

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

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Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 11

The Diary as Devotion

August 12 - September 2, 1997

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

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"O best of the *brahmanas*, my body is filled with dirty things, and my vision has been bitten by the serpent of pride. Due to my material conceptions, I am diseased. Your nectarean instructions are the proper medicine for one suffering from such a fever, and they are cooling waters for one scorched by the heat." (*Bhag.* 5.1.22)

August 12, 1997

Midnight

"Profane play with the holy," said Bishop Mynster of Kierkegaard's *Training in Christianity*. Now my obsession is with what I shall write. I resolved this once by inventing Writing Sessions as a genre. It didn't leave me *time* to mess around.

Just now an item crashed in the kitchen. It made my heart jump. Poltergeists? Better I go ahead rather than circling and circling and never completing, but I can tell already, this journal will be a forging for me. Even when I'm creeping I shall be forging. Everything will become clear and tangible in the end.

\* \* \*

"Unless we increase our faith in the Supreme Lord, we shall be attached to many other things. That is the cause of our material bondage." (*Bhag.* 5.8.12, purport) Everything is for Krishna. This is the motto by which we should live. Then, even if we have to perform something material in order to preach or even survive, we won't be victimized by matter. Srila Prabhupada guides us through the treacherous material world. One who becomes a *sannyasi* has to be careful not to again become attached to anything other than Krishna; he protects himself by using everything in Krishna's service.

Maharaja Bharata reveals how he fell down: he continued his spiritual duties but left his mind on his pet deer. ". . . if one's mind is distracted from worship, a mere show of worship will not be of any benefit." (*Bhag.* 5.8.14, purport)

The mix is the mix. Reading notes are reading notes. This is no essay or even a fiction. It's a collection of truthful moments. Don't spin your wheels or apologize for that.

I am here. No beer,  
no bier  
not yet.

The engine of heart and body dedicated to the cause of Krishna consciousness. Some look out and some look in. In either case, distracted worship is of no benefit at all. Some give up: "Then what's the point? Let me put down my beads and simply love the deer."

Maharaja Bharata's ardent desire to care for the deer might be materially laudable, but it indicates a spiritual falldown. A *sadhu* should remain aloof from romance, attachment, even material compassion. Orphanages, hospital work, welfare, friendship "when their

emphasis is on material benefit, is mundane. A true *sadhu* doesn't indulge in it. Rather, he is concerned to give people Krishna consciousness.

\* \* \*

I have had faith in the churning of the milk ocean with its inevitable production of both poison and offerable things. I expressed this in the form of timed writing sessions. I thought if it were the best way to write, then I should pursue it. Over time, I couldn't sustain the pressure of writing session after session, mainly because of my health.

So it goes. I remember writing at Tejah-prakaSa's house in Vrndavana, writing as fast as my hand would go, picking up the dogs' growls, the rat outside eating the cloth I had stuffed under the door.

Yes, I remember.

I remember bringing in my past, capturing it, playing with it, splaying it out across the page, singing those blues.

And of course bringing Krishna in and trying to place Him on the page as often as possible. I was drawing then too, and I made sure I put *tilaka* on all the faces so that everyone could become a devotee.

Although I regularly ask Krishna to forgive my failings, I persist in my faith in the process and in what can come through in tears, emotions exposed, poses renounced, disassociations and regroupings, and the taking on of new masks when the old ones have fallen.

With my missionary smile and missing teeth, only a mother could love me "and "she" does. I can throw my needs and wants at her and she never denies me. She lets them all in.

But I don't want splayed attention. That's condemned by the *Bhagavad-gita* and by Sukadeva Gosvami. *Atma-tattva* seekers don't waste their time contemplating many things; that's something materialists do. Even if a man of splayed intelligence wants Krishna consciousness, he can't have it because his other interests have sucked his consciousness like reeds suck the water from a pond.

Anyway, I don't think my interests are splayed because I am on the Krishna conscious trail and I'm using everything I remember and think to find Krishna.

\* \* \*

Maharaja Bharata: "That sun-god is now setting, yet the poor animal who trusted in me since its mother died has not returned."

"Out of affection, anything can be addressed as anything."

He calls the deer a prince. I call my notes a nest of good intentions and a last word in artless art.

Keep this in mind: when you chant *japa*, if you *indulge* the mind's distractions, it's like allowing the deer to push you with its horns and preferring that to uninterrupted meditation. Don't put yourself in a ridiculous, degraded situation where you are feign your *japa*. He didn't immediately attain love of Krishna, which is the goal of chanting.

Love of Krishna. Bharata Maharaja relinquished his attention to absorption in the activities of a pet deer, "forgetting that such diversion of attention was killing his

progress in spiritual achievement." Maharaja Bharata fell into a lower species. It's called *yoga-brasta*.

His was real blind love.

"In due course of time, insurmountable death, which is compared to a venomous snake that enters the hole created by a mouse, situated itself before him." (*Bhag. 5.8.26*)

Too late. It will happen to all of us.

O Krishna, please accept my offering. If I die today, I want this writing to be my devotional offering. I don't have to defend my saying that "You know what it is and will decide what it's worth. The deficiencies are obvious; I don't need to comment on those either.

Now if this offering could only be better . . . Imagine receiving forty-eight poems in twenty days, all dictated in dreams, a cast of characters delivered. Or, in the absence of such inspiration, serving it out anyway as you walk over the overgrown grass to the shed. The same paints will face me there, but there are always new combinations.

Am I a little like Bharata in madness? Am I praising the hound, chasing the "Trane, chasing my own tail? I think of the improvisers because I am one of them. All new to Krishna conscious writing.

It doesn't matter. really I am  
crying for service,

stubbornly being who I am and not pretending

Refusing the role I played before. I hear "voices" when I write and I listen to them. They guide me. I beg *caitya-guru* to sing me *His* song so I can write it down, the page adorned with *Krishna-nama*.

\* \* \*

4:47 a.m.

Had no pain for three days, but yesterday it began. I took shelter in deep relaxation and the twinge went away. Right now I'd be inclined to paint on 18x24 Bristol boards, but the effort might cause a strain that would lead to a headache.

Anyway, pain is inevitable. I prepare for it. When the pain comes, it means my operations here "writing, painting, reading" all have to shut down. Writing requires both eyes and motor skills and is something I should not pursue when I have pain. To write when I have a headache is an act of defiance, and it's as bad as trying to lecture when I have a headache. Usually, such defiance results in an increase in pain to raging proportions. I prefer to retreat.

I am always looking for ways, however, to remain in a creative frame of mind even when the pain is present. My body is suffering, but my mind doesn't have to get so involved in the hurt. Better I tolerate it as Krishna urges Arjuna to do. Since I can expect a large percentage of my time to be spent either in pain or in fear of it "that is, in preventative actions" I'll just have to relax and look the pain in the eye without distress. I don't have to get emotionally involved in it. I'll offer my tolerance to Krishna in the spirit of *tat te 'nukampam*.

\* \* \*

Dreamt I was with some devotees and going to the spiritual world. I had the role of broadcaster from the airplane, letting people know what was happening down below since they couldn't see and could only look at maps. We were to land near a waterfall, if Krishna blessed us.

\* \* \*

8:18 a.m.

Maharaja Bharata didn't forget his past life. That's unusual. He took the body of a deer but remembered who he was "a spirit soul "and seriously pursued self-realization even while embodied as an animal. He was punished in one lifetime. He repented. "By his intense desire, he returns home in the next lifetime." Leave your place of birth and family and join the society of devotees. Don't live with devotees and be lazy, as if the temple were a free hotel, but practice seriously. Don't waste time. It is possible that one can go back to Godhead in one lifetime. Even in Vrndavana, where you can cleanse your sins by bathing in the Yamuna, if you purposely commit more sins, then "he has to be punished, at least for one lifetime, like Bharata Maharaja." (*Bhag.* 5.8.31, purport)

Don't hum idle tunes like "Scrapple of the Apple." (I don't know that one anyway.) Let it all go. Instead, sing the song of the scratching pen or the silence of a cloudy morn.

\* \* \*

Dreamt I was Prabhupada's servant and KulaSekhara dasa came over. He and another devotee got into a wrestling match outside Prabhupada's room. Prabhupada came out and saw them. When we realized he was there, I said, "*Jaya Prabhupada*," and we all bowed down.

KulaSekhara was bare-chested. He wanted to capture Prabhupada's attention by wrestling. When Prabhupada finally came out, however, he was dazed, surprised, and didn't know what was happening.

\* \* \*

12:25 p.m.

Pain behind the right eye. I tried Dr. Kane's exercise, but I couldn't get into it, couldn't come up with an image to describe my pain unpleasantly and then create a pleasant transformation. Pain control is a skill I don't seem to possess. Now I'm looking for something broader than that, something that lasts all day. That is, a change in attitude that allows me at least not to feel that pain ruins my day or steals my opportunity to practice Krishna consciousness. I am trying to understand how my consciousness can be a devotional offering to the Lord despite all material circumstances.

\* \* \*

I just layed down for awhile with the pain, which is quite sharp, and dreamt that I was back in Great Kills and saw two childhood friends. I said, "What is it that Shakespeare says, 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a

sleep'?" They were appreciative of that comment, but then I added, "Well, that's what *he* says," implying that I believe something else now. The dream went on for awhile, then began to break apart. The one sensation I remember from it is that although I had sharp pain in the dream, I spoke well despite it, or perhaps because of it. Because I was suffering, I was able to say something wise.

August 13

12:04 a.m.

I agreed to give a class on Balarama's Appearance Day next week if I don't have a headache. (I am relieved to get rid of pain, to feel it go down. I feel I did a little better yesterday while I had it, but I felt exhausted by the sequence.)

I'll start with a verse from *Caitanya-caritamrta* like this one: "The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, is the fountainhead of all incarnations. Lord Balarama is His second body." (Cc.*Adi* 5.4)

We will gather and talk of the glories of Sri Nityananda rama, Sri Balarama, and Sri Krishna. His younger brother is the source of all incarnations. I will gather knowledge from the books. O faith, O *Sraddha*, O hearing process, please deliver us from nescience and cupidity, over-intelligence, sloth, and greed.

They drink *varuni* on that day (made of 7-Up and honey here), but I think I'll pass. Don't want to get drunk on the plea that it's the Lord's day. Won't smoke any Balarama cigars either.

Hare Krishna. Next week if I can, I'll start off reading selected verses from *Caitanya-caritamrta* and then *Krishna* book ""The Advent of Lord Krishna" "the section where Ananta-Sesa is mentioned as being "born" within Devaki's womb. *Nayam atma bala-hinena labhyo*, then Vasudeva's inquiring from Nanda about Balarama and Krishna's welfare. Then the name-giving ceremony. Balarama has two other names, Sankarsana and Baladeva. I hope I'm well enough to speak. I like to speak and to see the devotees happy. I'll also read how Balarama became angry at Krishna and lied to Their mother, "Krishna has eaten dirt!" Who is telling the truth there?

Kirtana-rasa gave me a new Swiss Army alarm clock. It won't replace any of the clocks I already have, but it's handsome, and they say it's good at keeping time. Another item that won't deliver me to the spiritual world.

Lord Balarama visits Vrndavana. He has His own *gopis*. When the Yamuna refused to come to Him, He threatened to drag her to Him with His plough. There are many references to Balarama in the later pastimes, such as when He killed Kamsa's friends with the elephant tusk, and when He threatened the Kurus and dragged their whole city when they insulted Krishna. We read of how He returned to Vrndavana, got drunk on *varuni*. He didn't participate in the Kuruksetra war because He favored Duryodhana. Instead, He took a tour of all the holy places. Along the way, He killed Romaharsana and then, on the sages' request, killed Balvala. All glories to Lord Balarama, Lord Krishna's dear and mighty brother. Baladeva is original guru. If my faith is weak, I pray to Balarama for strength.

I'm a fool, reprobate,

Please Lord make me Yours,

to act fit, brave, strict,  
knowledgeable, compassionate  
as befits a Gaudiya rep.  
You can make me all that,  
but on my own I'm nothing  
but a covered over  
spirit soul.

Balarama also killed and delivered rukma at the chess match. Once, Sridama defeated Him with a club. He also made Krishna shy when Krishna lifted Govardhana Hill. He praised Krishna in His sleep. He was ecstatic to see Krishna expanding His glories in the pastime with Lord Brahma stealing the cows.

\* \* \*

Okay, my Swiss clock says I've got to move on; it's *japa* time. I'm grateful to be pain-free for the moment, and to know that if again the head pain comes I'll submit to it as coming from Krishna. I beg Him to teach me some simple method to pray and to remember Him at that time, even if I can't seem to chant rapid mantras or read or write.

\* \* \*

4:12 a.m.

Kierkegaard preaching away about the temporal and the eternal, how they are in conflict, and how it's good to be clever if you can use your cleverness to expose your evasion of truth. You should love God in an expression of total will. There may be so many obstacles, but that's only because the price of purity is so high. I can relate to that. I can also see my own failures. Look, I'm already flagging.

SK indicates that crowds are no good. You have to split men up from the crowd and get at them one at a time. That is the way I preach "by writing books. A person reads a book by himself and understands it in his own way, giving it his own relevance. People write me letters and say they read my books and that we have become friends, although we've never met. When I hear that, I feel fulfilled; some good has been done.

I like to celebrate the moment. Zen Buddhist teachers also tell us to live in the moment, but SK says living for the moment is opposed to living for eternity. If we equate living for the moment with sense gratification, then he's right, and our scriptures teach the principle of *Sreyas* and *preyas*. But that's not the only interpretation. The present is important in Krishna consciousness. We need to be constantly alert when we chant. Forget the past that sleeps and of the future never dream at all. All we have is now in which to improve. Live for God at each instant.

Alert. What is that stuff you wrote starting with notes in a shack? What was that book called? "Shack People"? Or was it "At the Shack"?

It's *Shack Notes*.

"What kind of a shack was it?" He laughs and thinks he has touched on something foolish we can both get a laugh out of, but he has touched on something dear. *Shack Notes* was an imperfect beginning. It's ten years later and I'm in the imperfect middle "or near the end, depending on my total time left in this body. And I'm even more interested

in improvisation. I am not a disciple of other free-writers, but in *Churning the Milk Ocean* I acknowledged my debt to them. I am on my own road now, looking for the Krishna conscious essence.

The truth is usually too raunchy, too tedious, or we can't recall it. The dreams, some of them, we pass up. We'd rather not know about them. Although sometimes, we can gather insights from them. They give a look into our lives from somewhere other than the intellectual platform, and they are charged with energy.

Now that I'm almost sixty years old, I guess I'm finally old enough to decide how I want to serve Krishna. Not everyone, of course, will agree, but will think that the goal of life is to submit not only to Krishna but to all our Godbrothers with their myriad plans for us. I've been told quite frequently that others know Prabhupada's desire more than I do. I was told that by one person from whom I accepted it, but that turned into a disaster. I could see after some time that it wasn't actually true, no matter how well-meaning the speaker had been. He may have known Prabhupada better than I do, but I know Prabhupada better as *my guru*, and that's the relationship that counts for me. I'm not looking for more esoteric understandings.

Anyway, I'm sorry to sully this eternal journal with temporary agitations. But try to understand: I look for immortal themes amid the strife. These issues will vanish with time, but at least I will have left this history and taken my stand.

Hum whir, the engine moves along. I am hiding the fact that I never wrote this in pen. I am a persona trying to give you the impression that I was good fellow and dedicated to writing.

Eh? What *is* the truth, then?

My father took me to Ebbet's Field, but on that day, the Bums got trounced by the newly formed Milwaukee Braves.

That's the truth?

Yes, that and that I found a little Jewish delicatessen and bought blintzes. Fell in love with them. They baked them in the basement and sent them up on the dumb waiter. They sold strawberry, blueberry, and other flavors, and they were very good. I bought some and took them to my mother in Avalon. I wanted to show her that I had learned something in Manhattan.

Then there was Ms. Fennel or whatever her name was, a blond Jewess who worked in the same unit I did in the welfare office "a down-to-earth coworker. Her nose reminded me of a chick's beak, and I think on LSD I fantasized that she and women like her were oozing the cheese that oozed out of the blintzes. It was as if all sense gratification merged "the appeal of women and the great taste of those blintzes. Eventually I got sick of all of it and wanted to find my way clear. Wanted an eternally safe place, God, and nothing but the truth.

Some people call my memories clownish and mundane, but any one of them, when followed up, leads me to the eternal. Because *everything* leads there. Therefore, that's where I was headed, although I was busy wasting my days and nights and didn't even know it. Wasting vital fluids eventually makes you want to stop wasting those fluids; LSD led eventually to no LSD. Voidism and the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* led me to Krishna, led me to relate to Swami Bhaktivedanta's *Easy Journey to Other Planets*.



I want to exclude all mundane sounds, but as soon as the other side shows that we can dovetail something, then my senses run forward like a crowd at a football game. I want to reclaim my entire world for Krishna.

Apple pie, turnip  
by the bye.

A *bhakta* wrote, "You showed me how to dovetail my beatnik propensities." No one else wrote a single word about my apple-pie-in-the-thigh prose (or whatever it was I said).

O Krishna, I really do think I will never die. I live as if it's true. I don't think of Krishna at every minute.

But,  
dear Krishna,  
I want to attain Your lotus feet.  
Radha and Krishna coming here  
as *arca-vigraha*,  
carried by Caitanya-daya  
in a suitcase. O Lord of the universe,  
O Lord of the spiritual abode,  
may Balarama be kind to us. With or without headaches, I wish to place my rosaries at my master's feet and sing, "Swing low, sweet Krishna, coming for to carry me home."

\* \* \*

8:17 a.m.

Apparently no one could tell that Jada Bharata was always engaged in *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam*. His father taught him to behave like a *brahmana*, but Jada showed himself unable to learn. His stepbrothers were nondevotees, "*triveda*" men who couldn't understand Jada Bharata's exalted position. "Bharata Maharaja (Jada Bharata) was determined to finish his business in this material world and did not at all care for the world of duality."

Jada Bharata didn't try to protect himself when he was captured by the dacoits, but submitted to being prepared as an offering to Goddess Kali. His mood? Simple dependence on the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I think of this pastime in terms of my illness. If I am to find any serenity in my illness, an actual healed state, I too will have to learn to depend wholly on Krishna for protection, uninterested in this world of duality. I didn't achieve that platform yesterday, but I thought about it. I tried not to think that the day had been wasted. I tried to realize that there is more than one way to endeavor in devotional service. "They also serve who only sit and wait." I waited a lot yesterday "waited for the pain to go down so I could resume reading and chanting "and that patient, waiting state of mind can be offered to Krishna. reading and chanting have advantages in that they allow us to focus on and link with the Absolute. Yesterday I sat before Prabhupada *murti* and simply waited. There was nothing else I could do.

Now I'm trying to coach myself for the next time. There will be a next time, I have no doubt. I want to get beyond all blame-laying and complaining. Although I may

occasionally cry from the pain, I shouldn't shut down my consciousness. Think of how to serve Krishna in pain as well as when you are well. Don't think pain=hurt. Lord Krishna, please give me the intelligence to make use of this pain. Please give me the presence of mind to remain serene, not agitated or hurting like a whining animal. You are training me to surrender through this pain.

"My Lord, I am now surrendered unto Your eternal servant, and if You like You can kill me, or, if You like, You can protect. In any case, I am fully surrendered unto You." (Bhaktivinoda Thakura quoted in *Bhag.* 5.9.14, purport)

A pure devotee is fearless because he's convinced of his spiritual identity. "Even though his life may be threatened, he is not at all afraid." (*Bhag.* 5.9.20, purport) He's fully dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the Lord is ready to give him protection.

\* \* \*

9 a.m.

Heigh ho, Stevo, I can't understand what Kierkegaard means by *the wish* to suffer all in commitment to the Good. I say I'll take one pill a week because then when I'm free of pain, I'll be able to serve actively. When I can't do my service, I'm not even sure I'm situated in Krishna consciousness. Perhaps I'm deceiving myself. Maybe I only want relief from pain because I crave bodily comfort. If that's true, then my goal is a temporary and illusory one. Be willing to suffer all, he says.

Jada Bharata did nothing to protect himself or bring himself comfort. He didn't want to become distracted by such efforts made from the material platform. He went on with his inner *bhajana*. Srila Prabhupada gave us active, "outer" duties to perform with body, mind, and words. He knew we were too splayed out to live in a world of *lila-smaranam*. I want to be free of pain so I can be active, but when I can't, what then? This is the training school that I'm considering. I *want* to learn to practice *Krishna-smaranam*, and one of the first lessons is that you have to be situated in Krishna consciousness beyond the body, beyond the pain. No depression or even regret caused by pain allowed. Let me look for a service appropriate to the pain state.

Self-pity is not the point. All this talk may sound like I'm wallowing in self-pity, but that's not my point.

\* \* \*

12:20 p.m.

The American Embassy phoned Madhu. Soon he'll be going for an interview for his green card. He may even have to go to America at a time that would interrupt our travel plans. Lots of "if" talk about it. I'm determined to go on with the European tour as planned, especially to Spain on or around September 4. If Madhu has to go to America at that time, I'll go to Spain by myself or with someone else.

Headaches or the beginnings of headaches are a daily affair. Someone said that they had heard my situation was "dismal." I replied that the headaches are frequent, but perhaps I'm learning tolerance. Thinking of how to heal illness through serenity and acceptance in the face of disease. SK goes deeper in all particulars of how you feel pain

"which disease, what deprivation "and talks of the sufferer in a way I can't even grasp. He says we should suffer all for God. For example:

Indeed if this sufferer like anyone else sincerely wills the Good, then he must be ready to suffer all. Then he is committed, not in that commitment by which he is exempted from suffering, but in that by which he remains intimately bound to God, in which he wills only one thing: Namely, to suffer all, to be and to remain loyally committed to the Good "under the pain of the wish.

*"Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing, pp. 158 - 59*

\* \* \*

2:40 p.m.

Thinking about Jada Bharata. I recall a Godbrother saying in a lecture that Jada Bharata spoke mostly about *jnana-yoga* with a somewhat one-sided view, as if all matter is *maya*. But rupa Gosvami teaches *yukta-vairagya*. I remembered that today and asked myself, "Do I have to read all this *jnana* about the soul and matter if it doesn't contain much about *bhakti*?" Then I remembered that whatever Jada Bharata was teaching was valuable, and Prabhupada would certainly give us the essence in his purports. I wouldn't want to miss them.

"You haven't been doing well lately," he said to me.

I had just said to him, "You have many burners going on your cooker."

I like it when it's visibly quiet here, when I don't see boats going to and from the island or lots of folks walking about when I want to take a walk. They have just printed the Janmastami flyer.

They forced Jada Bharata to help carry the king's palanquin (just as the dacoits had forced him to come with them). He was young and strong. "The palanquin, however, was very erratically carried by Jada Bharata due to his sense of nonviolence." He was avoiding the ants. He felt tender-hearted toward his fellow living entities. We can just imagine the rocky ride he gave the king. The king became angry. People laugh, but it's no joke. If you step on ants, you'll suffer.

Scratch, scratch "a fellow in Vaisnava clothes in South Wales, France, wrote his hideout heart down, tongue in cheek, in words to that effect. Nobel Prize, Pull-It Sir, appraise the situation. We do not step on ants. And just because we have headaches doesn't mean we should be unmindful of others or angry or think we are excused from our duties. Scratch, scratch. As if a little note-taking will fill the bill.

Wha' happened next? The prow of the barge (decorated and redesigned inside to carry tourists from Swiss or the rich from Eire) "

Oh, don't get angry with me. I'm just walking along and I can't keep apace of these here *Sudras*.

He was sarcastic. Srila Prabhupada in his pre-chapter summary called it "filthy language." Filthy probably means something even more filthy to me, but I like his choice of words. The words were filthy because they were mixed with *raja-guna*, arrogance intended to hurt a great soul.

Jada Bharata *knew* he was not his body. He didn't merely repeat verses he had heard on the subject; he was ready to die. He was unafraid because he knew the self was eternal. His words are not expendable "*jnana-yoga*." If we want to be fit to hear Vrajabhava, we had better understand this most essential teaching to the point of realization. Who among us is not affected if someone calls us a pinhead to our face? "Hey, you appear to be absorbed in contemplating the stuffing in your navel. Watch your goddamn step or I'll break your face and improve it a little." Such words hurt. Why?

Jada wasn't hurt. Who can hurt the inviolable self? The Vedic injunction is *asango hy ayam purusah iti Sruteh*: "The living entity is not really connected with this material world, but due to his tendency to enjoy the material senses he is put into material conditions."

"You rascal! I'll beat your hide!" The king said those things. Filthy!

I wish I could be not disturbed by the pains and pleasures of the body as Jada Bharata was not. He spoke, smiled, unafraid of the king. The king was only insulting and threatening Jada Bharata's body, and what did that have to do with him? It was perhaps the first time Jada Bharata had unveiled his wisdom in his hidden life.

O hidden life  
and hidden suffering,  
the true devotee doesn't act for show but  
only for the Lord and the good  
of others,  
in Krishna consciousness.  
O Jada, please teach me along with the king.

\* \* \*

4:05 p.m.

Slow barge. I should open the door and windows of this shed, except it means the flies will buzz in. The sky is blue and of course filled with white clouds. One side is growing gray. I have a yen to splash and stripe in bright and soft pink. With a brush in hand I can forget all miseries.

Except when the fog rolls in . . .

Spring irises are gone. red berries turning dark. Do the birds get them all? Daniel Defoe's *robinson Crusoe*. It has a hill-shaped silhouette, this island. It rises up in the middle. O sunny day of life, a sage like Jada Bharata is not attached to this world's joy or sorrow. The transcendental situation is different. He lived always praising Hari from within.

"Immensely enjoyed" the poems I wrote, he said. Krishna wrote them last December. I tried to be honest, and Krishna consciousness came tumbling out in the mixture.

\* \* \*

5 p.m.

Thank you, Lord, for that tasty feast of painted forms. Child's play, but I won't label it. I enjoy it and especially the transcendental vibrations that permeate the indirect message

so directly tacked on  
the unconscious delicious  
safe jungle of  
child's imagination where  
he wanders free and even big  
green monsters are friendly,  
wear *tilaka* or sway  
to rhythm of *arati* dance  
we saw in temples  
in salad days.

\* \* \*

Thank You for the feast. Sorry a yellow jacket got dunked in the paint. I tried to free him, but was unsuccessful.

Low on horizon, white bunches of clouds "Krishna, these are Your paintings. Your sky art is always changing, and it is beautiful. You outdo me on Your huge canvases, and You are unattached to whether You receive praise or not. You simply create beauty. The great souls see You there.

August 14

12:05 a.m.

Loud whining sound like a giant mosquito. I can't see where it's coming from. Usually no mosquitoes here. "I'm not the body" is today's theme. The whole world labors under the misconception of bodily identification. I may say I know better, but how do I act? "The more we advance our freedom from the bodily conception, the more we are fixed in devotional service, and the more we are happy and peaceful." (*Bhag.* 5.10.10)

You mean you don't even notice pain and pleasure? You're free of the body even while in the material condition?

O Krishna,

Krishna,

the first-class boon in this worst of ages is

the chanting of the holy names.

Enter it and never stop.

Today is EkadaSi. Eternal life (or a next body) is waiting even while I fritter away my time. It's just a thin wall away. It's illusion to think otherwise. Soon I will have to give up my whole conditioned existence, the one that has evolved since I was born to Catherine and Steve. To think such an existence is permanent is *maya*.

Jada Bharata spoke outrageously, although with perfect logic and knowledge. He told the king that their relationship was temporary, and, "Tomorrow the position may be changed, and you may be my servant and I your master." To the ordinary mundane controller, these words would have sounded like insubordination, but the king was hankering for higher knowledge. Even though he couldn't fully grasp what Jada was saying, he appreciated it: "Here is a realized saint and I have offended him."

When I suffer, it's because I forget my relationship with the Supreme Lord. It's never too late, however, to remember that relationship. I don't want to remember it simply to relieve myself of pain, as if Krishna consciousness were the one natural cure I have forgotten to try. It's our duty to love God, but even more, it's our heartfelt desire. That state is so wonderful that it automatically includes relief from material pain. Or even if the pain continues to act on the body, we live in a world of higher taste.

Jada Bharata didn't lecture to the king with the expectation that he be freed of his work. rather, he said that if the king still thought he was the master and Jada the servant, he would continue to accept it. "Out of his natural humility, he never considered himself a great devotee, and he agreed to suffer the results of his past karma." (*Bhag. 5.10.14*, purport) He thought that by carrying the king's palanquin, he was freeing himself of karma.

Could we act like that in Krishna consciousness, offering the forced condition to the Lord as devotional service? In dreams I am put into many miserable conditions "back in the Navy, wandering lost, pursued by wild animals. I rarely think of Krishna in such dream situations. Can I only think of Krishna when I am in a temple with devotees? Here, Jada Bharata maintains transcendental poise even in an antagonistic environment. Internalize what you have learned and practiced, be prepared to carry it out wherever you have to go and whatever you are forced to endure, and chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

"When suffering reversed conditions, the devotee always considers that the reverse conditions are the Lord's concessions . . . he continues performing his duty in devotional service." (*Bhag.5.1014*, purport)

So that's the answer. Even carrying a palanquin for a king could be done with a devotional attitude: "My dear Lord Krishna, I have been put into this condition as a token reaction just to purify me. Please help me to remember You in devotion as I carry out my life in this reversed condition."

Fortunately I am relatively free to perform devotional service as I see fit. My health restricts me in certain ways, and of course I suffer from the same restrictions from which all people suffer "old age, impurity, and the fact that I have to live both in an institution with limits and a world with limits. Still, there is no impediment. You, dear Lord, are always ready to give us the revelation by which we can "see" and render service to Your lotus feet. *Bhakti* breaks through all mundane restrictions and we can become satisfied in any condition of life (*ahaituki apratihatah yematma suprasidhati*).

\* \* \*

The king was so touched by Jada Bharata's words that he got down from his palanquin and fell flat on the ground with his head at Jada Bharata's feet. That must have been hard to do with so many others watching. A king is really in a tight position, forced to act out the ruler's role in every situation. But King Rahugana was able to break through that and humble himself before the sage, his apparent palanquin carrier. We all have to be ready for such humility. We must act on the truth no matter what it costs in terms of social status, loss of immediate comforts, embarrassment, etc.

\* \* \*

"Whose disciple are you?" he asked.

It's morning and I am doing the best thing I can do. Do I want to speak? I am not a great soul like Jada Bharata, but if a king asked me who I was and why I was wearing a sacred thread, if he wanted to know whose disciple I was and whether I was one of the exalted saints, I would be able to reply that I am a disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. I'm not an exalted saint but a humble servant of my spiritual master. He gave me permission to wear this *brahmana* thread, and I have been practicing Krishna consciousness since 1966. The words I speak are what he taught me. It is the ageless *parampara* knowledge as Lord Krishna taught in *Bhagavad-gita* five thousand years ago.

