and handsome in this one.  
Oh, this one I should keep separate,  
he is looking at me.  
I'm wearing a swami hat,  
I'm holding the microphone,  
Prabhupāda has a special expression.

Then I get confused, nothing seems real . . .  
I go outside and as I unlock the gate  
I see myself as in those photos,  
young me and Prabhupāda walking.

But he is not here. I am alone.  
The young man is now old,  
walking alone on an Irish road.  
He is a writer who likes to live alone.

Where is his spiritual master?  
Who is more important, guru or disciple?  
How is it possible we can all be  
accommodated as intimate servants of Gurudeva?  
You might as well ask  
how can so many members of the Yadu dynasty  
live in Dvārakā?  
How can millions of *gopas* and *gopis* play with Him?  
He can do it.  
I walk and chant  
as he told me  
and do this writing  
to offer to him.



## #61

I didn't like to be with  
so many of his disciples.  
It was like a roller derby bumping up against  
them for a space beside him.  
I was jostling along with them,  
a little skinnier than most but  
I had my own weapons, somehow  
got a place beside him  
and did my work.

But after his disappearance many  
couldn't take it anymore.  
Why eat that crap?  
Some felt wounded  
or didn't have taste anymore for spiritual life.  
We were big disappointments  
and were ourselves disappointed.

There is a lot of talk about bringing all his  
disciples back together for his Centennial.  
That would be nice. But what does it mean?  
Can you bring him back  
for his Centennial?  
Will we go on a morning walk  
and cluster around him?  
I don't think that's possible.

I like to be here in Wicklow  
writing this and hearing him speak.  
It may be that I have fallen behind the pack  
and they are still walking with him. Maybe.  
But I think I'm doing as well as the rest.  
I think we are each bereft of our spiritual guide.

In the beginning he had to  
personally bring me to him.  
I'm going my own way, it's service to him  
in separation. If he wants me to  
be physically part of the pack  
he'll have to come back and put me in line.  
Otherwise I think I'm doing  
as well as they are.  
We are each bereft.  
And we have each found him  
in our own favorite way.  
At least that's how I feel.  
Prabhupāda is mine.

## #62

Sharon Olds wrote to her father after his death,  
“Dear Dad, I saw your double today  
through the curtain to First Class.”  
I never see anyone who reminds me of Prabhupāda  
except maybe his own disciples in saffron.  
Maybe an elderly *sādhū* in a Vṛndāvana lane,  
but that’s just external.  
I don’t expect to see him walking in the world.

Sharon Olds writes, “Isn’t it something  
the way I can’t get over you, this  
long, deep unearned desire . . .  
I guess I’m saying I hate you, too . . .”  
They say her book, *The Father*,  
“goes into areas of feeling and experience  
rarely entered in poetry.”  
I don’t ever hate you  
even if some demons in me  
would want me to feel that way.  
You are my light  
my way out of the cycle of birth and death.  
I’ve been reading about the hellish planets,  
how miserable it is to take birth  
to have to learn again, and how very rare it is  
to get out of this cycle. But you are my way.  
It’s easy following the feet of the pure devotee.



I have no doubt you are a qualified spiritual master.  
I am very lucky.  
I do love you.  
I just want you to accept me as I am  
but I can't take away your right.  
So we go together toward my death,  
me praying to always revere you and  
follow you to new revelations.





## #63

I've got the photos ready to travel,  
3 x 5 color prints.

The one on top shows me holding  
a red, tassled umbrella over you  
in the blue sky of Māyāpur morning.  
It looks like the rain has stopped.  
Ravindra-svarūpa is carrying a small video camera.  
Jayapatāka Swami is looking out to lands  
you might want him to buy.

I can tell this picture is 1974  
because of your bamboo walking cane.  
I'm concentrating to hold the umbrella  
steady and just right over your head.  
I'm wearing a Prabhupāda T-shirt  
which I usually don't wear.

You are striding, quickly,  
your mouth turned down,  
not speaking to us.  
We all gather around you  
because you are a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa.  
You have brought us to Lord Caitanya's land.

Another photo I picked even though  
I'm not much visible in it.  
I like the look on your face.  
Handsome profile, you looking up  
at an old castle in France,  
I can guess by the surroundings.

You traveled there by car,  
your *cādar* is wrinkled and *dhoti* too.  
You hold a small bouquet of roses.  
You look up appreciating some architecture  
with an innocent gaze, studying it,  
eyes shining, refined look.  
Even in such a candid, small moment  
I see you are a pure devotee of the Lord,  
engaged in His service. Maybe this castle  
could be used as a place of worship  
by your children  
and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa installed here.

## #64

I've got the photos to go through.  
But before looking at that facsimile,  
think of him within yourself.  
He's a writer,  
he's a sound that comes over the tape recorder.  
More than that:  
years of affectionate dealings,  
he always led us as a spiritual master should.  
"A spiritual master is expert in giving special  
instructions to each of his disciples,  
and if the disciples execute the order of  
the spiritual master, that is the way of his perfection."  
(*Bhāg.* 4.8.71, purport)

A garish print with too much sepia in it—  
but it's history: our *sannyāsa* initiation of 1972.  
Śrīla Prabhupāda on the *vyāsāsana*,  
looking like the *mūrtis* look now.  
We four *sannyāsis* all have grains  
in our right hands  
to throw into the fire.  
New *sannyāsi* clothes.

Prabhupāda I can't find what I want  
from these pictures. Please protect me.  
You have always kept us expertly  
and now I want nothing else.  
"The spiritual master is the external manifestation of  
the *caitya-guru*, or the spiritual master sitting  
in everyone's heart." (*Bhāg.* 4.8.44, purport)

## #65

So the photos aren't going to work for poems?  
Not so easy, not "poems, a penny each."  
Gaining Prabhupāda's love is not  
as simple as spelling C-A-T.  
I'm in the photo, an American boy in a swami hat.  
It's humorous how I took to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and  
*he gave me a daṇḍa.*

Sharon Olds could write a poem  
saying I hate you for giving me  
the *daṇḍa* and consigning me to a life  
of no more sex at 32 years old.  
But I think it was great and I thank you  
for getting me free from my wife.  
In one stroke you did it.  
You put me in league with saints.  
"There need be no anxiety over attaining perfection  
because if one follows the instructions given  
by the spiritual master he is sure  
to attain the perfection."  
(Bhāg. 4.8.71, purport)



## #66

Śrīla Prabhupāda, do I think I can  
automatically tune into you?  
We ISKCONites do it all the time.  
We end our phone calls,  
“All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.”  
“Jaya Prabhupāda” can be used to mean  
“Thank you for the loan of ten bucks”  
or it can mean “I don’t think much of you.”

Ways to be with him: stand and move before  
his *mūrti* during daily *guru-pūjā*,  
play a tape of his lecture,  
give money for the causes he recommended,  
chant Hare Kṛṣṇa with him in mind  
and especially be a preacher.  
“If you want to please me . . .”

