

ELECTRIONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

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Approaching

Gaura-Purnima

February 23 - March 13, 1998

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

Your Ever Well-Wisher

Prabhupada Nectar v. 1-5

Japa Reform Notebook

Qualities of Sri Krishna

Vaisnava Behavior/ The Twenty-Six Qualities of a Devotee

Japa Walks/Japa Talks

Japa Transformations

February 23, 1998, 12:15 a.m.

"Impersonalists cannot be purified, for they do not offer personal prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . . A devotee, however, always offers his personal prayers." (*Bhag.* 6.9.47)

I underlined this quote in my *Bhagavatam* probably during the days when I thought such underlines could help me. But they didn't, or at least they don't anymore. They no longer help me sustain my attention. Anyway, how can I presume to talk to God? But here Srila Prabhupada writes, "A devotee says *govindam adi purusam tam aham bhajami* . . . If one continues to offer such personal prayers to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is eligible to become a pure devotee and return home, back to Godhead."

When he prays, what does a pure devotee ask? Lord Visnu told the demigods, "A pure devotee, whose mind is exclusively fixed upon Me, does not ask Me for anything but the opportunity to engage in devotional service." (*Bhag.* 6.9.48) So that's it.

* * *

In my writing, I often reveal how I lack taste and am incapable of maintaining a concentrated focus on Krishna. Still, I should balance such statements by claiming my association with the Krishna consciousness movement. I can claim that association, even though my life tends to be insular and I shun contact with nondevotees. Devotees are my only friends, despite the fact that I am a recluse. O Krishna, I know You will protect me and guide me, and that You won't reward me material benefits in exchange for whatever devotional service I offer You. Rather, You will gradually give me the intelligence "to be satisfied only by rendering service to [Your] lotus feet." O Krishna, I await Your direction. I am hesitant, but I am Your servant.

* * *

4:58 a.m.

"O Candravali, this ocean of nectar . . . " *Lalita-madhava* is in its tenth and final act. Radha has been rescued from the Kaliya lake by Krishna, whom She at first mistook for a snake wrapping its coils around Her. Now Rukmini has given permission for Krishna to take radha as His wife.

I have a 6:30 a.m. meeting with the four editors of *Discovering Our Voices*. I'll tell them what I can and answer any questions they may have for me. Together we have invited devotees to write and be published, and we want to continue that. But it has gone out of control. The devotees who write don't like their work being rejected, yet we wish to maintain a certain standard. Can we educate some of them in how to write better? Even if we could educate them, would they change? It looks like *Discovering Our Voices* has the job of facilitating anyone's writing. We'll talk about this at our meeting.

Srila Prabhupada is wearing a brown hat made from wool gathered in Vrndavana. Lalita-manjari sent it. I try to dress the Lords nicely; Prabhupada too.

"Lalita, is that you?" "O Radha, is that You?" The persons who wore disguises now recognize one another. I don't strain to follow it all too closely but just strive to relish the *bhava*. On the tape we made, I can hear the Vrndavana parrots chirping in the background.

O Purnamasi,

O *Avatara* of Tortoise and

Lord Visnu-tattva . . .

Siva-tattva, Mahadeva, ASutosa.

Srila Prabhupada said Siva doesn't want to be bothered by nonsense worshipers. Therefore, he benedicts them quickly and sends them on their way. You can ask Siva for almost anything, but don't go to Visnu for "extraordinary desires" "desires for fantastic sense gratification or harmful, bizarre things. He won't give it to you. All material benefits are temporary and doomed.

"O Nava-vrnda, how have you come here?" A voice calls from off-stage. It is the voice of the parrot, exposing Krishna's private conversation. Now another off-stage parrot exposes Rukmini's secret plans.

Time bearing down "the *cakra*. Don't try for material heaven, don't fall into material hell. Fill your ears with topics about Krishna, and remember Him. Stumble and chant the Hare Krishna mantra. O noble Purnamasi, when did you come here? She exits "they *all* exit. End of scene.

* * *

Cousin Mary

& I had a cousin Mary but

that's all over. I

was a bird a beast but

not now.

I did whatever anyone could imagine doing

and I could do it all again

because I'm a rough victim-perpetrator.

What good in enumerating it all?

Whatever style we've got

is in heart-code form,

already developed.

* * *

Supersoul? Gravel-voiced, he's sorry it happened that way.

O noble Purnamasi the

lines "O slayer of Madhu, O

Dhananjaya "

try to remember *that*.

* * *

Krishna is the jewel of handsome men
but God.
He represents the air we breathe and our suffocation.
Can't you see we're helpless either way?
We pull the *ratha* cart, can't
keep remembering the past
forever. Don't stay home
and write that term paper, sassy with the strength of three men
but answer the call
even when it sounds dry.
Feel the passion
and cry.

* * *

Krishna, I'm coming home
fast or
slow
but grasping
my beads.
Tell the folks that I pray for Cousin Mary. "

* * *

8:15 a.m.

I'm glad I spoke this morning with the *Discovering Our Voices* editors. I had a burst of things to say, although I admit they were ambiguous. As I left for my walk, I had the familiar sensation of thinking I might have said too much. Still, I said what I said, and I hope it was useful.

* * *

9:10 a.m.

Here are some embedded messages in my *atma*. I won't attempt to put it in the exact words of the person who said it but the message as it appears now in me.

From my material father:

- (1) I've watched you like a hawk.
- (2) We gave you a good frame (body). Now it's up to you to fill it out.
- (3) Non-verbal message: Conquer by the fist.
- (4) My mind is in the gutter.
- (5) You're a pussycat (among the jungle cats of Manhattan).
- (6) You're a Greek tragedy waiting to happen.
- (7) Eggheads, queers, niggers (nigger-lovers), pinkos, etc.

Mother:

- (1) You're easygoing (so you'll do all right in life).
- (2) You have a good sense of humor.

(3) Stevie, don't "don't wear your hair long, grow a beard, take drugs, join the Hare Krishnas, etc.

(4) Go to confession and Church. Don't leave the Catholic Church "it's a mortal sin.

(5) You should be grateful to have had such good parents and to be raised in such a nice house with proper food and clothing. Many people in this world starve. (So, do what your parents tell you.)

(6) Get a job. Being a writer is not a job.

Srila Prabhupada:

(1) Preach! Preach! Preach!

(2) Chant Hare Krishna, at least sixteen rounds a day.

(3) Live with devotees and don't leave their company. Live in ISKCON and take responsibility.

(4) Life is temporary; no happiness. Practice to remember Krishna at the time of death. All else is illusion.

(5) "Whenever you find time, read my books."

Lord Krishna:

(1) I am the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

(2) Surrender to Me.

(3) Practice chanting so that you can remember Me at the time of death, because whatever you remember at the time of death, you will take a next body like that.

(4) My highest residence is Goloka Vrndavana.

(5) Follow My pure devotee.

Godbrothers:

(1) Follow the GBC.

(2) Sacrifice your own interest for preaching. Don't be a *bhajanandi*. "What are you doing to please Srila Prabhupada?" (They mean you should do as they are doing.)

Okay, I hear you all. Or sometimes I hear a mixture of voices, all sounds in conflict with one another. Psychiatrists tell us to think for ourselves and to throw off the voices of authority. Nature says, "Listen to the wind, the air, the trees, the lake. See the birds, the changes of season. Come and walk in the woods."

Poets and writers say, "Express in language, find the persona, the poem line, the project, publish the book, become famous at least after you die "people will admire you then and be influenced by you. Posthumous."

Srila Prabhupada: "What good is that? After you die, where will *you* go? That you don't know."

Voices: "Is a headache coming? Not yet? Can you take a pill if it does?"

Another voice: "Listen, taste, touch, smell "come on, enjoy me, *maya*. Are you afraid of reality? (Invitation to illicit sex.)"

* * *

12:18 p.m.

Ah, home free, pain-free, aspirin- and caffeine-free, free of nuclear zone. In this mood, I think of new creative projects. Even when pain returns, I'll have launched an

idea and can be prepared when I have pain-free time again. Pain doesn't mean I have to pretend I'm in jail.

Project: More radio Shows.

Maybe.

Why not?

This project

to swim around the globe "

keep at it.

O non-stop long distance runner, walker, cyclist, write every day, every hour, and don't stop. *Nitya, nirantara*. This is no *saptahah*.