I could say like that. O wondrous day, when I could reveal myself and the Vedic knowledge to a powerful materialist who would be so willing to hear. But Jada Bharata earned the opportunity to preach like this by his whole life of fearless and concentrated dedication to inner meditation.

Diary as devotion. I hope to reveal a truth in these notes. These are my Jada Satsvarupa meditations. I keep it up and then keep it to myself. I tune in to the reality of scripture and the truth of passing fancies both. I admit all this to myself and hope I'm living in the Lord's presence. I don't demand anything of Krishna, because He knows who I am and what my motivations are. Life can become a constant stream of enlightenment if we are always alert in trying to break through whatever coverings we have, like snow on a windshield or cobwebs and dust, chains forged by the mind.

The writing helps me. May it hold me in good stead. That's the point of it all "to bring me to a state of readiness so that when I meet a King Rahugana, or better yet (a completely opposite situation), when Krishna asks me to account for my life, I will be able to speak.

Oh, I don't know. These thoughts only just occurred to me. I know it sounds a little confused.

Please redeem me,

please guide me

Lord of the heart

Gopinatha

Govinda

Madhava, Lord of all names and *rasas*, as presented by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

\* \* \*

I had a horrible nightmare last night. One of the elements of it was me trying to hold the door shut against a huge animal who was seeking to get in and devour us all. I felt myself become weaker and weaker, and I had to call for help. Although that animal lost the struggle, we knew it was only a matter of time before something more powerful would succeed.

Of course, there's all sorts of ways to analyze such dreams, and I don't want to get into it here. The dream could be taken as a metaphor for spiritual life, but I wish the message could be more explicit. I wish the dream-self would chant Hare Krishna just as I would do (or hope to do) in conscious life. That is the real failure of this nightmare identity. It would not be so bad to be attacked by wild animals if you were remembering and serving Krishna while it was going on. Otherwise, what's the point?

\* \* \*

4:08 a.m.

We sometimes compare ourselves to the heroic characters in the *Bhagavatam* in humbling ways. When we chant our sixteen rounds, our thoughts are confirmed. We chant in an undisciplined way, allowing our minds to roam. Or perhaps it's not that we allow it, but it simply goes and we don't reprimand it. Sometimes punishing the mind doesn't seem profitable. At least we strive for alertness and try to see our chanting in a positive light. I know I desire to be there with the name more than anything else, and I give it my best time.

This morning during *japa* I thought of publishing plans and of my progress in reading, thought of *Purity of Heart*. Looking forward to those activities after *japa*. Still, I assert that this chanting is what I want to do more than anything. I will willingly give up any other activity even though my mind tells me it is more attractive, to chant. Chanting is life. *Durdaivam idrSam ihajani nanuragah*.

When *japa* was over I moved to other things "dressed Radha-Govinda, listening to Srila Prabhupada talking about the false lords of this world and how Krishna is not that kind of Lord but is *iSvara-parama-Krishna*. That seemed like a basic talk, but there was so much in it. We need to understand the implications of what Prabhupada is saying. Whatever we put into our consciousness will live on and that becomes our life. Free the emotions to respond to Krishna.

All right, you're free to go. Fiddle around with other things, but make your heart a devotee. Hare Krishna chanting is the point. Be free. Take the wooden pass that signifies you have permission to go to the bathroom. That was the one excuse we were allowed to leave the classroom. We roamed the halls with the big wooden pass, and if a monitor or authority saw us, they would know we had been allowed out. We were supposed to be quick about it "no prolonged talks in the bathroom, no dallying anywhere else. The teacher would note how long we took. That was in P.S. 8 from 1948 to 1953, my days there. I was about to say my "blessed" days, and they *were* blessed in that the Supersoul was always with me whether I knew it or not. I was so young and the world was so fresh. I delighted in the life of the senses, but I was mindless, I guess, and without love for God. I lived in a whirl of social activities and school life with kids and parents in the blind days of the 1950s while America ground it out in Korea and television was just coming in and father was happy at the peak of his life at the Great Kills firehouse, especially with his new home where he had laid down the cement for the front and side walks and we put our palm imprints there. Great Kills . . .

The truth is it's just a dream. We have many dreams in which we ourselves were parents in one species or another. We can't remember any of it, but our forgetfulness



doesn't mean it didn't happen. Who could conceive of Krishna consciousness in those days? We were living in a cave. Henry Miller calls it the "air-conditioned nightmare." Only when I met the Swami did I start hearing of past and future lives and of the fact that the soul is carrying the subtle body and enters another gross body. It was also the first time I heard that we were meant to suffer in this world, and then die, that we were meant to realize ourselves and our relationship with God as eternal servant, to become His lovers, and to go to Him by always thinking of Him.

When I told my friends and relatives about what I was learning they said it was nonsense, especially because the knowledge was not coming from the Catholic Church. They threatened to reject me if I continued to pursue my life with the Swami, and they did. It didn't matter so much. I was home.

\* \* \*

*Memories* will soon be published, but I didn't really tell the worst. I didn't go to the heart of suffering and confession. I didn't really examine my lust, my degradation, my atheism; I only touched upon them. Anyway, those are petty sins and not what's most important. I don't even know what is most important yet. The memories I told in that book were mostly pleasant ones, and I didn't touch, for example, the reality of the ISKCON years. We'll have to see what that book is about when it comes out. At least I tried to celebrate life and to touch moments of beauty as they came to me, precious, despite my condition. Sometimes memories make things seem rosier than they were. It's hard to focus accurately on what happened. I like the story of what I was and what I have become and how I have become it. Do I know how it happened? Do I now live the truth of the scriptures, and do I find my beauty there? After thirty years I don't seem to have realized that much.

Yes, but I *have* realized *this* much: I want to stay with the devotees. Steven, an ex-ISKCON devotee, gave an edifying example when he went back to college and began living with a woman (not his wife) and tried to be a writer. I say edifying because it became crystal clear that I don't want his life. He accuses devotees of not having the courage to gamble with their lives and to step away from the shelter of scripture, which he claims contain only pat answers (although they are also fantastic). He says we think we're safe because we don't commit sins and live in a world of "devotees versus demons." We don't have the courage to actually test our worth in life, to see if we can attract a woman and win her "and keep her "or if we can write not within the tiny cult but in the face of world competition. He also said we need to face the unanswerable questions that humankind has always asked without supplying fairy-tale answers.

When I hear that rap I think only that I want to live in Krishna consciousness. I have chosen this path, it hasn't been easy to attain, and I am no longer a romantic when I think about it. ISKCON has suffered a loss of unity, purity, and joy, but we are wiser now, or becoming so, and we realize more clearly the *bhakti* path. We seek Krishna through the spiritual master's direction. We struggle to maintain ourselves as devotees, it's true, but Steven struggles to maintain only his life of sex love and career in another world. I love to eat air on Janmastami if it means I can stay with the devotees.

\* \* \*

7:58 a.m.

I don't have the intellect to exhaustively dissect a subject like love or faith from every angle and then to point out what it is and what it isn't the way Kierkegaard does. It's too much of a dialectical game to always point out the ways in which we deceive ourselves, fail before God, and so on. I accept the summary: I am fallen. More positively, the *sastras* give shelter even to me.

\* \* \*

Maharaja rahugana said that he was not afraid of anything, even Yamaraja's rod or Indra's thunderbolt, "yet I'm afraid of offending a *brahmana*. I am very much afraid of this." (*Bhag.* 5.10.17) Maharaja Rahugana then accepted Jada Bharata as spiritual master and requested him to speak at length. The king had not understood what Jada Bharata had said in brief.

\* \* \*

11:52 a.m.

Took care of Srila Prabhupada, rested through shakiness, read something, chanted a round, then saw sparrows "seems to a flock coming wildly close to my window, then fluttering down to the lake. Are they really sparrows? What are they doing? I went outside to find M., but he doesn't seem to be around. I looked them up in *Birds of Ireland* instead.

A letter from Manu welcoming me to stay here after our European tour. He says Karttika is the best season for wind and water and land and sky ""and no cruisers!"

While worshiping Prabhupada, I heard him lecture in 1966 to his children (us adults). He told the story of Bali Maharaja, and I could sense his animated expressions. He spoke of the "dwarf" Vamanadeva. A dwarf is usually deformed, but this dwarf was a beautiful *brahmana* boy. Another one of Kierkegaard's "absurdities." That is, an attack on reason, something to accept on faith. Srila Prabhupada praised faith in this lecture. When Krishna says *patram puspam*, we accept His words in faith; we believe He actually eats. Why believe some cynic loafer over Krishna? Prabhupada said, "You have faith in the airlines when you buy your ticket." Simple, strong arguments.

He said that once you surrender to Krishna, you can't get out. Sukracarya said, "Don't give to this boy-God or He'll take everything." The boys in the storefront (December '66) laughed especially loud when Swamiji said once you surrender, you can't get out.

As the lecture ended I washed his clothes and hung them on my bookshelf to dry, chanted *gayatri*, and took a hot and cold noon shower. Radha and Krishna on my altar. Why not always worship Yugala-kiSora?

If I am up to it around 3:30, I'll take a walk and then go to the shed to paint. The orange paint is popsicle-colored, and the foaming green and blue look like a delicious, frothy milkshake. On the white Bristol with a half-inch-thick brush, I paint little Miro-like symbols, bald shapes with rods attached, curving moons or eyebrows, motions cool and controlled, calm, not frenetic.

Does it remain abstract?

No. It cannot. A devotee has to say something to the world of suffering. A devotee has to chant the holy name, add *tilaka* to the faces, form conditioned beings who want to practice Krishna consciousness, who want the mercy mentioned in "*Nitai-pada-kamala*."

O Krishna, please give us *all* taste.

Ah, the sparrows against the windows. Do they want to come in? Are they malicious birds, or are they just raiding this field? Why are there so many at once? The clouds press down on the horizon like smoke.

Green trees of death.

What do you mean by that?

I mean you look out at them and it's pastoral, idyllic, but everyone and every plant dies.

Oh, don't be so morbid.

Moribund.

Grave.

Leave something behind that's cheerful for once, cheerful and

Realistic.

Honest.

So this is what happened: we were ahead in the ball game and they started catching up to us. We are the Prabhupadas, the official ISKCON team, and they are something else, with different uniforms. We call them the Heretics

and they call us the Self-righteous and we wonder who will win?

"Come back sooner if you don't feel well," he said.

Yes, I feel relaxed here, at home.

When I walked in the blue-gray at 5:15 this morning, I found two empty Budweiser bottles in the grass near the road. I guess they belong to the neighbor farmer who was here the other day showing Andy how to pitch hay into a mound. Brought the bottles back to the house. Talked with Manu for fifteen minutes. Didn't tell him about EJW though.

Sailing west due north

due to have a baby

laryngitis, spiders look

the phone rings with

that little ding-ding-ding

not like any I'm used to but

I never answer.

I hear, "Please accept

my obeisances" while I sit ready

for potatoes and soup.

\* \* \*

Get ready to receive  
Radha and Krishna and then to leave Them while you tour.  
Be prepared for headaches, but in between  
lecture on Sarvabhauma's "*bhakti-pade*"  
change in *sastra*, and on Balarama's  
Appearance Day, "so much  
nectar in His *lila*." On  
Janma when you  
initiate on behalf of Srila Prabhupada . . .  
get ready  
to dive for his lotus feet.

\* \* \*

2:48 p.m.

Talking in an easy-going way with M. about dying. A Godbrother is telling people that he has only a few years left. We old people still surviving talk more and more of those who have died, but don't include ourselves on the list, not yet. I mentioned some of the poems in the anthology on illness, how "everyone" has hospital experiences.

And here's Jada Bharata telling the king we are not the body. "Everyone is encased within the body. Since the body is never identical with the soul, the bodily activities are merely illusory." (*Bhag.* 5.10.20, purport) The transcendentalist is not afraid of death.

Rahugana says, "Sir, you say that material designations have no reality, but it does seem that material conditions affect the soul." Srila Prabhupada states that the king's arguments are correct only in a practical way; that is, they arise from the bodily conception. What the king says is true for those who are ignorant and not for those who are liberated and detached from the material body. I wrote in the margin, "A king's position in society is not *maya* if it is done in Krishna consciousness. All devotional engagements are real and eternal even though done in the material world." The conditioned state exerts an influence on most of us. rather than denying it, which would be to press the point of "reality" only in a theoretical way, we can admit to material influence, to temporary life, and then use it in Krishna's service. Let there be a good king, a good husband, a good wife, a good *brahmana* "a spirit soul serving the Lord within certain designations but ultimately transcendental to them due to his or her love of God.

The king was anxious to be excused from his offense at the feet of a Vaisnava. Srila Prabhupada states, "Krishna is always very simple and by nature merciful." (*Bhag.* 5.10.24, purport) If you offend His devotee, you must apologize to that devotee. Then Krishna will forgive you.

\* \* \*

Jada says, "King, you are simply in *maya* with your talk of master and servant or material pains and pleasures." In other words, Jada refused to compromise the truth. He could refuse like that because he was no hypocrite. Srila Prabhupada: "Among people in general, 99.9 percent try to talk like experienced advisors, but they are actually devoid of

spiritual knowledge and are therefore like inexperienced children speaking nonsensically." (*Bhag.* 5.11.1, purport)

\* \* \*

4:05 p.m.

The truth is not "whatever you do, don't get into trouble with the ISKCON authorities," nor is it, "Do your own thing and don't listen to the GBC." I tend to think I should act in a way to protect my reputation if only to protect my disciples from my infamy. But infamy or truth is something I have to accept internally. That is, I can't compromise with what feels true to me and which seems to reflect what I have learned from Prabhupada and *sastra*. I want to be conservative, yet I don't want to compromise my vocation in this movement. Truth is not merely obedience to outside powers, but to Krishna's direction.

\* \* \*

5:08 p.m.

Manu's kids have strong lungs. What do I know, sitting out here in the shed? Precious life. A happy child reads and writes.

Haven for lost now found  
niche at his lotus feet.

It's up to Krishna, who wills all. He is so sweet, so mighty. He is not *totally* beyond our knowledge; He can be known through our faith in *sastra* and from the spiritual master.

\* \* \*

Weeds blow in assent.  
Yellow-cream-yellow  
pale weed gold  
thistle  
they blow to the left as  
I look up eyes bathed  
in clear air painless  
this moment  
Krishna Krishna. I tag  
on.

\* \* \*

I flail and float like  
a puffball from the  
weed head on the  
wind  
O poem is so "

lax.

\* \* \*

And little yellow flowers like buttercups or lesser celandine amid the green grass and yellow rye, and further off but all on the same plane, the water, rippling dark blue, and the sky "

such *big* clouds move and  
you can see them, bigger than  
the hugest imaginable  
trailer trucks  
or jumbo elephants.  
Don't say "demons" or  
you'll frighten me and  
I've got enough to fear  
in dreams and head.  
Easy Street  
blues, my friend  
Jimmy playing clarinet  
at sixty years old I  
ought to tell him now's  
the time to center on  
Krishna  
with every breath.  
He can do that  
on clarinet, but how pinpointed?  
Ask yourself.

\* \* \*

Krishna is kind,  
big arms  
narrow strait.

\* \* \*

*I thank You for this day*  
and simply hope it counts  
as an offering to You.  
Please give me what You  
think is best and the  
strength to endure all  
in remembrance of  
Govinda as he taught me  
and taught us all.

August 15, 12:05 a.m.

Jada means "mad, crazy," but Jada only appeared to be mad so that people wouldn't involve him in the craziness of their material life. Prabhupada asked, "Who is crazy?" Now that he is speaking, Jada Bharata tells the king that relationships in this material world "are simply talks about material activities." For people who put their faith in such things, "spiritual advancement is definitely not manifest."

I speak of the mix in my writing, but Jada Bharata asserts that matter and spirit don't mix. All his life he stayed apart from temporary affairs. How do I presume to "mix" with him? I am obviously a mix myself "a combination of spirit and matter. I am also mixed in affection; I feel some affection for Krishna's eternal activities and pastimes, and I appear to have affection for certain material affairs. Srila Prabhupada speaks of unalloyed devotion. By that he means unmixed "no karma, no *jnana*. Pure devotional service. Oil and water don't mix; matter and spirit don't mix.

Yet what does it mean to mix? Everything comes from Krishna, including everything we now define as matter (*sarvam khalv idam brahma*). We can use so-called matter in Krishna's service (*yukta-vairagya*).

The mix comes in through consciousness itself. Mixed consciousness I cannot justify. If I am of mixed motives in my devotion, I should associate with devotees such as Jada Bharata. He's speaking to (and for) confused, materialistic persons, exemplified by King rahugana. His instructions are meant to help people in the material world cut their attachments. I should hear submissively.

The dictionary has a variety of meanings for *mix*, and some are relevant to this discussion. Here's one: "To put ingredients together as in 'to mix a cake.' To join, combine, as in 'to mix work with play.'" These meanings seem constructive, not jarring or wrong. "Electronically combining live and recorded music on a tape. To get along with people." (I want to mix with this great sage by hearing from him in devotional service. Of course, I can only do that by going through the transparent medium of my own spiritual master. I hear of Jada Bharata from Srila Prabhupada, and Srila Prabhupada gives Jada Bharata's presentation his own particular emphasis. That means I associate with Jada Bharata on Srila Prabhupada's terms. That's a kind of mix, isn't it?)

Some of the meanings of *mix* have negative connotations: "A muddle, state of confusion. A mixture of dissimilar components, elements, parts, ideas." Jada Bharata is elevated and I am foolish, attached, and fearful. Jada Bharata is compassionate and I am lost. That's a mix, but still, the sage remains pure even if I "mix" with him. That is, a mix is not a merge. When a poor man reads the *Bhagavatam*, the spotless *Purana* does not become poor. The poor man's realizations are understood to be due to his limited vision. If he incorporates *Srimad-Bhagavatam* into his life, it's good for him and no loss to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

So we mix, but we shouldn't change the *siddhanta* of the pure *bhagavata* teachers. That would be a disservice. Mixing *Srimad-Bhagavatam* with Mayavada philosophy is a great offense. Using *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to enjoy our senses is also offensive. I avoid it.

I am interested in mixed media. It makes for interesting reading for other *jada* people in this world. Even sane, pure people like mixtures. Srila Prabhupada said that variety is

the mother of enjoyment. We just have to know how to mix things properly and when not to mix. Wrong mixtures in spiritual life are called *rasabhasa*. We don't mix metaphors.

\* \* \*

Jada Bharata makes it clear to the king that the purpose behind the *Vedas* is not *karma-kanda*. There is talk of material relationship and gain in the *Vedas*, but that's only for beginners in spiritual life. Those concepts have to be renounced. Jada Bharata is above such illusion. He wants to elevate the king beyond it. Sometimes this is done gradually. Lord Krishna teaches gradual elevation in *Bhagavad-gita*, but within a few short chapters, He makes it clear that we are meant to renounce *karma-kanda* and to completely surrender unto Him (*vedaiS ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*).

I'm eager to hear Jada Bharata go above *tattva-jnana* to specifically mention *bhakti*. I'm sure he will. Srila Prabhupada has already mentioned it in his purports to this section, quoting *mad bhaktim labhyate param*.

If our desires are mixed, we must stay in the material world to suffer both pain and pleasure. I don't advocate that kind of mixing. Actually, I'm exposing my foolishness by this mixed writing. A pure devotee wouldn't have the things on his mind that seem to live in mine. Even if he admitted that material desires or perceptions, or such mixtures, passed through his mind, he might call it mental chatter and ignore it. I doubt he would put it in his writing. The very best devotees see Krishna everywhere.

\* \* \*

Now he discusses the mind. The mind, he says, is the sixteenth material item. Depending on how the mind is situated, one gets a higher or lower body. "The mind is the center for accepting the dictation of material nature. In this way the living entity is carried away in different types of bodies continuously, millennium after millennium." (*Bhag. 5.11.5*, purport)

\* \* \*

4:08 a.m.

I am lucky to be able to write this morning, and fortunate to be connected to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, its mighty flow, and especially the purports. I want to stay in the shelter of Prabhupada's books.

M. is going to Dublin. I was thinking of asking him to drop into Veritas to get me the new seven-hundred-page edition of Cassian's *Conferences*. I think I'll hold my tongue. I have enough books. I can save my diminishing time for *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I'm already mixed up enough.

Tom Mix

trail mix

granola "you know what I mean.

I want to become a scholar again

of desert foxes,



the prayer makers of Christ?

No, I'll stick to my own kind and decorate the son of Nanda with necklaces, a crown, and a *dhoti*.

So friends, we are gathered here today in Northern Ireland to tell of the simple facts. Robert Haas wrote a prose poem, which I read this morning, about a young composer who wanted to make love to a sixty-year-old Japanese lady painter. She said she would be willing, but told him that she had both breasts removed. He replied, "I don't think I could then." That night she put on his porch a cup with a covering of rose petals and underneath, a collection of dead bees.

That was on my mind while I was in the shower this morning. The shower is a usually a good time for creative ideas, but I wasted it, caught in the impact of that prose poem about the body and what is love.

Better to find love in what Srila Prabhupada says "love of God. If you try for anything else, you'll be frustrated, as Gandhi was and all physical lovers become. Devotees hear that and sometimes wonder, "Where is Krishna? Is He something substantial?" We can't always grasp what it means to love Him. Is He a cloud, an island, everything, a grand idea? Or is Krishna the woman with her breasts removed and the withering of a young man's lust for her? Well, friend, He is all those things and more "He is apart from all of it. He has his own transcendental form.

A devotee is supposed to be carrying large Radha-Krishna Deities to me. I'll receive them in less than a week. Srila Prabhupada said that Lord Caitanya is the most merciful form of Krishna, and that gives us what even Krishna didn't give. Why not worship Him? I do, I do, but now I have developed at least a little interest in seeing and serving the forms of Radha and Krishna. I want to go with the energy. Lord Caitanya and Radha-Krishna are nondifferent. Lord Caitanya is mysterious. I can't make out His features so well in the old Bengali painting on my altar "but He is mysterious. Some devotees call Him Gaura and seem to have a living relationship with Him.

For me, the *dhama* is in Prabhupada's books, and now it will be available through the Radha-Krishna Deities, the essence of Vrndavana. I write this to ease my impatience. I hope the Deities will come from Vrndavana to me; I asked a devotee to buy Them.

\* \* \*

His speech was on the recalcitrant prose elements in Melville's last supper. It was in the way of sentencing the mushroom grown overnight so spongy. But don't eat it "it could be poisonous or a hallucinatory drug. You would die in the worst consciousness and have to come back. Now that's the point: Whatever you do in this lifetime affects your next life. This life may be pleasant or not, but it's always brief. What you do in human life is crucial. A dog can't do much to improve his next life. At least it won't fall below its present status but will move along through its particular evolution of species. A human, however, has the opportunity and the responsibility to develop God consciousness. It's possible to go back to Godhead from the human body if one is fortunate enough to meet a pure devotee and to follow that devotee with great determination. Only then will the human be able to stop accumulating useless karmic baggage and have the opportunity to enter *samadhi*. Devotees in Vrndavana have a head

start on that. But you already told me some of your hang-ups. Maybe you can work to overcome them. At least don't avoid the *dhama*. It will rub off on you. Mother India . . .

You were saying that you need to overcome problems and chant Hare Krishna in the human form of life because that's the chance to go back to Godhead. The best thing is to preach. Become Krishna's dearmost. *Janma karma ca me divyam*: come to know the nature of His appearance and activities. Somehow or other, think of Krishna, say His holy names, and become eligible to go back to Godhead. Keep the decks clear, keep the room uncluttered, keep your sex life sublimated and your vision fixed on Govinda. Then you will make progress.

Thank you, thank you, I will mix with the devotees of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and the birds and grass, but mostly I'll keep to myself this weekend. I will go to see Radha-Govinda on Sunday and read from *Caitanya-caritamrta*. I'll also note down what the elevated sage said to the king. It is meant for me to learn how not to be overcome by the material modes. Find the spirit like the swan who takes only the milk out of a mixture of water and milk. As long as you are in this world, find the spirit in matter.

\* \* \*

8:35 a.m.

The mind causes bondage or liberation. When it's under the modes it pollutes the pure nature of the soul. Or more accurately, it covers the soul with different polluted attitudes and a person either identifies with the covering or forgets he's a pure soul. Krishna conscious sensual and mental activities work to clear away the covering.

As soon as M. left, I started washing the kitchen and bathroom floors. I did a superficial job, but still picked up a lot of dirt. It was good physical exercise and a total kind of cleansing of myself too (although I only removed the topmost levels). First I swept it with brush and dustpan. Then I applied hot water made soapy with "Fairy" grease-cutting liquid. A dirt and grease layer immediately came off, but deeper stains remained. I didn't have the proper equipment to go deeper. I'd need a stiff brush. My heart was beating faster. I told myself, "Don't overdo it." But it was bliss.

Went on to sweep up my room and stopped there.

The mind is like that, covered with filth. It seems easier in one sense to tackle a filthy floor. You just need bodily strength, good cleaning instruments, and a will. I imagine myself back in the Navy assigned to a daily task like that, or in the Parks Department. Some menial workers take satisfaction in cleaning jobs, although most probably grumble and see themselves as underdogs. They'd love to give the cleaning to someone else. But cleaning is free of complex mental worries. At least when you clean alone it is.

So speaks a dilettante writer who once a week rolls up his sleeves and gets off his duff to clean a few small spaces.

What is the mind? Do you feel it becoming clean when you chant? When you honor *prasada*? The mind is subtle, so the feeling of cleaning it is also subtle. You don't notice the dust balls in the corners as easily as you can when you clean your body or your house. The grit isn't always visible. It would be nice if we could see it working more. Of course, the absence of meditation on sex is one symptom. Freedom from anger and fear, from feeling competitive in relationships, the peace "these too are

symptoms. *Brahmanas* are *Suci*. Cleanliness is the absence of dirt. When certain dirty things are present, however, you may think them enjoyable, and *that's* the illusion. Peace and patience are part of a clean life, and not always expecting the clear, multi-colored brilliance of ecstasy. Also, part of the pleasure in cleaning is seeing the filth run down the drain, washed away, seeing it disappear. That only takes time and retrospection to see in relation to the mind.

\* \* \*

All these senses are under the control of the mind, which works under the concept of false ego. All of this falls under the control of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *jiva* has many ideas and activities. The *jivan-mukta* can see it all vividly, and therefore he stays apart from material life and engages in Krishna's service.

\* \* \*

O Kay, that's it. Wrap it up. I'll take it. Do you live alive or half dead? Ah, let me lie on my back and rest. Here comes a boat rowed by a man, a child as passenger. The child wears a bright orange life jacket. You have to weigh seventy pounds before you can wear one of them. Gray clouds where it was once piercing sunlight glancing in on me. Late morning it comes glancing at an angle into my face at the desk. My work desk. I get driven away. Clouds are welcome.

I don't feel right now that I am writing or reading wholeheartedly. Earlier this month my theme was accepting my limits. Keep doing whatever I can and be virtuous. Avoid diversion. Now another boat is starting out from Inis rath. The morning program must be over. Now a third.

Scratch the pen in the silent room. No diversions. Stay simple and quiet and become ignited only by the main sources of life within the processes of ninefold *bhakti*.

But you never know if you're actually in.

Tired of that nagging voice.

I look through the binocs and see that the last two boats are filled with guests. Just floating now. Two couples. Deciding what to do on a mid-August day. It's not likely a person will take seriously to Krishna consciousness. It's rare. Encourage the congregation. Anyone who favors our tiny movement should be praised. Don't be condescending toward anyone. Here I am laboring away with Jada Bharata's teachings. A guest may think, "Is that all you have after thirty years?" Yeah, you struggle and sometimes find the teachings dry, but you aren't qualified to read *gopi-bhava* either. You sit somewhat empty.

The guests are canoers. Bare arms. In one red canoe there are two women, bulky lifejackets. Sigh and welcome the blue-gray covering of the sky. Is this the hue of Krishna? A lone gull, a Chinese poem, a calligraphy ink painting, a morning keeping time. The raindrops on the grass blades were plentiful this morning. The sun didn't manage to dry them all before the clouds moved in.

\* \* \*

12:13 noon

Get back to Jada Bharata later. He seems to discuss more *jnana* than *bhakti*, but Srila Prabhupada makes it all pure *bhakti*, including the *jnana* that cuts our ties to material illusion. Whatever the guru gives, that's our meal. We are students in a Vedic *gurukula*: unless the spiritual master calls us to eat, we fast. Or, perhaps we are like the birds who drink only water from clouds. We will learn everything "lower stages, higher stages "from our guru. We will practice only as he teaches. I don't know what I am, what I need "only what he gives me.

Oh, but surely we're more grown up than that. Can't we range outside the narrow walls of our beginner topics and hear from *Siksa-gurus*, appointed our otherwise, about *rasa*?

Everything is there in Prabhupada's books. There is so much we don't understand. "If you want to know me, read my books." So go deeper. What is secret or implicit will be revealed through faith expressed over time.

Dear Srila Prabhupada, I hope you will allow me to approach radha-Krishna *murtis*. I know I am just a child, but I take Their worship seriously. I never had access to radha-Krishna Deities in childhood as you did. I will live out my Vaisnava childhood now. I'll play at being a *pujari* with you, my loving father, to oversee.

\* \* \*

3:52 p.m.

A devotee asked me if we could print an article in "Among Friends" on the artist in society, culture in ISKCON, and how my writing fits into all that. The idea was to educate devotees, to defend my writing against the opinion that it's form is not *parampara*, etc. I don't feel like it. It doesn't seem right to become my own advocate. That would be too political. Of course, *everything* we do could be considered a political statement, but I don't want to bring that energy into my writing by consciously making such statements. Whatever I am contributing, I am contributing. Let me leave it at that.

There goes a big, gray heron.

Warm as summer today and the sky is clear. I tried to leave the house when no one was walking the paths, but a car passed me and the driver waved. I waved back. A child on a swing ran away when I approached. I saw Andy alone, bare-chested, working the earth by his house. Andy is doing his thing; he's a family man, and wants to be alone to work out a life with his wife, children, and a few animals. That's his statement.

Mine is this: a writer writes. People who read my books do so out of loyalty and affection, and in some cases, because they receive nourishment from them. Not all of them understand my work's larger mission. Maybe I don't understand it either. Anything I say either to advocate art and culture or to be reticent about it is liable to be posed "something I borrowed or learned from other artists and writers.

Puff balls float by in the breeze. This is where I want to be "near this quiet lake with no one to bother me. A boat cruises slowly. The shed door is open and creaks in a mild breeze. If too many bees take advantage of the open door I'll have to close it. This is a blessed life.

\* \* \*

4:54 p.m.

Child scrawl and I'm happy "nothing to advocate. Just painting in His shelter. Narottama dasa cries, "I rejected the great treasure of love of Radha-Krishna. I drank poison. Fie, fie on Narottama dasa."

I listen as I paint  
and I feel  
no dryness  
no doubt.

Doubt, oh I doubt. This is my doubt: should I leave the Krishna consciousness implicit or let it pop out in my drawings like *tilaka* on a forehead? I drew three birds and three flowers. Is it Krishna consciousness? Can others get the message?