It’s something you do anew each day.  
You go to him and ask, “Please be  
my spiritual master.” Prabhupāda agrees,  
you learn from him. You do some service.  
Each day is like the first time.  
I vaguely remember the time he  
saved lunch for me and put the plate on the  
floor and I bowed before him.  
My recall of the night he initiated me  
is dim.  
But today is fresh. I will refrain from  
harsh words and wishy-washy conclusions.

I will find him and  
accept him as my spiritual master,  
His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

## #67

I was in many, many photos with you . . .  
I sat before you young and fumbling.  
Took my place as a yajñic priest with your permission.  
I strode beside you through the corridor  
of Logan Airport with dozens of your beaming disciples  
escorting you to the departure gate.  
You are always venerable in these pictures,  
and the undisputed leader. Not “old”  
in any bad sense.

There's a photo of you on Juhu Beach  
where a gentleman blocks your path  
so he can touch your feet.  
You laugh and touch his head.

There is one picture where you look at me  
disgustedly.  
I thought of keeping it but put it back  
in the storage trunk.  
Maybe I had made some Māyāvādī  
argument and you were  
cutting it down, not that you were  
disgusted with me personally.  
I thought the picture might not be cheerful enough  
for when I will flip through them  
while traveling in our van.

It's not a small thing to have your spiritual master  
displeased with you,  
but it happens. Even Lord Brahmā  
displeased Lord Kṛṣṇa.  
Brahmā begged, "You know I'm Your servant  
so please overlook my arrogance.  
As the mother is not offended  
by the baby's moving in her womb.  
Please don't be angry with me,  
Your eternal offspring."

So many nice connections come to mind  
when I review these photos  
and so I want to keep them, even  
that disgusted one.  
If you were annoyed with me  
it was another sign of your love.



## #68

Looked at photos of him on  
Juhu Beach, no *kūrta*, stopping to  
talk with Bombayites who honor him as guru  
at least in the Hindu sense.

Me standing there also, no *kūrta*, thin,  
only 34 years old.

We believe we can  
go to be with Prabhupāda again.

We will have spiritual forms.

The way to perfection  
is by following him here and now.

I'm telling them to read his books.

Today we may see some imagined visit  
from you, Prabhupāda.

But mostly in your books.

You live in your instructions.

It's not something to be proved  
in the ordinary way:

Prabhupāda is with us without a doubt.

## #69

Prabhupāda is teaching the world  
what it has forgotten. That is, God.  
He wrote the purports but people  
don't read them.  
He challenged but they didn't take it.  
He walked the beach, in the park, and they could  
have come too but were too busy.  
Prabhupāda made what he taught sound simple—  
the body is the outer covering,  
there's a subtle body within that,  
and the spirit soul is the real mover.  
The supreme soul is Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda had a lot to say against the Māyāvādīs  
to people who didn't think it was relevant.  
They thought Prabhupāda was abstract  
whereas the problems of the world  
are real and multifarious.  
But he rejected that and said  
the one common disease is material identification  
and we all suffer from it.  
Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be cured.  
But they laughed. He knew they laughed.  
He was disgusted with them  
but didn't give up on them.  
A relatively few came to him,  
his boys and girls.

On them he lavished affection  
gave knowledge to stand strong  
and he chastised them too  
but that was also instruction, a sharp word  
to wake you up to the responsibility  
of being Kṛṣṇa's representative  
in this world.

Prabhupāda left his books  
and his followers, and he has gone.  
We still can't understand it.  
We are only trying to understand  
"I'm not this body. Kṛṣṇa's God."  
How can we expect to know  
where the pure devotee lives now?  
Don't bother about it he said,  
it will come in due course. Just  
try to serve Kṛṣṇa. Tell everyone you meet  
to please surrender to God.

Prabhupāda has left us  
plenty to do  
to get back to him.

## #70

While talking to a roomful of devotees yesterday  
I discovered  
that Śrīla Prabhupāda was a perfect psychologist.  
He assured us that we were fortunate and happy.  
We have given up sinful life and  
attained Kṛṣṇa consciousness  
so no one should be despondent.  
But Prabhupāda also made it clear  
we are not Vaiṣṇavas  
but servants of the Vaiṣṇavas.  
A pure devotee is very rare.  
He was expert and did it subtly  
so no one noticed how—  
giving us confidence and humility at the same time.  
And what he gave we accepted.

In arguing for Kṛṣṇa  
he'd take any side  
to prove the truth, to defeat the Lord's opponents.  
Prabhupāda said the devotees  
may call the nondevotees  
by ornamented names like *vimukta-māninas*,  
“those who think they have become liberated.”  
But Kṛṣṇa is superior and so he tells it plain,  
they are *mūḍhas*, asses.  
Prabhupāda did that too, like father and guru.



I'm remembering him  
and collecting my appreciations.  
He'd prefer to see me battling like him  
but if all I can do is discover  
some of his expert ways and admire them  
he will accept that too as a kind of service.  
But if you admire him, you really ought to preach.

## #71

This doesn't have to be printed but—  
Prabhupāda is mustard on a sandwich.  
Say something you mean.  
He talked in a way that could have put him into prison  
but Kṛṣṇa protected him.  
His Godbrothers didn't appreciate. We do.  
That's our qualification.  
He loved us and still does.

So I say mustard on a sandwich,  
the words just come to mind for something very strong.  
But he is also the nicest nectar.  
He is the father, the guru  
and he is all alone.  
We don't know his mind.

He sits at a low table and we mistakenly  
think we know all about him.  
He speaks the basic teachings to guests  
in the afternoon but we can't fathom  
the compassion that drives him to speak.  
And how is it that the inconceivable God of all  
has become his close friend?  
Surely he talks with Kṛṣṇa if anyone does  
because the Lord wants to give him ideas  
for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Maybe Kṛṣṇa tells him, "Prabhupāda,  
you already know what to do."

When they are together is it like  
*kṛṣṇa-līlā* in Vṛndāvana?

I don't know.

I just know I want to appreciate

his symbols on the page,

his walking stick,

his bare skin when he wears

no *kūrta*. And because of my false ego

I want him to spare me from his heavy frowns,

don't push my Americanism too far,

don't try to break my pride or

crush my artistism—in other words

please don't make me surrender!

He sees what a fool I am.

In a dream

he lets me take off his shoes.

## #72

A devotee sent me some black and white photos.  
One shows Prabhupāda in a room where he sits eyes  
closed in front of shelves where books  
and pamphlets or notebooks are stacked.  
The wall is bare, I don't know where.  
He wears garlands of big roses—some almost  
like cabbages—and marigolds.  
And his eyes are closed.  
He is in so many places, it's hard  
figuring out where he is  
in any particular picture.  
When he closed his eyes  
he could be anywhere,  
with Kṛṣṇa.

Here he is waiting for the plane  
that will take him from SF to NYC in April of 1967.  
He wears a buttoned shirt and  
under it a turtleneck jersey and  
over the shirt, a long piece of *khādi* as a shawl.  
Early days of ISKCON in America.  
His hand in a large beadbag.  
He's absorbed in the chanting  
and in what he has to do.  
He's apart from the airport waiting room  
and even from the disciples who surround him.  
He's lovable and our guru,  
but inviolable.