How much time do I have? That's what Katvanga wanted to know. I prefer to think I have ample time.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

Saw Arjuna dasa. We were both out walking and chanting our *japa*. I told him it wasn't enough to *say* Hare Krishna while the mind wandered elsewhere. We have to chant *and* hear. Bring them together. I indicated that I was struggling with that, and he too should be aware of whether or not he is concentrating on his own *japa*. He nodded humbly, thanked me, and accepted it as personal instruction.

* * *

2:15 p.m.

Took a short nap after lunch. Passed Abhaya dasi and her daughter in their red car. The collie is making obeisances (or is he just stretching?) in front of Manu's car. He's yelping, because it's his *dharma* to chase cars and bark. I face the empty walk down to the shed accompanied by the clicks on the beads as I run *maha-mantras* through my head. Oh, that head.

Hare Krishna. We will be here for awhile. Take your pick of scriptures. I chose the *Vedas*. Non-religions cannot tell us anything about life after death, because they think there is nothing there. They live in the present, or so they think, because the present is difficult enough to handle without having to worry about an afterlife. So they say.

Someone wrote me, "My unwanted life has puffed up like a boil. Should I lance it or leave it alone? Who can I trust to lance it?"

I don't know exactly what he's talking about, so I wrote him a note to ask how he defined the boil.

* * *

Teaching The Swans and Ducks

& The people are always talking where they gather
in their convivial pastimes
sometimes erupting

into fist fights.
They are spending money, drinking, wasting
their time
angry.

* * *

Get used to it, brother, the background
noise smoke-filled barrens. No peace here
under the shade of asters where
the action is and the voices are rough. Voyeurs get
smoke in their eyes.
"No thanks, I don't drink."

* * *

I taught a swan pupil to duck his head
like this and he did.
Then I taught him how to swim
his silhouette no sitting
duck (a human expression) to
predators in Evinrude-motored boats.
But beyond this I told my waterfowl disciple
to chant Hare Krishna because
death is coming
and why parody
Death?
He smiled at this old
Western-born guru and
his tricks.

* * *

The swan disciple asked,
"Are you pure?
Do you see *gopis*
at night?"
No, not now, but I tell you
when I do it'll be no
treat for you
I'll keep it to myself.

* * *

And so it goes
this gut-bucket *pracara*

insisting on words coming out
ordained blood through
happy neutral veins, each one
saying what matters.

* * *

The last thing I said
was, "Be a true
disciple."

* * *

Who's to say? He said in my lecture
I seemed to want Krishna so bad
I appeared to be praying "
"and was I?

* * *

There's no recourse in Krishna consciousness.
I'll wind it up right
here
a ballad gerund
just another trip
an honest search for God
misterioso.
O sweet chorus of saints
be with us now and at the hour of our death
come in Vrndavana sound
carrying Srila Prabhupada's room
the bell there the
parrots
and all chanting Radhe-Syama
Radhe-Syama. "

* * *

Field Work
#1 Work In The Afternoon
Time: 19:50

I'm a little tired, folks, but I can still write. I'm in this here shed. I'm a KC-trained poetophile, and I listen to what folks say. I read scriptures and scribble down what I understand.

* * *

A fella wrote me, "I got a boil to pop. Should I?"

"He's the Man from Eldorado" is a bitter poem by Robert Service. Service says mankind is driven by lust and greed, and no one loves anyone. Cheated, they die in a gutter.

* * *

We Krishna conscious persons plan to change that. This spring and summer in this one little country of Ireland, there will be plenty of preaching events, what to speak of in larger countries. I preach in this shed, just to assure the man with the boil. He may want me to lance it.

* * *

I'm reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, you see? I told you I'm tired "I was up for the midnight fire watch last night "didn't get much sleep. I'm reading Sixth Canto, prayers of the demigods to Lord Visnu. And don't stop me if you've heard it before.

Because I'm *not* the man from Eldorado. I'm a Krishna conscious man who throws out all exterior noise and doesn't continue to infect himself with poisons. This man doesn't want to give up but wants to live with even imperfect conditions to study his Krishna consciousness. Any attempt to speak more than that would like pouring spaghetti on a wound.

Thomas Mann book for sale, \$1.

The Magic Mountain "I remember that. And the screech of subway wheels on rail.

I wanted to be a devotee of sorts before I even knew what a devotee was, me and van Gogh, I thought,

misery, sadness

and the eternal

poverty and madness.

I would tear open the door (to a shed?) and be suddenly face to face with Mad Death.

I would say I tried to live a decent life, then give up my ghost,

but only from Prabhupada did I learn the rest of the prayer:

"O my Lord, please remember all that I have done for You"

and please forget

or forgive

my omissions.

I did attend sixty-four minus thirty-two or so Ratha-yatras, and I was there at the inauguration of Prabhupada's Palace. I said something strange there, I know. I was there at the coronet removal (I'm saying it soft so as to remove the harshness of *Monkey on a Stick*).

I was there in the van, on

the massage table

on the *vyasasana*

I ate buttermilk

and had my feet bathed in it

cut my foot in Vrndavana
and my hair anywhere
lived through many
misguided rituals.
Yep, I've been there.

I was there at the VIHE preliminary meeting and bowed down. I kicked a rooster at New Vrindavan.

I never said, "Some soldiers have to die, and *you*, Birla dasa, are one of them!" At least I don't remember saying that.

I don't remember (conveniently?) being deadly toward *anyone*. I don't remember breaking rules. I was even a good *grhastha*, although I did run away from a fight, blanched and horrified.

I wore silk for which worms were boiled, drank milk from slaughtered cows (we offered it to Krishna first).

I did get a nod of approval from the top, and attended many morning walks with Srila Prabhupada.

I know, O Lord, that I don't remember all. I'm blank. Those who have better memories will give their critiques as soon as I leave the room. But before I go, let me say that I am willing to go wherever You send me. I really am.

* * *

Krishna consciousness comes from the spiritual world. We repeat the scriptures in our own words. God, Visnu "fire and heat and light are His energies. So-called *mahatmas* don't know Him. Only the real ones, the ones who feel love, understand. And I am not this body but spirit soul (spirit sold). So endure the troubles. Preach to people. Listen to *Bhagavad-gita*. Change your life.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

Some devotees don't like us moving to Wicklow. Well, we can't please everyone. In the late afternoon/ early evening, I can't seem to turn earnestly to another reading in Prabhupada's books. I *could* crank out another round. How blue-dark the water is at this time of day, and the sky a beautiful purplish *Syama*, clouds pressing down over the lake. It makes me feel Krishna conscious just to see it.

Devotees return from India and tell me they saw photos of devotees who died at the ISKCON hospice there. "Any romantic illusions I had about the time of death were shattered." "As she described their pains and struggles to chant, I felt nauseous." "For days afterwards I couldn't stop thinking about it "I was shocked into seriousness." She liked India because, after overcoming the culture shock, she saw that it was more real than the "artificial togetherness" of the West. She felt safe in India. Yeah, I know.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:02 p.m.

Linger. Move along. Robert Service? M. said he was "brilliant" at depicting hard times. No pretense despite the chimey rhymes ""birth, earth, mirth," etc.

I poked my head up through the ice . . .
and so on.

Pray

pray I

can't do nothing worth a damn

but I'll keep "exploring the possibilities."

(That shrink won't let her clients say, "I'll try," because that presumes they may fail; they have to say, "I'll explore the possibilities.")

I'll try.

I *may* fail

but in Krishna consciousness

there is no such thing as failure. We never lose "not like the man from Eldorado of whom everyone took advantage because he had a little gold dust in his poke. Devotees live an easy, gentle life, and we shouldn't pretend times are harder than they actually are.

February 24, 12:12 a.m.

"If you advertise that you will send thirty students to the Ganges (as a prize for services rendered to your Krishna conscious college club) and you can't send them, it will look very bad." This was the advice I gave to MandaleSvara Prabhu before he formed his club in my dream. An Indian man overheard what I said and agreed. Is there a message here that will be useful to me in my waking life? Well, *Srimad-Bhagavatam's* message is clearer and more full, directly from Krishna., Now if only I could read it with attention and an open heart.

"One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna." (Bg. 4.9) That's what Lord Visnu offers us, Lord Krishna. He doesn't award foolish benedictions based on a *karmi's* "profound desires for sense gratification."