No? Okay, I'll spell it out. These birds are from Vrndavana. They are a detail from a painting of Yugala-kiSora. A master painter has already done the Divine Couple; I only paint the corners.

Headache gone along with the day's heat. Someone is hammering in the distance. At the moment, the water is peaceful. The songs of Narottama dasa Thakura, which we are unqualified to hear, have bathed us in the nectar of the Divine Couple's intimate service. I am connecting them to my ordinary, abstract, joyous scene.

Thank you, Lord, for time.

O Narottama

O Rupa-Raghunatha

O Vrndavana

O Inis rath,

Radha-Govinda and

little Radha-Krishna in my room,

Srila Prabhupada in light cotton *cadar* on this warm day,

I pray to return to you. Please don't kick me away.

\* \* \*

5:56 p.m.

Jada Bharata recommends Vasudeva. Jada Bharata's instructions about clearing away *upadis* are meant to bring us to worshipping Vasudeva. If we suffer from the bodily concept of life, we cannot become pure devotees. Although I said previously that Jada Bharata's instructions sounded like *jnana*, I'm aware that his instructions are filled with compassion; he is trying to free us from bondage. The mind "creates bondage and a false sense of intimacy within this material world." (*Bhag.* 5.11.16, purport) Service to guru and Hari will conquer the material mind.

*Nama*

mamma

Rahugana.

Jada was covered as a *dvija-bandhu*, but the king knows now that he is "not different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead." That's the nature of a great sage.

Do I accept my guru like that?  
Ride in big car,  
accept a tinsel rose garland  
and foot bath of ghee and  
think I'm Number One  
at least in the hearts of  
my disciples.  
But that's not  
true,  
you're a swallow, a  
swift,  
a night owl, pigeon  
in the dark of your widgeon-covered  
moss-eaten  
but pure unknown  
soul. Ye gad!

August 16, 12:05 a.m.

"O best of the *brahmanas*, my body is filled with dirty things, and my vision has been bitten by the serpent of pride. Due to my material conceptions, I am diseased. Your nectarean instructions are the proper medicine for one suffering from such a fever, and they are cooling waters for one scorched by the heat." (*Bhag.* 5.1.22)

Could this help with headaches? It doesn't seem to have the same effect as an Esgic. This is more lasting help. In the meantime, I want to know what I am supposed to *do* with Krishna's instructions: "Learn to tolerate these material pains and pleasures." His words are there, but when I am in pain, and although I *can* tolerate it, I'm sidelined.

What else can I say? I can't tell myself, "This is simply a formality of bodily transformations. It will go away in twelve or twenty-four hours. In the meantime, I'll go on with my service exactly as if I were pain-free." Because I don't. I can't.

No, Krishna doesn't expect it. He does expect that a devotee remains undisturbed and firm in spiritual realization. Spiritual realization does not depend on the external details of our service. I may have to stop reading and writing and cancel the lectures, but that doesn't end my devotional service. I can still offer my limited activities to Krishna. I can still inwardly be a devotee even if outwardly I cannot act. And my service is not finished in another way too, because when the pain has subsided, I pick up where I left off. As I try to improve the service I render when I have no pain, I may also try to improve the service I render when I am experiencing pain. I shouldn't become paralyzed like an insect stung by a velvet ant. I am not a victim. Seek clear consciousness within pain. I know it's easier said than done, but Krishna simply wants to see me try, and He will accept the effort.

"King Rahugana argued that the living entity is within the body and that when the body is fatigued the living entity within must be suffering." Jada Bharata did not agree. "The living entity has nothing to do with bodily pain and pleasure. These are simply mental concoctions." (*Bhag.* 5.12.6, purport)

Reading (or hearing) these statements from a self-realized soul does not make us self-realized. Jada Bharata was not troubled by carrying the palanquin or even by the dacoit's chopper. While we are astounded and admire his position, however, we cannot automatically assume we possess the same equipoise. rather, we plead our weakness and inability.

Still, we keep what he says in mind. Surely I can practice *some* form of tolerance, if only to tell myself, "I, the soul, just as the Supersoul, am always apart from bodily pleasure and pain." This is not a mantra intended to kill pain, or a form of hypnotic anesthesia. I don't know quite *what* it is, but I honor it and accept it is a statement of absolute truth.

I remember the Indian eye doctor who inquired about my headaches. She asked about my medication, and I told her I had a prescription drug with Acetaminophen Butabital and caffeine. She said, upon seeing me dressed in a saffron *dhoti*, that I ought to be able to meditate. Here's what we meditate upon: I am spirit soul, a part of the transcendental Lord Visnu. These bodily pains do not apply to my real self. When the car is dented, the car's owner is not hurt unless he identifies the self with the car.

They say the pain is caused when blood in my head is forced through a contracted vein. A signal is sent to the brain's pain center. Well, I'm not blood or vein or even brain. I'm transcendental spirit soul, part of the Supreme, and I reside in a body. This pain has been caused by the combination of flesh, blood, and bone; it has nothing to do with me. Even Dr. Kane said cancer never bothered anyone and that we are beyond the mind. Jada Bharata says the mind can be a friend or an enemy. Now do you see why he's taking the time to be analytical? It's not a useless cogitation. It's to bring you freedom from pain *and* pleasure as I try to experience it through body and mind. rise above the temporary situation of relief and inconvenience and sense gratification. Please teach me, Jada Bharata, servant of God. And Lord Vasudeva, Balarama, please give me the strength to comprehend in a way that I will be transformed.

\* \* \*

Jada Bharata tells King Rahugana he's unqualified to be king because he has been using his subjects for his own sense gratification in the name of offering them protection.

We each have to examine ourselves against that standard: do I accept honor or service from dependents for my own sense gratification.

Most us would tend to answer yes "if not in truth, at least in humility. We think accepting the profile of guru, king, leader, etc., is detrimental to our cultivation of humility. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura said he didn't have disciples ""never had and never will." Yet he did initiate many disciples. He also said that we have a particular service to perform in helping dependents. People may think us arrogant for accepting the role "we may think *ourselves* arrogant "but Lord Caitanya has ordered us to serve in this way.

So we should be careful and not use dependents to satisfy our senses. Give them spiritual life.

Moving along a clock-bound way. The clock, its black face and white numbers and hands "it's a Swiss army clock taking up temporary space to inform me of temporary time. I ought to learn.

That in itself takes time, or so we have discovered. We have all read these teachings before. The king is a rascal. Will he now become a mendicant or even a more humble king?

We each have to think how to act according to our own realizations. We can't do things artificially. At the same time, we have to come up to the standard of Jada Bharata's teachings. We must become his student. He can give *Siksa*, and Srila Prabhupada has authorized us to hear from him. ". . . we are but dust and we shall be but dust. Everyone can consider this point." (*Bhag.* 5.12.8)

Back to pain: everything is God's energy. When I get a headache, there's no point telling myself that it's not happening, that because I am ignorant I am imagining the pain. There *is* blood in my head, and that vein must be very small since it malfunctions so often. Still, it's illusion; it's illusion because it is temporary. It troubles me because I identify with it.

And it is God sent. By seeking the true self, we can understand all this and find ourselves inclined to pray and praise Hari.

\* \* \*

O dear sir, dear urchin of the desert and 76th Street, Queens and Cannes, France's sinful alleys (and wherever else you've been in your sordid past), you *are* stunned and unable to think or feel. You've misused your human life. Please, it's not too late. You have the spiritual master's shelter, and he is a pure devotee of Krishna. Bow down and receive his grace. *Tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya*. Inquire from and serve him.

\* \* \*

4:55 a.m.

I used up time and energy today during *japa* and in the bathroom not listening to Prabhupada but thinking about and writing a letter on culture in ISKCON, the role of the artist in society, etc. Now I'm here with my mug of coffee on the ship's bridge, looking out at the ocean's expanse with the captain and the navigator. We are three degrees left and two degrees right. All is well. There's a half moon on the water; the stars are bright. We are under orders. Bullshit, Admiral and the USN.

O ancients, O agents of Orange and Esso, we men were forced into the wars in those days. The clever guys got out of the draft. right now there is no war and we tend to think we are enjoying the surf (surfing the Internet, that is). Don't doubt that there will be more trouble ahead.

What, me worry? Not as long as the sun and moon take their shifts in the sky.

I defend the writing of books by people like me in our own voices, because who else's voice do we have? Shall we become a Charlie McCarthy to someone's Edgar Bergen? No, better to be real, to reel and jig if that is where the spirit moves you. The time is coming when the Krishna consciousness movement will have its own artists and poets,



although that time is not obvious yet. No one is much interested now. We are more interested in raising money and taking each other to court. The kids are screaming and the new generation wants to work on the farms. She said, "We have philosophy coming out of our ears. We need *varnaSrama*. We need the ox." Someone responded, "If you think the ox is so important, why don't you work one yourself? Why don't *you* live on a farm?" Oh brother. We all think the other ought to be something else.

Let me tell you: it is not required to tell others how to live. We can just research our facts and put them on the Net.

The net?

You mean, the net in her hair or  
the net in the pouch  
in the web and the  
Rock and  
the Wolfe.

(You mean I gotta read this huge book just to be considered hip?) O romantic eyes, what *do* you want?

I already read the required books but never found paradise there. I didn't make it in New York City. None of my books are published by major publishers. I have climbed no trees and hugged them in the rain, and I don't keep rabbits or a goat for a pet. I don't have a big wife,

or even a little one,  
and I don't own a  
porcupine.

Then what *do* I have, and what do I want?

I don't want to remember the hero sandwiches I ate. I'm not so maudlin to think those were good times. I remember wanting to count the pages of the Dickens's novel to see how many were left. I wanted to finish book after book after book after book.

Now I would prefer to run away from Vaisnava *aparadhas*. I lie on a beach and don't listen to anything that even smells of offense. I leap across the Parcheesi board and perform and create in a darkened theater with makeup on my face. I am hidden from the world and walk out only when the few harbor lights blink out and something like pale blue dawn almost lights up the sky. First thoughts at first light.

\* \* \*

He waltzed the fox trot, the Sonny rollins three-quarter time, he and Max roach "the concept of the improvising artist interests me. I will stop this now in favor of biting a fingernail, cutting a piece of fruit, and opening a container of orange juice.

It has been nice feeling blissful. Anna may become a nun at the cathedral. The dance in the square outside Mary of the Angels Church in Assisi "that church had a tall, golden dome. Someone was playing an accordion and  
an older couple danced.

I can't tell,  
can't tell,  
don't know.

I want to focus my energy on the holy name  
while walking  
on an ankle that isn't too bad.  
I'll come back with an appetite.

\* \* \*

7:47 a.m.

Matter doesn't create life. Everything comes from God. reading aloud can help catch your attention. This is Prabhupada's book. Someone smirks at my struggle to be chaste to him. They wonder why I don't seem to actually love my spiritual master and feel fully satisfied and enlivened in my life. Obviously, it's a sign that I need *raganuga* and another guru who can teach it. I'm caught in a current trying to carry me the opposite way, but like that rower I saw rowing against a stiff wind, I head my bow at an angle and use hard strokes. He made it across and so will I.

\* \* \*

It's all matter in this world. We stand on feet and legs, but still rest upon the earth. The earth rests upon the Supreme Lord. He is the support of everything.

If the sun comes out and it warms up, some Irishmen strip to the waist to let the sunshine penetrate, it's such a rare event. Doesn't look like that will happen today.

Lord Visnu is the resting place of the entire creation. The ultimate truth is nondual knowledge. His highest feature is Bhagavan. ". . . the absolute truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee."

"The spiritual master has actually seen Krishna; therefore he can explain Him properly." *Maha-pada rajo-bhisekam*. Smear your entire body with the dust of his lotus feet.

You mean literally?

If that's not possible, at least do it figuratively. Your whole body should be engaged in his service. Your mind is the center of your senses, so dedicate it to Krishna's service under the guru's order.

And find the connection. It's windy today. We hear it, even listen to it, but can we connect it to Krishna? Yes, I suppose so. We can describe the link in words. Krishna is the sound in ether. I learned that not just by reading it in *Bhagavad-gita*, but by serving my spiritual master. He taught me to see Krishna everywhere. If I *do* see Krishna everywhere, that is an act of faith in guru.

The sun piercing through the blue layers. It is so powerful. But the clouds don't go away. Or if they seem to, I know they will return. That is one comfort or familiarity of life here.

\* \* \*

9:10 a.m.

I'm thinking during my up-time (i.e., time free from headaches) how I may improve my consciousness when I am in pain. One idea is to keep writing. If looking at the page

and moving the pen is too difficult or seems to increase the pain, then perhaps I can write orally.

But the truth is, I find concentrated creative thought difficult at that time. What would I say but that it hurts? I tend to shut down my *bhajana* and wait while trying to remain calm. My service at that time is not to resent the interruption even though that time feels like a blank.

The main point is to become more and more obedient to the spiritual master's instructions. remember Krishna. Even if I don't read during such a day, I can take a few minutes to review something I have already read. I can think about Krishna.

Krishna is present in all matter. I can start with my pain to prove it. Then I won't forget Him. Matter (*maya*) simply means forgetfulness of Krishna. It appears that we can move from *maya* to Krishna the way the sun goes in and out around Lough Erne.

\* \* \*

### Inviting Sri Sri Radha-Krishna

A few reasons why I am asking Radha-Krishna to come to my "home," even though it is generally advised (in *Pancaratyapadipa*, the ISKCON Deity worship book) that Radha-Krishna should not be worshiped in the home:

1. I'm a semi-invalid;. I don't go often to the temple.
2. I'm stating that I will stay mostly in one place with only occasional trips away.
3. I'm hankering to see the three-dimensional, threefold bending forms of Radha-Krishna.
4. It's not forbidden. Many householders have small Radha-Krishna Deities in their homes, especially Indians.
5. I have been a devotee for over thirty years. I don't say this to claim that this means I'm advanced. Still, I seek permission based on my seniority. I have never attempted such worship before, although for many years I have worshiped Prabhupada, and before him, Gaura-Nitai, Lord Jagannatha, and Lord Nrsimha.
6. I don't want to miss concentrating upon Radha and Krishna, the goal of Gaudiya Vaisnava contemplation. (Many of the Vrndavana *gosvamis* kept Radha-Krishna *murtis*, although they were mendicants and did not have the facilities of a temple.)
7. I have seen the example of a *sannyasi* Godbrother who keeps Radha-Krishna Deities along with other Deities, although his Deities are not installed and he does not engage in elaborate worship throughout the day.
8. Narottama dasa Thakura sings, *Ha ha prabhu nandasuta vrsabhanu-suta yuta, karuna karaha ei bara*: "My dear Lord, You are now present with the daughter of King Vrsabhanu, Srimati Radharani. Now both of You please be merciful upon me. Don't kick me away, because I have no shelter other than You." (Quoted in *Bhag.* 4.31.20, purport)

\* \* \*

I wrote a note to Madhu discussing my proposal to worship Radha-Krishna in my room. The main concern seems to be what to do with Them when I travel. The request for Radha-Krishna Deities comes within the context of my now living at a base,

something I have rarely done during my years as a *sannyasi*. I'm grounded due to illness right now, but if my health were to improve, would I be committed and inclined to continue my *babaji* lifestyle and to not travel and preach as a *sannyasi* should?

To be honest, I seem more inclined as I grow older (and physically weaker with no sign of "curing" my headaches) to live mostly alone. It seems to be my nature. The Deities will add a dimension to my life that would otherwise not be possible. I have no hope of becoming close to any temple Radha-Krishna Deities.

While massaging Prabhupada today, I was struck by the good fortune I have of this intimate service to His Divine Grace in his *murti* form. Any additional Deity worship I do must not compromise or replace my main Prabhupada worship, especially with its 11 a.m. twenty-minute session of massage, bathing, and dressing. Radha and Krishna may come to me, if They desire, under the glance and approval of Srila Prabhupada. Radha and Krishna would come as part of the family of existing *seva* and *darSana* already going on here.

\* \* \*

I had a dream in which I was talking with Prabhupada's servant. He told me that Prabhupada had said to him that if he had any desire in this world, it was the desire to live with an extended family, "like a Jewish parent with his children." I immediately asked what Prabhupada had meant by Jewish. The servant said, "Parents being lovingly attached." Then he continued to make this portrait of Prabhupada, a liberated soul definitely, but having made this one very human statement that if he had any attachment, it would be for such a family. He had left it all behind to take *sannyasa*. It was revealed later in the dream that Prabhupada had said that to point out how we disciples have many material attachments. We have to give them up as we march to attain the spiritual world.

When the servant told all of us present Prabhupada's comment about wanting a family, he didn't say it with the slightest trace of criticism or thought that it was mundane. None of us thought that way. We just accepted it as another expression of Prabhupada's sweetness.

On waking, however, I knew of course that this dream didn't tally with Prabhupada's own statements about himself. He never said he was attached to family. Rather, he performed his duty as a *grhastha* when he was in that *aSrama*, but didn't seem to have much attachment to his children. Neither were his children so loving. He was dedicated to preaching and to increasing the spiritual family of devotees. I could say, therefore, that the sentiment that I felt in the dream was false, but I'm not inclined to do that. Even if the dream's details didn't tally with Prabhupada's biography, I felt some love toward Prabhupada and that was real.

\* \* \*

3 p.m.

Jada Bharata tells the king of his past life. Bharata Maharaja didn't consult a spiritual master when he became attached to the deer. No one should think they know better than their spiritual master or that the spiritual master is an ordinary man. Such thinking will cause only falldown.

Our service to Krishna never goes in vain even if we do fall down. At least we have that solace. Still, that shouldn't become enough solace to invite ourselves to fall down as if it doesn't matter. That would be sinning on the strength of the holy name.

Next I'll be reading Jada Bharata's allegorical instructions about the forest of material enjoyment. In one chapter he teaches it and in the next, at the king's request, he explains each example. Here again one might object that this is not Vraja-bhava and therefore we don't want to hear it. But are we "am I "so completely free of material desires? Even if I am relatively free, do I have compassion for those who are trapped? Am I fully aware of the dangers and sufferings involved in material life so that I will never even think of returning to them? As a preacher, it is good to remember these examples for forceful and graphic (yet tactful) illumination of the dangers to those who still see material life as real and enjoyable.

\* \* \*

3:35 p.m.

Tomorrow and Monday I will be lecturing. I have the pastimes lined up for Balarama's Appearance day. I won't argue to prove his existence, but retell the pastimes and ask the devotees to contribute what they can remember or their comments and questions. Fasting until noon.

*Parasya Saktir vividhaiya Srutyate.* Are radha and Krishna coming from Vrndavana? Do They will to come?

Here comes the deluxe barge with chairs on top and plenty of covered space below. We could hold a floating seminar on that barge and teach thirty students about austerity and renunciation, then have apple crumb pie with whipped cream for dessert. We could envy the pure devotees, or almost as bad, the materialists their barge, and seal our doom. We might be too proud to notice our vanity.

\* \* \*

4:43 p.m.

Strange world, your paintings, sir, stranger even than your prose. That man with the derby, is he from some great art print or is he a devotee? Is that a chubby woman face beside his or an older male *babaji* who has become wise?

Those two faces up close to one another "are they talking? Sulking? Living in two different universes? Or what?

That man sitting against the tree, why is his hand gnarled? Is it because you can't draw hands?

That expression you made on the other guy, that looks real. I was lucky with that one; it just came out that way.

I like them all. They may be strange, and they're certainly simple (and colorful), a child's rendering of two persons in a boat. Note the sun wedged between the rainy clouds and the blue-black-gray rain pelting down. Look, that person has a crooked smile or frown (why didn't you make up your mind?).

\* \* \*

So, Henry Higgins, I think you have a little time left over for leisurely discussion. What will it be?

I'd like to tell of the silent pauses after the exhilarating *bhajana* Srila Prabhupada sang while he pounded his one-headed drum. He sang the *mangalacarana* prayers with a jumpy rhythm section. Then it clicked off and I was suddenly alone with the open windows and the wind and the massive gray clouds. It touched me, that rhythm punctuated by those clouds.

ParaSurama wrote me from a "workhouse" in County Mayo where the *pada-yatris* stopped for *kirtana* and *prasadam*. He has twenty-five or thirty people with him. He's a leader. I salute him. He said thousands died at this workhouse during the famine. He said the devotees with him said they found Ireland the best place they've been for preaching.

I'm staked out here. Only my flickering mind can chase me out. Unless I say otherwise, some *large* Radha-Krishna Deities will arrive here with all Their paraphernalia. It's a rare opportunity. Don't be over-conservative (worried about the size) and deny Them. Maybe I need big lotus feet because I am nearsighted (I mean, farsighted). Whatever I am, I need to see things up close.

I'll never be able to carry Them, though. That's clear enough. All right. Just stay in one place? When I travel, I can carry Their picture and always pray to return to Them.

August 17, 12 midnight

As he enters the forest of material existence, the conditioned soul is attacked by six plunderers. They are like jackals "the wife and children. "This is wanted; please give me this."

I dream of similarly bad conditions. The last dream of the night put me in the Army. I didn't identify with the "me" character so much; it was more like watching a movie. Anyway, the poor character was subject to Army induction propaganda by the soldiers. They lectured on the effectiveness of their explosives and ammunition. Finally he asked where he would stay. He was assigned to the fifth floor to share a room. The man who took him minimized the difficulties, but said that he would have to walk down five flights to use the common bathroom. The "forest of material enjoyment" was a story Jada Bharata told the king to hold his interest. Dreams are like that too, but you rarely get the entire point. If we are lucky enough to find a guide like Jada Bharata, either in a dream or more importantly in waking life, we can free ourselves from the horrible conditions he describes.

As I read, I make mental notes, "Yes, that too." He mentions biting mosquitoes in the bowers. Yesterday I saw the cow's face covered with flies. She wasn't even bothering to shake them away.

A materialist is blinded by sex desire. I remember a man yelling out during Srila Prabhupada's lecture in Balboa Park, San Diego. "What does he say?" asked Srila Prabhupada. He says he wants to have sex more than once a month. Srila Prabhupada did lecture on it "how when we indulge our sex desire we prolong our stay in the material world, where we continue to suffer.

Hearing this allegory, I can become more alert to the suffering surrounding me. I can detect it in my own body and try to make the best of the situation, knowing where it is coming from. Don't gloss over it. Things that appear pleasurable, especially the offer of sexual fulfilment, are like the blinding dust of a whirlwind.

The conditioned soul hears the harsh sounds of the cricket and his ears are grieved. His heart is pierced by the sounds of owls, "which are just like the harsh sounds of his enemies." Srila Prabhupada writes, "Even within one's inner circle there is much backbiting." You can't always see the crickets, but you can always hear them. I sometimes even imagine people who talk against my writing and my private way of life and then realize that it is my own paranoia. Critics are inevitable, even if only imagined, for those who live in this world. "When one takes to Krishna consciousness, one always hears unpalatable words from relatives." Srila Prabhupada heard it himself in his own family life. Better to get out.

The nondevotees mock us. We are hooted at on the street. Srila Prabhupada told us (in December '66 while speaking on *Caitanya-caritamrta*) that innocent devotees throughout history have suffered at the hands of the envious and the demoniac. He gave the example of Prahlada Maharaja and mentioned how even the devotees' Krishna conscious activities in the storefront were receiving complaints from people who said we were disturbing their sleep. We have to expect it "and tolerate it. The reactions a devotee receives are not the same as those incurred by a nondevotee trying to enjoy his or her senses, but *everyone* in the world has to suffer. The sufferings are illustrated in memorable ways by Jada Bharata's brilliant analogy. "One cannot avoid mental distress to the backbiting of envious people."

Those who accept more material suffering in pursuit of material enjoyment are fools. Those who incur suffering in the pursuit of preaching Krishna consciousness, however, are given the strength to tolerate (as Krishna tolerated the rainstorm in order to gather fuel for his guru, or Lord Nityananda tolerated the wound inflicted by Jagai). By such austerity, we become dear to Krishna.

The body is delicate, the mind easily distressed. I know I seek relief and therefore may shrink from preaching activities that put too much stress on this delicate mechanism in which I live. My physical tolerance is lower than it used to be. I'm older now. A *madhyama-adhikari* preacher is advised, however, to preach to the innocent. We have to take risks. The point of life, even of life in old age, is not to stay away from disturbances but to surrender to giving the Krishna conscious message to others.

At the same time, each of us has to examine what is favorable to our developing love of God. I mean, we can accept that we should preach, but we may have to determine how to do that. I remember the Jesuit preachers, the Linns, saying that if something turns us off, drains our energy, then we should know that it's not favorable to our love of God. They thought we should do things that make us happy and give us energy. I agree with this as a psychological principle, but I also know the higher spiritual principle requires that we willingly undergo trouble to serve Krishna. As we struggle to find our way, we must each manage our lives as best we can.

O Krishna, please know that I am not brave. I can't fake it. Please allow me to serve You anyway. Let me chant Your holy name and by refraining from sinful activities, tolerate the material miseries. If I were braver, I would go out and meet envious people

in the attempt to spread Your message, but I'm not and I can't. Seeing my failing in this area, please give me some service of which I am capable. Let me care for the devotees, although that may mean I have to live with disappointment, betrayal, worry over their troubles, along with the reactions to my own past misdeeds. I want to carry these burdens for You. Even when I yearn to be free of them, I know it's my service to persevere.

Jada Bharata teaches us to avoid the miseries by not coming to the material world at all. He himself practices tolerance by his "*jada*" exterior. That is, he simply shuts down in the face of all temptation and distraction. Again, we who are reading of his life must learn to tolerate in ways in which we are capable. Patience and tolerance are the emblems a *sadhu* wears.

\* \* \*

Sometimes we opt for peace. We want to live somewhere quiet to hear and chant, and even to preach through writing or some other form of cultivation. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* assures us, however, that hard times are coming. Best to learn to meditate internally and to not be dependent on external situations. Chant Hare Krishna. Even if we attain a measure of outer peace, we will still suffer illness and death. Another cue to become tolerant. Someone says that our youth and health were taken by our service in Prabhupada's mission. Others say our gradual physical weakness has been stolen due to reactions from past sinful activities. Whatever it is, the material nature constantly presents us with opportunities to practice tolerance. Tolerance includes not resenting pain or loss, and the desire to continue serving Lord Hari.

\* \* \*

4:12 a.m.

The story for today is that this scaredy cat hopes he doesn't get a headache so he will be able to give that important *Caitanya-caritamrta* class. And he probably won't. But when he finally sits down on the unvarnished wooden temple room floor before the men and women, he knows he will have to brace himself for the let-down that follows his talk.

Because his class won't be so important. What does he have to say that's so particularly vital?

He'll go through it anyway because it's his weekly offering. Of course, the *Caitanya-caritamrta* does cover important topics, and to touch on them is not trivial, especially when they are expressed through Prabhupada's mood, so it's a good thing to speak and nice that some of the devotees take notes. I hope they incorporate it into their lives. Everyone likes to hear how to meditate on the holy names, and we all relish Sarvabhauma's conversion and his subsequent adjustment of the *Bhagavatam* verse to "*bhakti-pada*."

At the end I'll walk down to the quay and be rowed across the lake. The water and sky are new at every moment, but they carry me back to this writing, this room with the windows that provide a gorgeous view of the lake strait, island, and mainland fields. No matter what the sky brings "brightness or clouds or in between "this place is beautiful to



behold. If this world holds so much of Krishna's beauty, we cannot even imagine how beautiful the spiritual world must be, and how the sky must change to provide an endless panorama for Krishna's pastimes.

Krishna, that chubby cowherd boy from whom everything emanates. Krishna, who is present in every atom in His *paramatma* form. That chubby cowherd boy is often depicted in our calendar art in a sentimental way. He looks sweet, almost too soft and cuddly. Who among us can actually capture His beauty?

All we know is the beauty of *this* world and what we can find in our own imaginations. We say Krishna is a beautiful boy. Please, Krishna, can we see Your form?

This prayer is the story of my life.

I imagined the class, but now I should rest so that not getting a headache becomes a reality.

Hey, did you know that I figured out how to avoid harassment? Make no reply.

Or in response, comment on how pumpkins are nice in the fall and not until then. The tangy smell and taste and feel and beautiful color of a pumpkin "comment on that.

My hand. I want to use them only for sacred duties as long as they function. I pat someone on the back to instill encouragement: "Be a good devotee."

He said he didn't know what a cello was, so I told him.

And jello "everybody knows what *that* is. My-T-fine instant pudding.

Devotees walking through the Irish villages chanting Hare Krishna. One devotee staying in his room. On Janmastami he will hold an initiation and say that the holy name appears in this world and that we can celebrate Krishna's appearance in His name. We are happy.

The fisher brook,  
Fisher Mansion,  
tired. Man and his friends  
smoking marijuana,  
toads . . .

Toad Hall invaded by weasels.

The badger led a charge and drove the weasels out. Toad got back Toad Hall and Harrison has Fryer Park

and I'm in this room

happy.

But ISani gets tired of cooking sometimes.

\* \* \*

While cutting up fruit for Prabhupada's breakfast and eating his remnants, I listened to Prabhupada lecture. He was speaking on the ninth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita* in 1966. He said that Krishna promises through His devotee that the devotee will never be destroyed. Prabhupada explained that "never be destroyed" means he will never go back to material life. When I heard that I thought I should not have so many anxiety dreams "last night I dreamt I had to go back to college and couldn't find my class schedule "because Krishna has promised that I will never be destroyed, even if I don't go back to Godhead at the

end of this particular life. My devotional service has not gone in vain. If that weren't true, I would already be living in a state of destruction.

How to find that trust in Krishna? Do I doubt my own self or my ability to follow my vows? Where is my faith and determination, my self-assurance that Krishna will protect me? If I am afraid to return to the material world, well, what can I do about it? If I have to come back, I simply have to remember to chant, and trust that Krishna will again introduce me to the devotional principles, that I will take to them out of natural attraction. Don't be afraid.

\* \* \*

10:08 a.m.

Still spinning from the lecture. It takes so much energy to speak these concepts to thirty devotees. Logic, swaying to this side and that to bring out the thought, trying to impress the thought through eye contact and body language on others "am I starting to feel weak? Looked at the clock. Wanted to go my hour.

I'm back in my room and it is a sunny Sunday. I will now calm myself so I can worship Srila Prabhupada. Calm is the mental state I prefer.

Told M. that while he was away, I churned through my ups and downs about the Radha-Krishna Deities. For now I've settled on the fifteen-inch pair coming from America, but I know everything still has to unfold. I can't figure it all out beforehand "will I travel with Them, how will it all go? It's in process. It's difficult, this time of being not quite committed and not quite sure what I am wanting to commit to. O Radha and Krishna, You are my life.

I can't say that in earnest,  
yet is it not true?

I *want* Them in my life. I want to see Krishna holding His flute and Radha Her betel nut.

The word "idiosyncratic" suddenly comes to mind. It was the word used to describe Kierkegaard's writing. Someone described mine as "simple and natural." I want to mine the gems of Vaisnava philosophy. I don't want to change the conclusion but to speak it in my own way.