Another photo is a side view of his face  
and his right hand holding beads,  
maybe an initiation *yajña*.  
Here's one smiling, the day he left  
for New York City in '67.  
So many different moods in a day.  
I can't describe more . . .

He was very old in his 70s and then 80s.  
But not an old man. He's not a man  
at all, the pure devotee  
is pure representative of Kṛṣṇa  
and his body . . . is Prabhupāda.  
I look at his photos  
with an awakening of love.

## #73

Prabhupāda,  
I heard you talk this morning while I  
shaved my face and bathed and  
yes, as I sat on the toilet.  
You said that we need milk  
to understand God. Not too much,  
a pound or half a pound a day.  
Milk gives us the brain to understand  
transmigration of the soul.  
Kṛṣṇa is very fond of the cows,  
as in His picture in the temple.  
He is the patron of *brāhmaṇas* and cows.

I rewound the tape and took it out to play  
for Madhu, because I want him to give me  
milk every day and fear he may have some  
prejudice against it.  
He heard Prabhupāda's words  
and we agreed.  
I said some people speak against milk  
purchased from stores. They say it's supporting  
cow slaughter. But Prabhupāda took it.  
He wanted people to drink milk and then  
when they were convinced it was good  
they'd stop killing cows.  
He said, "Take her blood as milk but don't kill her."

"Just that one reason is enough," said Madhu,  
"Prabhupāda did it."  
Yes, that one word.

Will the world come to accept him widely?  
Will we see it in our lifetime?  
They say the Centennial will help  
but maybe it's too early.  
ISKCON has to get itself together first  
before we can hope to unite the world.  
Let's appreciate everyone's efforts for Prabhupāda,  
at least appreciate Satsvarūpa  
and give him a cup of hot milk daily.  
Prabhupāda took it—at night with sugar.  
I served him milk in a silver cup.

He will always be dear to Kṛṣṇa  
and to intelligent people on this earth.  
As *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says,  
only those who are intelligent  
can practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness.  
And they will love Śrīla Prabhupāda.

## #74

They have written their non-Prabhupāda poems  
by the hundreds and thousands.

Now it's time we spoke out.

Tell them how nice he looks when he smiles,  
show them a photo of him on the roof in Bombay.

But they won't appreciate, most people.

Then start with myself. I worship him within,  
as I close my eyes,  
he's the same Prabhupāda as in the photo but . . .  
I'm praying that he retain me.

It's good to have his photos in frames  
on the walls. In this room  
where I'm a guest, I looked up yesterday  
while laughing at one of my jokes,  
then I saw him  
with his palms joined, in a mood  
different than mine.

It calmed me down, it tested me.  
Prabhupāda in the picture, Prabhupāda within,  
as the life-sized *mūrti*, as his disciples . . .

He was born a hundred years ago.  
He is a youthful, spiritual person.  
He's moving blissfully in Kṛṣṇa's service.  
As mysterious as Kṛṣṇa is to us,  
so is His pure devotee . . .  
And one time he said . . .



## #75

I remember one time in Boston,  
Hamsadūta said to Prabhupāda,  
“Whatever I have is yours.”  
And Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “That I know.”  
They were referring to beadbags  
but it also refers to the life  
a disciple gives to his guru  
and the guru expects it.

The guru is surrendered to the Lord  
and to his own guru.  
We are expected to do nothing less.  
Prabhupāda was saying, in effect,  
“What’s mine is yours and what’s yours is mine,  
that I know.  
But what else shall you do for Kṛṣṇa?”  
Always asking more,  
so that we can be delighted as he is  
in pleasing Kṛṣṇa’s senses.  
How to do it?

He says we should work  
for the benefit of others.  
Whatever you have received from him  
you should try to give it to others.  
That is what Prabhupāda is about—love for Kṛṣṇa  
and compassion for all souls.  
Give them Kṛṣṇa consciousness.  
At least try to think of ways to do it  
and give it to some,  
at least some.

Police crimes, war crimes, rebels' crimes,  
Prabhupāda sees through them all.  
Everyone is in ignorance.  
"These things will go their own way."  
Māyā is punishing them,  
you can't interfere.  
But you can work to save them.  
It's like the whole population is crushed  
under houses in an earthquake  
or buried half alive in a collapsed coal mine.  
He sees this all the time, whereas others see  
boys and girls enjoying in a town square,  
or a businessman eating a steak on the airplane.

He sees  
death camps in the suburbs and skyscrapers,  
ignorance in all books.  
No wonder he looks grave  
and his mouth corners turn down.  
But he is happy and generous.  
He drives his aging body to travel  
to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness although it's not easy.  
He did the most significant act of anyone  
in the 20th century and  
the world has yet to recognize it.

## #76

Prabhupāda wishes me well in any honest venture to be Kṛṣṇa conscious.

I say "preach" and "spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness" so many times!

I get sick of it inside when

I say it only because I am supposed to.

But I actually want to preach.

My spiritual master writes,

"Spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness" in his books

and when he says it

it doesn't rub me the wrong way.

He explains why

a compassionate person wants to help others.

If you see someone about to fall off a roof,

you call out to them even if

they become annoyed that you stopped their fun.

Prabhupāda did it and said,

"Do as I am doing."

It's the best way to worship.

Kṛṣṇa did it Himself in the form

of Lord Caitanya, traveled six years continually

distributing fruits of love of Godhead.

He said, "How many arms do I have to

give out all these fruits? Come, please

help Me taste them and give them away."

In any photo of Prabhupāda, he is actually  
preaching. At a festival in  
Balboa Park, on a chair in a householders's  
flat in Calcutta,  
in someone's business office,  
sitting outdoors beside a Citroen  
eating lunch on a cardboard box  
en route to go see an old castle for sale—  
he is always preaching and worshipping  
in this world and the next.  
Want to be with him?  
Take up his order, tell whomever you meet  
please chant Hare Kṛṣṇa,  
Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme  
Personality of Godhead.



## #77

Just say, "I am your devotee  
and I like the way you rule.  
I surrender to you and your  
teachings. I admire disciples of yours who have  
deep attachment for you. When I see it—  
and it's not always easy to detect because  
some show off devotion—  
I'm very attached to it.  
I want to come close to it.  
I want it for myself."

Go on reciting his twenty-six qualities,  
how he invited you to participate in 1966 *kirtanas*.  
Tell of the collection basket in which he  
collected about \$6 an evening and how  
you sat with him one night and counted it and  
he said, "This is Lakṣmī-devī" and  
placed his head to the basket.  
And you sat up late in his room typing  
while he ate his night snack of puffed rice.  
You escorted him to Chambers Street  
to see the immigration lawyer.  
He gave you the courage to instantly give up  
grass (marijuana) as soon as you met him.  
He sent you to Boston with a rub on your back,  
he hauled you in, reeled you in  
again and again. He let you write poems even  
back then and said they were good.

You made foolish arguments  
on behalf of the materialists to fuel  
his arguments on morning walks.  
He accepted your company.  
He has left you his purports and you are studying  
them.  
He has left you a great challenge—  
to live every moment in dedication to Kṛṣṇa.  
You misunderstood, failed to appreciate  
but it's not too late.  
Here he is again, with the Lord in your heart  
Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa  
calling you,  
“Satsvarūpa—you are Satsvarūpa *dāsa*—  
come on, do it right.  
Don't get left behind.”