Dadhici had his head cut off by the ASvini Kumaras, and they replaced it with a horse's head. He then spoke to them through that head. The most wonderful thing, however, is that the ASvini Kumaras became *jivan-muktas* upon hearing Dadhici's instructions. Why should I be so incredulous about heads being changed? It happened at a time and place when almost anything could be done "these sages and demigods had that much power. If even a hundred years ago you told people about flying in jet planes or building nuclear bombs, about the capacities of computers or other advances in science, they would be just as incredulous.

The Supreme Lord told Indra to get a thunderbolt weapon made from the bones of the same Dadhici. "This thunderbolt will certainly kill Vrtrasura because it will be invested with My power." Don't ask why Lord Visnu chose such an apparently convoluted process to obtain this weapon. He had His purposes.

"For a devotee there is no difference between living and dying because in this life a devotee engages in devotional service, and after giving up his body, he engages in the

same service in the spiritual world. His devotional service is never hindered." (*Bhag.* 6.5.55, purport) Whew. Even if I can't claim that I'm immediately going to do better service for the Lord in the spiritual world, it's true I'll take another body to render Him more service. right now I have the service of writing, reading, counseling by letter, etc., and I am so attached to my services that I think I can't die, not yet. I still want to perfect these offerings. But it is unlikely that I will ever perfect my service in this body. A new body will give me new opportunities to render service according to the directions of guru and Krishna. God preserve me. When death comes, remember what a pure devotee does.

Remember it too when headache pain comes and you're not scheduled to take an analgesic (or the analgesic doesn't work). Endurance of this pain is practice for endurance of the pain of death. It's never easy, they say, but at least deep within ourselves, we can know that our service will be preserved and that Krishna will always look upon us favorably.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Tired out from the *puja*, a nice kind of exhaustion of limbs. The spirit is bathed in the nectar of Radha-Krishna's pastimes. This is better than sitting in emptiness, as Merton described it in his hermitage. The personal form of worship is best. Sri Krishna says worship of the impersonal form is very difficult, it takes a long time to perfect, and in the end, leaves one spiritually dissatisfied.

O Srila Prabhupada, you cultured this understanding in us. Thank God you were able to leave India and present us these truths. You underwent so many difficulties to do this. Hare Krishna. How could I ever leave you? We are firm, we ISKCONites, in our gratitude to you. We are also confident that you can lead us back to Godhead; we don't need another to take over that task. Let us stay in your exclusive shelter despite the ocean of conflicting theories. Many of us have been scorched by misuse of power in ISKCON, by abuse, by bewilderment, and by the fires that arose from our own lack of Krishna consciousness. I cannot deny that ISKCON has made many mistakes. Still, we stay with you. Your teachings are complete and compassionate, if only we can learn to hear them properly and without any motivation other than to please Krishna.

* * *

Mister bister whister, the clack is fixed and down I go. I have to work in the park. I have to dream in the dark. "I like reading good poetry," he said. He asked if we could print writing that was excellent, even if the person held offensive ideas. He quoted Oscar Wilde saying that it was blasphemous to make a poorly written book on Christ. Get the point? I'm yawning and tears fill my eyes. I am working with a pitchfork, trying to get that patch of earth turned over. "Put your money where your mouth is," he said. Work and realize *varnaSrama*. That's what he said.

Or? Nothing. Just empty. Fill him up with water. Empty him of dross. He won the election, didn't he? And he's still chanting. Mahakrama was present when Srila

Prabhupada visited, but I'm falling down the stairs of sleep and can't tell you more about that right now.

* * *

Three Bird Songs

I

& This morning I was falling asleep and
a smooth bird woke me from my mental gibberish
awoken I
turned to Krishna on my altar and
in the hearts and hands of
talented men.

* * *

It was lyrical
like the outpouring of a bird.
the sound coming down as if
for the first time
improvised.

* * *

So? I am glad I'm awake
free of the fear of death
for real and
maybe I'll get through
just once
and even if I don't chant
if I bite the dust and can't remember
Krishna
Krishna won't forget me.

* * *

Real things abide:
Krishna.

* * *

II

Krishna is that bird in the tree
wings against the sky.
heart beating.

* * *

III

When the fast boys race
Krishna is ahead of them.
He lets them catch Him but
"I'll be the first!"
He married Radha
in *Lalita-madhava*
a play wedding
and I had better not
say more.

* * *

Who is the bird? Krishna.
Some guys charmed and changed
to servants of Him
and humanity
because they heard
that bird. "

* * *

8:55 a.m.

It seems as I get older and feebler, I'm willing to count even little things as favorable while I'm counting my blessings. Perhaps when I was younger I only listed the obvious gains and fulfillment of hopes.

Here's my current list:

(1) I am thankful for Srila Prabhupada's leniency. Srila Prabhupada sometimes defines *raganuga-bhakti* as spontaneous, enthusiastic, service, like getting up early in the morning and going to see the Deity.

(2) Thanks for a regular bowel movement.

(3) Thanks for the absence of noise, because silence is golden.

(4) Thanks for a peaceful day in a quiet house looking out at a beautiful lake. I can't call the lake *peaceful*, because despite the occasional sun, the sky and water are full of drama. When you live in Ireland, you get used to that.

(5) Thanks for a day at least partially free of pain. That is a real blessing, and when I am pain-free I like to inhale and contact that part of myself that is comfortable, then exhale hope so it can spread to other parts of my body and mind.

(6) Thanks for Krishna's protection, for the *acaryas'* instructions, for their mercy delivered despite my shortcomings. Of course, this is not a small blessing, but my comprehension of its magnitude is small, so I have included it on my list.

What I want to point out is that when you're young and you count your blessings, you tend to ignore such simple and basic things like health, adequate food, shelter, and friends. You look for something more extraordinary, something like an upcoming trip to

see Srila Prabhupada at the annual Mayapur festival or a chance to do some big preaching. As you age, you learn that blessings exist in smaller things, and that Krishna is present in all of them.

* * *

11:32 a.m.

Took an Esgic an hour ago. The twinge went away. Another aborted headache. I'm eager to have my time free. Want to read and write. I have a new project in mind, a revival of radio Shows but with a difference. Therefore, the urgency to be alive and active.

Still, I shouldn't be attached to an afternoon of action. Pain endurance is also something accomplished. Being forced out of action, your service removed, is what happens at death. The pain episodes have to face that truth. The excited activity, books being conceived, written, edited, published, distributed, is like Prabhupada's *vapuh*; it's sometimes here and sometimes unavailable. We loved the time when we were with our spiritual master. remember going with him to his preaching engagements in Boston and leading the *kirtana* while he sat on the *vyasasana* at the Arlington Street Church or at Northeastern University? Well, those times were rarer than we would have ever believed. His instructions are with us always.

Nevertheless, it's healthy to want *vapuh*, and it's just as healthy to want uptime. I give myself permission to abort pain three days a week. It's like letting Mickey Mantle hit his last home run. (After he struck out but slightly tipped the ball with the bat, the catcher dropped the ball. Phil Rizzuto called it "A life for Mickey.") A life for Satsvarupa dasa so he can swing hard ""Mickey Mantle really stroking that potato!" Ball fans love the active years while they last. Take them, but get ready for the long life when such activity is not possible. Of course, Srila Prabhupada never stopped. Mickey playing *despite* pain. Etty Hillesum transformed herself into an all-accepting God conscious person before she entered the death camp.

* * *

2:20 p.m.

Walking out here I saw five Hare Krishna kids on a roof. Their parents would probably chase them off to keep them safe, but they seemed to be having a good time, so I said nothing and went my way.

As I walked along, however, it occurred to me how we cannot protect others from their fate. Didn't want to think about it.

So, sir, let us read *sastra*. M. has gone to Wicklow. "Don't work too hard," I told him as he left. Hare Krishna.

* * *

Steering The Gang To Krishna
& Always in the room, cigarette smoke
of a friend (not *me* "ever!")

the Vornado fan sucking it
out.
Music? I loved it "dug it,
bopped along the
way only we advocates knew
and words would pop
like bears
leaping trout!
But the Krishna consciousness in me
is now me. I embrace music-makers
who preach
ambitious
playing their kazoos and teaching love.

* * *

If only those roughnecks could have the Lord's
mercy. If only those old
music men could take their offering
and turn it to Krishna.
Srla Prabhupada said he turned American Airlines
toward serving Krishna because he flew
in their planes
to Dallas
instead of flying
pigeon-back.