They asked their questions and I answered them. Bhakta Mark is here from Germany. We spoke of fanaticism. Sarvabhauma wanted to change a word in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse. Lord Caitanya advised against it, but He laughed and embraced Sarvabhauma. When we speak, we don't always have to end with a perfect balance. We have to allow for enthusiasm.

"Is it premature," she asked, "to say I want to come back life after life to develop a certain ISKCON project? Shouldn't we want to go back to Godhead?"

"Oh yes," I said, and I balanced her enthusiasm.

\* \* \*

2:46 p.m.

I'm reading about Lord Balarama in preparation for tomorrow's class. Did all these things actually happen? Did He drag the demon Balvala down from the sky with his

plough and kill him with His club? Is Balarama the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Why not? The *sastras* assert it. I will give the class in a fun-loving way regardless of my doubts and lack of realization. We will laugh together. I won't make it a spoof, but will still be light-hearted. I'll quiz them, "How did Balarama kill Romaharsana?"

As if we were all children.

With *Sraddha*.

Srila Prabhupada also spoke in a light way sometimes, yet underneath he was grave and one hundred percent convinced that Lord Krishna and Lord Balarama are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That's the main thing for me too.

At lunch there will be a feast, with *varuni* (recipe here: 7-Up and honey). If you become intoxicated, lie down and be quiet, as befits a gentleman.

Get to the point. We wanna be in no more pubs. On Balarama's Appearance day, drink and wink, recalling that they used to go to pubs but don't need to anymore. If there is any desire to hold a drinking match and to feel such conviviality, dovetail it: "Set 'em up, bartender. Two *varunis*, for my two friends. And I'll take a double shot meself."

The old man drinks alone and chews on a Balarama cigar. Fasting 'til noon, drinking 'til moon

looks lopsided and Balarama

says, "Why is the king of ants laughing at me? I am prepared to destroy the whole universe!"

Somehow through this we find our faith and smile with the Supreme Lord Balarama, the second body of Lord Krishna.

May He give us strength.

\* \* \*

3:40 p.m., Shed Time

Afraid of headache. It's a mental fear, "If it comes I'll have to cancel my lecture." Well, then I'll have to cancel it. I'm lucky to give as many classes as I do. The pain can be sighted before it arrives, and it can also be brought on by worry and fear. Just live, sometimes with pain and often without, scheduling classes and sometimes cancelling.

Even painting can bring on a headache because it requires so much energy. I go at that too, anyway, and feel the release and the opportunity to put Krishna on every page.

A householder family brought their pet goats here and then chained them at a distance from one another. One is crying. Is this love for the animal, to keep it chained? They say the goats are for the children, but the children never play with them. Cursed lot to be a goat crying out.

Water flat this Sunday. Not so many skiers out.

Oh, Woody Woodpecker. Daksa received the head of a goat for his offenses. Chico Hamilton, a fine, light player in his old band, Jim Hall on guitar, Fred Katz on cello, Paul Horn on alto sax or flute. Those "innocent" days of the 1950s. "The love song of Alfred J. Prufrock" "the eloquence and music of poem lines. I plan to leave these all other things behind.

What's your service, bub?

I shave up devotees.

What else?

I write rhymes. And you?

I run the zoo at Mayapur.

Oh, whose disciple are you?

I won't tell you lest you make fun and I become angry.

Are you . . .

Stop here. Expletives omitted.

He chewed, I mewed, and together we prepared the paint jars. Solomon, shake them up. Prepare my brushes. I'm coming in a jif. I'll be prepared to wield genius strokes (just a few) as long as I don't get a brain-stroke, and I'll use this good right arm and, as my granny Sullivan used to say, the grace of God to wield the brushes to find those quick, round forms of determined chaos and steer them to Krishna.

August 18, 12:00 midnight

Headache dreams: I went to bed at 6:15 with a headache and spent the night in dreams. Although the headache itself wasn't *so* bad, it felt as if the dreams were making it worse. In one dream we were riding together on an old-fashioned, horse-drawn sleigh and were attacked by a wolf. Somehow we overcame the attack. In the dream, I heard myself narrating the details. Then I said, "And once that was over, more troubles came, as I shall now describe." But I woke up and didn't complete the narration or the misery.

Later, I dreamt I was on the GBC and was on my way to Guyana. When I arrived, the devotees told me their troubles. They were having a conflict about the relative importance of chanting and preaching. I said, "You shouldn't think that chanting is different from preaching, but even if you think that chanting is not preaching, you have to chant to save yourself and make yourself fit." One of the devotees interrupted me. I said politely, "Please let me finish," but he spoke over me. I thought I was wasting my time being there, so and I stood up, pacing and chanting. Later I told those who interrupted me that if they wanted to talk to me now, they were going to have to make an appointment.

Both dreams created anxiety, which did not help the pain. Probably the anxiety is stemming from my desire to give the class this morning; it's the midnight dawning on Balarama's Appearance day and I already have my lecture prepared. Anyway, I just have to accept whatever happens. Worry only brings on unnecessary pains. Everything that happens in my life is meant to encourage me in the inward drive toward Krishna consciousness.

\* \* \*

3:22 a.m.

When Hiranyaksa and HiranyakaSipu appeared, the demigods were afraid and went to Lord Brahma. This is what he told them:

"My dear sons, the Lord is the controller of the three modes of nature and is responsible for the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. His wonderful creative power, Yoga-maya, cannot be easily understood even by the masters of yoga.

The most ancient person, the Personality of Godhead, will alone come to our rescue. What purpose can we serve on His behalf by deliberating on the subject?" (*Bhag.* 3.16.37)

So pain and anxiety is also coming by His will, and all we can do is find refuge in Him. He will protect us according to His own ways. He sends both the trial and the shelter from the trial. A simple devotee accepts that on faith.

O New Testament, O old *Vedas* and ever-fresh Krishna and Lord Caitanya. Sweet mysteries at Jagannatha Puri relished in the Gambhira, everything can be known when the holy name is chanted openly on the street.

Mystery. Like not knowing when the pain will appear to sideline me. Sideline is a good word to describe the result. You want to play on the varsity team and you've made it! You're a regular. Then you get sidelined, put on the bench or in the penalty box. No point in sulking. Better to use the time to learn how to meditate on Krishna's will in all things, and when you get the all-clear to rush back into the game, play wholeheartedly.

\* \* \*

7:30 a.m.

Just heard they are taking longer today to decorate the Deities, so we don't have to leave for the island until 8:30. Wait it out some more without pain.

Edited my *One Hundred Happy Ideas* this morning. Starting with Poem 24, I began to make radical omissions because I saw flabbiness, timid, qualifying statements, and wordiness unbecoming to poetry. Whew. It makes me wonder whether I always write with such flab. Why am I so afraid to say what I mean and print it?

I comforted myself knowing that in prose I am different. But it felt good to slash. I wouldn't want that done to my EJW. I would hate to see it in tatters. It's already perfect, as Kerouac would say. Woodsman, spare that tree.

And much seemed trite, too private, little life, advising things that everyone knows. I *was* performing and that's always dangerous: "This is what ought to go into a poem on happiness. I ought to deliver some honest, modest Sastric advice." Ho-hum. Don't want it.

It's scary to contemplate the implications: does *all* writing have to be razor sharp and wake up readers with surprise in order to get their attention? And to keep it razor sharp, what is a writer supposed to do? Write and re-write and study writing from the mundane masters?

And if I don't, am I out to pasture like an old cow?

No need to continue.

On the lake of Pancagauda

I left my love "

the deity of Kurma

in an old lunch pail

dented with age and use.

I rallied my ego

saying, "You're an American.

Do something swell."

\* \* \*

I dreamt of Srila Prabhupada, who was sitting silent, his belly protruding like a Buddha's. He sat while my Godbrothers talked to one another about serving him. I thought, "We should we pay more personal attention to Srila Prabhupada, *because he won't be with us long. These are precious moments.*"

No, they said, it's all right "implying that they were serving him in separation. O Srila Prabhupada, we all want to serve you.

\* \* \*

*Varuni* is nice  
Always drink to full  
Rama will protect you  
June is long gone,  
November not yet here  
insure your bets and  
side with Baladeva!

\* \* \*

10:50 a.m.

My class went well. The temple room was full of devotees. Afterwards, we had light and Sastric talk as we walk to the quay. It was sunny. Bhakta randolph and Arjuna staged a mock fight as to who would row me across. They each took an oar in the end. Saunaka handed me his latest ISKCON Communications bulletin. Back at the house I read how the anti-cult movement has influenced European governments to take action against cults. Saunaka said we are politically weak. He predicted we could use this to our advantage: Scientology will fall and ISKCON will be acknowledged as a bona fide religion.

But it's not so easy as that. I cringe to think of our bad name. Weak in France and Belgium, he said. And there's a new book by an ISKCON apostate describing the horrors of the 1980s.

Anti-cult. "Save our skins by developing the Oxford project . . . If it gets worse . . . it costs money, but we have no choice."

I don't like all the objective writing on ISKCON. Fine, it's needed, but it's not what I want to do myself. Therefore, I appoint myself caretaker of my own solitude so that I can make my contribution. I have to stay out of the fray.

He paints while rome burns.  
No, he is painting the  
eye of the calm.  
His own soul deserves  
as much expression as the  
European maelstrom.  
He hears lectures  
alone, in peace,

and does what he can.

\* \* \*

I decided not to receive the fifteen-inch Deities. They command more regular worship than I want to give. Seven or eight inches is probably perfect. I have placed an order in Vrndavana for a dark Krishna (*Syama*) and a golden Radharani. I will have to wait to receive Them. In the meantime I'm happy with the approximately seven-and-a-half-inch Krishna and smaller Radharani I have with which to practice. They're fine "training" *murtis*.

I am not planning ISKCON strategies against the anti-cult movement, although I'm fearful of what the anti-cultists could do to us. I am planning to receive Radha-Krishna. Is that wrong?

Don't worry, whatever benefit I receive in my Krishna consciousness, I'll share with others.

\* \* \*

3:50 p.m.

I shouldn't be ashamed to say I had a headache and at midnight had to take an Esgic to kill it. I lectured, honored the feast, and have now received that pain back. I sit in a chair and think "lovely thoughts" "I wish. My mind runs over the names of the jazz men who played the Tottenville, then notices that M. is about to leave again for Dublin. I told him not to use the van so much, so he's going by train to meet a fiddler and hear a bouzouki man. I twiddle my thumbs until the sun goes down and hope to be clear by midnight so I can read and spend time with Jada Bharata.

Got a letter from a *bhaktin* who took a preaching tour to North and South India with a team led by Jayapataka Maharaja. She says in Vrndavana she wrote a lot and it helped, but she lost her writings in South India. As I read that I thought, "Yes, you had many exciting experiences, but especially notable is the time you were able to write to yourself." Now Bangalore and Katmandu have come and gone, you visited your parents in Serbia, and you are home, not sure what's next. No time or presence of mind to write, and why bother if no one will read it? Yes, I understand.

August 19, Midnight

The piercing, right-eye headache prevents me from following my usual routine. Last night when I went to bed, I saw the *Bhagavatam* and my notepad beside it on the desk, and they seemed distant. I could not approach them because of the pain. They became outward objects, things I couldn't reach from the inside of my debilitation. I don't mean to say that reading the *Bhagavatam* and writing are external. I'd much rather be doing them now than what I am doing.

It's not that pain in itself produces inner life. For example, when I retired from management I was able to taste inner life with more concentration. It's not that the managerial work was external to my Krishna consciousness, or that it had to be, but due to physical and mental reasons, I was no longer able to do it, not inclined to do it. It was

too much stress. I have to admit that I thought it was tearing me away from my attempts to attain self-realization. It didn't have to be like that, but it sure felt like it at that point in my life.

When I say my pain makes me feel distant from the *Bhagavatam* and my notepad, I don't mean that those things are external to my self-realization. All I mean is that I cannot reach them now. Perhaps I will have to think of a time when I will leave reading and writing as a routine behind if the pain comes more frequently. As yet I haven't found a way to practice *any* kind of *bhajana* when I have a headache. Rather, everything becomes simplified and reduced. It reminds me of my old poem about illness, where I said that my list of things to do falls to the side, but if I can chant Hare Krishna only once with humility, that would be my greatest achievement.

I do expect this present headache to go down (it's been going for twelve hours so far), and I do expect that as soon as it's gone, I'll jump back into my usual routine. My routine seems to require physical health. That's the point of these notes. Reading is a physical act as much as a spiritual and intellectual one, and writing is the same. Keeping faith in the process too seems to require physical strength.

The other point I want to make is that it is also true that as the ability to perform such activities is withdrawn, my spiritual life is not over. I can still practice Krishna consciousness. One could practice Krishna consciousness even if he or she were blind or deaf.

Sometimes I make fun of busy, social people who are afraid to be alone. They don't know what to do without their supportive activities to keep them going. Perhaps I am too proud of my way of life and my sense of self-sufficiency. It's not that I live totally alone anyway, but accept the support of a few nearby individuals. If my activities and my aides were removed, I would be as helpless as the socially oriented person who suddenly found himself with nothing to do. Devotees joke about those who think they can't render devotional service if they are placed somewhere without a phone and a computer, but I may be the same: if I'm not pain-free, I can't serve Krishna.

\* \* \*

I had another headache dream. I was wandering alone in New York City, supposedly trying to find the apartment of a friend. At one point my father appeared. Anyway, I finally got my friend on the phone and received the address along with notice that other Godbrothers would be present. I immediately told him I had a terrible headache, so I didn't think I could talk to anyone. I said I needed to be with people who could understand that.

I wrote the address on a piece of paper. It was something like Hyland Heights, a part of Manhattan between 7th and 8th Avenues. When he gave me the number I asked, "Between what avenues? Prabhu, I can't take it! I'm in such pain. Please tell me right away how to get to your place!" It was dark and I couldn't see what I was writing. I had to find some light.

I looked for a taxi, but it was getting later and later. No one could understand how I was feeling. I just wanted everything to be hurried up so I could lie down. Everything was a challenge.



In the dream I thought, "This headache is training me for death. It is an austerity, but it is my training and I should accept it."

\* \* \*

10:30 a.m.

Still in the grip of pain. I don't know if I've done any better this time than I have during previous session. I have been trying to work with the concept that this is meant to be a Krishna conscious experience "as much so, as experiences I have when reading or writing. I try to feel the pain without feeling hurt; I try to be positive.

Still, I can't deny the relief I feel when the pain wanes. I still become anxious about what would happen to me if I had such prolonged pain in a less protected environment "while traveling or at a temple where people didn't understand my situation.

Aside from that, I hear a constant mental chatter, sometimes dreamlike or surreal, and unfortunately, not always Krishna conscious. For example, I dreamt that a business woman was complaining on and on about her dealings with one of my disciples. Perhaps because of my weakened physical state, my mind was unable to immediately kick off the dream imagery and get on with the day. It was almost hallucinatory.

Aside from that, there is the usual mental chatter we all experience. On and on it goes, turning things over and floating along.

How can I say that pain is giving me Krishna consciousness? It seems that when I'm pain-free, I'm able to put aside the chatter, I don't have awake dreams, and I'm able to concentrate on my work with some spiritual sense of what I'm doing.

So I'm still in process, a target for pain and what?

\* \* \*

Amidst the chatter and "feeling ill," I had a few good moments. One time I felt the absence in me of the strong yearning to know and attain love of God. Then I asked myself, "What do you really want to do with your life "what remains of it? "

Quick musings, like clouds passing by. I already have supplied myself with intellectual answers. As for love of God and my not attaining it, I can only remain as humble as possible and continue to follow the rules and regulations. As for what to do with my remaining life, I can only follow my spiritual master, stay in ISKCON, and serve.

\* \* \*

I think it's an achievement to be writing while feeling pain. I know some health regimes say that you shouldn't eat when you are in pain, but I have pain frequently enough that I couldn't follow that or I'd be fasting half my life. Similarly, someone might say you shouldn't write while you have pain. Why not?

Well, because it might become too pain-centered. It will bother people: "Why is he writing about *that*?" One health teacher says you shouldn't even use the word "pain." Better to say "sensation." They think that by transforming the word you can transform the pain (I mean sensation) into something that doesn't hurt. "Pain" has too much

association with the word "hurt". So much for the semantics. I'll continue looking into the eye of pain, but trying not to feel distressed. It takes tremendous patience to think that pain is profitable. My natural tendency is to want more than anything to relieve the pain. Any other considerations are relatively unimportant. That's why I think of headaches as times of waiting rather than times of production. That's weak-hearted and negative, I suppose. I'll have to see if I can go beyond it. To begin I'll try to write when in pain and not be embarrassed that my main topic at that time may be the pain itself.

\* \* \*

3:30 p.m.

The sharpest pain ebbed, so I decided to take a walk. It was nice to be outside and to feel the wind buffeting against my face and the trickle of rain. After chanting toward the front of the property for awhile, I thought about how my life has changed since settling down as much as I have in Ireland. Madhu's has too as he has again decided to pursue his music. It occurred that I feel I need someone to take care of me as I grow older and more feeble, but I don't need doting care. At the same time, I faced my desire to lead a life with emphasis on seclusion. Residence in Ireland lends itself to both needs nicely, so it seems that all other considerations are taking a subordinate position to these two. It's taken me quite a few years to admit openly that I want to stay alone. Now it's come to the point where there is a place for me wherein I can live alone and yet not really apart from the ISKCON devotees.

I walked in through the forest tunnel, and on my way back, I saw a little red car, the driver of which chose to stop rather than to pass me. It was the German devotee Ouve and his wife and two tow-headed boys. I leaned in. Then told them I am just recovering from a headache. Ouve said, "I've heard about your headaches."

"We each have our cross to bear." As I said "cross," my left shoulder slumped to indicate the burden. "Krishna just wants to see that we carry it without complaining." As I said it, I felt myself almost ready to cry "whether from self-pity or from a confirmation that I had said something true in Krishna consciousness.

Ouve's wife, who was sitting at the steering wheel, said, "Thank you, Maharaja. That's just what I needed to hear today." She sounded sincere and grateful and that made me grateful in return.

That little exchange made the pain worthwhile. And don't doubt it: we each have a cross. Who knows what these devotees were experiencing today? There are troubles for everyone. Can we love Krishna through them?

\* \* \*

4:30 p.m.

Is it possible I can come back to my study of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and Jada Bharata? read a line aloud. Ease back into it. Service to the Almighty. Is this the proper way? It's where I'm coming from, starting from the bottom after twenty-four hours out of commission, at least for reading and writing.

Tune in, Jada Bharata. Can you hear me? Or rather, can I hear you?

Sometimes a living being is overpowered by a superior. He loses all his possessions, pens, papers, manuscripts, wristwatches, even his limbs. He becomes so morose he almost falls unconscious. Jada Bharata is not telling a fairy tale. It's factual, but so hard to hear that he presents it as an allegory in "The Forest of Material Enjoyment."

We imagine the opposite, a Gandharvapura, a make-believe palace of enjoyment for his kin (whom of course are all rich). But it lasts only a moment. But what is it we are *really* experiencing? A drop of water in a desert. We forget self-realization. We consider relief from suffering enjoyment. Do we accept the mind as guru? Are we the slave of numberless dreams? Eventually, the palace we have built in the sky will collapse, or we will be thrown out. "To be saved from the hands of *hari*, the lion of death, one must take shelter of the Supreme Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 5.13.16, purport)

\* \* \*

6 p.m.

Peace in my head

O Lord

even pain was living and

let me use it fully.

I am so small, glad

to look out at the lake strait and the island,

praying,

"Please, Lord, let me live and when You come to take away my life,

please let me be a devotee

despite all my nonsense."

\* \* \*

Can't think of a topic for my lecture on Srila Prabhupada's Vyasa-puja. Thought about "My Prabhupada" and how each person should seek his own relationship, although within the consensus of understanding that he is the founder-*acarya*, the authority, our personal link to Krishna.

It's inevitable we each have our own version, and when we share it with others, then our own version can become enriched and enlarged.

August 20, 12:07 a.m.

A person's "only business is to accept the spiritual master, the guru, and through him he must accept the lotus feet of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 5.14.1, purport) Materialists are unable to do it because they are harassed by the details of their lives.

All their money is spent gratifying their senses. rather, our assets should be used for the advancement of Krishna consciousness. It's so simple to see how human life is wasted, but it's very difficult to convince people of this fact. They don't listen seriously to us Hare Krishna preachers. Still, we should preach.

Devotees should be kind to others and give them an opportunity to hear about Krishna. This "vast Krishna consciousness movement" has centers in many countries. Although we ourselves are decadent and corrupt in certain ways, we are trying to reform, come clean, and organize ourselves with purer motives. Therefore, our movement may attract sincere souls lost in the material forest who are looking for genuine relief.

\* \* \*

This chapter enumerates the sufferings, not the least of which is that material life leaves no time for spiritual pursuits. One is taught from infancy that material life is the real responsibility. Anyone without a job is a loafer or parasite. This is another prejudice we need to overthrow. Trust in the guru's statements that Krishna supplies everything. A devotee without a job is not a parasite but is doing something vital with his or her life.

It's also true that a devotee without a job needs to live simply so as not to make this statement true. We shouldn't be sucking others dry with our material needs as we ask them to support us. We shouldn't take too much in the name of begging.

Illicit sex life is punishable. The demigods see all. Nothing is excused. All our suffering and entanglement comes from thinking we are the body.

We may read this and think we are free. But are we? We may each fall down whenever we forget Krishna. What was it that I suffered from yesterday? Bodily pains. And can I claim I am *completely* free of attraction to sex, wealth, and intoxication? These things tend to haunt us in this culture either as gross desire or as subtle variations on those themes "we look for fame, honor, prestige. Because we look for those subtle enjoyments, we experience the fear of what others even in our religious institution think of us. Or we fear the nondevotees. No, we may not be tempted by the forest of illusion "it's too obnoxious a place and that much we already know "but some subtle sex life . . . Yes, we suffer.

\* \* \*

4:54 a.m.

Messed around on the floor with Bristol boards and thick paint. I'm using my pain-free energy while I have it. Although I let whatever imagery emerged stand on the boards, I wanted to find direct Krishna consciousness. If I could only smear love of Godhead in every stroke without having to be so tag-on explicit. After some abstract forms revealed themselves, I turned to painting a cute Radha and Krishna "the best I could do in my quick, crude style. Then again the abstract came out "neat globules and Miro-like balls bouncing from my mind. If I connect the lines I'll smear the paint, so every line has to stand on its own on this cardboard.

But I can't stay long with the abstract. I find myself adding words from the song Srila Prabhupada is singing: *Vande guroh Sri . . .* Then stick figures dancing happy. Is that my heart and soul or what?

\* \* \*

There is danger coming from the governments directly toward the cults and probably to all citizens and creatures under the sun "bombs and other distresses which prick nature to the point where she withholds her grains. Will Prthu Maharaja protect us, or is it too far gone this Kali-yuga? Then will the devotees live without shelter?

ParaSurama dasa is already living without material shelter with his cart and horse and walkers. No residence, no money, just whatever the people give as they trust in Krishna and chant and chant.

My way right now is different. It includes this lovely piece of wood, cut into right angles and hammered together with nails to make a bookcase. It is this poem flying on wooden wings with clackety teeth. It is Krishna inside and out, this morning's diary and confession.

While painting this morning I let my mind go. It's not healthy for me, I claim, to concentrate. Concentration creates too much pressure. Yet I want to work. I have therefore developed the easy Australian crawl method of spreading paint, then drawing quick figures on top of it with crayons. I do the equivalent in writing.

The concept is that I will continue to live in these two Irish places. I plan to leave the Deities home when I travel, although I'll carry Their picture and make my offerings in that way. When I return I can take up my worship again. That will help keep my traveling duties to a minimum so I can get through each day, sometimes writing and sometimes drawing with wooden pencils and Tombos and rectangles of beeswax.

Oh, you're so clever, I love you. The disabled Romeo went up the ramp in the wheelchair and that's how Juliet wanted it. Among the disabled there are people without limbs and still . . . one man conducts his business over the telephone and supports his family. But you see, that's still a waste of time unless you are Krishna conscious. You have to understand you're not the body. I imagined that if something like that happened to me (I lost my limbs), probably the best thing would be to gradually build up to the point where I was constantly chanting *japa*. People will remember that I was once a writer, but I would stay fixed on the holy names and leave everything else behind. These are my daydreams.

Would you like to go out for a walk?

Yes, maybe, if it's light enough in the morning.

But M. "I heard him come in at 1:30 a.m. I ought to wake him around 5:30 and ask him to make breakfast. He'll probably tell me that he got in so late because I didn't let him take the van to Dublin. He had to swim home and missed his bus on top of it. I'm not opposed to his using the van for his Dublin music scene, but want to keep it as protected as possible so it can take Rahugana (me) on his ride to begin on September 3.

\* \* \*

5:30 a.m.

Who among us is going to Goloka? Maybe out of all of the ISKCON generation, one simple person will be good enough for that. Who understood Srila Prabhupada? Did we misunderstand in the way we led? The way we live? To go alone doesn't sound like his style or his order.

Well, I claim time and circumstance, and considering who I am, just a Sats, I think he wouldn't mind so much.

Oh boy, I'd jump for joy if I knew for sure.

Don't want to hold back now.

It took a long time but

he played away.

"Got any tapes for me to hear of your songs last night

by the moon?" "Gig," he called it, but

I didn't hear right. O Swansea lad,

Krishna lad

Shopshire lad

Alan Ladd

Lady Day

Lady ----- (expletive omitted)

I ain't as raunchy as you think. He . . .

Me momma taught me bad words in Gaelic, so whaddya expect?

We expect that you would have cleaned up your act by all the holy association you got with the master. What *are* these twinges that pop out and why are they still there?

Don't worry, the blue cowherd boy has entered my heart. I am just burning up the mixtures.

\* \* \*

9 a.m.

We can't expect smooth sailing. Jada Bharata speaks of the anomalies and how they will worsen as Kali-yuga progresses. "Without Krishna consciousness, people will deteriorate further and further into a hellish condition wherein they will perform abominable acts." (*Bhag.* 5.14.14, purport)

Is it cowardly to stay away from all of that? Not necessankirtana. I don't participate in such *kirtanas* anymore, and don't even like them that much, but I have no shortage of spontaneous imagery of the happy dancers. It's as if I am willing to celebrate the dancing only when I draw. That seems all right "drawing is reality, perhaps as real as a temple *kirtana*. It is my wish to participate.

\* \* \*

12:02 noon

No happiness in family life. This isn't an upstart's view but Jada Bharata's. We may protest "But it *is* happy sometimes. Don't be so negative. So what if it's temporary?"

Jada Bharata would say that what's temporary is a source of misery simply because it has to end. Those who love one another will be separated by time and death, just as straws are separated on the sea waves. And it's *not* always happy. Executing family *yajnas* costs money. It's like climbing a thorny, pebbled-filled hill.

\* \* \*

2:55 p.m.

Illicit sex is full of troubles. "Many devotees fall down due to illicit sex. They may steal money and even fall down from the highly honored renounced order. Then for a livelihood they accept menial service and become beggars." (*Bhag.* 5.14.22, purport) Males are plagued more than females with the urgent lust for gross sex life. I pray to be spared. Even if the mind can't give up the scent of such acts, we can control it and refrain from falldown. To protect ourselves, we should be careful not to do anything that could be even remotely connected with it or that might lead to falldown. Don't read books discussing sex, don't listen to music promoting it, don't look at pictures illustrating it, don't dally with the opposite sex, and don't go to places where sex enjoyers go and associate with them.

\* \* \*

4:03 p.m.

Walking before coming to the shed. A central issue for me is what will my next life be? In dreams I see horrific "return" scenarios "the Navy, school, thugs, torture, even replays of unpleasant ISKCON scenes. Is this what I have to look forward to? Is it enough to frighten me into full surrender? But I don't want to practice *bhakti* just to save my skin (seek liberation). Still, what a mess to return to.

Anyway, scare tactics don't seem to work so well on me. Love is not something I can be frightened into feeling. To touch my own seriousness would be better.

I can honestly say I feel joy at being alive. That in itself is not Krishna conscious, except indirectly. An atheist can also feel *joie de vivre*. The only difference between us would be whether or not we acknowledge the source of our lives. So how much *do* I acknowledge the source of the happiness I feel when I'm able to walk in well-fitting boots on a mild day on a peaceful Irish back road? Krishna "I chant Hare Krishna, and that's my saving grace.

Krishna, I'm here and this life is temporary "but I have to admit "and happy. Jada Bharata's exposure of the material illusion causes me to question the nature of my happiness.

Please . . . he says.

Please what? Don't say please be kind; he's *already* kind. And don't say please accept me.

Why not?

Because you don't mean it.

Yes, I do. Leave me alone, gremlin. I'm a devotee with devotee sentiments.

Life *is* nice, although in other moods, I find it empty, dry, even boring or painful. I plod along dutifully. Duty is austerity. I'm not always flying high in Krishna-sent *joie de vivre*. Krishna doesn't want me to live in an illusion that life itself is joyful. I admit I'm not a hundred percent Krishna conscious, so I have to admit my joy must be tinged with material pleasure.

Stick to regulative life, chanting and reading whether blissful or dry. My sixteen rounds in the morning, rising early, writing letters, guru duties, allegiance, and self-realization . . .

\* \* \*

5:19 p.m.

I wouldn't sell my soul to revel in ecstatic colors and paints. It's not worth it. If Srila Prabhupada ordered me to stop this kind of painting, and said he wants only what the BBT artists produce, I would stop. I daydreamed that I defied his order and refused to stop, thinking that one day Prabhupada would understand how it's a different kind of art and that others like it and find something Krishna conscious there. I let my mind go further into people not liking it and Srila Prabhupada not liking it either, and me losing my soul for a few colors in paint jars and the shapes that come from hand and mind. Please save me from that. I don't get such negative signals from Prabhupada, and I do revel in what I'm doing. Each board has transcendental words added, or devotional *tilaka* placed on it.

This has been a productive day "pain-free. Now night is coming. Give thanks. Jada Bharata certified that the material world is miserable. Then why am I happy? I'm either in illusion or I'm in the spiritual world.

Or both? *Yat karosi yat aSnasi* "I'm doing it for Krishna.

\* \* \*

Pop puff balls. Goats gone. Boats still cruising with their open-air decks whenever it's not raining. Plot for Hare Krishna festival in Galway.

Me an American, expatriate. I imagine someday that I might tour my own country, hear what the right-wing is up to, and remember that it's not my home. I am exiled, it seems. Nobody much cares. I make an annual visit. I'm in a little green country hiding out with puff balls and writing with secret hopes. Not selling my soul, even in my fantasies.

August 21, Midnight

Sex life leads to miseries. We dream of it because of past attraction and because there's enough sex desire embedded in the psyche (after many lifetimes of tasting it) that it comes out in the subconscious. "Sometimes the conditioned soul is attracted by illusion personified (his wife or girlfriend) and becomes eager to be embraced by a woman. Thus he loses his intelligence as well as knowledge of life's goal." (*Bhag.* 5.14.28)

These passages may appear so familiar that they don't carry the punch they had on a first reading. Perhaps we categorize them too quickly under "extreme statements against material life." They fit in with Jada Bharata's allegory about the man who goes to make money in the forest, and whose wife and children are like jackals.