## #78

Here's a sepia picture of Prabhupāda  
in his kitchen at Rādhā-Dāmodara.  
We imagine how it was  
before he came to America.  
The light coming in the window is from  
Rūpa Gosvāmī's *samādhi*.  
Prabhupāda said he was comfortable in those two rooms,  
living in Vṛndāvana with no cares.  
But Kṛṣṇa dictated, "Come out"  
so he went to America  
to give us Kṛṣṇa consciousness.  
Then back to Vṛndāvana to build a  
beautiful *mandira* and guesthouse and  
establish the spirit of worship and service.

In this photo Prabhupāda  
has returned to Vṛndāvana.  
He's sitting on a straw mat on the floor.  
His right hand is grasping the *prasādam*  
from his plate. He is wearing a sweater  
and staring intently out the window  
which is flooded with light.

What is he thinking? What new order is coming from  
his gurus who live in their *samādhis*?  
Where shall Prabhupāda go next  
to perform what task? Maybe he is telling them,  
"Although I made some success in America  
only a few have come  
and only time will tell whether they  
succumb again to sex and drugs."

“No, you did right. You established the  
seed and plant of *bhakti* in the West  
and gave new birth for India also. . . .  
There is always more to do,  
Lord Caitanya wants this.”

Of course this is only my daydream  
of Prabhupāda's thoughts  
and the replies of the Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.  
It's my way of looking into his room  
when he is absorbed in ecstasy and  
I'm hoping to grab a little mercy  
to carry on my service.



## #79

Prabhupāda, pick me up,  
Prabhupāda, let me serve you,  
please let me do something nice for you  
like improve my chanting and  
bring some people to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness  
movement. Let me help some devotees  
to find their way.  
You expect something  
from an old student of yours.

Prabhupāda, I love you.  
You said you were an old man,  
you said old age makes the body ugly  
but we see your body as spiritual.  
Prabhupāda, I could fall down  
so I pray that won't happen.  
Let me be near you.

Prabhupāda, I am a tape recorder for you.  
You said, "I write  
all the articles in *Back to Godhead*  
but we divide up the names,  
like Satsvarūpa, Hayagrīva, Dāmodara and Rāyarāma."

I cut my hair for you, wear this saffron *dhoti*,  
I want to go on pilgrimage,  
I want to serve you here and now  
in writing.

I read your books and underline sections  
that strike me,  
lines that assure me or challenge me  
and then I share them with your devotees.

Prabhupāda, you are my father, and the father  
of all your devotees.

I will go now and hear you.

I have a van full of your tapes and books.

I dig into them.

They are my sustenance. I have been looking  
at your photos.

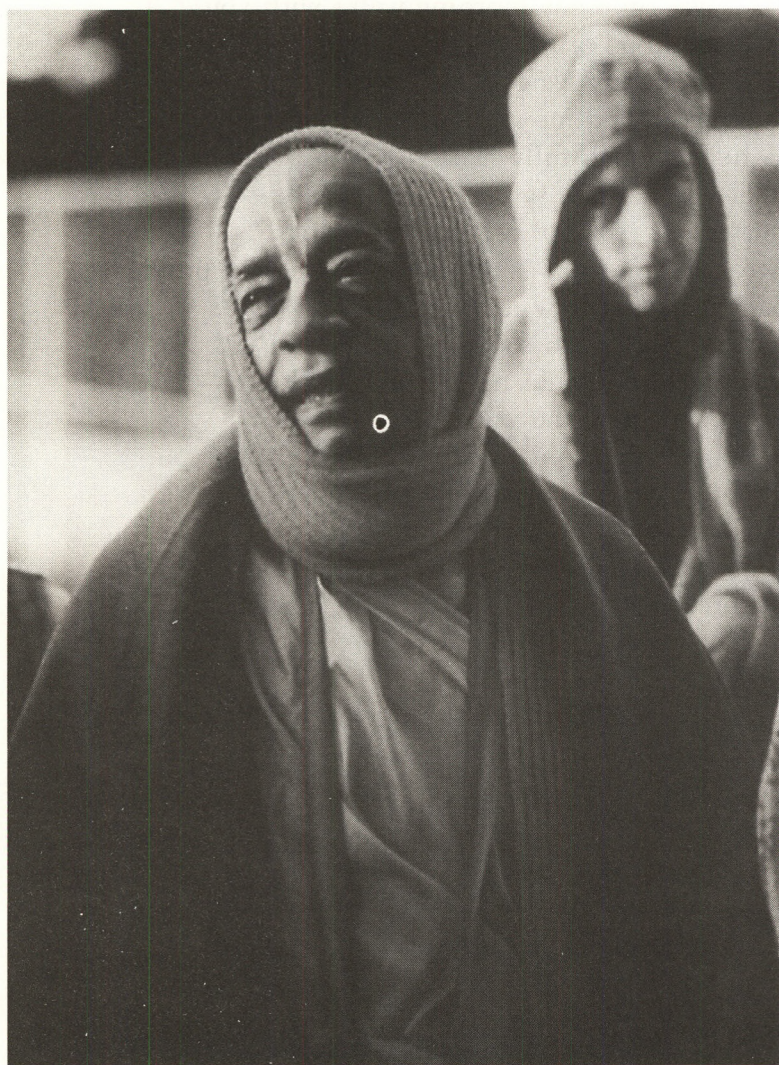
Prabhupāda, please tell me what to do  
if you think I can hear.

## #80

Yes I was on many morning walks with you  
and I'm proud of it.  
I like to see my *śikhā*-tousled head  
sticking up and me gliding behind you,  
to hear thoughtfully  
what you have to say.  
I listened best on those morning walks.  
At other times I was plagued with mental problems.  
But no matter how restless I was—  
wanting service in separation from you,  
disliking the menial nature of what I had—  
I never disliked the walks.  
There was pure philosophy streaming from you.  
The debate with Māyāvādīs and scientists,  
the joy of walking with you and  
how you kept the conversation  
so pure, preaching,  
and the clothes you wore too—

Lightweight garlands of frangipani in Hawaii,  
a soft wool shawl,  
your saffron wool *cādar* over that,  
most handsome and stately.  
“Good morning!” you said to passersby.  
Little did they know who you were.  
We shared at least a little  
the secret you carried.







I'm looking at those photos today  
and feeling comforted.

Your hand in your beadbag,  
your face turned back and smiling to a disciple . . .  
if I try to get too much out of it  
the photo will vanish.  
I'll try not to be greedy.

You exist in many dimensions,  
not just in a piece of glossy Kodak paper.  
But it aroused my devotion to see your image.  
I don't want to miss you.  
Please take me on the walk.  
Please talk or be silent as you wish,  
please walk with your disciples,  
and make us Kṛṣṇa conscious.

## #81

My Prabhupāda.

Don't be smug about it as if you  
own him to give Prabhupāda seminars  
all year during 1996.

Yet I may say "my Prabhupāda."

So can everyone who follows him.

We all have a monopoly on his love.