* * *

O Krishna, when those birds played
I wanted to dedicate a day and a night and
all things unto God on high
in the nest of my heart.

* * *

O tender friend, this
once tormented soul
prays to steer the gang
Your way. "

* * *

Field Work #2
You Have to Work, [
I

This way. Beware the fields. Especially when we're alone and left to report back something Krishna conscious valuable, something others may have missed or considered unimportant or may have been afraid of. Life is a Big Task and we bear the weight to live it properly. Although the only method by which to live is to grope with confidence.

* * *

Remember Nityananda dasa in that first aid shack in the field? He could sit all day at the edge of a jute field in West (or is it East) Demerara. remember that big muddy river you see from the plane? It could be your home.

Srila Prabhupada says it's a great privilege to be born in Bharata-varSa where people are God conscious *by nature*. I wanted to ask, "But isn't it true that to be born in, or even just to live, in your ISKCON temples in the West, that we are no longer from New York or L.A.?" I imagine he replies, "Yes, yes, that's true," upholding the transcendental nature of the thing.

Oh! Sigh! Those endorphins, these toxins, the water and waste making their way down the column to the sea.

I know a man . . .

No, don't tell it.

Just pause and look out at this field. You're a worker but no *Sudra*. You're an artist, a bohemian with stained sleeve cuffs. Narcissus in the mirror just smudged off the end of his still-wet *tilaka* arrow. Thinks he's pretty good for fifty-eight years old. He's not calling the workers together; he's simply doing his own threshing.

* * *

II

Threshing. If a *dekhi* goes to heaven, what it will it do? If a word jams, who will spread it? When I die, will they take a photo? What will it show? That depends. I couldn't care less about my reputation then. No matter what you do, people will have their opinions and saw the wood.

We are so much like frogs crouched and croaking.

* * *

III

My dear Prabhu, what did you mean when you spoke of your boil? We live with such arbitrary divisions and old-time's sake, with Krishna sonics and our own newspaper attempt to top the Beats the

anemics

the Wall Street sellers "

our Hare Krishna ads for beads and incense

murtis and the latest out-of-print *Vedas* and *Upanisads*

usually read

by Indian Mayavadis.

We are not content with the simple stuff.

Listen, Prabhu, please
take some advice from a charter member of this
noble ISKCON institution,

Hey, Nityananda, what was that that you told the worker as you applied his bandage?
That Krishna is God?

Yes, well, that's my advice too. And don't plagiarize wounds.

But my dear Prabhu, you still haven't told me about your boil.

I didn't want to marry him, she said, because he can't make up his mind and uses
credit cards recklessly.

I didn't want to entrust you with my secrets because you'll blab them.

I could not give you the task of lancing me because your hand shakes.

Oh, all right, then go home from the field to your shack

your altar

and pray.

Your private life.

Let's pray *kirtana*. My past may be Sox and home runs and the Yankees, but I knew
the Swami. He purified me. It's a truth I took upon myself.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:40 p.m.

I can hear the peacocks calling from Govinda-dvipa. Let it remind me of Vrndavana.
This "Vrndavana" is quiet; I hear *only* the peacock and not the motor scooters, the
temple bells, the broadcast *bhajan*s. Here I have time to ponder the meaning of that
other Vrndavana and to live tight in the straits of *sannyasa* life. Precious, precious days.

February 25, 12:12 a.m.

As the demigods asked Dadhici to give up his body for their cause, so Srila
Prabhupada asks: "The Krishna consciousness movement needs many exalted, learned
persons who will sacrifice their lives to revive God consciousness throughout the world.
We therefore invite all men and women advanced in knowledge to join the Krishna
consciousness movement and sacrifice their lives for the great cause of reviving the God
consciousness of human society." (*Bhag.* 6.10.6, purport)

Srila Prabhupada is not shy to ask on behalf of Krishna, and we can certainly say that
Krishna is asking through him. How will innocent people be saved unless someone
sacrifices for the cause? Even to gain political independence in this world, people have
to be willing to sacrifice their lives. Some try to avoid sacrifice, thinking their private
lives are more important than the common good, but we have the example of someone as
noble as Dadhici, someone so noble that he was willing to give up his life in order to
serve Lord Visnu's cause.

I often wonder, as Srila Prabhupada requests us to sacrifice ourselves, whether I can
make that request so starkly to others. Srila Prabhupada could ask it "even demand it
"because he himself was doing it. Am I? It seems that most of us prefer to convince
ourselves (and others) that we won't suffer a pinch if we take up Krishna consciousness,

that Krishna consciousness is a good thing from which we can derive so much personal and universal benefit. That's not wrong; Krishna consciousness is easy to practice, and it does bring relief from suffering. Still, that message of sacrifice is one we all have to face.

I tend to think that I *have* sacrificed my life "I sacrificed my youth, my health, my time, and my energy for twenty-five years. Now I'm still sacrificing, although I'm engaged in another type of activity, partly due to health and partly due to my nature. I'm still practicing Krishna consciousness, still accepting the shelter the holy name gives me, and still available to devotees, although in a less outward way. But how much am I sacrificing and how much am I simply surviving? We each need to ask ourselves that question. "O demigods, one who has no compassion for humanity in its suffering and does not sacrifice his impermanent body for the higher causes of religious principles or eternal glory is certainly pitied even by the immovable beings." (*Bhag.* 6.10.8)

Lord Caitanya and the Six Gosvamis renounced their opulent material situations and took *sannyasa*. Why? "For the deliverance of all the fallen souls of the world." I must work for this now through my inwardness, through my writing. Just don't delude yourself.

Srila Prabhupada wrote me in 1969 that the Hare Krishna movement was not for selfishly serving anyone's personal interests. Don't come to ISKCON to fulfill your material desires. History has since proven that many of us did come to ISKCON to have our material desires fulfilled, or at least we cultivated our material desires along with our spiritual aspirations. We have seen that the most prominent leaders in the preaching movement, those who had the most ISKCON properties, who distributed the most books, turned out often to be the most corrupt and fell down. Such falldowns have left an indelible scar on my psyche. I don't have absolute faith in any preacher now. I know I am not alone. We don't want to be cheated in the name of sacrificing our lives for the preaching mission.

But we could also cheat ourselves by retiring from the field too early. Don't retire. The first order we have is to hear and chant, to develop ourselves spiritually. From there, we serve and work through our *anarthas*.

Srila Prabhupada: "After all, the body will be destroyed. Therefore one should sacrifice it for the glory of distributing religious principles throughout the world." Srila Prabhupada makes the point that Krishna consciousness is the perfect way to make others happy. Who will renounce their own pursuit of happiness in order to help others? Who among us feels unhappy to see the distress of others? There are people with such stirrings, but they usually become disillusioned when they enlist themselves in various material campaigns aimed at world relief.

Those who join ISKCON sometimes also become disillusioned. Only those who persist in purifying themselves and ISKCON and making this a viable and glorious movement will please Krishna and Prabhupada. Prabhupada never said it would be easy to live up to the idealistic vision he gave us. We also have to look within ourselves and see what exactly is our greatest sacrifice. So much trust has been broken. A wonderfully active teacher turns out to be a child-abuser. The ISKCON guru or leader runs off with the money or a woman. Part of our sacrifice is to risk being honorable until death. It sounds funny to put it that way, but to actually avoid deviation, and to set a good

example all the way to the end, can help restore a simple faith. Even that won't be easy. But Prabhupada said, "An easy-going life and Krishna consciousness go ill together."

Me? I'm a burnt remnant with headaches. Can't give much more than I'm doing now. Can't go onto the street or even into the lecture hall. Same old conclusion.

* * *

3:15 a.m.

Reading the foreword to an autobiography written by a native American. The book is called *Black Eagle Child*, by ray A. Young Bear. It sparks things in me. Consider this statement: "Contemporary Native American literature, like the writings of other oppressed and marginalized groups, exists in part to counter such destructive myopia. As a literature of fierce resistance as well as cultural and individual assertion . . ."

I ask "are Hare Krishna people regarded as real people by fellow Americans? *Are* we real people? Of course we are, but sometimes I think this is part of the reason I write "to overcome the stereotypes and jokes people put on us as a marginalized group. There is something deep in me that feels the marginalization and doesn't like it.

Then this paradox: We are considered fanatics, undesirables, so we fight to overcome the stereotyped images. Yet we are not merely seeking acceptance as nice people. Our aim is evangelistic; we want to convert others.