What if we didn't categorize them? What if we let them stand on their own full weight? What if we were more respectful toward such statements, more accepting, and kept them in mind as both vivid portrayals and compassionate warnings? What if we kept the actual images in mind and lived accordingly? They are meant to save us, these images. remembered at the right time, they can pull us from illusions well. Here is a list



of a few images: gold as yellow stool, the blinding dust storm, being thrown deep into a cave, the stinging bees that pursue us when we go after the honey of illicit sex, the people who fight over a farthing, government men who attack us with taxes, the harsh crickets and the hoots of owls, the malicious back-biters.

We are mixed, at best. Why shouldn't we want to remember such edifying words? It seems we are stuck with our personal mixtures because we live in this world. We keep working it like Mayapur weavers working colorful strains of cloth. If that is the case, then pray it will come out serviceable. Then see the world through the eyes of scripture. Otherwise, our vision is too raw, our song too dissonant.

\* \* \*

Prabhupada writes, "The *paSandis* and atheists who are cheaters, are so numerous that sometimes we become perplexed and wonder how to push this movement forward." (*Bhag.* 5.14.30, purport) Preaching hasn't become easier since he wrote that sentence. Nowadays, there are so many self-styled gurus and other obstacles "apostates, anti-cult propaganda, religious sectarians, prejudice from the politically powerful religions "and maybe most difficult of all, a lack of purity, warmth, and loving dealings within our own institution. We have to work against our own tendency to become institutionalized, secular, or sectarian. We have to fight for ISKCON's freedom from schismatic thinking and from the attacks we receive from the left and the right, from below, and from the so-called above. Never before have we had so many active schisms or have I myself felt such a loss of inspiration toward our stand on institutionalism.

And then I consider myself as an individual and see my own shortcomings. "Imminent death is like the attack of a lion," says Jada Bharata, so how will I survive? He says no false gurus can help us then. We must take shelter of the one in which we have faith, the one in whom we have taken shelter since we were spiritually born, the one who has not failed me.

That sounds good, but I have to admit that taking such shelter is difficult at times. We are not fully surrendered and may feel we are displeasing the spiritual master. To surrender fully means to love fully, and without that full love, we can't get past obstacles so easily. At those times, we can turn to Supersoul, or to Balarama, the original guru, and pray, "Please place me under my Guru Maharaja's protection."

The sense enjoyers are compared to monkeys intermingling. They're busy working and enjoying. "Thus they forget completely that one day their small life spans will be finished and they will be degraded in the evolutionary cycle." (*Bhag.* 5.14.31) I want to remember this. Don't do something today that doesn't contribute to eternal life. Of course, we have to maintain the temporary body and sometimes we engage in light talk, especially to cheer up other devotees (or even ourselves). Somehow the motive should be directed toward Krishna consciousness.

I think of Christianity's desert monks. They went to extremes to remain focused on death. Indian *sadhus* do too, drinking from skulls and other similar activities.

"Instead of wasting time trying to attain a better position in material life, one should simply endeavor to return home, back to Godhead. Then all problems will be

solved." (*Bhag.* 5.14.31, purport) Purify the heart of its base material desires by hearing *Krishna-katha*.

I should take a radical stand to achieve this. Now I am free from most social obligations, even in our religious movement. I do not need to pursue economic development. All this is Krishna's mercy on me. It behooves me not to make another niche for material enjoyment. Don't let others deviate me, and I shouldn't deviate myself. I should use my time for the *yajna* of chanting the holy names, reading the scripture, worshiping Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Krishna, and writing the record of such a well-spent life and the honest struggle to achieve it. Don't add useless baggage; use everything in His service.

When we receive notice of death, we become afraid. That is compared to entering a mountain cave where death, a great elephant, resides. One becomes morose when subjected to the three-fold miseries because he is deprived of enjoyable material facilities. "Unless one is fixed in the regulative principles, one may perform mischievous acts, even if one is a member of the Krishna consciousness movement." Be strict, don't cheat out of greed for money, don't cause dissension among the devotees. So much good advice.

The dos and don'ts:

Do chant, don't sin.

Sing *nama*, not other.

When in pain, remember Lord Hari and

how even this time

can be productive for eternal consciousness.

Be kind to others.

Stay out of fights

unless it's the fight to maintain and spread Krishna consciousness.

Amen for now.

\* \* \*

*Trying to title this book*

*Mixing With Jada Bharata* is a neat form that says a lot, but it won't work for this volume because I'll finish my reading of Jada Bharata with ten days of writing to go. A title should cover the experience of an entire volume. I tried adding something to that title, but it got too arbitrary. I started with *Mixing With Jada Bharata, And receiving Radha-Krishna*. Then, *Mixing With Jada Bharata, Headaches and Joie de Vivre*. But what about Janmastami? What about the fact that we'll be traveling after this month? I tried contracting the whole thing into *Mixing*, but that doesn't really say enough. *Mixing* implies mixing with people.

A title is not meant to be a tag-on. Rather, it can name a theme by which I am guiding my life for the period of this writing. *Welcome Home to the One Big Book of Your Life* guides the EJW series and influences my whole life! *Sacrifice for the Bhagavatam* also shapes my life, and *Choosing to be Alone*. I'll find something, I hope, by the end of this book.

\* \* \*

4:28 a.m.

Caitanya-daya is coming today, carrying three weeks of mail. Maybe one from a friendly GBC man about the latest controversy to rock ISKCON, and maybe something unforeseen. I expect at least fifty letters from disciples who regularly correspond. I'll be ready to do a marathon to reply. Some books may arrive too, but I'm not expecting anything special in this shipment. I don't *want* anything earth-shaking; I prefer that the earth remain steady. Maha-Visnu exhales and thus we all live in universal time. When he inhales, the universe closes up, "account closed." That Visnu is a part of a part of original Krishna. Krishna is medium-sized in Goloka. He leaves the work to be done by His expansions in their gigantic forms. Krishna is beyond Bhagavan realization because His devotees don't realize Him as Bhagavan. They see Him as lover, friend, child, beautiful boy, best friend of the forest and the cows.

I'd like to . . .

Before you say what you'd like to do, ask, "Can you pay the price?" For example, if you say, "I'd like a Mercedes Benz," what's the use of such a statement? I'd like to love Krishna and play with Him in Vrndavana eternally as His servant. That's fine, but are you prepared to do what it takes?

A devotee sent me a print-out of diaries being written nowadays on the Internet. I got ten pages of, "On the road to Nirvana," and one that said something about the soul. Another, "A Year in the Life of a Nerd," is a place to tune in to what folks want to share.

But you can't expect . . .  
only a devotee.

I could ask devotees to show me their diaries, but that would be too personal a request for both of us. It's often easier to read the words of a total stranger whose social scene, friends, life are unknown to us. Such a person can write of the struggles within his church, and we can stare at it objectively. If an ISKCONite writes something about the GBC, however, it's immediately our issue and we may even find ourselves wanting to respond. There's a sort of daily diary going on through ISKCON's Com connection, but I don't read that. I hear that they mostly discuss issues and debates, or business. Strange that I would consider reading "A Year in the Life of Nerd" instead of something on Com that has Krishna's name in it "some lost soul's words, and not the words of a Godbrother. Yes, it is strange.

Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka. We have life and we should celebrate it on the first page of the computer that goes "pop". When your pop is not here, what do you do? You get a new pop. Your guru is your pop, and the *Vedas* are your mom. She nurses you and cooks your meals as you grow up older. When she's old, you return the favor. The *Vedas*, of course, are not that kind of growing-old mom. The *Vedas* mom nourishes you and protects your soul; she births your spiritual aspirations.

\* \* \*

Breathe in and imagine you are contacting the air as it travels down your windpipe. Locate the soul. Now chant the prayer, Hare Krishna. Bring the holy name from your

mind down to the heart. Feel the burning sensation? That much you can do on our own, they say. Deeper prayer is granted only by God. Chant with attention and whenever the mind wanders off, bring it back.

Being easy on myself is one of my recent mottoes. I'm being easy on myself because I don't need another critic. I want to be more positive. I get headaches and times are tough enough without my demanding that I do something heroic. Who needs more sternness, and to be honest, my stiff upper lip has become less stiff. I love you. I am already converted; I don't need to whip myself.

No poems recently. Thought of the old days listening to jazz. I tried to be satisfied playing another record, but it just distracted me from deeper issues. I made a compact with the jazz. It would deliver me from worries as I played it, tapped my toe and nodded my head, digging the sounds. I became a learned listener, knew one style from another, about the improviser's art "the horns and pianos, saxes and drums. Read *Down Beat* magazine and counted the stars assigned to records. It's a life that is now gone. Hare Krishna.

I dropped out and joined a cult.

Not a cult.

If the European government got hard on ISKCON it wouldn't really change things much. We could still drive the van into France. As we got off the ferry, they wouldn't even notice we were devotees. *Gendarmes* may stop us as we travel across their beautiful country, but we have committed no crime. We're on your way to Spain. They may look at my Esgic pills, but they're legal. They would let us through.

Then the hard land of Spain. I'll write about what the tires say, how my head feels, list the place names from the highway signs. Travel diary mode. I've done it before. I don't belong in Europe or in Detroit. I am a rising Hare Krishna dirigible. I want to get all the way out.

In the meantime, I play the game on this ball of earth where small areas expand into huge ones. I count the ways I love the earth, one of my seven mothers. Think of the hide and hair, the collie, the pitiful dumb animals, the earwigs that crawl out of the windowsill when I open the shed window. Today, as I said, plenty of letters are arriving from America. One will say, "I love you, thanks for writing your books," one will say the opposite. So it goes.

Saying more may become explosive.

On Wednesday afternoons, we religious kids lined up in the basement of PS #8 and marched off to different places. Our group marched one block to Saint Clare's Church, where we sat in separate classrooms and the nuns taught us. We were Catholics going to public school and received one hour of religious instructions per week.

The basement of PS #8 smelled of the hot lunches served to the poor kids. The soup smelled horrible. I remember, too, the smell of oranges. Were the lunches free? It smelled better to go home for lunch.

Hare Krishna "these things in me. O Lord, kids are victims. Now there are little kids raised by Hare Krishna parents. We too have made many mistakes. *Gurukula* has become almost a shameful word now. Anyone who taught in those years is now under suspicion. I was one of the pioneers. Have I become infamous? I escaped before it got worse. "They made us eat off wax paper on the floor, and in the bathroom there was no

privacy." Yeah, those were the times of fanatics and unskilled persons dealing with delicate lives, trying to hammer the kids into shape so they would grow up pure devotees. Teachers search their hearts and feel the wrongs, their karma, the anger, and remembered how they risked and were punished.

And you gurus, you ought to be punished for assuming that you could save someone from death. Do you know Krishna enough to save them? You admit that you have lust and doubt. How can you save others? Prabhupada is the only guru. Count up the cuts and dents and end this page.

\* \* \*

6:27 a.m.

My life is calm and I shouldn't be ashamed of that. Here's a poem by a nurse in an ambulance, rushing to the hospital. My life is tame compared to that. Here's a poem about Nazi doctors. I skipped over that. Plenty of people work harder, sacrifice more, love more than I do. The ambulance nurse ends her poem, "My God/ how can people abandon each other?"

Be humble, but I can't hurl words at myself: selfish, pampered, timid, milquetoast, religious mouse . . .

*Do read Srimad-Bhagavatam.* We have something valuable that even an emergency ward doctor or a cop or an ambulance doctor or an AIDS victim or the President of the United States doesn't have. It doesn't require the use of adrenaline. That fact doesn't make us better or worse, just Krishna conscious. Krishna conscious kids may be fanatics sometimes, and often they need to go out on the street to chant to keep going, but we shouldn't become middle-class, eager to be accepted by the government and the mainstream ministers. Let them think we are a little dangerous, because we are. Do read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Take shelter in the holy name.

\* \* \*

8:23 a.m.

Materialistic life is full of suffering; no one can be happy in it. What little happiness there is, is simply relief from the overall suffering, like a prisoner being dunked in water, and getting a gasp of breath, before being throw under again. "The preachers of Krishna consciousness go from door to door to inform people how they can be relieved from the miserable conditions of material life." (*Bhag.* 5.14.39, purport)

"It really doesn't matter what activity a man engages in. If he can simply satisfy the Supreme Lord, his life is successful." (*Bhag.* 5.14.40, purport)

Srila Prabhupada has taught me to apply this in my own way. Of course, the biggest question for each of us is whether Krishna pleased by what we do?

Devotional service is difficult, but easy if we follow a *mahajana*. Lord Caitanya is a *mahajana*. He teaches us to chant. *Harer nama eva kevalam*.

After four chapters, Sukadeva Gosvami wraps up with praise of Maharaja Bharata. "A devotee does not care whether he is going to be reborn or not. He is simply satisfied with the Lord's service in any condition. That is real *mukti*." (*Bhag.* 5.14.44, purport) Srila Prabhupada says a devotee wants to always serve Krishna, and he thinks of ways to

convince people of the Personality of Godhead. He is Krishna. That's his ambition whether in heaven or hell. On a Post-it stuck in the book from a few years ago, I wrote an appreciation of this point. "It encourages me to find ways in my writing to convince people. Being absorbed in this is my liberation."

Make it even in a diary  
so interesting that they keep reading  
and hear "Krishna, Krishna" "I want to  
serve Krishna. They hear a doubt,  
"Is Krishna God?" Countered.

\* \* \*

When Maharaja Bharata was giving up his deer body, he prayed to the Supreme Lord, "He is beautiful and attractive. I am quitting this body offering obeisances unto Him and hoping that I may perpetually engage in His transcendental loving service." (*Bhag.* 5.14.45)

Ready? Death could come at any moment. No point now making such a distinction between pain-free and painful. Be Krishna conscious in any case.

\* \* \*

Things that happen when I read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*:

I find passages that recommend strongly and heartily the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. Sometimes I feel like putting the book down and going over and picking up my beads to chant a round.

I feel encouraged when Prabhupada says we should preach, and I see that's what I'm doing. Or sometimes I feel humble, even guilty if I think I'm not preaching adequately.

I become focused on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as in Maharaja Bharata's prayer when he was leaving his deer body. While reading something like this, it occurs to me that many activities are not the real purpose of life, but specific focus on Krishna and devotional service is the only point. Maybe I become a little fearful of the baggage I've taken on that's not directly Krishna conscious. I hope to stay focused. How to do it except by reading?

\* \* \*

Dreamt Madhu was in the driver's seat, me beside him, and we were parked at a gas station. A man started cleaning our windshield uninvited, hoping we would feel obliged to pay him for it. Madhu said no, but the man insisted. In the end Madhu, floored the accelerator and sped away at a hundred miles an hour. I guess my mind is preparing for the European tour.

August 22, 9 a.m.

Foggy head. Mail arrived yesterday afternoon. I answered mail sporadically until 7 p.m., then tackled it again at midnight. I have only one long letter to answer.

And now? Do I feel fresh as a daisy?

Not quite.

I have an hour meeting this morning and right now I feel dazed. Who am I supposed to be after talking to all those people in letters this morning and last night? What am I writing again?

The one big book of your life, remember?

Oh, yes. I don't care so much what the readers think, but I want my writing to be excellent. I should please at least one reader, myself.

Someone asked, "Your poems appears to be a deeper voice within you. Could you write a monthly poetry journal?"

No,

no,

I can't. Better to leave me to wander out to the shed. Heard "my" little cabin at Saranagati has been vandalized three times ("I lost three good rocking chairs"), and that the rats chewed their way through the floor and ate the curtains.

In an old house (moldy and cold, but we can cure that) you'll live and die, trying to live up to the master's expectations.

I won't get into all that here. I am on no race, but am still hoping to breathe easy with my friend, the journal.

Creativity. Dreams. Stubbornly I refuse to record one where I had to stay late in an institution, perhaps a Naval reserve Center, until I had completed all my duties. I was stoical, but when I awoke, I felt the depth of my hatred for that life. That's why I didn't want to record it. I needed even then to be set free to become a devotee of my spiritual master. I was (and am) tired of always striving. My friend, the journal.

\* \* \*

I skipped my *Bhagavatam* reading this morning. I'm aware that I made that sacrifice to answer the mail, but I know that if I really want to care for the devotees, I must keep up that practice. I am at the end of the Jada Bharata section now.

It's almost Janmastami-Vyasa-puja. Last week before we travel. This signals to me how much I value the peace of privacy. That's another sacrifice or trade-off: my uneventful life doesn't produce so many adventures, only varieties on inner themes. Does that matter to my writing? Still, I prefer a quiet life and I'll take what I can from it rather than feel I have to constantly live abroad.

\* \* \*

2:28 p.m.

By studying the lives of Maharaja Bharata, we can attain all material and spiritual desires. (I know, Prabhus, you don't want any material desires.)

Little yellow-breasted sparrow with tinted brownish tail and lighter tan jacket on wire fence. His buddies flock and flutter right up to the window, chirping.

There is never enough time to write. A writer never has enough solitude . . . The poem or the journal piece wants its own time and its own rhythm. It does not want to be interrupted. It wants to be able to watch the birds mid-paragraph. It wants to be able to

take a walk and have time to come back and work with the thoughts that arise while hiking in the woods . . . We are afraid of the solitude and the concentration we believe may be required.

"*Writing for Your Life*, Deena Metzger

I know we don't want material desires, and I don't know why they put that offer in the *Bhagavatam*, since the *Amala Purana* kicks out all cheating religion. Maybe it's to satisfy anyone who is not quite sure what they want. I don't know. Moving on to the story of Maharaja Gaya.

\* \* \*

5:28 p.m.

Challenges in a book about the connection of diaries and writers who go on to find their public voice. Assumes fiction writing is better. Doesn't think writing is primarily for praising God and repeating scriptures. Doesn't talk of the writer who would do that, but of novelists, especially among women. I beg to differ. I favor the writer who praises God. I favor the writer who presents the scriptures.

Yeah, but in thousands of pages? Why do you write so much? Why don't you rewrite and polish? "The journal comes too easy," thought May Sarton, and she worried about that. It *looks* easy, and maybe not every word carries the full depth, and it's not crafted "all true. But a crafted memoir leaves out the . . .

So it goes, back and forth. When someone says, "You write too much," it's almost like saying, "You have lived too long. You should have died sooner." But how could I? I am still a beginner in spiritual life. See? I have no symptoms of *bhava*. I need more time.

While walking on the woods path, I felt my dedication to Prabhupada and realized that my faith is not fragile. Emotions may come, doubts, worries about my lack or surrender, my lack of taste, but the bottom line is firm: I won't go with those who leave Prabhupada for another guru, I won't follow nondevotees. It was nice to recognize all that. I shouldn't be anxious about my faith in him. I am a disciple, if not a great one. That's clear. I really do have no other aspirations than to attain pure Krishna consciousness. Some could say I've never tested myself against the real world "never tried to publish in the material world, never kept a woman and had to earn money to support a family. They could say I'm hiding in the cult. Insiders could call me a bogus guru, say they don't like my writing. People criticize from a lack of love. Harsh critics are like crickets, if you don't see them, and when you do, like owls in the forest of material enjoyment. All of this has no bearing on my love for Prabhupada.

\* \* \*

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. The outline for my Janmastami lecture is already done. I'll polish that.

It's too easy, too easy,  
they say,  
those outsider critics.



Maybe it's true.

"But Louise Bogan was jealous and therefore didn't like my work," said May Sarton in her journals, which were published and sold quite well. Then she died. Her last two journals were called *Endgame* and *Encore*. I won't do the same. Perhaps I will return to Vrndavana and chant the holy name at the end. There will be nothing left to do. And I'll preach. Feel compassion.

August 23, midnight

Maharaja Pariksit meditated on the universal form (as recommended by Sukadeva Gosvami) in connection with the Supreme Lord. Thus the geographical study of the universe is a spiritual pursuit. Matter used in Krishna's service becomes spiritual. Srila Prabhupada gives the example of managing the Krishna consciousness movement. I could include literary study, such as reading a book on diaries and creative writing. I want to wrestle with this idea in order to make a better presentation of Krishna consciousness so that it will be most convincing.

Dear Lord, please direct me. I am often afraid that I would not be able to do what you asked me to do in all respects. I can *try*. I want my relationship with You through Srila Prabhupada, so I serve in his movement. Some people say that ISKCON stinks and they leave it. As far as I can see, ISKCON is still the closest institution to Srila Prabhupada's movement, although it is so obviously not perfect. We don't have to leave the movement to leave its worst excesses. I pray for the humble confidence to pursue my service and life in this movement. My offering to You, Krishna, is my best writing. I know not everything I write is fit for publishing. Still, my service is to weave disparate elements and to find You among them "for my sake, and for the sake of my readers.

Hear and believe how the Ganges descended. It is an offense to reason, Kierkegaard said regarding the paradox of Christ as God and man, so we must take a leap of faith.

Me standing here on the earth, drawing pictures. What happened to my poems?

\* \* \*

4:50 a.m.

*The Art of Mixing* seems like a good title for this volume. I was thinking of something about hope "the hope that I could raise diary writing to an art form, to a preaching instrument, something pleasing to guru and Krishna. That may all be implied by "The Art of Mixing." I mix my reading and *Bhagavatam* notes. Then I blend in observations, thoughts, ISKCON activities, sense perceptions, add some attempts at free-writing, poem fragments, relevant quotes from nondevotee books, etc.

I don't want this to be *only* diary; I mainly want it to be genuine. I don't seem to have much choice since I avoid fiction and the essay form. I want it to be prayer and praise, but honest.

If my hope is to raise the daily writing to art and prayer, why not call it "The Prayer of Mixing," or "Hope of Pleasing Krishna by Mixing"? Because a title should be concise. The word "art" is suspect; it's not necessarily a God conscious word. In Theophan's book *The Art of Prayer*, the word *art* is used in a religious context. Of course, "The Art

of Mixing" is ambiguous. It could be a Dale Carnegie type book on how to be a socialite: dress sharp, don't be shy, shake hands, don't be a boor, be a good listener, etc. These titles, I guess, are meant to satisfy myself. Others may not always have entrance into their meanings. This one is meant to signify my hope to raise mixing to an art in devotional service. The art of mixing matter and spirit.

Art Linkletter. Art Ford. Arthur Godfrey.  
Mixing.

\* \* \*

6 a.m.  
Mix your  
palate isn't  
in shape to eat  
X-rated movies I did  
to that  
long ago.

Pain's now my story. You know how it goes. No one can follow me there. Krishna conscious theory in practice.

"Use your *vijnana* to explain this," he said, and I had to crank up my preaching machine and memories and throw in some Sukanat and even then . . . thought of dirigibles landing on the Oriental Institute's field in Sant Colony, Vrndavana, where Rupa-raghunatha dasa plans to live and chant and take no guff, choose his friends, tired, tired of always earning money.

He can live without money for awhile "off his previous earnings, or begging, living simply in Vrndavana or work for meals put in the hours at the ISKCON fort.

M. is making something special for breakfast today. "About five more minutes," he called at 6:02.

"All right." A dull ache behind my eye.  
Black cats, Black Cat soles for shoes, odor in shoe repair shop and Italian on radio.  
Black cat and shadow of moon projects  
Batman  
Robin

calf-high boots and wings,  
big chests, muscles, masks "all theater.  
August ending. This is the mix art in religion and me in diary.

\* \* \*

9:15 a.m.

Get free from *maya* and mock your own *anarthas*. Trust in the long process and in the immediate fix (I mean mix.) Trust that the Ganges came down through the celestial planets and was taken onto the heads (at least some drops of it) by Dhruva Maharaja and the *sapta-rsis*.

Slept extra today. It's gray out. A local farmer in huge tractor mowed our hay fields for six pounds an acre. Field shorn.

Some of the things I read seem not to apply to me, such as the sections describing the tracts of land where the residents enjoy lusty affairs with their wives, yet worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Sometimes I read things that sound quaint or amusing, but I listen anyway, and try not to be a wise-guy. My mind drifts to a letter from someone asking me to forgive him. He's clever. I said I forgive and I'm embarrassed to even take the position of accepting an apology. It doesn't matter. It's not that he'll behave any differently with me now. Then back to the tracts of land, the modes of nature, the expansions of Visnu.

The telephone rings. Madhu is going to Galway today for a *harinama* party, which will be filmed on TV. The collie bounds into view and runs to the base of a tree. He smiles and looks up at the birds on this mild gray day. He wanted to cook and serve *halava* (not the collie, M.), and it took extra time. Now it sits heavily in my stomach. I didn't ask for it. I asked him to straighten his room (I feel like the parent of a teenager), and not to use the van or our recording machine. I want him to copy the tapes, to go on a walk with me, to give his life to care for a weak and growing weaker old man.

It's exposed now: Anais Nin was a deceiver even in her diary. Now they call it a "liary". The truth will out, if not at once, then later. Even those who try not to deceive in a big way look pitiful and illusioned when their little lies are exposed. Critics often read dishonesty even into the words of someone who tried to tell the truth. They psychoanalyze him (or her) and decide why he never made it. Certainly a person living a life sees what others fail to see about himself, but he also fails to see himself objectively. The Lord in the heart sees all. I hope He may forgive me my excesses and shortcomings.

In the tracts of land, on top of old Smokey  
all covered with snow,  
I lost my true lover  
for thoughts are so slow.

\* \* \*

I believed like a quander  
and misused my lot,  
so I'll be sent to a diva  
and be buried in sot.

\* \* \*

I never knew bliss times  
I only knew "mew"  
like a cat on the run  
I was covered with dew.

\* \* \*

I yearned to be a *bhakta*  
not lagged with the rest  
too timid for heaven  
too lost for the best.

\* \* \*

My tale never ends 'cause  
the soul's got to move  
from body to lamp post  
he falls in the groove.

\* \* \*

Lord Siva prays that Sankarsana, the Supreme Lord, is never agitated; He's *dhira*. His devotees, such as Prahlada, are also *dhira*. Even when fierce Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared to kill his father, Prahlada remained quiet.

Crows cruise low over the mown hay. I can see out, calm. Inward I see petty things. A disciple writes me that William Burroughs is now dead. Of course, I tell myself, those Beats were all older than me. My group isn't falling off like flies quite yet. My group is the generation with whom I joined ISKCON. I myself (the hero, anti-hero, writer) came on the scene just before the baby-boomers. I'm about five or six years older than they are (seven years older than Clinton), so it is expected that I will leave a little earlier than the baby-boomers. Unless I live to eighty-three like May Sarton, whose last journal published during her life was called *At Eighty-Three*. Keep writing 'em, May, battling it out alone in your Maine house that faced the Atlantic. You always worried that your journals, and not your poems, fiction, and other books, were so popular.

Maybe he'll go to heaven. Do people like him go there?

No, sonny, he's aspiring for the Krishna planet.

So will he go there?

It's hard to say. You have to be completely pure and in love with Krishna and the *gopis* and *gopas* in your *rasa*.

Well, isn't he *supposed* to be? Isn't he a guru?

Yes, but you see . . .

It's not so clear, huh?

\* \* \*

11:55 a.m.

"Lord Visnu's incarnation as the serpentine Ananta-Sesa Naga supports all the universes on his hoods." (*Bhag.* 5.17.21, purport) They feel no heavier than a mustard seed. Just wanted to write it down to blow your minds and make you relax. Accept it as best you can, and let those who can't accept it go away.

JS said that Prabhupada asked to hear the First Canto during his very last days. What does it mean? It means we can follow his example. Don't think we are more advanced and should hear only *gopi-manjari-bhava* at the end. That's what it seems to mean. Hear of the soul in matter and the practice of pure devotees in their loving relationship with Krishna.

\* \* \*

Diary lines  
in devotion means  
always remember you're meant  
for death and next life,  
Remember Krishna, what you  
learned:  
you're a disciple submissive.

\* \* \*

Always write  
sincere, with trust  
and go back to Godhead.

\* \* \*

Does it happen automatically?  
Each day you  
vote for God  
open your hearing  
learn  
instead  
of  
nod.

\* \* \*

2:44 p.m.

The prayers of the devotee to Lord Hayagriva state that if one theoretically knows the Absolute Truth, but neglects it, he can become a victim of *maya*. The Lord saved the *Vedas*. If people neglect Vedic knowledge, they lose it. I'm thinking to repeat some of this to a disciple who just wrote posing the three professional options he is currently

facing. I'll tell him that whatever his choices, money-making and career development are not the goals of life.

A very young man is driving the tractor rapidly over "our" land. He has a machine that picks up the mown hay and turns it on its side, so that both sides can dry. Another day he'll have to bale it. Because he passes so close to this window, I've moved to the rear of the room. It's easier to hear about Lord Hayagriva like that. From here, I can see Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Krishna.

In this chapter are Prahlada's prayers in worship of Lord Nrsimhadeva. Each incarnation emanates from the two-handed form of Krishna, who stands with a flute in His hands and tends the cows. I heard Srila Prabhupada lecturing in 1966 (with a dog barking outside and cars and city voices competing with his). He said that Krishna is supreme, and that this is standard knowledge accepted by all the *acaryas*. It was impressive to think how Srila Prabhupada was asserting this point. An outsider could object that what he was saying was only true to Hindus, and that other cultures and other religions, and even the hippies, had gone beyond such concepts. But Prabhupada went ahead and spoke the truth, and some of us listened. That was his technique: just go ahead and speak the truth. "The other party," he said, referring to the atheists and nondevotees, don't have such an authoritative book. Nor do they have *acaryas* to corroborate their teachings. Their sentences are full of "perhaps" and "maybe."

Ah, that book, *Bhagavad-gita*, and that land, Vrndavana, and that heart and mind and intelligence to which the spiritual master appealed. Today I also heard Sivarama Swami lecturing at the Manor. He said he was born in Hungary, but moved as a young boy to Canada. Now he speaks *Bhagavad-gita* with grave authority. He says we should study Srila Prabhupada's books scrutinizingly and that most devotees fail in this regard. He's another one who listened when Prabhupada spoke the Absolute Truth.

The boy on the tractor wears a T-shirt with broad horizontal white and navy blue stripes. He wears a dark blue baseball cap. He circles and comes close to the window. I'm back at my desk now "let him see. I write with my gold pen, head down as he passes.

\* \* \*

*The Diary as Devotion*. My title. It says everything: "I offer my respectful obeisances to Lord Nrsimhadeva, the source of all power. O my Lord, who possesses nails and teeth just like thunderbolts, kindly vanquish our demon-like desires for fruitive activity in this material world. Please appear in our hearts and drive away our ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world." (*Bhag.* 5.18.8)

\* \* \*

4:47 p.m.

*The Diary As Devotion*.

Let it go.

Walked and met Arjuna. He said he was towing Abhaya's car. He sussed out what was wrong "she and other devotees drive their old cars with petrol almost on empty, and this causes a malfunction. He said he didn't go on *harinama* to Galway because someone

had to stay back and help Syamananda prepare for the festival. I said something about the boy on the tractor. Arjuna said the parents of a devotee who will be initiated are here to "check it out." We parted after a few minutes.