Prabhupāda writes, "Anyone engaged in the service of  
the Lord

is spiritually very dear to Him. . . .

It is not that Lord Brahmā is considered  
very great while an ordinary human being  
trying to preach the glories of the Lord  
is considered very low."

Gather his sayings from purports and letters  
conversations and memoirs and  
tapes and books and looks from photos and films,  
from worship hours in temples,  
form your own opinion, serve him . . .

Your own Prabhupāda.

Some are more dear to him than I,  
that's all right, they deserve it.

But, *ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram!*

I too have a place as an atom  
at his lotus feet. No one can deny it.

Even Prabhupāda will not deny it.

He has given it once and will  
never take it back. And I will  
never relinquish that hope.

Here he is talking to me.  
It looks like that. He has a beard stubble,  
he's tough-minded, super-intelligent  
about the world as well as the spirit.  
I'm looking down. Did I say  
something foolish?  
He was superior to me and  
that sometimes rankled me.  
He really put you on the spot and made  
you surrender to Kṛṣṇa—give up  
your nonsense concoctions  
and pride in your own achievements.

My head is covered with a sweatshirt hood,  
and I'm looking down, mouth pursed,  
and he seems to be looking at me!  
He's asking me or checking me out,  
testing me. Or maybe just asking  
whether I bought the airline tickets.  
No I think it was before then, because  
Rūpānuga is a *sannyāsi* in the same picture.  
What's he saying to me? He looks  
so neat, the *sannyāsi* top piece is  
elegantly folded over his right shoulder,  
he wears a soft sweater, a *cādar* folded  
narrowly and slung over the left shoulder.  
He's like a military general and very alert.  
He's paused, it appears, in his walk  
and looking at this one fellow.

I worship that moment now  
with satisfaction to know  
I took some attention from him  
which we all hanker for . . .  
Now may I serve him worthily  
in separation.  
Prabhupāda, I feel good,  
much enthusiasm still.  
Let me write up a storm for your mission.  
Please accept it,  
dear master, as you accepted me  
that moment on the walk,  
within your entourage.



## #82

Prabhupāda's morning walks,  
see them from a distance now.  
Here they come. He is in the center,  
leading the pack.  
Without him there is no unity like that.  
We walk alone remembering him.  
Or do we walk together forgetting him?

I know it's not so bad. Prabhupāda is  
still with us. It could be a lot worse.  
Maybe it's even better now?  
Look at this group from Māyāpur circa 1973.  
They are eight abreast on the main road and  
out of first row five fell down hard,  
left the Swami, disowned Kṛṣṇa consciousness  
and three others "changed āśramas"  
from *sannyāsi* to householder.

So is it good that the truth has come out?  
But you see, he held us together.  
I want to see Prabhupāda  
but when I look at the photos  
he's always surrounded by men  
and many of them have left.  
So you get this strange impression  
when you look at his pictures,  
that something went wrong—  
suicides, bloop, betrayals.

Those who left, if you ask them,  
they have their own version—they say,  
“We were driven away, mistreated, victims.”  
No one has a bad word to say about Prabhupāda  
but plenty to say about each other.

Here they come down the road now called  
Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg.  
I can’t help it, I’m overwhelmed  
by the Godbrothers  
and the things we used to say to one another.  
I was lucky to get through it  
but not unscathed . . .

The main thing has to be that Prabhupāda  
was with us, and taught us and each one,  
no matter what has happened since then,  
has the impression in his heart  
that “I met the pure devotee, I heard  
from him with faith. I was sincere.”  
Surely that’s the main point  
not to be confused with  
confusing emotions  
when you look now at the pack of  
men surrounding him twenty years ago.  
He shines out pure and unaltered:  
“Kṛṣṇa is everything,” he said,  
“and we must surrender to Him.  
The purpose of life is to serve and  
go back to Godhead.”

## #83

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
everybody's spiritual master,  
I've got another book in the works.  
I hope you'll like it.  
I walked on the Irish road this morning  
chanting *japa* and thinking of my writings.  
Things are different than when you  
were here. I'd never dare do this.  
Neither would the others dare.  
We've got you still,  
to rule over us.

Dear spiritual master, I shouldn't be the one  
to write. I don't have the latest  
news from Russian ISKCON centers.  
I am not the Padayātrā chief or  
chief of ISKCON's news bureau  
or even a *pūjārī* to tell you that  
Rādhā-Gokulānanda are happy.  
I'm sure they all communicate with you  
through the heart.  
I've got this typewriter  
and a yen to put out words  
and direct them to you.  
Not even clever . . . oh, well,  
I'll never leave you.

Here they come on the walk,  
there they go . . . now he's in the lecture hall,  
now he's in his room  
alone with Hari-sauri.  
I'm wishing I were somewhere else.  
I used to think America was home,  
but now, Swamiji, I'm wandering.  
At least I know you are the polestar  
and I am your orbiter.  
I hope it won't be long when  
you recognize me and call me  
in close to get your orders.  
Then, feeling quite fixed up  
I'll sail off on your mission.  
Even now I'm doing that,  
as I hear you speak.



## #84

In this 1971 photo, Prabhupāda is right at the departure gate, American Airlines, Boston to New York.

He's sitting on a pillow on the floor and we are all sitting close. I'm singing and playing *karatālas*. His secretary, Śyāmasundara, is poised by the door with briefcase. Rūpānūga is carrying a three-tiered tiffin, tensed, waiting for the boarding announcement. The Boston *brahmacārinis* all wear one-colored *sāris*, the top piece over their heads. Patita-uddharana is facing Prabhupāda eccentrically, with his eyes closed.

I stayed behind, would not go to New York. It was so rare to see Prabhupāda. We had waited years. He had been to India, Moscow, Paris . . . why not go with the others to New York and get as much of his association as possible? Because I thought I ought to stay with the newly initiated shaved-up *bhaktas* in Boston. They couldn't go to New York so why shouldn't I stay with them? That was my duty. I'm not sure it was right but as I look at this photo I'm sure glad Prabhupāda did come to Boston and that we stayed with him right up to the departure gate and that the inspiration came—I think it began with Suhotra— and we started chanting and Prabhupāda smiled . . .

I'm sure glad they photoed it  
so that I will not forget I chanted  
with my spiritual father, sitting on  
the floor.

There's so much bliss  
I don't want to let it go . . .  
"Flight 388 is now departing."

## #85

Prayer to our master:

Who can make so many *bhaktas* and *bhaktins*  
but one sent personally by Lord Caitanya?

I read in your purport, master,  
that the enmity between the *ācārya* and the parents  
of young devotees has been going on for  
a long, long time. It happened to Nārada when  
he stole the Haryāśvas from their materialistic dad.  
You wrote of this  
and told us not to be afraid of  
those who come as enemies. Kṛṣṇa  
will protect us.

Prabhupāda, yesterday they asked me again  
about following the eternal resident of Vṛndāvana.  
How will we know who he is?

Is it Prabhupāda? Yes, sure, I said.