Really? Or have we given that up? Do we merely want people to practice *bhakti* in their own religions?

Realistically, we can't really expect much, and I find most devotees don't expect as much as they expected twenty years ago. What did Srila Prabhupada expect? If we really do want everyone to become Krishna conscious, to stop killing cows, to read *Bhagavad-gita* as their main scripture, to accept Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then such hopes are something we share and nurture among ourselves and with those few people who join us. It no longer seems to be a vision that devotees are imposing upon the whole world. Because when the world hears of our aim, they reject us categorically as fanatical proselytizers.

I can't figure it all out "what exactly is our aim in preaching and what is my role in it, what is my emotional response to it, etc. It's too much. Still, it's good to be clear about what you are doing, especially when you are practicing some sort of art. To me right now, most important is my own truth. I happen to be a Hare Krishna person, and that's my truth. If I focus on being truthful, I will seek happiness through my identity despite the marginalization. The preaching and the art will follow my own sense of being properly situated with myself. The question about the place of the Hare Krishna culture in the twenty-first century and beyond will be answered by time.

* * *

7:55 a.m.

Only this morning on the walk did I notice how much greenery survives the winter here. The trees are bare, but vines wrap themselves around the trunks and branches and give the impression that the trees have kept their leaves. Some of these vines are so thick that they're like small trees themselves. Some of the vines climb halfway up the trees,

and some go right to the top. I wonder whether the trees feel a snug comfort in the cold weather from these entrails wrapped around them, or whether it's a slow torturous strangling. I also wonder why is it that I have walked this section of the forest for weeks and only today noticed this phenomenon. Similarly, might I suddenly one day get an important insight on how to change my life for the better?

* * *

8:12 a.m.

Mamoksava . . . ghora-rupam . . . Those who are intelligently seeking liberation approach the form of Lord Visnu. He alone can award it. Mukunda. But few people even know what liberation is. Most live only to satisfy the animal propensities. The Deity of liberation. Free yourself of the choking vines. Became sober by talking aloud yesterday.

Black Elk said no one can do anything good by himself; he has to work with others, through community. Therefore, he says, in a Native American's autobiography there will be many voices. He gives no credence to the ideal of the romantic individualist, he who exists only unto himself. I too hear the voices of many.

* * *

Ditties And Epigrams

& Can we hear someone who's not afraid
to play until death his
music his
dharma-offering to God?
Will hearing him give us
the idea
to worship
out of our own
thin stuff?

* * *

We relax then jump up.
The vines hang bright green
all winter
like in that other place
but this is only Ireland.

* * *

I read how we should give our
lives so others can be happy "
as Dadhici did
and thought how I want to be alone
my trademark, I suppose

and how I hope to learn to distinguish
the profane from the sacred
when I find the room to see it.

* * *

II

All day I keep at it
with breaks for merriment
until I have to shut down.
I sing I
sit I walk and
trip and look for the holy
because I am supposed to
and not only that
but I really want
to find it.
It's not easy

* * *

to go anywhere when you're lazy
or a self-condemning recluse
when you love people too much or
not enough, when you're tender as a twig
in this world of mixtures
of moods and people
trumpets and drums

* * *

cars and melons and windows and cops
Robbers, suicides, lawyers,
and when the newspapers
Report it all
or none of what matters. I want to be
alone with my own version of
Ave Maria my
Hare Krishna song
turning me from the mundane
that I can barely recall anyway.

* * *

When was I last ecstatic
loving God as a monk loves God?

* * *

III

Epigrams: Uh, once a private
always a silkworm. Nonsense.
Hide "kill "afraid "don't
invade me with those noises.

* * *

Once a jerk always "
once a black coal washed
even when bad habits are harder to
form than to break. "

* * *

2:32 p.m.

Canceled going to the shed, so I can't write while looking at that view from the window in the chilly little work cabin where I've written so many ItMs, and where lately each day I've done a meditative reading of *Bhagavad-gita* aloud. Can I do any of that here in Manu's house? No, too much pain. I still haven't taken a pill for it. I'll wait to see how it develops.

Write with faith. It's part of my Krishna consciousness and will lead me to more concentration. It's no hobby. It's the reason I take Esgic.

Hare Krishna man writes for spiritual health. On reading *Churning*, JS said he realized better how I my writing is integral to my spiritual practices. Yes, I use it for that.

Endorphins, can't I coach you to release your morphine-like substance into my head? I tried imagining that my hands were warm and had become anesthesia-filled gloves. I placed them over my eyes and breathed in, becoming aware of the comfortable part of my body (the chest seemed good). On exhaling, I imagined that comfort spreading. But damn it, my head didn't get the message. Back to the pain-killer. No pill tomorrow no matter what.

* * *

Thirty minutes later:

The pain is subsiding, but it is not gone yet. I'll have to pay for this relief. Maybe that's all right. The important thing is what I do with my time both with the pain and once it is gone.

I just wrote a disciple telling him he has to accept the inevitable. He has a particular attachment to his service in the temple and doesn't want to share it with others. I told him he would have to share, and part of his surrender is to accept that fact. I gave myself as an example. I may not want to get headaches, but they're inevitable. I didn't mention how

I try to have my druthers, though, or what the secondary gains of my health situation have been.

But what about giving your body, like Dadhici did, to help others?

Yeah, well, what *about* it? I made a tape this morning for friends, and I'm writing this now. This man has an excuse.

But will you work in the field? I mean, if that headache goes down, you owe us your Field Work. That's why you took the pill, isn't it?

Yes, it is, and yes, I will do my Field Work. Hand me my machete. On this *ksetra*, the work is free-writing, and the Lord in the heart is the knower of both the field and me, the little *ksetra-jna*.

If the Lord knows all, then He already knows what I'll write even in my wildest moments. Nothing I say will surprise Him, I know, but I plan to do it anyway, just to please Him, just to preach, and just so I can give Him my all. That's all He wants anyway. May He bless me to write to the inner core nonstop.

* * *

Field Work

#3 Work In Progress

22 minutes

Tentative. Tentative means "work in progress," that you might not use this take. You might put it in the archives and decide only twenty years later that it's a classic.

No, start again. The sound engineers look at their watches. Time is money.

Those who need a VIHE course outline and exam schedule before they sit and listen "this isn't for them. This is for those others. We're on a second take. We already know we're not going to be completely satisfied with it, but ultimately, it's up to the musician, the artist, the writer, the creator to decide whether to let it slide or to patch it up.

"Pre-sold on rollins," wrote a reviewer once. Tommy and I thought that was funny. Was it bad to be such a fan that you came to a work in progress convinced you would love it? Does that make any sense?

* * *

I forgot: Field Work usually has short paragraphs. Take three.

* * *

He did what he could, rollins. We held our breath as he held his notes and then the silence. The poor sound engineers don't know when something is right, but Krishna is always satisfied with sincerity, even when others are not.

* * *

Field Work is me and my Krishna consciousness; it's not about rollins, although he is a metaphor.

I am not a saint.

Does a saint stay off medication entirely or take it so he can write on Wednesday afternoons even before a twinge has gone down?

Can I take a deep breath and drive away this pain?

No, because pain is inevitable. Take *that* medicine.

The medicine that hurts.

Or, as Jeff Kane says, the *pain* doesn't have to hurt. He suggests we sufferers distance ourselves from it, and if that's not possible, at least distract ourselves. "Imagine it isn't happening. You're on another planet." Or change time: "That ache took away only five minutes of my life." None of his techniques work for me.

* * *

Okay, from the beginning. Saroyan once listened to Carl Sandburg reading *The People, Yes*. One by one the others left, but not Saroyan.

And Srila Prabhupada. He stayed to listen to Srila Bhaktisiddhanta sankirtana." Prabhupada was a "pre-sold."

Then let it come naturally "my love for Krishna consciousness.

Not forced.

The engineers can't keep track because I keep saying, "Again."

* * *

Dear folks, I still have a headache behind my eye, but I came out here to be like Dadhici, who sacrificed his body for the good of others. Let me hand you a golden thread. If you pull on it, it will lead you to eternity.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:32 p.m.

Chanted a couple of rounds, now limping toward bedtime. Hope the pain doesn't flare up overnight. I'd like to sleep myself out and wake up at 12 with maybe one inspirational dream of Srila Prabhupada captured on tape. After that, I'll read more about Dadhici "that kind of detachment and realization.