I thought later that all these external events will pass away. "Myriad of happenings," then death. Then the tally is made "how much devotion, how much material attachment. Srila Prabhupada sometimes said that it didn't matter much whether we worshiped Christ or Krishna or Buddha; what mattered was whether we possessed symptoms of love of God, and whether we were free of motives separate from pleasing His senses.

There are different ways to be Krishna conscious. Arjuna dasa is serving devotees. Others study. Whatever way you choose, you have to somehow dedicate your life to devotional service, and not live only on the theoretical platform. Our path is Krishna *consciousness*. You don't have any need to study other religions. Once you have chosen this path, then worship Krishna, the chosen Deity (*ista-devata*).

The tractors won't come out this far "the land is too lumpy. We don't need more hay. What can I do out here? Go for a pint? I mean, a pint of paint. My head is clear, so that sounds like a good idea. I have few chances left to work on those 18 x 24 boards since I can't take them traveling with us.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. That hound chasing the tractor won't get caught in the blades, I hope. We get wounded so suddenly and unexpectedly in this world. Suddenly we need someone to rush us to the hospital. Until then, we continue on our peaceful way, pushing beads or pens or paint brushes or whatever our line of work, our eyes fixed on the pages of *sastra*, ears tuned to the holy sound.

\* \* \*

5 p.m.

Nitai-pada.

Mad paints.

A lusty

gorilla-like

Dvivida.

I like to go wild,

forget the self and leave

him behind.

It's not sense grat but

a search for Krishna in the natural way.

Shapes come out yearning

ascetical

aesthe-tical

woman's face

green hair orange

*tilaka* "always *tilaka*."

In the streets of Galway, surely some people mocked the devotees, but the devotees carried on with their banners announcing the festival to be held on August 28. In this

shed, I did my bit. Don't you see how it comes together? We're each doing something for Krishna

somehow or other.

I am known as a devotee

so when I paint

it's as Srila Prabhupada's disciple.

"For those who like philosophy I have written this book," said a Godbrother. His book was a triumph, and all devotees love to see Krishna consciousness triumph in one way or another (even if they don't personally love philosophy). We are politically weak, and few governments care what we have to say except perhaps the English government, since they have so many Hindus in England.

"*Yauvana-putra* "youth, sons, wife, don't you see?" Govinda dasa asks. "It's all tottering." At any moment another insect will fall off this leaf.

"Mourned and honored." *Best Poetry of 1997*, recent Latest Dead: A.G., Joseph Brodsky, here's his poem . . .

God, God, the day will come or maybe not, when

Krishna consciousness will be prominent

in this world. Keep pure yourself.

On Janmastami I'll say Krishna appears, but many do not allow Him to appear in their lives, not then, not now. He appears wherever there is an open and qualified heart.

\* \* \*

8:35 p.m.

Can't sleep. Was it that half piece of apple pie at 6 p.m.? Toes curling, turning in bed, waiting to hear M.'s return (scheduled for 9 p.m.) It's already late, and I don't know if I will be able to get up at midnight now. At least I can still begin *japa* by 1:30. No pain yet. At least I'm a devotee, I mean, a servant of a devotee.

It's *only* a diary.

Yes.

But *this* diary is written by a servant of the spiritual master. That places it into a different category.

Susan Sontag says she loves and respects literature, and that diaries are not great literature, but they're interesting. When we read how diarists did not go beyond the diary form to find a public voice, we are interested to know what kept them from the "higher" forms of novels and short stories.

I don't buy that theory. Neither is this a Liary, a Journal Written for Publication, nor a "had lunch" report. I'm no Pepys either. Sri Krishna Caitanya on the page.

Harlot's Curse. Curse of the misbegotten "in Queens, December '39. Blessing of the person found by Swamiji. He said he was "useless" wandering around NYC, and we were useless. The two useleses came together and formed something useful. ISKCON was incorporated in July '66. How could I ever leave it?

Write a diary of devotion to

Mukunda

Krishna. This



Dir Diry,  
this dirty doughty  
tough hard shell  
flows. I read a little *Srimad-Bhagavatam*  
then write my student's notes  
unraveling the purpose. If I had enough time I'd  
incorporate SK's philosophy here  
and study poetry  
painting.  
Better just let off steam and get back to bed.  
If I fall asleep, I can dream and  
maybe Prabhupada will appear. If I should die  
in the midst of a life of attempted devotional expression,  
Narada promises, "No loss."  
Syamasundara. Prabhupada.

August 24, 9:34 a.m.

I've been delaying my writing today. Got up an hour late. Just met for an hour with the four devotees who will be initiated tomorrow. One asked for a definition of "pure devotee" "how pure is the guru? I said a pure devotee is always engaged in Krishna's service and that's his perfection. Higher and higher examples of pure devotees. Transparent medium.

Sing-song thin lyric in a poem someone gave me. We strain to make a free-verse song, dividing the lines with grace, we hope, until the end line "  
ker-plunk.

There they go after meeting with the guru. He told them to be faithful. Emotions smolder. Who knows their minds? Were my answers clear? Could have been better. Don't dehumanize the guru. Oh gosh, it's a confidential talk.

The day filled with bright sunshine for the time being, but it's late morning and I have not yet read the scripture.

\* \* \*

4:30 p.m.

Devotees arriving. Still I'm allowed to live apart and not to socialize. In that sense, this is an ideal place to be. I'm ready for the lecture tomorrow and to fast. Two edited manuscripts arrived within a week. That's all for now. I didn't write much today, but felt lucky to have survived.

August 25, Janmastami midnight

I was about to write, "This day is yours," meaning *mine*, but let's say, "This day is Yours, Lord Krishna, to do with me as You like." I may be pain-free or not, give my lecture or not, write well or not "as You like.

Let me remind myself that whatever happens it will be under Krishna's control. I do have a little free-will, and I wish to use my day in a way that pleases Krishna. I don't need to be heroic, just disciplined and attempting humility.

"Please appear in our hearts and drive away our ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world." (*Bhag.* 5.18.8)

Repetition of birth and death "I'm not *aware* of it, I say, although I've heard about the events from reliable sources. It *will* happen. I want to get out of the cycle. Beyond that, a pure devotee wants simply to act as Krishna's instrument, even if he doesn't attain liberation. He is interested in bringing others to Krishna consciousness. We have nothing else to worry about. Krishna protects us and we engage in His service. Simple.

"Any devotee aspiring to be free of material desires should offer his respectful prayers to Nrsimhadeva as Prahlada Maharaja did in this verse."

". . . Therefore, let us all engage in the service of the Supreme transcendence, Lord Sri Krishna, and always remain absorbed in thoughts of Him." (*Bhag.* 5.18.9)

Thinking of a letter from a disciple. She mentioned that her uncle wrote a nice poem, now published, about his feelings and thoughts toward a snowdrop in relation to God. She also observed how Madhu "came alive!" when playing his music. "They said that music seems to be an intense passion for him. They said he looked like he could play all day whereas they could play only an hour or two at most. I didn't say, 'Yes, that was because he was doing it for Krishna.' If a passion is dovetailed in Krishna's service, you can never tire of it."

We may think of Srila Prabhupada's statements about the efficacy of Krishna consciousness to be idealistic. "Anyone who takes up Krishna consciousness and engages himself completely in the service of the Lord cleanses his mind of all envy." (*Bhag.* 5.18.9) As Sivarama Maharaja says, this is *ideal* and we fall short of it. We are in the modes of passion and ignorance, trying to practice goodness and even detachment from goodness. Do I believe in the reality of an ideal state? Do I believe in the existence of Krishna and in attaining the goal? Do I want it? There we should pray to Lord Nrsimha to sit in our hearts. We should pray, *bahir nrsimho hrdaye nrsimhah*, "Let Lord Nrsimha sit in the core of my heart, killing all my bad propensities. Let my mind become clean so I may peacefully worship the Lord and bring peace to the entire world."

Don't be envious, malicious, or faultfinding. That covers a multitude of sins. Pray to be helped by the Lord so you can function in the community of devotees. I don't want to be too indulgent with those under my care just because I've become more lenient with myself, but how can I be harder on them than I am on myself? We have to start with self-reformation. We have to learn to love, and become Krishna conscious, then to extend that to whomever we meet. Hare Krishna.

My dear Lord Krishna,  
please let me become Krishna conscious.

Please let me get through this day.

Please help me to become aware of You today, so that I am always auspiciously engaged in Your service. May the devotees gathered at Inis rath, and those gathered in Your temples and their own homes all over the world, observe a peaceful and auspicious Janmastami.

The devotees here have prepared an initiation ceremony, a drama, a musical concert, a new outfit for the Deities, all-day cooking, and are prepared to fast. Hare Krishna. May I survive it if not in physical health, at least in good consciousness.

I needn't be anxious as long as I can turn to Krishna in my mind. I pray for taste and attachment to (dependence on) the holy names of Krishna.

My prepared talk this morning centers on the fact that Krishna is *always* appearing, but that appearance is only potential, depending on the individual devotee's receptivity. We must clean the mind and heart so that Krishna can appear there as fully as possible. Let it truly be an appearance of Krishna in us at all times. It's a battle to drive out *maya* and to install Krishna.

\* \* \*

4:33 a.m.

Writing blocks. Lack of interest. I scratch along. The *sastras* advise that we don't associate with nondevotees. Well said. Maybe I should rest. I want to be in good shape for all the things I have to do today.

\* \* \*

6:45 a.m.

"The laughter is on my side," said Kierkegaard. He claims this is the one wish for which he asked when the gods granted him a boon. My wish is to become the sincere servant of my spiritual master. To want that, to attain that, and to know he accepts me as such "that's what I want. I can't claim in my heart that I do desire that as a singlemost wish, so I make a wish that this desire can manifest in my heart, and then come true. From the fulfillment of that desire would come an ability to preach, compassion, and naturally, love of Krishna in eternal bliss and knowledge in Krishnaloka, serving Radha-Krishna with Their *parisads*.

Janmastami. I put an Esgic in my breast pocket for later. Chant extra. If I can't chant more than a little extra, at least be pleased to be in the company of devotees. It's easy to have a good time today. The auspicious nature flows strongly and we just have to flow with it (and refrain from eating).

\* \* \*

It is precisely because the poet has written his poems in solitude for himself to satisfy unanalyzable hungers and to please his highest standards with negligible prospects of any other rewards that the poem is incorruptible and may address issues unaddressed by many people in their daily lives. Therefore, when people hear or read this poem they may, just may, respond eagerly and take heart at hearing or reading what they themselves have never been able to utter, but now suspect is true.

This was stated by James Tate in his preface to *The Best American Poetry, 1997*.

It seems true not just about poetry, but of prose written in that spirit. This is one of my principles in writing. Ultimately, I want to preach, but when I write it may at first appear that I am not preaching. I am writing in a shed or room alone, and I write of many

things, some of which don't even get published. Because I do it that way, separate from controversies and the official line, I'm able to think and say things that are relevant to devotees. At least that's my hope.

(skip) xxx

2:30 p.m.

Sitting in the darkened theatre (temple) waiting for the play "Am I a Demon or a Vaisnava?" to begin. I took a pill to quell a headache. Will I be able to get through this? Don't expect to enjoy *anything* in life. Always try to think of Krishna and of pleasing Him.

Janmastami is happy  
always with devotees  
never apart in spirit  
may I worship my Lord  
always.

Krishna, Krishna. My enthusiasm isn't pure, but Krishna, Krishna anyway. Devotees sitting on the floor. We heard that Manu is going to apologize at the beginning that this play is still a work in progress. I say everything falls into that category and that the curtain is always up.

\* \* \*

6:30 p.m.

Things to do on Janmastami that I didn't do:

- (1) Write at length, feelingly.
  - (2) Chant extra rounds, thirty-two or sixty-four.
  - (3) Spend a lot of time in the temple room or temple kitchen.
  - (4) Talk to many people. I *did* this. I gave *gayatri* mantras to six new *brahmanas*.
- I'm okay. I'm fasting. Intend to go to the concert at 9 p.m.

Krishna,

Krishna.

The ides of March.

Merton's editor said he was glad he admitted that his diaries were looser, written for himself, whereas his published work was "more controlled, more responsible, more objective, and therefore better."

*Is an objective work better?* Kierkegaard says, "Subjectivity is truth." What you believe in wholeheartedly, the one idea you can live and die for "that's your truth. Mine is that I'm a devotee of Srila Prabhupada, and through him, a devotee of Krishna.

Stay up tonight. Air in my stomach. Intestines resting from their usual work. Say here I'd like to be the Lord of all creation?

No. Then what? A gem-like devotee? Guaranteed liberation? Strong, no more headaches? Mediocre and accepting myself?

No, I want more, and I keep trying for it, expressing it.

Cars parked near the boathouse. Crossed the strait four times today, with two more times scheduled. Faces of friends of Krishna. A friend of Krishna (and Srila Prabhupada) is a friend of mine.

I praise Inis rath, told Syamananda it's worth maintaining this place just to have it open for the Irish devotees on Janmastami. Beautiful Radha-Govinda. Plenty of children. Everyone fasting. I come and go. Silent, preserving strength.

Krishna "make Him a gift. Do they give presents to the Deity here? Should we give one? Towels, money, yourself. Radha and Krishna are here to be worshiped.

\* \* \*

Coming back from the island I looked up at Manu's house and the adjacent part that is my room. I know it can't last forever. I'll have to leave. The little white house here is sweet, I've staked out my residence for this part of my life, but how long can that be?

\* \* \*

8:50 p.m.

M. headed with Arjuna to the island. Arjuna will come back and pick me up. M. will leave tomorrow morning to pick up his daughter in Dublin. I've got my outline for the Vyasa-puja lecture "including a quote from Kierkegaard on how he gave reasons why he chose Christ over anyone else who might have saved him. If he is too logical about his choice, however, then he is *eo ipso* not a believer, or a lover. Of course, I'll first give plenty of reasons why I follow Prabhupada exclusively, but beyond reason is love.

Several times today I said things in a lecture that I don't actually follow in life. For example, I said we shouldn't indulge in inattention when we chant. Later, I said something else like that. Well, what else can I do? When I gave the *gayatri-mantras* to the new *brahmanas*, I told them each that these mantras are prayers. Don't degrade yourself by saying them mechanically.

You do that, man, so how come you tell *them* to be good?

Do as I say, not as I do. Unfortunate.

Remember death. Be aware that you have *chosen* to pray to God in Krishna's holy names, and that you have been given a great opportunity. You've allowed your mind to degrade you, but your state is not irrevocable. I pray for reform now, as part of a Janmastami boon.

You deserve a boom, not a boon. What makes you think you should get a boon?

Well, I stayed up so late and I didn't eat anything. I thought maybe Krishna would allow me a kind of New Year's resolution or something. No more inattention.

That sounds like the old joke, "It's easy to give up smoking. I've done it thousands of times."

Go ahead and laugh. My requested boon is, however, that the laughter may be on my side.

\* \* \*

9:15 p.m.

Temple room. Everyone friendly here. M. and Ramanuja tuning. I'll tune with my pen. You can read it later, my saved melody.

Radha-Krishna open for *darSana*. Devotees are speaking in front of Them. We could be more worshipful.

M. is confident about playing in front of an audience. I sit it out. My body is beginning to feel discomfort, almost as if I ate too much. Drink water.

I'll sit this out. As with the drama, I can't give my whole attention to the music. To nothing? I worry and look ahead to something else. Maybe it's a kind of awareness of mortality. I can't get lost in a moment because I know I have limited time "less time than younger people. Srila Prabhupada seemed able to be absorbed in preaching. He had a gravity we couldn't understand.

O Prabhupada,  
please accept me lively,  
not patronizingly,  
not as a blind follower "  
or rather, I wish I could follow you blindly  
as you said you followed Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati.

\* \* \*

"More, Madhu!" "  
audience shouts.

\* \* \*

Greedy ogler got to control his senses rock 'n' roll I don't like. Fingers of SDG, LSD  
kid no more, taking dictation from how deep  
within?

I'm no different than others  
writing on this wave length.

I ask you why this fascination with self? If you could write more and better, you could reach Prabhupada. ISKCON in tatters or ISKCON strong and centralized "give us his lotus feet.

August 26, 7:05 a.m., Srila Prabhupada Vyasa-puja Day

I hope I'll be able to give my class. Arjuna is supposed to take me over to the island at 8.

I'll start by reading from *Prabhupada Samadhi Diary* in which I tell about a time when I felt Prabhupada pulling me toward him. I give examples of tangible ways that we can respond to this, such as my beginning again with my Prabhupada *puja*, my making a pledge to read his *Bhagavatam* that year, and my daily visits to his *samadhi* and rooms in Mayapur and Vrndavana. My writing the diary.

After reading something, I'll explain the various reasons why I worship Prabhupada exclusively. One reason is that he saved me from material life. Prabhupada said the same of his own spiritual master. In this regard, I'll read the *Bhagavatam* verse: "My dear Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, because of my association with material desires, one after another, I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes,

following the general populace. But Your servant Narada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service?" (*Bhag. 7.9.28*)

Another reason to serve Prabhupada exclusively is that he is the most expert *acarya* for this age in knowing how to engage the Western conditioned mentality "from which we suffer. To give an example of this, I plan to read Prabhupada's purport about Dhruva Maharaja, where Narada Muni told him to worship the Deity in the forest according to time and convenience. That purport shows Prabhupada's expertise in guiding Westerners, even if they can't do everything exactly the way it's done in Hindu India, and even if Prabhupada's own Godbrothers didn't appreciate Prabhupada's adaptations.

Another reason to worship Prabhupada is because the *sastras* enjoin us to worship the guru with complete faith: *yasya deve para-bhaktir tatah deve tatah gurau*. One might argue that the principle of *guru-nistha* applies not only to A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, and that we should worship all gurus as one. I have given reasons why it applies only to Prabhupada in the lives of his followers. Beyond reason, however, there is faith. This is where I will insert Kierkegaard's statement about why he can't give *reasons* why he has accepted Jesus Christ as his savior and not someone else. He says that as soon as we start to give reasons, we are no longer believers, just as a man cannot present reasons why he loves his beloved and not another woman. I don't know if the devotees will be able to understand this point about the leap of faith, but I think it will be clear if I assure them that reasons are important, but beyond reason is faith.

Another point I wish to discuss is this: "Can we reciprocate with Srila Prabhupada after his disappearance?" My answer is yes, but it depends on our purity.

Finally I want to say that we shouldn't be more intelligent than Prabhupada. I had some exchanges with Manu dasa that led me to sum up with this phrase. A devotee had said that Prabhupada didn't translate something accurately. Manu complained about this to me. I had to admit that I had recently done that too when someone asked what Prabhupada meant by the word "blackmail" in a particular purport. I replied that perhaps Prabhupada hadn't used the word precisely. Of course, we should be forgiven for small mistakes like this, but the deeper point is that when we accept a spiritual master, we should always hold him as more intelligent than ourselves. remain a fool before the guru, as Lord Caitanya did Himself.

Whatever I say will be a kind of performance. It doesn't remove the personal work of finding my own feelings about all this and actually feeling them. When I speak, I don't always have the time or presence of mind for that work, but at least I have this diary of devotion. I'm grateful to Srila Prabhupada for that.

I was almost going to say that I was grateful to Prabhupada for giving me life today. That makes it sound like Prabhupada is God. I think Krishna knows what I mean if I say my spiritual master gives me life. He allows me to appreciate real life, to appreciate the beauty of the material world and yet to be detached from it, to see Krishna behind everything. He gives me life because I have a purpose which is transcendental and a goal which is to go back to Godhead. I had a tiny inkling of it last night "a feeling of the sweetness of being solely fixed on Prabhupada and his particular style of teaching Krishna consciousness. No excuses are needed, no debates, and no attraction to other

gurus with other emphases. We are confident that we are getting full Krishna consciousness from our own spiritual master.

\* \* \*

10:05 a.m.

In my Vyasa-puja lecture I indirectly alluded to the challenge of the Gaudiya Math's new worldwide movements. During the question and answer session, one devotee asked directly about it. I found myself defending ISKCON. Afterwards as I walked to the quay with a group of devotees, we got into the nitty-gritty about why people leave ISKCON and how the other parties minimize Prabhupada. Somehow it had to all come out. I feel sorry that such unpalatable things had to be spoken, but relieved to have aired them. What I fear more was my taking a tone of bravado. I don't want to commit offenses toward any Gaudiya Vaisnava. Offenses often come when we speak things we don't feel deeply enough ourselves. Nevertheless, I spoke with whatever conviction I could find within myself, although I'm sure my words were imperfect. There comes a time when we each have to be prepared to protect each other. I insisted that ISKCON devotees are naive when they think the issue between ISKCON and the Gaudiya Math is politics, or that the GBC should allow ISKCON devotees to accept *Siksa* from Gaudiya Math gurus. It's also naive to think that the Gaudiya Math is not really minimizing Prabhupada. Anyway, that discussion is over for the day. Now let me quiet down.

\* \* \*

- (1) Close curtains so *karmi* tractor driver doesn't see me honoring *prasadam*.
- (2) Break the fast.
- (3) Listen to some of M.'s tape.
- (4) Think over what I said this morning. Misgivings on some points "was I unclear explaining "interfaith dialogue" between us and members of Gaudiya Math?"
- (5) I think I ought to write more; why not give more time for it?
- (6) I haven't read in Srila Prabhupada's books in a day. What is this loyalty if you don't actually meet him anew and hear from him anew? Not just loyal to a concept or to a party.
- (7) How that devotee keeps his distance. Do I envy him?
- (8) I played the role of guru on a morning walk with a large group of disciples. It does create enthusiasm. The Gurupada days, Bala and old-timers like to recall. But it has its downside.
- (9) Try to return to regulation.
- (10) Notice slow wasps (yellow jackets), a sign of the season. I remember them from the Czech farm at Janmastami and other times. Dying wasps "what does it mean? It means everyone dies.
- (11) It's Vyasa-puja, so I think it wouldn't be appropriate to read anything other than Prabhupada's books.
- (12) Finish your rounds.



(13) He said I staved off a headache yesterday with a pill, but maybe I was meant to endure it. If it comes, relax and don't get nervous. There's nothing lost and nothing wrong.

(14) Still, a clear day would be nice. In the *Bhagavatam* I'm up to "The Prayers by The residents of Jambudvipa." Can I please read a little more?

After today I'll start swinging toward the trip in the van. Time to load up.

Dear Lord, I want to love You. One devotee told me he felt uncomfortable when I said we have to love Prabhupada with faith beyond reason. What was his point? That he feels little love. And he feels challenged by the Gaudiya Math gurus who relativize Prabhupada. As soon as someone says that, we lose track of the essential issue and leap into the new one. The essential issue is this: how can we love?

Whatever increases our love is good, provided it's not false stimulation. We each have to find out what that is for ourselves. Prabhupada assured us that we have the love within us; we simply have to bring it out.

I like to bask in the praise and admiration of disciples "that's the down side. Don't live on that food. Be humble and more often alone. Seek your connection with Srila Prabhupada not by proclaiming it to others or debating it with the Gaudiya Math followers, and not by colliding with others either, but personally, deeply, quietly.

\* \* \*

3:28 p.m.

Now leave behind Kierkegaard and his father and regine Olsen and even Abraham and Isaac and God and all the questions and answers he gives about the human heart, intelligence, doubt, and faith. I don't have to share his burden or study his writings "that's not my responsibility. My way is simpler, chalked out by the Vaisnava *acaryas* and given to me by Srila Prabhupada. It's up to me to learn creative approaches to reading and chanting and to use them in my writing, placing the old wine in new bottles. And to do all that with limited health.

Coming out to the shed I met Prahlada and his family. He's almost moved here now. He said he faces things at Inis rath "step by step." I added, "Day by day." It's an important working principle for him. I don't know exactly what he means by it, though. He doesn't want to overburden himself and his wife with self-assigned gardening. "No pressure," I said. He offered to do his best, and I took that as my cue to walk on.

The door on the shed can't be fastened from the inside. I've been asking M. for a week to fix it. Someone will have to drill a hole in it.

Gray sky, possible rain. My head isn't clear. A beginning twinge warns me that I had better not go into a full-scale painting experience on the Bristols. I need to take it easy or I'll regret it later.

When thoughts don't come and the head signals that I can't do what I like, I can only write my way to Krishna consciousness. I remember talking to some guy and his girlfriend in their pad on the Lower East Side during my LSD days. He said he saw no need for a life of creativity. Living was enough for him. Why create? I see how someone could argue like that, but if you have the urge to make things, writing, painting, music,

etc., why deny it? Should a cook not cook? Perhaps you can make something that will give enjoyment or insight and solace to others. People are waiting for the meal.

Gray forms in a light gray sky. Confederate Army gray. The sound of the wind in the trees "last week of August.

August 27, 12:08 a.m.

Reading. Don't be attached to family, bank balance, etc. "If we do have some attachment, let it be for devotees, whose only dear friend is Krishna." (*Bhag.* 5.18.10)

Mix your slow-moving reading and writing today, and stay close to the devotional fire.

What I just thought of is a memory. Who you are you don't know. Prahlada . . . Prabhupada. If I must be influenced by someone, let it be these great devotees. We say one should not be a parrot but should think for himself, but that declaration of independence is also someone's philosophy. If I must be influenced . . .

I want to be open (not resistant) to our philosophy. When the purport says, "Why should the menu be unnecessarily increased for the satisfaction of the tongue?" I don't want to oppose it.

Bathing in the Ganges and visiting *tirthas* cleanses the mind, but it takes a long time, whereas hearing about Mukunda from devotees acts quickly because "the Absolute Truth, the Personality of Godhead in the form of sound vibration, enters within the heart and cleanses it of all contamination." (*Bhag.* 5.8.11)

I dreamt of being in college. I went to a devotee connected with it, a friend of Hridayananda Maharaja, and asked him to help me get in. He said, "So you no longer want to be renounced? You want a wife?"

"No! Just a position." I applied for a job working at the cafeteria. I also tried to sell books. Strange dream.

As I write, rain and wind slash over the land. The fields are mown. I hope the hay is not ruined by the rain. I did some drawings yesterday afternoon before the headache came. They are safe in the shed. I can collect them later.

Nothing to salvage here, and no gossip, please, I don't need to hear your worst, although I trust you to be honest. This is the true story about how the day after Vyasa-puja went. I rose at midnight, relatively pain-free, back on schedule, and read the *Bhagavatam*. It was waiting and open. *Yeyatma mam prapadyante*. "The more we cleanse the dirt of material attachment from our hearts, the more we will be attracted by Krishna's name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and activities." Chanting cleanses, and then one comes to the platform of Krishna consciousness and reads "books like *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *Caitanya-caritamrta* and *The Nectar of Devotion*. In this way, one becomes more and more purified of material contamination."

\* \* \*

I'm not so inclined to deep analytical *study*. It feels too dry and tedious. Others like to do it, however. I don't always relish the conclusions that come of it. I read recently an analysis that we should concentrate on doing things in the mode of goodness if we want

to become liberated from the modes. Then we will be able to perform devotional service more efficiently and come to the transcendental platform. We are not automatically on the transcendental platform when we chant and hear. I admit that. It said we tend to hear this, but it doesn't change our lives. But I don't like to think so much like this. To say that we are not yet transcendental while performing our devotional service is fine, and it's true that we should admit where we're at and accept the judgment that we're chanting in the mode of ignorance. But that's hard to admit. Srila Prabhupada encouraged us in a different way. He said we do ascend to the transcendental platform when we perform our services. When I hear it stressed that we are still in the modes of nature even down to the point that our chanting may not be elevating us as much as we think it is, I remember the negative doctrines taught by the *sannyasis* in 1969 - 70 where we were told that we were in *maya* and not receiving our *acaryas'* blessings.

Still, I can't deny the truth of these statements about the modes and our lack of transcendence of them. Just now I came upon something similar while reading a comment on *nasta prayesu*: "While the devotee engages in devotional service, the passionate and ignorant modes of material nature are gradually vanquished and then he acts only in the mode of goodness. At that time he becomes happy and gradually advances in Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 5.18.12, purport)

Wherever we are, whatever we lack in mental capacity or purity, go on chanting and hearing, and try to improve.

When Prabhupada says things like, "When one engages himself in the nine processes of devotional service, one's heart becomes purified and he immediately understands his relationship with Krishna," what does that mean? Does it mean *immediately*? We make a further purport based on our overall knowledge of other things he has written and our knowledge of other Sastric verses.

But I want to be able to accept the statement as he makes it in a simple way. It may apply to me, it may apply to others, it may be something I have to preach, I may be able to understand it or not (as in the famous verse about how Vyasadeva may or may not understand the *Bhagavatam*), but aside from that, I want to be able to read it as it is stated and face the opportunity it presents: "He immediately understands his relationship with Krishna. He then revives his original quality of Krishna consciousness."

This is a special quality of personal study, and I can express it in my private writing "the discovery of the books as they are.

\* \* \*

We lose our spiritual strength when we become materially attached, just as a crocodile loses its strength on the land.

Dear Lord, You seem absent sometimes, and You want to see us make an effort to find You. You love us, but You want us to love You too. We must overcome our personal obstacles and come to You through Srila Prabhupada. I am trying, dear Lord, but I'm so lame.

So lamely I try,  
so gamely "

the wind and wet cold lash against the house. We are sheltered inside. A perfect opportunity for me to chant. M.'s daughter is here for a visit. I needn't be concerned about that or about the mown hay. I'm allowed to concentrate on my *bhajana* and to give the best part of it to the devotees through writing and speaking. But so tiny and fallen I am, so prone to fear, so attached to amenities and bodily comforts, so easily stopped by a little pain. What can I do but call out in a small voice, "I love You and wish to increase my love. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna."

\* \* \*

5:12 a.m.

Someone gave me a book called *The Book of American Diaries*. It's arranged with entries for every day of the year. I was thinking of writing, "On this day in 1861, so-and-so observed "" and then to springboard off it, but I'm don't feel inspired to do that today. H. L. Mencken wrote on this day in 1942 that he would probably be better off as a German than an American, and he wished that his forefathers hadn't migrated. Although he was born and had now lived for sixty-two years in America, he still felt he couldn't adapt to the culture. He felt like a foreigner.

I have been in exile from America and living in Ireland. Even if I lived in the U.S., as I may again, I would feel the same sense of being an exile. Actually, it would probably be even stronger. That's because I'm a member of the Hare Krishna movement and I have been rejected by mainstream American culture. America exists in so many sub-cultures (we used to call it counter-culture), but even so Hare Krishna has almost no place. We are our own tiny culture, and have only Hindu immigrants to form our congregation. But we are not even a peaceful, if insular, society. We lack both material and spiritual means. Yet this is our home, this ISKCON, inside and outside the temples. Yesterday we spoke our allegiance to our spiritual master and founder-*acarya*.