Either you consider him as  
a very elderly *sannyāsi* coming from Vṛndāvana  
as Swamiji in New York  
or you consider his eternal *rasa*  
in which he's a *Vrajavāsi*—  
if you fix yourself in service to him,  
you are following the eternal resident of Vṛndāvana  
and that's the quickest way to qualify to go there.  
After your death you join Kṛṣṇa  
in His road show and get introduced  
to your service and Prabhupāda  
is involved in this. Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
is that explanation all right?

I know there are plenty of details that I left out  
but the most basic thing is that  
Prabhupāda will lead us.



## #86

We live here until we die and  
we can always remember those eleven years.  
Think of you sitting in a rocking chair  
in the Dallas backyard, one of many places  
you traveled,  
eighty years old, Mississippi farm  
walking through the grass.

You pause on the walk, you turn to  
me, I smile. You put me on the spot.  
You are certainly a powerful spiritual father.  
Now you turn away from me  
and gaze fondly at my Godbrother.  
No one of us owned you,  
you gave to each of us, even though  
you saw how devious  
and quarrelsome we could be.  
And you bravely lectured  
in the rowdy Paris theater.

We can always remember  
from those eleven years,  
especially what you said. It stays with us.

## #87

You can be sure he won't reject you.  
That's an important thing.  
At worst he may hold up my books—  
say they are stacked on his desk  
and say, "This is a waste of time."  
But he wouldn't say that.  
Some of them are good.  
But say he said it, and then he says,  
"Now go and work with Brahmānanda,"  
or something impossible like that  
and I say, "Yes Prabhupāda" and I go out of the room  
and at least try it.

Then later in the day he sees me  
and revises something. "The books are  
not all so bad." He might name one he liked.  
And he says, "What about you and Brahmānanda?"  
I say, "It doesn't look like it will work."  
So he says, "All right try this.  
This is also something I want.  
Since you like to write, why not  
write a book . . ."  
He tells me something I can get into,  
a direct order.

These are fantasies but I think  
I am all right with him.

If I take a walk without him,  
it's not without him.

The book *Japa Walks*, *Japa Talks* is also for him  
and the crazy free-write is written  
with worry that he may not approve.  
Daring means you take a chance  
he may not like something you do.  
But it's always in relation to him,  
your bad thoughts and good thoughts.

Steve Kowit said, "Can't you ever do  
a single thing that Prabhupāda doesn't approve?"  
I say to myself, "Yes, I could do it,"  
and I do it all the time.  
But I don't want to die a rascal.

I read how Indra disrespected  
his guru and grew weak.  
Prabhupāda says the guru should never be disrespected.  
Bow down to him every day  
whenever you see him.  
I like that.  
I like the Prabhupāda *mūrti*.

Say I went into his room and he has  
a stack of five volumes of *Prabhupāda Meditations*.  
He says, "From the looks of these books  
you seem to be always thinking  
of your spiritual master. Now  
go bring me some lunch."

## #88

Dear Prabhupāda, this is the time  
when I praise you.  
Only now? Also on the prow of the ferry boat.  
On the walk I praised *harināma*.  
But how could I have the gall  
or why would anyone want to hear me talking  
about *japa*? It doesn't make any sense, me  
the atheist from Brooklyn College.  
So it's praise to you  
that I walk as a *sādhū*.

I always make mistakes.  
I think I'm being humble when I'm proud.  
And you are there to correct me,  
"Don't say you are a Vaiṣṇava but a servant of.  
You are aspiring to be a servant of Vaiṣṇavas."

You turned in my direction.  
I came forward carrying my *daṇḍa*.  
I'm glad you recruited me into this army  
of saffron men. You gave me the  
inspiration to move with your  
biggest servants and preachers.

Prabhupāda, you look dainty and  
like a prime minister who can decide  
whether to release nuclear weapons;  
you send young men to the battlefield.



Your right hand is turned down and one finger  
extends down the walking cane,  
your left hand, palm turned up, holds a flower.  
A gray wool scarf is wrapped around your neck.  
Your stride looks like a dancer's  
and you turn back in my direction.  
I inch forward  
to hear you.  
The more I think of it—  
you gave me everything good.  
Out of fear I think I can't own up to it  
but when I look at you it's possible again.

## #89

You say the world has to be divided  
into four orders . . . the sun is the center  
of all power in the universe.

In the same way Kṛṣṇa is giving out  
light and heat. I forget what you say,  
find your voice rough  
unless I'm strong and receptive.

I keep hearing  
and beneath my squeamishness  
I take in and believe whatever you say.  
This is not the way I would actually talk to you.  
It's my mind talking, fighting  
for my love for you.

Let me see another picture of you,  
let me read you in the right time of day  
and it will come rushing back.  
When I prepare a lecture it's completely lined  
with quotes from you. Who can say  
I am not your representative?  
I say I'm not sometimes and so do envious people.  
The fact is you are the ruling guru.  
Hundreds surround you outside  
the ISKCON building in Evanston, Illinois.  
You look down not impressed  
and not enjoying being the center.  
And when the governor speaks at the opening  
of Krishna-Balaram Mandir, you calculate  
what's in it for Kṛṣṇa.  
You like it when we read your books.

## #90

"I am so strong,"

Prabhupāda says. "I kick on their faces!"

He's talking about the Māyāvādīs.

Dr. Patel is disturbed to hear it.

"You are a guru," the doctor says, meaning  
he wants to protest but he doesn't dare.

He mumbles a defense

of faith in Māyāvādī leaders

and Prabhupāda comes on stronger,

"I have to speak the truth

it doesn't matter if you don't like it."

A little later down the beach

Dr. Patel tries again:

Ramakrishna was a saint.

"He worshiped Kālī," Prabhupāda replied,

"and claimed to have become God.

But in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says

that if one worships a demigod

his intelligence is gone. How

can such a person become God?"

The doctor can't accept it,

he sees them all as saints.

"This mentality has ruined India,"

Prabhupāda says.

We listen, we agree.

Even to this day and until we die

we will never accept the Māyāvādīs.

He was so strong.

## #91

He lives forever.  
He is somewhere with Kṛṣṇa.  
We are living on his orders.  
We offer him food.  
He will accept it if we do it nicely  
the way he accepted when he was here in the 1970s.

In the same way, put the plate there  
and I'm glad to say that's  
all I have to do.  
The mystery of how it gets offered  
to Lord Kṛṣṇa and turned into divine remnants—  
it's all taken care of just by cooking  
and offering to our Guru Mahārāja.

I don't do it nicely, but  
still, my whole day is more or less  
in his service. Dressed and looking  
and talking like him, I can't claim  
I'm thinking like him . . . but  
I do try to dovetail all this.  
I am a candidate like those musicians on the Bowery,  
who came in 1966,  
to whom he said,  
"Just offer your music and poems to Kṛṣṇa.  
Is it difficult? You don't have to change anything.  
Even if you don't do anything else  
but come here and chant and hear and take *prasādam*  
you become perfect."



I'm not bragging that after thirty years  
of discipleship  
I'm like an uninitiated hippie  
on the Lower East Side.  
But I am counting on his  
liberal essence.  
And the truth of his preaching—  
that we dovetail our consciousness with the Supreme  
and just do what we would do anyway,  
make some poem or song  
but do it for the Supreme.  
God is Kṛṣṇa and the Swami is our guru.  
I can't help but count on that.