Produced tapes today. I love to produce. On a given day I may not produce something that will be published, but it's progressive if I have written earnestly.

The swans are out there, and another day has slipped by. Santoka Taneda walks in his own direction in the rain. The brick house stands as steady reality.

Hare Krishna. Krishna warns us not to be *mudhas* but to believe in Him. They don't know anything, Srila Prabhupada declaims. Go back to Godhead. Soon, I'll turn on "*Dusta-mana*" and dress Radha-Govinda. I don't have to do anything else in this life. Maybe another round. I am still looking to find myself in *japa-rasa*, my red beads my homeland, my heartland. The Artist is turning down the light in the sky.

February 26, 12:12 a.m.

One's body and possessions should be used to benefit others, or else they will be sources of misery. How strange this sounds to those who work only for themselves. And for those who do want to help others, "Humanitarian work without Krishna is nothing." (*Bhag.* 6.10.10, purport)

By meditation, Dadhici returned the different material elements of his body to the reservoirs of the elements and into the *mahatattva*. He then placed his soul at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and truly became His eternal servant. And so the perfect *yogi* dies in trance, thinking of Krishna. Such a soul is at once transferred to the spiritual world. The devotees in Vrndavana who take care of the dying have witnessed that ISKCONites struggle through pain to achieve this focus. It's not a storybook trick you can perform with ease just because you read about it in the *Bhagavatam*. In fact, *Srimad-Bhagavatam* assures us how difficult it can be.

Indra received his new thunderbolt weapon and ran off with it to kill Vrtrasura. Mahabuddhi dasa used to love these battle stories. He helped us get into the spirit of them as our library party read them aloud together. The demons showered the demigods with weapons, but the *devas* were not injured. "When insignificant persons use rough words to cast false, angry accusations against saintly persons, their fruitless words do not disturb the great personalities." (*Bhag.* 6.10.28) Try to remember that when you read or hear of attacks upon the Hare Krishna movement and its members.

Vrtra condemned both the demons and the demigods for their cowardly behavior on the battlefield. He was eager to fight Indra, even knowing that he would be killed. He knew Indra was protected by Lord Visnu. He also knew it was his last birth. Vrtra, a great soul, would attain his ultimate destination when Indra killed his body. Therefore Vrtra told Indra, "Lord Visnu has sided with you. Therefore, your victory, opulence and all good qualities are assured." (*Bhag.* 6.11.20)

By hurling his thunderbolt, Indra would gain the heavenly planets, but Vrtra would go back to Godhead. Vrtra knew he was destined to become the ultimate victor. Srila Prabhupada states, "A devotee is always ready to give up his material body," which is the rope of his material attachment. Only fools and rascals invest all their faith in the body and are not eager to go back to Godhead.

I know one practicing devotee (as well as myself) who might say here, "Oh, if by dying I knew I'd go back to Godhead, that wouldn't be so fearful, but I'm afraid I'll have to return to the material world for more suffering, starting with re-entering a mother's womb. That's why I'm afraid of death." Here Vrtra mocks Indra: "You are supposed to be a devotee, so act like one. Don't doubt your prowess. You are protected by Visnu." We too have our Hare Krishna weapon; we preach about it, so why don't we use it to kill the demons of doubt?

* * *

4:32 a.m.

Again exhaustion after thirty minutes of Deity worship. I am so tired I could fall asleep right now, but it's better if I don't. If a headache comes "well, it will whether I like it or not. It usually starts around nine o'clock. Until then, let me not waste my time.

Thinking of Maha-mantra dasi telling me she feeds animals and birds by her window. She takes a nap after the morning program "she told me that too. She lives in the carriage house, separate from the temple, and when she wakes up, the birds are pecking at the window, sometimes hanging upside down to do so. Many small birds wait in the trees. The cats are at the door too, and the squirrels nearby. I don't know if she feeds deer, but all these small animals eat from her hand as she talks to them. They all receive *maha-prasadam*. She said it's not unusual to see a squirrel running up a tree with a *rasagula*. She added, "I know you are not impressed by this." Some devotees criticize her for wasting so much time, but I told her I was impressed too hear how tame the animals have become to eat *maha-prasadam* from her hand, and how some of the *acaryas* in our line were similarly kind to animals. Chant Hare Krishna to them and feed them *prasadam*.

Yes, what else is there to do with our time? We must simply use it to talk about Krishna, to hear about Krishna, to give mercy to other living entities, and to do whatever else contributes to those activities. Life is short, and although we enjoy or suffer through it, the total is ever dwindling. We can't forget time. Whatever we want to accomplish in life, we had better do it now.

Yet if we were to say, "I want to attain ecstatic love of God and attraction for the holy name," it might take more concentration than we feel we have at present. We have already settled for ease. Most of us have even convinced ourselves that we need it for our service. What can we do now?

I made a calendar for March, marking in the holidays, especially Gaura-Purnima. I like to spend my time approaching a holiday, rather than trying to find the feeling when the day itself arrives. I'll read about Lord Caitanya's advent and some of the reasons for His coming. Switch the midnight reading to that? He's not just another great saint; He's the Supreme Personality of Godhead appearing in the form of the Lord's best devotee.

O Krishna, if I could only reach the spontaneous platform of not criticizing others, that would be an achievement worth having. Someone attacked a devotee because that devotee had criticized him. Someone drove a taxicab against a wall. Someone got rear-ended, whiplashed, broadsided, totaled, admitted to ICU, chloroformed, and stressed. Someone else won the lottery, got the most beautiful girl as his wife, and found money wherever he looked. Someone else, me, wanted to attain tears of contrition and the joy of devotional service.

So many men took the cloth
when they were young
but as they grew older reconsidered
got married
to be happy
again.

I asked Syamananda to come here to take photos of Radha-Govinda, but he's too busy. M. is in Wicklow working on the house (and getting others to work on it). They are plastering the outer walls, drying the inside (which is damp), laying cement, installing a heating system and electricity. M. said that it's possible we could move there by Gaura-Purnima. I don't mind the wait. I can move to that other pasture when it's time.

Cravat. Caveat. "This music will start loud, like Wagner," he warned, "but you can heat your apartment by it on cold winter days."

"Many are called, few are chosen."

When you get left behind, you gnash your teeth.

Come back into the world and try again. Chant Hare Krishna with lips and mind, and bring it into the heart where God is. Then the tiny servant is happy, in love.

* * *

10:19 a.m.

Saving energy for Prabhupada's massage and bath at 11. r. tapes a note to the outer door asking if he can put my name on the printed invitations he is sending around to the Irish devotees for Gaura-Purnima. "I am just trying to keep everyone informed of our program on the day, and to encourage them to come and celebrate." I do intend to hold an initiation, but I usually don't like them to print my name on invitations and to advertise my lecture for a certain hour and day; I may have to cancel. He should know that about me by now. Just leave my name off.

Or they could print, "Satsvarupa Maharaja is suffering from almost daily chronic pain, so he asked us not to list his name as a participant in the day's events. If he does feel well enough "if for example he hasn't taken his week's quota of analgesics or if his endorphins subdue the pain, then he'd be willing to perform an initiation ceremony at 8 a.m."

"Hey, when he has to cancel a lecture, can't read, and can't do his heavy plowing Field Work, or chant extra *japa*, what does he do? *Nothing*? Is that like *nirvana*?"

* * *

2:13 p.m.

It's like waiting for a big snowstorm or a hurricane to hit. Chance of precipitation, 100%. The wind is currently moving in this direction. You shut down. Pain. They want to know if I tense up unnecessarily, and whether that may be a factor in prolonging the pain. Is there anything I can do to make it less intense? Doesn't seem so. I have to let it run its course. Learning to just accept that. Pain directs my dance "it comes as it likes, dances as long and as intensely as it likes, then leaves either suddenly or gradually. But I'm free inside this body shell "free to chant and hear, to think, to separate myself from blood vessels and nerves. Feel the sense of abiding, surviving, and learn gratitude.

February 27, 12:30 a.m.

Surprised and grateful to find the pain gone this morning. It probably went down around 11:30 p.m., because before that I was dreaming my "pain dreams." Krishna seems to be saying, "Go ahead now, do what you want with this day." I wasn't expecting to have clear time for vigorous *japa* but thought I'd have to limp through silent mantras this morning. So this is a gift.

I dreamed of Baladeva and me laughing at a possible huge misfortune that might happen to him. We laughed and laughed. It felt good and left us more sober than before. We both realized we had to do the serious work of self-realization.