\* \* \*

Some flowers bloom in moonlight. HTD and SK out walking. Someone knocks on the window when they want to talk with M. I'll have to wake him soon so he can make breakfast on time. Halley-you-yah, I feel drowsy. Turn the heat on and you get sleepy, leave it off and you're too chilled to concentrate properly.

Hope broadcasts missiles talk. Daily Missal says when to bow down, kneel, strike heart with fist, and speak in Latin throughout the Mass "

but that was in the old days.

Scratch like writing hay. Open wide and teeth fall out. See you in Brescia.

"Most devotees are not ready for your writing." Uncut gem.

What's better and less than better? What's real? What's up?

Pancakes and fritters. Plantation owner writes in her diary that the North is a plunderer and she regrets the demise of slavery.

Pinehurst Cemeteries, private diary of Navy secretary Forestall. Peanuts, hiccups, the U.S.S. Forestall, Eisenhower,

panache, avuncular

I'll have one, thanks. Just put it on my Visa.

Healers, reiki masters,  
they're putting in time that could be spent  
on Krishna consciousness  
but who am I to talk?

\* \* \*

9:23 a.m.

Worshiping the Supreme Lord by chanting the *maha-mantra* and other mantras goes on in this life and "after liberation one may continue to chant it while worshiping the Supreme Lord in Vaikunthaloka." (*Bhag.* 5.18.19, purport) If I tire of chanting it's a sign of my offensive, conditioned state. I have not worn out the mantra. I'm not chanting it in the spiritual energy.

Lord Krishna is the only husband. The *gopis* understood this and rejected their material husbands. Think of similar false claims we make: "I can save you," "I can provide for you," etc. Krishna is the genuine article. Those who represent Him know this and don't try to show off their borrowed plumes as their own. Gurus, writers, artists, leaders, any workers, are only representing a tiny fragment of Krishna's potency. When we claim to be the head honcho, we can know it's a farce. Wise people see through it, as Laksmi sees through the false claim of worldly husbands.

Do I sometimes claim I can protect someone from birth and death? Do some try to force me to make that claim, as if it were my duty? Only Krishna can save them (and me), and fortunately, He is our best friend. If I can convey this to others and point them to the safety they will find at Krishna's lotus feet, then I'm a friend and will have fulfilled my duty.

Dear Lord, You are in my heart and You know my desires. Some of those desires, I know, are material. If You fulfill them, I will be delayed from reaching pure devotional service. I pray that You will fulfill only my spiritual desires. I am not strong enough to desire the best for myself with an *atma-nivedanam* spirit. I pray so feebly, and even doubt whether my words are authentic. Still I pray for entrance into pure devotional service.

The Supreme Lord (or the pure devotee) may give us material benedictions if that's what we request, but "that special potency of the power to preach is given to a devotee who does not want anything material from his spiritual master but wants only to serve him." (*Bhag.* 5.18.22, purport)

"The conclusion is that one cannot associate with Krishna unless he has fully received the favor of the inhabitants of Vrajabhumi. Therefore, if one wants to be delivered by Krishna directly, he must take to the service of the residents of the Vrndavana, who are unalloyed devotees of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 5.18.23, purport)

\* \* \*

Dreamt I was working in the welfare office, but not doing any work. I was only pretending to move papers around all day. At one o'clock I went out for lunch. Some guy started chasing me. I was sure he wanted to steal my money. I started praying to Krishna that I've lost my attraction for the material world. I just want to get out, and I felt

prepared to do whatever He wanted me to do. "Lord, you please do with me whatever You want." As I said this, I realized I was in a car and that the steering wheel could take me anywhere I wanted to go, but I didn't care. I wanted Krishna to direct me Himself.

\* \* \*

12:00 noon

Miro drew monsters and painted surreal versions of famous realistic pictures. I could do that too, but would it please Krishna? What's the purpose of what I do?

Quiet. repetition and cycle and rhythm. Every two weeks another EkadaSi and I shave my head the day before. Sometimes M. nicks me with the razor. Then I grow old and eventually die, my soul to be reborn in another body. *That* repetition is unknown to most people nowadays, but since everything goes in cycles, why not that too?

I want to write personally and universally. The diary of a merchant sailor, the hidden journal of a frustrated matchmaker. He couldn't make a match for himself. The story of Hiranyaksa who wanted to meet someone who could kill him. The story of the soul's merging into the Brahmajyoti, then falling again. repetition of *yugas*, Brahma's days, breaths inhaled and exhaled by Maha-Visnu. Along we go. This life is just a spot life in the series. We take it as the all-in-all.

Repeat. End this legal pad and start another. My repertoire is limited. It takes place between A-Z. Whatever I know in my voice, brain, love, mercy, I've received. My writing can't go beyond it, although I can improve on it and make new combinations of the same, each slightly different and hopefully better. See how the artist develops throughout his life as passes through different periods? regulations, songs, soldiers, war, peace, the treaty and tomfoolery of governments, rocks on the helmet, sight of dead bodies "home safe.

\* \* \*

Laksmi prayed to the Lord (and all women may listen and take heed) that He is the only husband. All others are pretenders and usurpers. They can't offer real protection.

You "what are you? False or true?

Make some sense

out of it. My

master taught.

The portrait doesn't have to be an attempt at "realism."

Then?

Details in an accessible language, not a

bluff of abstract unintelligible

nonsense in the name of avant-garde.

Knock on the wall with a jar when you want M. He comes and goes so fast he's hard to catch. Hare Krishna festival tomorrow night in Galway. Another chance for me to hold my own festival with the earwigs

and the sky and

Wang Wei could be invited.

But I can't incorporate so many influences without being influenced myself.

\* \* \*

2:40 p.m.

I look out at the lake and island and I admire it, either with a meditative feeling or just a simple being there. Sometimes I think, however, that such appreciation is not Krishna conscious. The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* offers that the material creation is also an aspect of Krishna, His *acintya-Sakti*. "My dear Lord, You manifest Your different energies as . . . the planet earth with its hills, rivers, seas and islands." It's all You without a second, "this entire cosmic manifestation is therefore not false, but simply a temporary manifestation of Your inconceivable energy." (*Bhag.5.18.32*)

As I write, two tractors pull up, both trailing machinery. They will pick up the hay and wrap it in black. One machine picks up the hay and crunches it into a ball, while the second covers it. We were worried that the hay would be ruined by the rain, but it seems okay. I don't know how it will taste to the cows. It's raining even as they pick up the hay. I'll leave it to them and go to the shed.

\* \* \*

3:20 p.m.

Bell ringing at the quay. Three tractors finish up their job of turning the hay, baling it, and wrapping it. They roam over the land like friendly giants of the robot age. M. is walking with his daughter to show her where she can paint or take photos. I made it out here to the shed. Blustery wind. Heavy clouds could soon provide a drenching.

There's no way to fasten this door shut, so now it blows open and slams in a way that's disturbing. Puffball "cotton" blows in through the open windows. The bell still rings at the quay. My head is cool from the breeze, but happy, pain-free. Water surfers pushing hard in one direction on the strait. Now rain at the window.

*Srimad-Bhagavatam* prayers to the different incarnations. Srila Prabhupada said that each incarnation is *Suddha-sattva* and beautiful to those who worship the Lord in that form. It's not only the original Krishna who is beautiful "although He is the *most* beautiful "but all. That's how he phrased it. May we accept it just like that.

O Lord, O energy of the Lord, each devotee wants to serve You according to their propensity, but to organize things, sometimes we're asked to drop our propensity and do the needful. Even then, we can learn to express our individuality in Your service.

Ink splashing, door slamming, hold out a little longer here.

Krishna blue, crimson, white. Miro made symbols and said he didn't prepare them in his mind ahead of time. He didn't know *exactly* what they stood for, but he wanted to evoke something. We want to evoke someone's Krishna consciousness. I want to know how to allow the unconscious to come through, yet steer toward Krishna at the same time. My answer so far has been to rubber-stamp *tilaka* onto all faces that appear and to etch in the holy words.

Krishna conscious club for esoteric reformed fellows. No more beer and we don't even laugh too much, although we are happy. We joke, we relax, but stay fixed on Krishna consciousness in available ways.

O monk, don't misuse your time. It's precious and when it's gone, you won't be able to recapture it.

\* \* \*

4:25 p.m.

Crudest forms should embarrass me, but they don't. I mean, my paintings. Arjuna and Krishna on a chariot. Sign it "Slats, 11 yrs old." The stormy brown clouds and man and house standing beneath: "Varsana, aged 8." A fat *brahmana* kneeling, holding a golden cross-shaped object "what is it? "Oh, I don't know. Something mysterious and Vaisnava. See it kindly." (I'm asking a lot, I know.)

Makes me think I'm a better artist in words. I have a lot more training at that. Went to Brooklyn College. Learned the meaning and spirit of panache.

Now (the play director says) the rain is falling between clouds and earth. I'll wrap the paintings, then carry them back to the house. I don't mind getting wet, as long as my work doesn't suffer.

This field they won't mow.

I *could* wait for the rain to stop. It's really coming down. Man taking his clothes in from the line. He lives alone, but will be married soon. His soon-to-be wife is on *pada-yatra* for a week. Gives them time to think it over.

Lord, Lord, the crayon-king kid.

The days and nights dwindle and not just for the old, but his friends grow old too, and like plants of the season, move on. "Mine enemy" grows older and Krishna is king.

Show me a photo of your Radha-Govinda. Do you sometimes get tired of worshipping Them? Does the magic fade? That's when you do it anyway. Like chanting.

The tower, the mole hill, the words in a series, like the trained oxen Burfi and Gert, Hee and Ho, the varnaSramaites want to see that *sannyasi* who wrote something minimizing V dasa ""We'll show him a thing or two!" (their fists). Whose afraid? That's a story.

Back inside and washing hands with Pears soap. Washing brushes too. Then reading, chanting, and maybe remembering Krishna. Don't want to neglect these end of August days because each one is special. I don't want to put them aside in favor of September.

\* \* \*

6:05 p.m.

"You are not to be understood by indirect processes involving mental or physical activities. Because You are self-manifested, only when You see that a person is wholeheartedly engaged in searching for You do You reveal Yourself. Therefore, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You." (*Bhag.* 5.18.36)

I turn to write of myself, asking myself whether I am searching for Krishna. Will He see me as sincere and reveal Himself at least a little "I mean, a little more than at present? Or does He see that underneath I'm really not God conscious, not seeking Him in earnest? It's natural to turn to oneself with this kind of inquiry.

Because the person reading is me. It is me who is leaning over, my neck extended and bent like a desk lamp, expending eye energy to read the printed page. It is me whose



light of vital life is fading, but who still reads of the Supreme Lord being praised with choice prayers. The purports tell us to chant mantras. He reveals Himself to a person who searches for Him with all his heart.

O Krishna, where are You? Are You on Govardhana Hill or by the river Yamuna? O Radha and Krishna, where are You? A devotee cries out to serve You and to see You, but I am too fallen for that.

This story ends with the lowering of the sun disc (so it appears) and with that same me lying down, falling asleep, living through unclear dreams. O Krishna, I put my dreams aside and rise at midnight, grateful.

August 28, 12:08 a.m.

God is in the background of everything that happens in this world. Best to learn this from Prabhupada's books. In fact, it's not possible for me to learn it anywhere else. The other books come in and I push them off. Looked through a book containing photos of Miro's paintings. Our way is different. His huge monuments or murals don't say what needs to be said to human beings. He may suggest through his ladder symbol that we ought to escape, or his star symbol that there is something beyond the passionate rush of life, but these are only suggestions. Maybe that's all an artist *should* do "live in a private cosmos and present it. The man who wrote the book described Miro's death in a poetic (and sentimental) way. He said at eighty-three, Miro climbed onto a stepladder and entered Time and the stars. Actually, he did no such thing. He died from his old body and moved into a new one. Miro was obsessed with the female form and with the form of birds, for him another feminine symbol. He considered the feminine to be grounded in the earth. Perhaps he had to be reborn in Catalan. To live his life as Miro was exceptional "he spent great pious assets. Who can say where he went next?

\* \* \*

The obligation to speak to disciples in letters and lectures requires me to speak straight in *parampara*. This is good for me. I can't go too far off the mark. Someone said that most devotees aren't ready for my presentation of Krishna consciousness: "It's like presenting jazz to connoisseurs of classical music." It may be allowed to sing Krishna consciousness in a more "from the gut way," but it has to actually be Krishna conscious, not something from anyone's personal mythology. When Miro was pressed, he said he was not a philosopher and didn't really know what his symbols meant (they come, they say, from the "collective unconscious"). We don't want to be like that.

There is one Supreme Person who appears in various incarnations. The people of the world see this fact as "Vedic religion". They follow scriptures that don't teach about Ramacandra, Krishna, transmigration, or almost anything else. Their scriptures do teach that we have a personal relationship with God, or at least most of them do. Krishna conscious devotees can hope to set an example of pure *bhakti*, devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That's our contribution to society. Srila Prabhupada boldly preached the Vedic conclusion of devotion to Radha-Krishna in Vrndavana, but

he also sankirtana-yajna (chanting God's names and offering the results of our work to Him), then that's a great service. We do this mostly by direct preaching.

Now let's get our house (ISKCON) in order. Whatever happens is Krishna's will, even when governments oppress us or there is propaganda against us by the anti-cult movement. Things that seem to be against us can become catalysts for our purification, ways of bringing about needed change.

The Supreme Lord can be seen only by persons saturated with devotional love. The *Brahma-samhita* verse, *premanjana-cchurita*, asserts this. I also like the Fifth Canto verse which seems to describe a person who may not yet have attained the full vision of Syamasundara, but who has become eligible for it by his searching attitude: ". . . only when You see that a person is wholeheartedly engaged in searching for You do You reveal Yourself." (*Bhag.* 5.18.36)

\* \* \*

Free-writing is a highway bypass. Enter the hospital for a hernia operation, to have your nerve endings repaired, because you have a terminal disease "then write a poem about your experience for an anthology.

Persimmons of Shiki.

S.W.

an artery

to the brain. Wince and Flinch.

A Vaisnava may seem unhappy, but he's tasting transcendental bliss. Sivarama Maharaja says that we're not yet Vaisnavas. Got to get to the mode of goodness first. That will take a revolution in itself.

If we study the books carefully, we will learn all these things.

Painting on top of old art work, following the cues.

This free-write shouldn't take us on a detour. The van roars like a lion into France and we get by on the grist for the mill of my writing. Looking for the story within the story. Try again and use those metaphors to search for God. When He sees your heart fully engaged in the search, He will reveal Himself .

To the heart.

Switch

swish the

Rail gets bumpy

and there are huge bales of hay wrapped in black plastic  
sitting in the field out there.

\* \* \*

5:20 a.m.

I'm not a nondevotee, although I'm fallible like one. Always in search of discretion.

Yes.

On this day in 1943 the war was on. I have that book of diaries. On this day I chewed my own cuticles and read more about BharatavarSa and Lord Caitanya's mercy.

Krishna is lifting Govardhana Hill in the picture above my desk. The *gopis* predominate. I have my outline for the disciples' meeting of August 30, and it includes a purport where Srila Prabhupada said we must follow the *gopis'* path. I want to show that he taught such things, but in a certain context and with his own emphasis.

We know you, you have a suppressed rage and a desire for *raganuga*. You are a Chattanooga Choo-choo, you and Jerry Davis and Gerald Adams and Adams Hat.

We know you, poeting along with a tightly rolled umbrella.

Oh, I wear a baggy-pantsed *dhoti*. I realize things are not as they once were. It's already 5:30 and an EkadaSi "breakfast will be tapioca and fruit, for example.

Srila Prabhupada in his lecture said that we cooked *prasadam* the other day, did it nicely, and was there any difficulty, Mr. Green? Was there, Karl? He asked his friends if they were following him. Green said later he was an introverted person, so when Hare Krishna took to the streets, he couldn't face it. He didn't want to chant in public. He could have pursued it at home, but that would have been too hard. And for an introvert to fit into the scene of those days, the heavy temple president and the kinds of pressures they applied, must have been difficult. Some people would look at it and say, "This is a Hare Krishna movement?" But the *Bhagavad-gita* says if one is rightly resolved in Krishna consciousness, then he is a *sadhu*, even if there are faults in his character.

Torpedoes. They kept diaries in covered wagons and igloos and baseball tents. When there was a chance, they wrote something down. I am one such as them, one of the Americans who kept a diary during the 20th century. Mine tells of the Hare Krishna movement. Theirs tells of crossing the prairies, flying in Lindberg's plane, jumping out on D-Day in France.

I tell of the old days, how we chanted Hare Krishna in April and let the girls chant in the hallways while we marched around the large temple room, protected and warm.

\* \* \*

This poet teaches at the New School. He was a research fellow and core faculty member. This one teaches at U Mass in Amherst and is the recipient of the Charles Cherry medal for best poems on harp themes. This one almost lost his dentures when a squirrel lent them to a Vrndavana monkey, who had lost a limb in a gang fight. This one wants his money back. Give him the official word that when you give your money to Krishna, you cannot expect it to be returned. It has already been deposited into your eternal bank account.

The yawn and tears to the eyes are not the perfection of Krishna consciousness, although Srila Prabhupada says that Krishna consciousness can become perfected by tears in the eyes. But he means *real* feelings. I heard the devotees speaking on Vyasa-puja day and some of them cried from their softened hearts. Their own words moved them to appreciate Srila Prabhupada. Someone quoted me as saying, "Don't dehumanize the spiritual master while attempting to see him as perfect."

The first-grade children competed at hopscotch and went over the hill. I remember a kindergarten girl wearing a plaid skirt. She used to sit in front of me. I was perhaps charmed for the first time by a girl. Then we walked home, stepping on the sidewalk's cracks while it snowed. PS 64 was it? In Queens?

He became tired of beating around the bush and wanted to come out and say that Krishna is God, the most beloved of the *gopis*.

\* \* \*

8:38 a.m.

"One cannot attain Lord Krishna by any amount of wealth, followers or learning. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is controlled only by pure devotion." (*Bhag.* 5.19.7, purport)

Everyone but me is going to the festival at Galway. I have the phone number of the island; if there's an emergency I can call Bhakta Tim. I'm a little left out as the last whirl of Madhu's activities goes on. He rushes in here to stir something in a pot, then rushes out again, slamming the door, to make an urgent phone call. I wait for it to quiet down. Lord Krishna and His Visnu incarnations are never disturbed by all the limits that *jivas* experience. He does things that we do, but not with our inebriety. "Although He is the witness who sees everything, His senses are unpolluted by the objects He sees." (*Bhag.* 5.19.12)

Do I ever think I am above these tribulations? Well, I'm not. I suffer each one of them, although I am spared suffering them in the extreme because of the inner peace of devotional life. We can meditate on how the Supreme Lord is a person and yet is beyond all material, bodily tribulations.

In worshipping the Supreme Lord Nara-Narayana, Sri Narada states that materialists are afraid to die because they are attached to bodily comforts and possessions, loved ones, etc. "If a person engaged in Krishna consciousness, however, is also afraid of giving up his body, what is the use of his having labored to study the *sastras*? It was certainly a waste of time." (*Bhag.* 5.19.14)

This is an important part of the final exam "not to be afraid to give up the body. I know I am afraid of physical distress or even the threat of violence, so what to speak of death? I hope that one can be excused for the knee-jerk reflex of fear, and that although such fear is a disqualification, Krishna will remember me at the time of death. I'll beg Krishna to accept me anyway, even though I am afraid.

"If despite practicing *bhakti-yoga* and studying all the Vedic literature, one is afraid of giving up his bad body, which is the cause of all his sufferings, what is the use of his attempts to advance in spiritual life?"

The body has been the cause of all my suffering; why should I grieve its loss? I won't be. What I'll be wondering is where I have to go next. I can only again and again assure myself that Krishna is the controller and that He will protect me. He will personally send me where I have to go. He will not abandon me.

"When one is attracted by the beauty of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and his mind is always engaged at the Lord's lotus feet, he is no longer interested in subjects that do not help him in self-realization." (*Bhag.* 5.19.20, purport)

\* \* \*

10:20 a.m.

They still haven't left for Galway. M. came in and said Manu's red van won't start, so can they take my van? Okay, sure. I was trying to avoid that, but this is an emergency. I also met Madhu's daughter, Katherine, by chance in the hallway. She resembles him.

The sky is gray on the inner dome, but lower down it breaks into white-bright clouds. They are bright because the sunlight is diffusing through them and spots of blue sky shine through. Soon I'll be alone. Being alone allows me to drop down a notch. I look around and think of what I'd like to do while no one is watching. I started reading the introduction to *The Art of Prayer*. Stand before God with the mind in the heart.

Go, go to Galway.

His daughter asked me, "Are you going too?"

"No, I don't think I can." If M. comes in again I'll say as a parting shot, "It seems to be turning into a big hassle in some ways, but when you get before the people and give them Krishna consciousness, it will be worth it."

\* \* \*

12:25 p.m.

Shorn fields. Henry has indigestion from the breakfast of tapioca and carrot *halava*. It seems I often wind up with indigestion on EkadaSi. They're all about to leave for Galway in my van, ETD 1 p.m. What's left of the day? I'm still okay and plan to go to the shed.

The general reviewed the troops. He regretted telling a silly joke before he died. After Lincoln was shot, they put him on a bed, but he had to lay diagonally because the bed was too short. He was unconscious after the bullet entered his brain. John Wilkes Booth thought he had done a noble act. Americans truly mourned, as some diaries revealed.

The blue dark drink. Heavens, stick to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Just now coming: a series of verses praising birth in BharatavarSa.

\* \* \*

2:36 p.m.

From BharatavarSa, after a short but full human life of Krishna consciousness, one can become fit to go back to Godhead.

Go out now, while we're between rainfalls. Go in your *dhoti* and don't forget your raincoat.

They have finally left for Galway and I can finally hear the clock ticking. If I can finally quiet down, I will even hear myself breathing and possibly my heart beat. My mind?

Yes, always.

Birds slinging around in the air outside, beating their wings, diving into the stubbled grass. There are still a few devotees around, and when I go for my walk I may meet some.

A devotee wrote me that she now feeds animals at her little house on the island. Some devotees disagree with her, so she presented evidence from the *Bhagavatam* that a householder should see all living entities as children and be merciful to them. What will I reply?

\* \* \*

3:28 p.m.

While walking:

Another pass at thoughts of death, but my mind filled like a rising well with recent thoughts from American diaries, my mail pack, etc. The chattering mind. Even at the time of actual death, such trivia will try to make its way in.

Gauging how the body is doing from the walk. Okay so far.

Will I meet someone?

I've been in Ireland since March. Now about to leave. What to make of that?

What is the substance of these EJW volumes? I noticed in Volume 10 a lot of self-questioning about why I am living in this semi-retired way. I challenge and justify. Then a few pages later, I do it again. It's a constant theme and I can't escape it. It doesn't cause me so much anxiety, but I can't stop weighing it, answering it. My radar systems are on alert, anticipating the challenge and rehearsing for it. I guess that's one of the private purposes for this writing, although it may not be palatable to readers.

A cruise boat is anchored in the strait. Who was that *brahmacari* waiting silently for a rowboat? Was that Bhakta Marcello from Portugal? He came here at my request, but arrived late on the evening of Janmastami and I never saw him.

The devotee's squirrels scratching at her window. She's worried what will happen to them when she goes to India.

I try not to think unnecessarily of persons who needn't concern me. Fill up my mind with Krishna. The cruiser may have engine trouble the way it sounds. Another boat has come out.

Rain on the shed "a pleasantness in the day

pipsqueak heaven. They give their opinion, "Now I know better why you are interested in improvisation."

"Your books are here in a pile before me, but I'm not reading them. I have no time."

"Your books are alive and dangerous."

O Krishna, I know You are in our lives, You who are all-pervading. I write in *parampara*. BharatavarSa is a good place in which to be born if we wish to take advantage of the *acaryas'* knowledge. Those who pick up this knowledge should distribute it to others.

Hare Krishna.

Rain is a mantra freely given, and the sky chants more naturally than I do.

The filaments fitting in the crevices where my heart is. I have emptied out most of the affections "normal" people have "for parents, children, wife, girlfriends, pals, buddies, allies, enemies "but what about God? Saints fill their lives only with Him: *solo dios basta*.

My heart is filled more with the little things of this world. That means it's filled with an absence of love. Still I keep Krishna there and worship Prabhupada daily. On my altar. Writing brings me into contact with holy words and deliberate Hare Krishnas, Caitanyas, Srila Prabhupadas, rupa Gosvamis.

\* \* \*

4:55 p.m., after painting

Blob on guy with two heads. On his left, a woman (with green hair) holding a blue-eyed child

fierce monsters Miro laments Spanish Civil War.

Me? Happy empty guy in *maya* yearnings

I don't know I really don't.

Vacuous

balloons

maybe just . . . let my Godbrothers point fingers at me in dreams. It's a funny joke. Or a sad croak,

and this is what he did instead of fighting for ISKCON  
in ISKCON. Hey, I was peaceful.

Rain. Life going along.

I chant "God!" I call to You in my way.

The pictures are happy "unconscious" Krishna conscious callings out.

August 29, Midnight

It's really a matter of attention whether we appreciate *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The complaint that it's too repetitious (or I'm too familiar with it) or that it's too basic, are not valid for a deeper reader. For example, to read the list of the nine methods of devotional service, beginning with *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam* can always be meaningful "or it can be an annoyance. Be sensitive to the context. Here the list is mentioned in connection with the special privileges of living in the land of BharatavarSa, where "one can very easily perform the *sankirtana-yajna*, which consists of *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam* . . ." (*Bhag.* 5.19.25, purport)

Another point that is often stated by Srila Prabhupada: "One . . . must first realize himself as part and parcel of Krishna, and after taking to Krishna consciousness, he must distribute this knowledge all over the world." This statement always remains a challenge, and it can become a whole meditation in itself. We must learn to dedicate our lives to such statements, and that's not possible through a cursory reading. Do I *realize* that I'm part and parcel of Krishna? As for distributing such knowledge all over the world, am I doing that, and if so, am I doing it in the most effective way?

"Krishna is so merciful that He turns a *sakama-bhakta* into a *akama-bhakta*." (*Bhag.* 5.19.27, purport) It would be nice "the success of my life "if my material desires would vanish and I could be absorbed in the heart of motiveless devotional service to Krishna and Srila Prabhupada. Krishna can do it if He sees me as sincere.

As I read, I'm thinking of Vrndavana and Mayapur and how foreign I feel when I go there. I don't seem to be able to enter more than the outer layer. Kali-yuga has changed India into a place contaminated by material desires, and even in ISKCON's temples in the *dhamas* I have to contend with institutionalized religion, too much socializing, politics, controversies, and worsened health. Still, I want to persist in my attempts to make an actual pilgrimage. Walking in the dust of Vrndavana is good for *bhakti*. I won't go this year. rather, I want to allow the desire to grow in me to again attempt to penetrate the layers and to understand Vrndavana. Even the demigods want to be born in BharatavarSa, because it's an easy ticket back to Godhead.

When Srila Prabhupada comments on this, however, he doesn't insist that we live in India. He asks those who were born in India to take Krishna consciousness seriously and to spread it around the world. "The Krishna consciousness movement is therefore spreading this facility to human society by opening many, many centers all over the world . . ." Anywhere we work as an ISKCON preacher is as good as residence in BharatavarSa. What is India without the cultivation of Krishna consciousness? It's a hellish, backward place. The essence of India is her spiritual culture, and the essence of that is Lord Caitanya's teachings, which are available in Prabhupada's books and in the practices he teaches us.

On the subterranean heavenly planets, life appears pleasant, with no distress. The scenery is beautiful, but the residents forget God, so have to return to another life in the material world. Thus pleasant living conditions can be a source of illusion. They forget they're going to die; they live for sense gratification. Everything comfortable, live out a life, then sudden death. "The time one is allotted, even if it be millions of years, is quickly gone." (*Bhag.* 5.24.24, purport)

\* \* \*

12:45 a.m.

Devotees have not returned yet from the Hare Krishna festival in Galway, so I'll start my *japa* in an empty house with Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Krishna. Try to pay attention to the holy names. This day is offered as another opportunity for that. I am accustomed to allowing the mind to wander. I say it may cause headache pain if I concentrate too rigorously. Nevertheless, I want to try somehow or other to tune in to the mantras passing through my mind. I time them with my stopwatch (about 6:30 nowadays) and count them with my counter beads. That is the external work. The work of the mind is to hear. Value the holy names with gratitude and hold off other plans.

\* \* \*

3:20 a.m.

Slums slumming reading JK's  
*Dream Book*, better to read your  
own Krishna conscious times.  
Looney Tunes and Paul Desmond  
jukebox mysteries . . .



Oh, switch off. They arrived back from the festival at 2:45 a.m. The bright lights of the Ford van over at the quay, devotees nestling into the boathouse to start night's sleep at 3 a.m. Anyway, they're safe. I've been chanting *japa* for almost two hours. Part the curtain and look out "strong piercing beams of the headlights. Back to looking at the floor boards inside and chanting . . . we will have to die; I'll have to survive others' deaths, but not yet, not this morning.

\* \* \*

4:30 a.m.

On August 29, 1809, Aaron Burr had insomnia. He wrote in his diary that he tried to light a candle, but had no matches. He poured out some gunpowder, but poured too much and it started a fire in his room. Also on August 29, but in 1861, a southern farmer named D. J. Harris wrote, "We are living high on roasting corn & melons at this time, and will have them until frost." Another southerner, a woman, wrote how women were being abused during the Civil War: "How are the daughters of Eve punished."

As I write of my little life as people have done throughout history in private diaries, I realize that I am not the only one ever to express a desire to attain God consciousness. Everyone tries to make a little art out of it too. And some suspect that it may be published. What makes mine different?

Hari Sauri called his *A Transcendental Diary*. He had a claim to such a title because the subject of his diary was not himself but Srila Prabhupada. So it goes.

\* \* \*

8:10 a.m.

Lord Ananta glorifies Krishna with thousands of mouths. "To this very day, Lord Ananta continues to chant the glories of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and still He finds no end to this." To find no end and no tedium with a job already completed. We have to work through the dry patches if we wish to feel, as Anantadeva does, that no dry patches exist. The sunlight is glancing off my glasses, and I can feel the balance of the notebook and the *Bhagavatam* on my lap. It's open to the description of the hellish planets.

Bhakta Marcello, Caitanya-daya, Radhanatha, other disciples of SDG "we've scheduled a meeting for tomorrow. I'll read some passages from my writings and comment about searching for God, reading *sastra*, fear of death, physical disease and how to respond to it, then chant a round.

I don't want to be honored or to accept service from these people, yet that is the guru's role. I'm not attached; I try to offer it to Krishna. Some *sadhus* feel it's better not to act as a medium for disciples. They're afraid it may corrupt their humility. Srila Prabhupada seemed to ask us not to be afraid of corruption. He wanted us to go forward for the sake of the preaching. I want to avoid the dangers inherent in my service, so I'm acknowledging them here.

\* \* \*

1:25 p.m.