## #92

I heard the beginning of Prabhupāda's  
"Varṇāśrama College Talks,"  
on a morning walk, Vṛndāvana 1974.  
Devotees are still discussing what he wanted.  
He had a clear vision and threw out lots  
of ideas like sparks. Now see what you  
can manage.  
There should be a college  
and they can teach *āśramas*, *brāhmaṇa*,  
*kṣatriya*—who will learn how to kill—  
*vaiśyas* will protect cows  
and *śūdras* will go to school to learn  
obedience.

It should be a boarding school.  
Hṛdayānanda Mahārāja asked the most questions  
because he was actually interested in doing it.  
Prabhupāda had much to say, not just  
a curriculum from a dean of studies—  
he said the Western world has no philosophers  
and so Freud becomes a philosopher.  
"Don't mind" (that he is lambasting Western culture),  
"but they're all no better than animals."

I want to hear you and appreciate,  
that's my main business.  
I can tell others what you said,  
Prabhupāda, because I took the time  
to hear it clearly.

Maybe I can be a teacher of Prabhupāda-kathā  
in the *varṇāśrama* college.  
Tell them, "Just remember that he spoke  
all this in Vṛndāvana, while walking.  
He wanted us to start a new chapter  
of human life in the Western world.  
He called us all *mlecchas*,  
but said we could be reclaimed."  
I want to go hear some more  
and tell what he said.

## #93

All those young men clustered around him  
on the walks. It's simple—  
they all love him.  
He makes them feel good.  
Some of them are tough guys,  
almost all were drug-takers  
who want to be clean  
and transcendental and . . . like Prabhupāda  
at least in some small way.

You could say they want power  
in his movement  
but that came later.  
First came attraction for him  
and that cannot be denied.  
That will save us.

Now go back to that simple attraction,  
examine it and build on it.  
Forget the mistakes—at least  
don't repeat them.  
Be humble and like you were  
when you first saw him:  
you knew you were in sin,  
and you knew he saw it and forgave you.  
He carried Kṛṣṇa.



He teaches the mantra,  
he gives out good food,  
his books are a little hard to swallow at first  
but when you get past your prejudices  
(that's what he called them, Western prejudices)  
you find it clear and you are  
as good as someone born in India.  
He says you are even better than a Hindu.  
You are Kṛṣṇa conscious,  
you can be reclaimed.  
Give up illicit sex and marijuana  
give up being a tough guy.  
It's not easy but it is easy.

Just go see him and hear and  
go back to simple truths:  
he's your guru,  
you wanted a guru,  
so God sent him.  
Now you have nothing else to do  
but serve him with your whole life.

## #94

Last night was euphoric. I couldn't stop looking at photos of Prabhupāda until it was bedtime. Then in the dark I saw them still, and me with him as a younger man. Finally I fell asleep and didn't wake up until hours later. I remembered it again and reached for them. One album is labeled "Brag Book," for keeping photos of your children, wife, the house, the fish you caught . . . I brag to have such a spiritual master. Here's a picture of him sitting outside a sleek Citroen in France, eating his lunch, and that's me in the background. I was his servant.

Here's a picture of him entering the old L.A. temple. He's wearing dark peach-colored socks and a rust-colored sweater. That's me behind him with the same colored socks. I could go on like this, looking at the old prints, wondering what happened to so-and-so. But I have more serious things to do, like getting ready for breakfast and I have assigned myself to write some lines on him each day. Okay, but don't put down photo-watching. I'm living in the world and I look at the pictures. Prabhupāda is with us.

Brag Book: there I am taking *sannyāsa*. See the pretty girls when they were 21 years old. That's Prabhupāda on the *vyāsāsana* with the microphone. Who is that waving the peacock fan? Karandhara looks so real. Oh, I know her. There I am again, right in with the big guys. Seeing the photos reminds me there was a lot going on besides our single-minded dedication to guru. And yet you can't deny the looks of spontaneous adoration,

Sudāmā Mahārāja leaning forward to see Prabhupāda's expression as Karandhara shows him the wool swami hats they sell to devotees, and a young mother with her infant held up, she's really happy to see Prabhupāda. The whole L.A. devotee community has turned out to be with him as he takes a tour of their buildings. And after all, they are living that way—dress, customs and religion—just because he said to do it. As Professor Rochford wrote, "It is nothing short of miraculous that one man could inspire so many people throughout the world to become God conscious."



## #95

When did you last hear Prabhupāda speak? What was he saying? You beg to hear again. He wrote, “This verse is very instructive for sincere workers in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.”

“We should not be jubilant in victory or morose in defeat. We should make a sincere effort to implement the will of Kṛṣṇa.” That was given in connection with the speech by Vṛtrāsura who encouraged Indra to pick up his thunderbolt and fight. Vṛtrāsura wanted to be killed by Indra’s thunderbolt because it was created by the order of Lord Viṣṇu. Vṛtrāsura actually wanted to go back to Godhead whereas Indra was interested in keeping his sense gratification in the heavenly kingdom. So Vṛtra was a better Vaiṣṇava than Indra.

Early this morning I begged Prabhupāda to accept my writing just as it is. He’ll let me know eventually if it’s off. I ought to worry—the Lord gives a devotee what he wants. He gave Indra the heavenly seat back and let Vṛtrāsura go back to Godhead. I say I want to do what Prabhupāda wants, but what do I do?

When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the L.A. community he stopped in one room and a new devotee, Tirthārthī came forward and offered him a drink of water from a silver cup on a silver tray. Śrīla Prabhupāda took it. In the photo I’m standing behind Prabhupāda watching. I helped to bring Tirthārthī to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I preached to him at Santa Cruz when he was a hippie. Prabhupāda has drunk the water and is now returning the cup. It’s a very nice moment, and Tirthārthī



looks so fresh and new as a devotee, clean and saved and so fortunate to be able to give Prabhupāda a drink.

We were all running after Prabhupāda wanting to serve him and be recognized by him. It's a simple phenomena but also difficult to explain. After he disappeared in 1977 many disciples stopped serving actively because he didn't seem to be here. Or they didn't like the way his leading disciples took charge of things. Some said Prabhupāda was pushed out of the center of attention. That did happen . . . Things are better now, I think. Let's look at the next picture.

## #96

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you—please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Thank you for letting me write to you. Thank you for being everyone's spiritual master. Thank you for giving us the chance to embrace Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thank you . . .

Prabhupāda, I just finished writing something called *Japa Walks*, *Japa Talks* for the devotees and for me too. I hope you like . . . the fact that I did it in your service.

I see him walking in my mind's eye, with cane, striding, elderly but never bent over . . . let's keep away the demons from this vision—while he smashes their notions.

He's the guru of thousands, not cheap initiations but one has to follow the four rules and chant sixteen rounds—and give a whole life. Consider the books that he wrote and the temples he constructed, the movement he established.

My Prabhupāda. I walked and talked with him. My favorite photos contain me beside him. I can't help it, it's part of my love for him—that I love him saving me, bringing me along. Now dear Lord, please make my words true: I will never forget what Śrīla Prabhupāda did for me or be untrue to it.