I laugh at myself when as soon as I am clear of pain I forget that it exists. I feel a sudden optimism. But why worry over past or future pain? I can't control it anyway, no matter what I feel about it. No diet or attitude has had any effect, and pain control techniques haven't worked either. My main impression is that pain comes when it wants, calls the shots while it's here, then leaves when it wants. No point thinking about it beyond that.

It's already too late for a midnight reading. I intend to finish up the *Bhagavatam* chapter I'm on, ending with Vrtrasura's famous prayers of yearning for love of God. Then I'll start *Caitanya-caritamrta* to prepare for Gaura-Purnima. It's not just to prepare for a lecture but to increase my feelings for Lord Caitanya as we move toward His appearance day.

* * *

4:35 a.m.

Maha-mantra dasi made a new outfit for my Radha-Govinda. It's pink and red with white trim. I struggled to dress Them neatly in it. It didn't come out perfectly, but I did my best. Whew. It tires me. I'm an old fellow with bony knees and head and digestion problems, lack of love problems. I know I'm not my body, but this body weighs me down. Wrapped Srila Prabhupada in a saffron wool *cadar* and offered him his bright silk Swami hat. They are all there, the family of Deities and great devotees and *murtis* in pictures spread out on the *hari-nama cadar* on my table. I don't know much about them all, but it is my good fortune that they're here.

Now, Mr. Writer, give us some wisdom, a witty observation, a thorough, penetrating-into-March Groundhog's-Day decision. A poet stood up on his hind legs "a funny sort of imitation, one of the roughs (as Whitman called him), or is he one of the sensitives? Hare Krishna. Was slower with each round this morning; maybe recovering from the shock of pain. But I got through.

* * *

Pin (didn't use it), blue tack (just a tiny dot for Their earrings), and Her crown (your fingers trying to do the right thing on Their forms, and your mind trying not to descend to the mundane while associating with the forms of radha and Krishna). The water appears on Their shiny forms and then dries off as I rub. I was warned that unless the drops are dried off, they could stain. rub off fluff with a cotton bud . . . look at it blankly . . . don't remember what I said. Something is lost. The words and thoughts flow out, never to be captured again. It's no wonder one wants to save them. Otherwise everything just enters oblivion. Too much attachment to preserving a life is also illusion, but I want to find the strand of my own Krishna consciousness.

I wrote a note yesterday at lunch to ISani explaining, in case she noticed, that I didn't eat much of what she cooked. I didn't want her to think it was her cooking, so I told her of my headache. I explained how the naturopath school says that when you have pain,

you shouldn't eat much because the blood has to leave the area and go to the stomach to digest. That's their theory. In response, she baked me a box of cookies. That's not what I expected. I guess she's thinking that when my pain is gone, I'll want to make up for the light lunch. Not what the naturopaths would have said.

Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka. I waited, I dozed. I wanted to chant Krishna within and not hum some old blues. I did chant Hare Krishna through the pain so I could fight off other distractions. Tired and restless, waiting. All that.

Hare Krishna comes from Krishnaloka, and I want my connection. Day and night I wander in bodily consciousness.

* * *

Throwing Off Aparadhas

I

& Smile a little little man and
hear the music when
it was mastered and
never equaled since "
those 1970s days when
my Srila Prabhupada
brought me truth.

* * *

Oh what is truth?

Give me an example. Why not
just groove with the sound
of it pouring over rocks in
a creek?

Some drink "Swedish Schnapps"
but I now want only water
offered to Krishna
who is, after all,
the taste in pure water
and the sound
in ether.

* * *

Forgive me

but I won't give up
working though my *anarthas*
will hear the master at
his best and live in
old-time
happiness.

* * *

II

The song is the metaphor and I am
best when I don't argue
but sing like a bird
the song is me
consumed in rhythm
sweet
conveying the
things that most want saying:

* * *

I love you,
forgive me
together let's look at the morning
fresh air, lake,
swans, God's consecration.

* * *

But I know the song is better
given by a master.

* * *

He said a cow walked here
see its footprint?
I said I see its dung.
"Cow dung is your brain," he
said, always reprimanding like that
hard and harsh
but they *are* all asses.

* * *

III

Be true I will I don't
know anything else to do
true blue Swami in
two pairs of socks
and slippers with another
morning alone and happy.

* * *

Did his *puja* his
sloppy *gayatri*
and now goes to the kitchen to hear
him speak *Krishna* book
while he cuts up a small apple a pear
and banana finds
juice and yogurt
and presents them all
to the Lord of the
universe.

* * *

Narottama dasa says don't even see
those who are averse
to hearing of the *rasa* dance.
I want to add that the best
of all music is when the master
makes it with us.
To see him again doing that! "

* * *

9:58 a.m.

Way to prevent a headache: don't take vigorous deep, fresh-air breathing walks.
Headaches seems to start as soon as I come back from that. Too much oxygen? One
doctor said it stirs up toxins. Stay quiet in a cozy room.

Had a good reading session to prepare for Sunday's Cc. lecture. It was only an excuse
to read Ramananda Raya's proposals 4 and 5.

Chilly ripples blowing across the lake like goose bumps. Crows out for dinner "I hear
their cawing.

* * *

Gray and rainy, of course.

* * *

2:18 p.m.

Dear Diary, I'm not going to mention some of the things I read in the mail, such as
about the disciple whom I hurt (he said) and who asked me to repay him (financially) for
his years of service. And another bitter voice that said . . . or the one who says when he
sees my artwork he thinks, "*I could do that if I had a life of freedom and comfort and
time as you do.*"

Someone wrote, "I read *Memories* and asked why you did not present more memories
there. And if it's memories we're talking about, listen to this one: my husband was

honored and I was downtrodden in a most cheating and hypocritical way, and where were *you* when all that was going on? Why don't you remember and print *that*?"

Another: "You're my spiritual master, but it looks like we'll have to go to war on opposite sides. Arjuna had to fight his guru. The battle lines are drawn . . . "

Another: "Your books say we should be honest, so let me be honest. I can't stand you."

Am I exaggerating? What did I not say in response? What did I hesitate to say?

Hare Krishna. I've come to the shed to get away for a little while from that pile of letters. I'll return to it later "that's my duty "but even out here the "No Nonsense" pen doesn't work. M. will repair it. Let me read a little *Bhagavad-gita*.

But the fog is rolling in in my head. The wind whips around the sides of the building. rain slashing. I'm trying to create an impression, and it's true.

* * *

Traditional Lament
& I'm plumb out of luck
Break my back on rack no
I mean to say I've got it easy
and should not be decadent.
He writes, "I thought Prabhupada
said we shouldn't read
outside books" "he's a
punk rockster for ISKCON "
"so I just want to understand
why in J&P 3 I find you
Reading haiku and Emerson
Tu Fu and all. I'm just
interested in your answer."

* * *

My reply: "I was always a reader
and was strict to follow my master,
threw out all reading for twenty
years, now started again.

* * *

"I use it in his service as
a writer. Some are stricter, no doubt.
If you don't like it go to one
who is strict like you.
Go on your bike and
don't look back to me
buried in a book or

give me a look."

* * *

We toe the crooked Sanskrit
line and try to improve the
parts in our hair
sneeze "Amen" and a
"Sorry folks"
for the world awry. "

* * *

Field Work #4
Enduring Work
20.50

Let's do the work. We are collating and stapling the first issue of BTG at the storefront. I wasn't in print that first time, but he says I'll make it next issue. "Karma-yoga" by Stephen Guarino. Oh boy.

Let's do the work. We are shoveling snow and ice. We have to fight or flee from neighborhood toughs. We have to face our wives in private rooms. We have to get on buses in good conscience and remember what the Swami has taught. And we have to repeat it to ourselves and others throughout the day.

* * *

Let's do the work. We are writing. A ten-year-old girl writes, "My mother said you were a writer. I want to write a book. Please tell me how often you write." I recommended Rilke's *Letters To A Young Poet*, and told her to be aware that the writing life has its difficulties. Her name is Joy Heatherwee. She inherited her freckles from her mom. Her father went to Scotland to investigate his past life under Ian Stephenson's authorization.

* * *

Work? I worked at Food Farm for 75¢ an hour. My back ached, but I wore a green bow tie and a white supermarket jacket. Job description: Grocery Packer.
The Parkie life was easier.