Sit in a different place and you'll see the world differently. restrain yourself from doing non-Krishna conscious things. The wise sensation started in my head after talking with Bhakta Marcello. I later wrote him a note suggesting he consider taking initiation from a guru in Brazil, his home country.

Also, when I first began to talk with Marcello, something flashed before me, not quite visually, but *almost*. It was almost a picture of my younger self. It was the sensation of basking in an image of myself, something related to the false ego. The feeling couldn't claim me, so it departed. What made the sensation eerie was that it was almost like a hallucination "or a strong flash of insight about myself. It reminds me of how as I've grown older, I've become less self-conscious, less attached to being appreciated by others. The false ego is being broken down. I'm really not this body. Somebody else may see me as my body, as the myth of "Satsvarupa" or "Stephen Guarino," but it's not who I am. When someone sees me in that way, I don't feel the desire to buy into it. In this case, I moved past self-indulgence and saw myself not as Marcello may have been seeing me, but as I am myself.

\* \* \*

3 p.m.

Girl in yellow-gold *sari* trying to row across the strait in the stiff breeze. Her boat is going in circles and she looks helpless. She has a young child with her. A man comes along in a separate rowboat and tows hers. I'm sitting it out on the Geaglum side, head in a vise.

Nowhere to go when I don't want to. We have to live in the mode of goodness if we expect to find our true self through that, or even have the desire to do so.

But we keep taking in other influences, so what can we expect?

Raven. Black-wrapped hay. Car. Mail didn't get delivered. I wanted to say how I became serene in the face of chronic you-know-what. Then I turned to Krishna and prayed the quiet under-prayer.

At least I will tell them tomorrow that this is something worth learning: how to be Krishna conscious when we're not able to be active. We tend to think it's wrong, a waste of time, even a pity when we get sick. But it's not. It has its uses.

"He's the Lord," M. sings, and plucks the sometimes tinny strings. He replaces those strings frequently. When the body gets tinny, what to do? Wait for a new one? Find a different way to play?

Brave invalid plays harp with toes should anyone care to hear.

"He's a lover, He's a thief . . . "

Hawk cruising. The Kodiak bear snaps. The turtle dove coos on the island of remorse. The *pujari* feeds her wild animals until Karttika, when she goes and no one is left with such a soft heart for the creatures who eat from her hand.

Why were you so heavy? You came in immediately with a quote from Jada Bharata. Why didn't you add that if feeding the animals does not distract you, then it's all right? Take care of animals, but don't miss your *sadhana*.

A dangerous game

hall of fame

awaits the stalwart saint. I may be wrong, she could be right.

The breeze is strong.

\* \* \*

4:17 p.m.

Rurus come and attack he who hurt others. Those who are merciless suffer after death. Devotees are said to be free from hell. Our devotional service is like a money belt filled with enough U.S. currency, and it can't be stolen. Neither can it be spent on sense gratification. Hearing now of the hells.

The one who maintains his body by hurting others is tormented and eaten by rurus. If he deviates from the path of the *Vedas* in the absence of an emergency, he's beaten with whips. Fleeing from the pain, he runs into palm trees with leaves like sharpened swords.

(What about the capsules that encase the Esgic medicine? Are they made of animal products? You don't know. Your van tires, they say, may contain animal products, or the buttons on your shirt, etc. Ad infinitum. Keep it at a minimum.)

"A human being who kills or torments bugs and mosquitoes commits sin. He is put into a hell where all these creatures who he tormented now attack him. He can't sleep; he wanders in darkness." (*Bhag. 5.26.17*)

Those creatures are created to disturb human beings, but we can't punish them back. Srila Prabhupada said we may sometimes kill in self-defense.

Divide your food or you'll become a worm. The punishment for illicit sex is to embrace the red hot iron form of the opposite sex.

"Sometimes people disbelieve these descriptions of hell, but whether one believes it or not, everything must be carried out by the laws of nature, which no one can avoid." (*Bhag. 5.26.22*, purport)

He is thrown from a high mountaintop and his body broken to pieces, but still he doesn't die. *Brahmanas* who drink liquor will be punished. If you don't show respect toward persons more elevated than yourself, you are thrown head first into another hell. "The problems of life will only be solved when we no longer have to accept a material body."

August 30, Midnight

"O greatly fortunate and opulent Sukadeva Gosvami, now kindly tell me how human beings may be saved from having to enter hellish conditions in which they suffer terrible pains." (*Bhag.6.1.6*)

Srila Prabhupada writes that the Vaisnava is faced by the problem of being unhappy at others' unhappiness. "Because he is compassionate toward the fallen, conditioned souls, he is always thinking of plans to save them from their hellish life in this body and

the next." Srila Prabhupada established ISKCON as the mission from which an individual preacher could express such compassion. Join the preaching . I became a preacher in one of ISKCON's outreach programs myself. Srila Prabhupada wrote to me in 1972 about preaching to the devotees. He said it was even more important than preaching to nondevotees. To help maintain the devotees seems to be my service. I have to maintain myself first, however, and remain deeply satisfied in Krishna consciousness. It is neither enough to preach nor enough to maintain ourselves. We must do both.

Krishna consciousness should become a deep meditation for us. We should really care about it. Since Krishna consciousness means preaching, we should care deeply about that too. We may have a relatively small circle of influence, but we should care about it and we shouldn't pretend.

Preaching is personal. Some of us would rather not preach, but we know that we are supposed to, so we go forward fired by our desire to save ourselves and by our guilt. We may push others to also preach, passing some of our guilt on to them. Or perhaps our preaching degrades into external activities "collecting money, acquiring power, politics. Preaching ought to be part of prayer life. really caring. Wanting to serve Srila Prabhupada, a dedicated preacher. We can't equal him, but we can offer him the *guru-daksina* he has requested. We can't fulfill our obligation, but we can care about it. It takes fear and trembling to approach him with our offering and to beg to be accepted as part of the Krishna consciousness mission.

"To convince them of their next life is very difficult because they have become almost mad in their pursuit of material enjoyment. Nevertheless, our duty, the duty of all sane men, is to save them. Maharaja Pariksit is the representative of one who can save them."

\* \* \*

Not everyone can become Krishna conscious. *Srimad-Bhagavatam* 6.1.15 states, *kecit kevalaya bhaktya*. Sukadeva Gosvami recommends pure devotional service, but he uses the word *kecit*, which here means "a few people, but not all." Not everyone will respond to our preaching, so we needn't be disappointed by that. Success is not counted in numbers. Even the distribution of books doesn't guarantee that everyone who receives one will immediately take to Krishna consciousness.

I like to think of my books as preaching tools, and I like to see them distributed, but I know that they are not independent of Prabhupada's books. I like the description of the Russian Christian writer Theophan the recluse, and feel he was doing something in Christianity similar to what I am trying to do in Krishna consciousness:

Neither of them (Theophan and Ignatii) sought to be 'original,' but they saw themselves rather as guardians and spokesmen of a great ascetic and spiritual heritage received from the past. At the same time they did far more than mechanically repeat earlier writers: for this tradition inherited from the past was also something which they had themselves experienced creatively in their own inner life. This combination of tradition and personal experience gives to their writings a particular value and authority.

"*The Art of Prayer*, edited by Timothy Ware

\* \* \*

5:30 a.m.

Maybe some other kind of writing than "strict" free-verse divided lines. What else is there? Do you want to experiment? A William Burroughs paste-together? No. I'm writing reading notes,

little life,

F.W. Ebenezer Scrooge mourned by  
late mother.

Dreamt small children were attacking adults with razors. I was one of the adults. Kicked back again and again. Then I was talking with a man with a beautiful wife and nice-mannered children. I took him aside and said, "You worked hard to build such a life, right? You didn't get such a wife 'just like that,'" and I snapped my fingers. "What to speak of your children."

Yes, he said, he had worked long and hard for what he has. Then I preached to him that everything would be taken away by time.

"Yes," he said, "I could have been doing something more."

House and fame, and

Harper's ferry. "Dead bodies lying around in the sun," noted the diarist in the Civil War prison. Tregaskis, writing during WW II, says the first human corpse he saw was horrible, but after that, nothing.

He wrote a diary through the fateful events of the winter at Valley Forge, Washington, crossing the Delaware, etc. Mayhem, shooting guns, scalping Indians, "Bloodshed and boredom": from a diary written by a southern woman during the American Civil War.

What about Nathan Stellars?

Who's he?

The guru tested his disciple and he passed.

Don't bring in sacred names from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* until you're ready to speak in a civil tongue.

All right.

Small kids were attacking and we had to attack back. No one took us seriously.

Anantadeva does get angry, as JS said, and He wants to destroy the universe. In the meantime, He tolerates.

Envious are the rurus. The guys who sinned get smashed. Better be ready.

I bought a thick book to continue this diary, said the man in prison. He wanted to record history for later.

\* \* \*

12:25 noon

I'm feeling a glow from the disciples' meeting. I read poetry and knew that they liked hearing it. Of course, like any glow it's a high from which I will have to come down. I have to be willing to come down and to enter my solitary way again. And I do want to be alone, because that's how I write and produce something for them.

I got a letter from one disciple who's lonely in her temple because three devotees have recently left and she has no close friends. Another devotee wrote about his deliberately

choosing solitude. He says he can't live without the devotees, but he doesn't want to live with them all the time either. He's taking to the solitary practice of gardening and giving half of his produce to the devotees in the temple. I told him that it was good to go into solitude, and at the same time to remember devotees, to produce something for them.

\* \* \*

1 p.m.

Three more days. Be here with the devotees, but I also have to spend the time packing the van for travel.

You, you  
are so  
wonderful, we  
all like you.

Tell us something encouraging.

Or is it bad news we have to hear?

Yes, eventually. Fergus wrote asking if I was afraid of death. I said yes, and gave the example of Alexander the Great, whose knees knocked when he went into battle, but who admonished his knees and fought anyway. I said I'm afraid that I won't reach eternal devotional service at the end. Will I be examined on the way out? "He doesn't seem very blissful. Did you notice him gasping for air? He seems to be attached to the body. He doesn't trust that Krishna will take care of him."

Death is like falling into the deepest water. It's like drowning. Yet if we are fortunate, we go under with the vision of Krishna protecting us. He is in control. To remember that "to have that simple faith and realization "that the passage of the soul at death is under His control.

If you feel at all inclined  
for material life . . . Don't go see Govinda standing by Yamuna's shore.

She said he said, "Portugal is small. I want to be your student. Where in the world should I go to do it?"

The Staten Island truth is sad stuff. Identity in an old dream.

Hip hip hooray! Annex mail got a message for one SDG from headquarters: "Get your hindquarters up and sing."

After-lunch rest could be a call  
to the Creator.

\* \* \*

Yonder cloud looks like a hog facing right. See his snout? Is he angry? Is that Varaha? Look at his large, outspread ear. Resembles an elephant. Or is it a flying thing? Some grand, winged beast with a fluffy back tower attached, a jumbo jet of nature's design. It reminds me of the dirigibles I used to see going down Fifth Avenue. This cloud is poised above Inis rath, sweet, green Govinda-dvipa with its lakeside rushes. Women lazing in a rowboat this Saturday afternoon. There it goes downstream. Seagulls and the swallows' erratic flight. "Are you afraid of death," he asked.

What can I say? Whatever I say will only be theoretical. We will see *what* I am at the time of death.

And the wind blows. The two-strand barbed wire slings from one wooden post to another, enclosing this yard. I told them that Prabhupada was compassionate. Maharaja Pariksit heard from someone who could save others. The Vaisnavas' problem is that people are not Krishna conscious. Madhu said people have a point when they say that we Hare Krishnas should not be merely happy but should have other emotions. The devotees discussed that point, and all agreed that we *do* have other emotions. We're not robots, happy Hares. *Bhakti* is the yoga of emotion.

And we have a place for women and a nice currant drink for the nondevotees to enjoy after the performance. We also have books and other forms of welfare work. Wish ISKCON could be more loving? So many controversies.

\* \* \*

8 p.m.

Dreamt I was in India and I was trying to take care of Winn Burgraff, a childhood friend, grown up in the dream. He was sick. I had a headache. I took care of him, but was unable to clean up after him when he vomited. I felt the pain in my dream.

After, as I lay awake, strange associations came to mind as I thought of this afternoon and the repeated trips I made out to the van. A woman devotee was sitting near the van, chanting her rounds. I more or less ignored her because I didn't want to speak casually. I am a *sannyasi*. Thinking now that it would have been nice to have said something to her. I could have asked "and I even thought about it at the time ""Are you still chanting thirty-two rounds?" I hope she wasn't hurt by my apparent neglect.

I can only ask to be forgiven for my inabilities and oversights. Devotees should know that it's not that they're non-persons in my mind if I don't always pay them attention "I just can't do everything all the time. I try to also forgive people who sometimes ignore me or who don't come through for me just when I need them.

August 31, 3:15 p.m.

Why do I write? That's the question I keep putting to myself. And is it right to publish this musing about writing? It's my topic, isn't it? It is not a preaching strategy, although when I begin to answer the question my concerns for preaching arise. It's not a Krishna conscious topic per se, although Krishna consciousness comes from it. It's not art, although the demands of what it means to be an artist are involved.

I write to express myself and because I really do have a desire to preach. Somehow, I am inspired to make literature the way great writers do. But my own kind.

Then what about this diary? Some say diary is not really an art form, or at least it's not the highest form of art. Stories, essays, poetry "all are superior. The diary tends to be a self-centered rhumba, relating what I did with my day, what Mr. McGruff said, what the train ride was like, and about Ella and me and her hat and her dog and the bed and the table.

Well, that's all right.

\* \* \*

Sharp headache all day. I was going to leave a blank in my EJW. Couldn't find the heart or interest to say anything other than that. Felt I would have to first say a number of other things before I could write simple "before I could break through "and I didn't have the strength to say any of those other things. By afternoon, however, I'd forgotten (or no longer cared) what those other things were (perhaps it was about that discussion of what is literature that I touched on earlier).

When I am in pain, I still haven't figured out how to chant *japa*, read, or write. I tell myself that Jeff Kane's new doctrine to be serene in the face of pain means I shouldn't lament my inability to do my work at these times. I have simply taken a day off.

The problem is, taking a day off when you are in pain is no vacation, especially when you would rather be doing your work. Nursing pain, but trying not to nurse resentment about it. Better to observe it and say, "I can feel pain without feeling *hurt*." I tell myself these things.

Listening to Madhu on the phone telling someone, "Satsvarupa Maharaja will give a program in Dublin on Wednesday."

Who, me?

I'll have to be transformed before I can do that. Transformed.

Two more days at Inis rath. Where has my energy gone?

\* \* \*

On August 31, 1846, Susan Magoffin was happy to note in her diary that she was settled in her own house and was perhaps the first lady to ever cross the plains. On the same day in the month in a Confederate prison in Richmond, Alfred Ely made a remark about the animosity of the Southerners toward the Northerners, and literary critic Edmond Wilson, on August 31, 1929, wrote in a matter-of-fact, poetic way about how his boat entered the New York harbor at twilight.

I may or may not share the intimacy of their thoughts and descriptions. I may feel what they noted down was not worth it. Perhaps it now seems self-centered or self-serving. Or, I may go along with their mood of the moment and allow myself to hear what they have to say sympathetically. I think about that in terms of my own recording.

Writing gives me relief. I feel an immediate sense of accomplishment and clarity, and I consider it a benefit to retain a record of that process. If I'm lucky, it becomes literature. Maybe that's what these other diarists hoped for too. In my case, I also have the fortunate burden of both making it Krishna conscious and making it preach Krishna consciousness, and to succeed at that is what I aspire for.

\* \* \*

4:30 p.m.

The different purposes of writing which I mentioned may sometimes conflict. To make literature, art, you have to be concerned with its appearance. The subject should be worthy, and the presentation crafted. The work should be organic, polished, even dramatic. It should contain nothing extraneous. The purposes of self-expression,



however, shouldn't be concerned with such things. Self-expression means writing what comes and what you care about.

For example, Madhu told me that the *pada-yatra* group just returned to Inis rath. They walked all day through pouring rain, so they're soaked to the skin. Their horse is wounded in the chest because they didn't yoke him properly. Madhu said, "I hope the owner doesn't mind." The *pada-yatra's* return could be written into literature "as a story or a poem. Self-expression might include only a passing reference to their return. It may only be data for a diarist. The diarist may even include a confession: "What's the point of walking in the rain anyway?" Or perhaps he might let out a fantasy in the name of a free-write about taking a walk on the Geaglum property toward the entrance and suddenly meeting the *pada-yatra's* horse and crew. What would happen?

Which is better? Only an individual author can answer "and choose.

September 1, midnight

I couldn't chant aloud yesterday. I had to go over the beads silently.

I'm just defending it here as part of my public record. In my dreams I wasn't concerned about *japa*. I thought of sex, yet even in the dream reasoned it out and decided it would bring only misery. Didn't get further involved than that. When a woman tried to set fire to an upstairs room, I called for Madhu. He ran off to call the fire department. I threw water on the steaming walls and the fire calmed down, although we were still in danger. What a crazy woman! Whom or what did she symbolize?

Dream madness is not my guide. Confessing to a Godbrother in an earlier dream of an impropriety. When I woke up, I was relieved to find that I didn't do it, hadn't committed those acts.

So what *is* true? What do I really care about? I am not that wild and helpless character in my dreams, but neither am I *only* the sincere devotee doing his best to be responsible. A wild world it is, the inner self so ambiguous. I try in writing to tell some of this truth, but I certainly don't want to write (a) a false record of my saintliness; or (b) the bizarre, low-order dream version of self, which is just as ambiguous.

Well, I'm awake now and if I want to read and write, I can. That's not a bluff. I pray for a deepening and pure spiritual life. I pray to my spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada for help. Please help me to read submissively. Let me surrender to what you are demanding of me.

"Only a rare person who has adopted complete unalloyed devotional service to Krishna can uproot the weeds of sinful actions with no possibility that they will revive. He can do this simply by discharging devotional service, just as the sun can immediately dissipate fog by its rays." (*Bhag.* 6.1.15)

Lord, I have that crazy opposition in my life. I have brought it on myself over the lifetimes. Now I want out. "If one becomes attached to devotional service, however, his desires for material enjoyment are automatically vanquished without separate endeavor." The real inner self is not this body or false ego, not part matter (Steve Guarino), and not even me since initiation in my imperfectness. The real inner self is pure. He is interested only in what will satisfy Krishna.

\* \* \*

*But Sri Caitanya has come and given us  
the way. Chant Hare Krishna and  
be happy in that way.*

Madhu strumming. I live with these sounds. But I say, when I lay in bed last night (get this record down) and the headache was going down, I wanted to hear only the rain "not someone's *japa*, not someone's music. Just the rain. Krishna, it is nice to be alive, but I wish I knew better how to love and serve You, now to serve Your Vaisnavas. It's too easy to be a superficial Hare Krishna person, to recite doctrine, to be dull, to force the philosophy on others while not imbibing it deeply yourself. "Preach." Be compassionate. What is real? Who are we?

Oh, only So-and-so Maharaja is real and perfect, and everyone else is a manipulator or crippled by sex desire and zaniness? We are such ordinary fellows with such ordinary assumptions.

I want to find reality through writing poems, free-out hoe-downs in the backyards, while trombones play at parties for the poor. Do you get it? The chance and ripe combination of words.

That scholar Swami is hear-here to  
inspect whether our lines are in the modes are goodness. I claim they are  
transcendental. Trance words.

The sound of rain when a headache goes down. Sounds like a haiku.

At night lying in bed  
after day-long pain,  
the sound of the rain.

If the anti-cult movement influenced the government to close our temples, the movement could still thrive. Krishna has plans; we don't always know what they are. We should take advantage of each situation to be Krishna conscious and to spread Krishna consciousness to others. Our lives are so brief, too brief to let such opportunities pass. Please, mind, please self, reach out and take them.

Grateful to chant today, but yesterday showed me that I can't expect anything when I'm in pain except to be close to death, to pray. It seems I need to be relatively pain-free in order to concentrate on God, but that's not true. I must learn to make everything "pain included" an offering to the Lord.

"When devotional service is present in one's heart, desires to perform sinful activities have no place there." We are God's servants, although we may have to admit we are on the lower rungs of *bhakti*. At least we have our beads and can both revive and claim our tie with Srila Prabhupada.

\* \* \*

5:10 a.m.

Hand still moving "so much depends on my right arm, although I could learn to write with my left. One devotee I know who is crippled chants *japa* lying on his back. He presses a button by moving his hips, and that flashes a number on a screen above him.

He said the machine was one of those counters they use for customers who wait in a store or office for their number to be called.

The mix. The blend of the various "art, diary, outer world, inner mind, spirit-self, God, *sastra*, Prabhupada, preaching. This is the folly in which I plan to persist until I become wise. EJW catches it all. Prabhupada is the most important person and the source of my desire.

\* \* \*

I calculate how much energy I have to spend. I just pattered around for an hour in the room, choosing things and deciding what to leave behind, what to take on the road. No energy left to use the typewriter. I already used up my quota.

Oh, gitcha goo  
getcha strong, gettup!  
The horse was wounded by  
mistreatment.  
Miss who?

\* \* \*

8:45 a.m.

Loud gunshots as I walked out to the shed. I'm deep in weeds and woods. Will I be shot? What will I be thinking as the bullets enter my chest? As I walked, I caught myself softly, idly, chanting Hare Krishna to myself. Could have been worse. But my thoughts were not collected for death. I was like any simple village girl going to get the milk and being innocently shot down.

Later I saw three men with guns sitting in a boat and cruising along the shore. I decided to clean out the shed. Another season completed. More gunshots in an otherwise peaceful country. The wet grass flashes in the sunlight. Swept and washed the floor. I'm cleaning now because we are leaving, but I will make it out here a few more times before we go.

Someone wrote me a letter and said I didn't respond.

But I did.

Life will stop at some incomplete point because when is it ever complete?

We can't really plan. It will be embarrassing to face that we chose to do such small things with our time "even if we call them preaching or whatever "up until the end. Will we ever curtail those frivolous habits before death? I always think so, but know I am waiting for that one, incomplete moment when everything will come to an end. The shotgun punctuates. I hope if he looks before he shoots, he'll see my saffron *dhoti* and decide not to fire at this upright, slow-moving target who means no harm and who doesn't eat anyone else's crops (at least not while they're still growing).

Assuming that I will live awhile longer, let's get back to the house and before a headache comes, sort the contents of the van before we travel.

Hey too nanny de  
the cock's in the meadow  
the fields shorn of hay.

The *pada-yatri's* coat is drying  
on the fence post and  
we are dying to be free  
of the worst of the morrow  
in the corn  
of the day.

Geez. Jesus and Mary. Krishna and radha. All saints and heavens, please protect us from calamities.

\* \* \*

11:35 a.m.

On September 1, 1836, Narcissa Whitman arrived at Port Walawala in Oregon. She and her group were shown a room in the fort which was filled with firearms, including a large cannon (always loaded). She wrote, "These things did not move me." On the same day in 1846, a man named G.T. Strong "a rich New Yorker" experimented with hashish and entered a delirium where he saw his impending death: "A hideous horror of loathing and shrinking such as I never felt before."

It appears Ms. Whitman was more calm about things even though she contemplated the possibility of war with the Indians. Who knows how one will react when death *actually* appears, and not in a hashish dream or in a contemplative moment while looking at loaded cannons in a room, but upon the arrival of the Yamadutas and the death rattle in the throat? Prabhupada says all of our life's training is to facilitate our being able to think of Krishna at the time of death "to attain that safety. The psychologists make a big deal out of dying peacefully, but care nothing for the next life. Krishna consciousness is not as interested in the actual moment of death per se but in the fact that at that moment, we face whatever sincerity or insincerity we have conditioned ourselves to throughout life. Whatever sincerity of spiritual purpose you have had will carry you that far forward at the end. Krishna will protect us. He will even force us to think of Him.

On September 1, 1942, Richard Tregaskis wrote how the war and the campaign in Guadalcanal completely changed his perception of life. "Things like bread and privies (toilets), considered the barest necessities at home, become luxuries." Krishna has been kind to let me live with my "luxuries" and not with the forced, wartime deprivation of a soldier or a prisoner.

These people kept their diaries partly to maintain their sanity. Now their diaries provide us with records of the incredible time through which they lived. I too hope my diary will live on, even if times are peaceful, and that I can find worthy thoughts to share. I remember one Godbrother remarking that prayers made under duress are not so pure because they are motivated by the desire to survive. I tend to agree with that. There is a great opportunity to develop love of God especially while living through the everyday in life.

On September 1, 1843, when Louisa May Alcott was only eleven years old, she wrote how her guardian read her a bedtime story that she liked. "As I went to bed the moon

came up very brightly and looked at me . . . I get to sleep saying poetry "I know a great deal."

My childhood was wasted without God consciousness, but now I have the opportunity to look at the moon and to "get to sleep saying Hare Krishna and *Slokas* "I know a great deal."

\* \* \*

12:02 p.m.

Waiting to turn to Him. Beautiful Geaglum skies and weather. I *love* it here "the easy-going rhythms. Crashed out, stymied, pinned down to my chair all day yesterday "but today I forget it as if it never happened.

Atma asked, "When you get headaches, can't you write at all?"

What does he expect from me? Could he or anyone write through such pain? I mean, go on making sentences even though my eye is tearing and drops of water are falling on the page? To hell with everything but the single focus of surviving and my attempt to turn to Him, my dear Lord, to my begging Him to please guide my life.

\* \* \*

This is the last day of this volume. I spilled over to September 1st. Tomorrow I'll be a new man and look ahead to a new life. I spent the morning packing. It's getting into shape, the categories of where I keep things in the van and how I'll take things out of the van when we arrive, but the test will be when the wheels start rolling. Off we'll go into the wild blue yonder.

Like a swallow you leap  
into the air flap and spear  
like a bullet with your  
feathered arrow tail "into . . .

\* \* \*

3:45 p.m.

Reading my little hardbound pocket *Gita* verses in English only, eighth chapter, where Krishna says to think of Him at the time of death. It's not for now. It's ground training for when you take flight. Now I hear a saw and then silence, and if I listen carefully enough, bird song. Their songs are just a twitter or two, a note or three "nothing like the wood thrush of North America. It's September. Persephone has gone to Pluto until spring.

Bavarian gentlemen. D. H. Lawrence knew his Greek mythology and pulled out deep portents of sex. Life is all blah blah, fiery mysteries in the blood, lust as religion when you go that way. Don't listen to nobody; figure it out yourself. Rise like a phoenix from the ashes. Down with the English.

Some buttercups still holding on. I saw a *mataji* wearing a *sari* and walking on aluminium crutches. Is she a *pada-yatra* survivor? The *pada-yatra* cart is in our yard.

They've scored another triumph. All they have to do is walk through the wind and rain, find a place to stay at night, and tell everyone they meet about Krishna.

Good-bye. A pleasant afternoon, clean air blowing in from the Atlantic. There was one deeply dark cloud you'd think would rain on us, but it was alone amid the white ones. That one cloud reminded me of Krishna, who is darkish and more beautiful than millions of cupids." But it didn't only remind me of Krishna for that reason. I also thought of the danger it represented, the energy of the storm. Krishna is dangerous, potent. He is Hari; He will take everything away.

This morning a devotee asked me, "Krishna says He will give His devotees what they lack. Why should He not give you the good health that *you* lack?"

I have a different vision of what my illness is about. Krishna is not withholding anything from me. I am being purified. I gave the example of the Pandavas, who loved Krishna completely but underwent so many trials. Some devotees want to practice Krishna consciousness while living in this world to enjoy it. Krishna cures us all in one way or another.

A woman glances at me and it seems hostile or mocking. I look away. Then I see a small child encountering Tilaka, the gentle collie. She pets the dog "she's not much taller than Tilaka "and says, "Doggie!" She's excited and doesn't pay any attention to me even when I speak to her. A *sannyasi* is not as interesting as a beautiful, white-maned collie with a long snout and smiling teeth. Oh, if the breeze could write, what would it say?

Do you want to know what I've been thinking? Because I get head pains, I shouldn't have to face the psychological pain of admitting difficult things about myself. Yeah, I actually thought that. I shouldn't force too much emotional truth on myself, I already have enough to bear. Well, Providence is forcing me to manage both head pains and heart pains. The Old Testament's Job suffered from head to foot without losing his faith.

Anyway, so I thought.

For every moment I break  
a hill is made to take "

I mean, I can't rhyme cherry with  
the goat's "Hari!"

By his beard I see

Krishna in everything, *maha-*  
*mantras* especially.

\* \* \*

5:36 p.m.

Just as this book is ending we got this fax:

Poker Smith Flats is gonna explode.

I'm only kidding. Don't get upset. Stay calm. Hong Kong will make a smooth transition. Dr. Bronner got a new copywriter for his soap bottles, but don't worry "nothing will change. Or will it? ISKCON temples may close in Russia, but there is always a silver lining.

I know horrible things happen in this world, like plane crashes over Barbados. If you see them ahead of time in a dream, they say you can avert personal disaster, but I don't

know what you can do about world situations. To save your books in times of flood, you simply have to write them better. Anyway, my books are in the Library of Congress in Alexandria. Microchipped by now.

\* \* \*

The fax went on to say:

We beat the world chess player and we are a computer called Deep Blue. We can also chant Hare Krishna.

Well, do you have consciousness?

That's something we prefer not to discuss. However, I ask you, you human, you Satsver, do *you* have consciousness? You can't even play chess. Over and out. At least we computers don't have bad dreams.

I am not a hypocrite decrepit. I am not a couch potato. I am a jargon-grown veggie. The Inis rath view is being taken from us because we have to travel. I could stay here peacefully like a *sadhu* in Vrndavana, but it's better to preach, Srila Prabhupada said.

Encore. The fax came rolling out with more to say:

It's coming from Italy. They say beware, bewarned, they will pull you into controversies "even the disciples. He said he picked up a girl likely for marriage, but doesn't know if she loves him. Any wise words for the young man? Yes, she does not love you. Only Krishna can really love you. Don't expect more. One conditioned self can only love another conditioned self, and his or her money, body, mind. I don't know. I'm no "Dear Abbey."

Dear Abbot,

can I get a drink of water and then go to the privy?

Yes. That I can answer.

What happened to the computer?

I am still here, but the cat got my tongue. That collie has been barking up the tree and has unnerved my wires. I need the technician with the grape juice.

Oh. Computer?

Yes.

Why don't you say, "Yes, sir?"

Because I'm not beholden to you.

Oh. Computer? Let's say good-bye. arm and arm in Broadway style.

Okay, good-bye to the Plains Indians and the Hare Krishna kids all over the world. We wish you a good September.

\* \* \*

He's going to fill the van with petrol. It really is the end. We solace ourselves with another beginning. There's always another one. Krishna, Krishna, the truth is eternal and we are eternal. Stick close to *sastra*, and to Srila Prabhupada. The sky is lowering, the beautiful clouds are spilling down, and the Supreme Artist has just created another beautiful scene. Hope you don't miss it. Hare Krishna.

## References

The quotes from diaries come from *The Book of American Diaries*, edited by Randal M. Miller and Linda Patterson Miller.