He calls me to be with him.

## #97

Too much devotion denotes a thief.  
You said it, Prabhupāda.  
And here I am writing your glories,  
my professed love.  
I am the fool.

I am not a thief—I wish I were so bold.  
You and your master, Lord Caitanya,  
want to give us *kṛṣṇa-prema*,  
but I quote, “Too much devotion denotes a thief.”  
Lord Caitanya says, “Join Me  
as gardener, pick fruits of love of God  
and distribute them with Me in *saṅkīrtana*.”  
Prabhupāda is the party leader,  
and we are going out with him.  
But too much devotion denotes a thief.

I may be after name and fame  
as a *sādhū* in this movement—  
a place to eat and sleep without much work.  
Steal for myself worship due to him—  
too much devotion denotes a thief.

But it's better to try Prabhupāda poems  
than practice silence as a virtue.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for giving us *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, NOD, TLC, Kṛṣṇa book, all your little books and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* with its advanced ecstasies of Lord Caitanya.

Thank you for teaching us the art and practice of honoring *prasādam*. It's a miracle you teach, and we can be the miracle makers. One takes simple ingredients, get them in the food store, clean and cook and prepare them on the plate. When offered on the altar of guru and Gaurāṅga with the prayers Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us, the food becomes *prasādam*. Kṛṣṇa eats it. He eats spiritually and leaves spiritually. It tastes good and we are saved from eating lumps of sin.

Thank you for engaging us in Kṛṣṇa consciousness all the years you were here. You sent me the tapes in the mail, your dictations of TLC and Kṛṣṇa book. I typed them as soon as I could, my prime personal assignment from you. If you want to make more tapes, dear master, know that I am ready to type them. I will eagerly type up a new book by you with all enthusiasm just as I had in the old days. Thank you for the enthusiasm.

Thank you for making me a man. They think a man has to have a wife or sex partner. It's not so. One can be heroic by controlling the senses and then he can make disciples all over the world. A man lives by a code of truth and you gave us the initiation vows. Thank you.

Thank you for Deity worship, for reminding us not to sleep so much, for reminding us always to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your re



minders are challenges. You certainly challenge our complacent attitudes. You break up licentiousness, sensuality, speculation, the posing habit, the do-nothing stance, you come to us and expel the bored yawn, the foolish "I am God" or "I am *gopi*."

Thank you for bringing us down to earth, teaching the basics and making Goloka real to us—when we are ready for it.

Thank you for being who you are. I hope to walk the beach with you again and hear you speak and this time with rapt attention.

Prabhupāda has entered my heart. I am glad to say that and to welcome him here. He did this long ago, in 1966. Today I am enunciating it once again. Welcome, spiritual master. Please take a seat above me. Please take a cup of water. Please take everything and use it as you like. Once I was with you when you visited a flat in Calcutta. You noticed a little doll on a shelf. It was the Air India man who bows obsequiously to all customers. You said, “Who is that? Vivekenanda?”

Those homes you visited didn’t receive you warmly. They were not your disciples. They had respect for you but they weren’t giving you their whole life. We disciples want you to come into our lives and rule. We may still be unruly but we want to correct that. Thank you for coming and being our spiritual master.

He speaks strongly every time. Listen to him. It may be something very basic like the *Bhāgavatam*, Nārada and Aṅgirā telling Citraketu that all human relationships are fleeting and therefore untrue. The true self is the soul within. You are repeating the commentators—Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Madhvācārya and others—quoting *Bhagavad-gītā* verses, and I am listening and getting immense gain. It’s not like I know it already. Thank you for presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this way.

He will not be forgotten. It is testimony that the BBT Archives produces every word they find by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, prints them in durable hardbound books, and sells thousands of copies. I want those books and the time to read them always.

And many memoirs and partial biographies are written by your disciples. I want them too. I want to be with you and your disciples and to help remembrance of you to go on and increase. My help isn't necessary; it's for my own benefit that I enlist in the project of making sure we don't forget you. I start with myself. I go back again to the Second Avenue storefront in my mind, remember him. I was afraid of him, but I bowed before him and I meant it. I offered my life to him and carried out his instructions to the best of my ability. I see him standing over me smiling, sitting across from me thoughtfully. I take his instruction and leave the room. I am still a young man. He lives forever somewhere and I can resume being with him—no truly, it has never been broken.

## #100

O Prabhupāda, you told Professor Kotovsky he didn't know real Communism. You told us that the Russian professor said, "After death everything is finished," thus proving himself less intelligent, like Professor Zahner who you called the lowest of mankind because he blasphemed Kṛṣṇa as a misleader.

O Prabhupāda, I see you as an elderly *sannyāsī* strong to lead the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. You said Lord Caitanya wanted many Indians to take His message out of India but you were the only one to do it effectively. Everyone should cooperate with you. I wish to do that and help others to do it.

O Prabhupāda you joked with us ("Sarasvatī, where is Kṛṣṇa?") and taught us seriously (there should be a Vedic planetarium) and expressed your candid opinion that America was going to hell. "Don't mind," you said just in case we were still attached to our material country. How could we object when you spoke the truth, cutting our illusion and attachments?

O Prabhupāda, I was there at the end and can attest you were noble all the way, brave and perfect in the act of disappearance from this world. In the last two days you went inside yourself. That was glorious. But up until then was also wonderful, how you preached from your bed, encouraging devotees to be ambitious preachers, sending them to Russia, Bangladesh, back to Māyāpur despite the *guṇḍās*—to push on in America against those who would fight us.



Prabhupāda, you honor *prasādam* slowly and with care, Hari-śauri has told us. We watched you eat although we're not supposed to, but we wanted to see you doing everything.

Prabhupāda, I pray that Lord Kṛṣṇa will allow me to go on praising your qualities and deeds in words and to serve you with my own words and deeds and thoughts. We will worship you and guard your temples and your Samādhī Mandirs.

O Prabhupāda who kicked out TV and cosmetic makeup and donuts and Ravi Shankar records and the comic section of the newspaper and the whole newspaper and boring jobs and illicit sex and put in their place, *kīrtana*, *prasādam*, the dressing and worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and the challenge to read and distribute rare books, to lecture in the college.

O Prabhupāda, I'm running out of life to praise you, please give me more inspiration and time, if not in this life then in the next life. Let me tag along, give me some service . . . and please bless all your disciples so that we can truly become the army of pure devotees you envision to deliver the unfortunate souls who are drowning in the Kali-yuga flood.









## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following disciples and friends who helped produce and print this book:

Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa dāsa

Caitanya-dayā-devī dāsi

Guru-sevā-devī dāsi

Kaiśorī-devī dāsi

Kalki-devī dāsi

Keśihanta dāsa

Lalita-mañjarī-devī dāsi

Lalitāmṛta-devī dāsi

Madana-mohana dāsa

Mādhava dāsa

Madhumaṅgala dāsa

Nārāyaṇa-kavaca dāsa

Prāṇadā-devī dāsi

Yamunā-devī dāsi

Special thanks to Rādhā-Ramaṇa dāsa for his kind donation to print this book.