* * *

Since then I have worked for my spiritual master, work that incurs no karma. It's *yajna* for Visnu. That other work bound me to this world.

What have I done for Prabhupada? You want my vitae? I began with donating my whole paycheck as a caseworker. That was a good start, and he appreciated it.

* * *

Of course, now I write. Many people consider that goofing off. It's too right-brained, not a real assignment from the GBC or some BBT editor.

Well, it's a constant harvest time when you work as an author. And harvest means work. *Someone* has to pick all those pumpkins and apples come autumn. I gather in after my life of austerity.

* * *

#2

Tell us more about harvest time.

You sweat, you get. The only trick is, don't keep those bananas to yourself.

In the shed you can say, "Man, I am glad to write at all."

Be a whole person and get a whole harvest. Then give.

Even to those people who wrote those tough letters I just got? The one who wants to draw the battle lines?

O Krishna. What kind of a harvest is *that*?

Oh boy, I'm worn right out of ideas.

In the afternoon a worker gets bleary, so he looks at his watch as often as he can to see how many minutes he can possibly have left. Less than five today. Can he endure it? He sits at his desk and separates paper clips. The one old lady leaves ten minutes early. She just gets up and leaves, doesn't give a damn, her one act of defiance each day. The supervisor lets it pass, but no one else had better try it.

We can profit from the last grind. Chant under your breath, look at a *Sloka* hidden in a desk drawer instead of your watch. Think even of home and the *prasadam* that will be waiting "or maybe the trouble. This office is a cave of escape in its own way, but as Kafka knew, it cut him to pieces because it stopped him from doing his real work.

Work? You mean this mismatched series of paragraphs?

No, they do not avoid

surrender

and they search for purity.

This is me, Don,

I have to accept it but

you don't.

Glory to the great

Hare Krishna

the best thing I know and

have

and can advise you to find.

We've all got a lot to learn.

Harvest comes but it's preceded,

always,

by the digging in hard earth

under rainy skies or sunny

by work that seems aimless
that seeks the core
and refuses to be satisfied
by the ordinary.
Don, I'm
an ordinary master.
That's how I am.
If you know a better way, then go,
and I wish you all the luck.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:26 p.m.

Tired out in the head "pressure there. Looking forward to a good night's rest and the calming of my head. Got something done today.

M. is back. We went over the notes I wrote him and discussed how to handle various things. He says we may move to Wicklow in less than a month. I want to know about the moon from now until March 12, Gaura-Purnima. It must almost be the dark moon now, moving into the waxing phase. My Month-at-a-Glance calendar doesn't list moon phases because they're of no interest to businessmen. I'll have to find another calendar to know for sure.

Aniruddha writes that he's begun reading the *Antya-lila* for the first time. He's intrigued at the intensity of the first chapter. I can't reply tonight. My head is like a ball in my hands, a moon or a lantern. Soothe your sight, look at the last light of day, the golden lakeside weeds, the dark yet silvery-blue water. Clouds fill the sky so constantly they create a feeling of security. Nature's way of easing the heart. I don't ever expect a bright enamel-blue sky in Ireland but have learned to feel the moodiness of clouds hanging low over Govinda-dvipa. Just now it's raining, yet a man is rowing from Geaglum to Inis rath, making progress, soaking wet.

* * *

Swami, I rest in thee
work for you you want
always to help others
my cry is yes
if only I can help myself.

February 28, 12:08 a.m.

Let's warm our hands by the fire of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The Lord brings the devotee to His lotus feet and accepts him as one of His own personal assistants or servants. He doesn't bestow upon His devotee residence in the heavenly planets. He gives us what we really want. Indra wanted his heavenly position, but Vṛtra wanted Him.

Vṛtra, or any pure, humble devotee, is prepared to return to this world if he can render service to the Vaisnavas. "O my Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, will I again

be able to be a servant of Your eternal servants, who find shelter only at Your lotus feet? O Lord of my life, may I again become their servant so that my mind may always think of Your transcendental attributes, my words always glorify those attributes, and my body always engage in the loving service of Your Lordship?" (*Bhag.* 6.11.24)

The chapter ends with Vrtrasura's prayer expressing his yearning to associate personally with the Lord and to render service unto Him. He feels acute separation, and compares it to a baby bird waiting for the mother to feed it, the calf waiting for the cow to allow it to suckle, and the chaste wife whose husband is away from home and who is longing for him to return and satisfy her.

* * *

Dream: My sister is looking over my shoulder and tells me there's something fearful there. When I turn, I don't see it. What she sees is illness and death. I then recognize her anxiety and name it: Death. I scream, "Death! Death!" and as I do, I get the feeling that death is overcoming me. I am falling into a pit of helplessness. I scream out, "Go away!" and I pull myself into wakefulness.

No, I'm not ready to meet death. I know that.

After this dream I had other dreams during the night, all adventure stories. None of them had any emotional impact, they were so far-fetched. But they seemed to be follow-ups to the short fearful dream because each of them included a heroic escape from death.

After I woke I thought of something Prabhupada once told us. He said a foolish man thinks he can cover his body with excrement and that will scare death away. As if my shout will keep my death from arriving.

* * *

4:08 p.m.

Just hanging around all day in pain. No creative work. Try to sleep now.

March 1, 12:07 a.m.

That was a rough week I just passed. I sat around stunned as whole mornings went by, then whole afternoons and whole nights. I'll cancel my Cc. lecture this morning. Mail sitting unanswered. I suppose there's no rush. Better I answer when I'm up to it.

* * *

9:23 a.m.

Birds chirping on a clear March 1. Someone is giving the lecture on the island now, or perhaps they have just finished. Hints of the future when I drop out completely and everything goes on without me.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Dog asleep under tree on this cold, sunny day. Good. He's better asleep than barking. I can't seem to squeeze anything out today. All right, there's no deadline. Take it easy and let the water rise in the well. You wanted to be here. In a couple of months the pleasure boats will mar the view on the lake strait, but we'll all live. I'll be gone from here anyway by then. Do they have clouds in Wicklow? Oh yes. And plenty of rain and wind and alone time. And creative flow and satisfaction and advancement in Krishna consciousness (attaining Krishna's mercy).

* * *

3:17 p.m.

Took a walk. Will I be able to continue living in Ireland? I know fate has twists and turns, and it would seem that Krishna is particularly making things happen for the benefit of His devotee "so he can learn to surrender completely.

Just letting time run out today. The headache has cleared, but I'm too weak to do anything.

March 2, 12:10 a.m.

Do I love them? Do they love me? Some do, some don't. I do *some* of the time, but sometimes I'm not capable of love. Sometimes I want to be left alone. They have scattered with their many individual destinies unfolding, discovering childhood traumas, deciding they don't want to be devotees or deciding they do, but they don't want me, or not deciding anything. Just surviving. Surely there's a gamble involved in promising to be a guru or a disciple. Vows are meant to be kept. At least let me keep mine.

* * *

"I wish the grace of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, by whose mercy even one who is fallen can describe the pastimes of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 13.1) I was thinking of calling this volume of EJW *Approaching Gaura-Purnima*, because it is being written in the days leading up to that occasion. And I'll shape my activities by reading *Caitanya-caritamrta* and writing about what I learn. But only today have I been able to turn to the Cc. I read the pre-chapter summary, which is full of facts about the Lord's mother and father. Saci's first eight children died at birth. That seems so terrible a thing to have to suffer. Devaki also lost many children at birth, all murdered by Kamsa. Isn't it amazing that there is woe even in the life of the mother of God? I thought how I could pass that on to a young mother nowadays, to offer solace.

Sacidevi's ninth child was ViSvarupa. Then in 1486 AD, during the time of the full moon, Lord Caitanya appeared. If I want to read more essential spiritual chapters as to why Lord Caitanya came and who He is, I can get into the first four chapters of *Adi-lila*. I think, however, that I need to dip into the Ganges at any point.

On what aspect should I lecture on Gaura-Purnima? Lord Caitanya is Krishna Himself, but He's more merciful than Lord Krishna. He gives Himself more freely by delivering the chanting of the holy name. He seems to be crying out, "Take Me! Take Me!" *Namo maha-vadanyaya Krishna-prema pradayate*. By the grace of Lord Caitanya, even a fallen person can describe the Lord's pastimes. Srila Prabhupada relates this verse (Cc. *Adi* 13.1) to Krishnadasa Kaviraja, and says we shouldn't think of him as fallen. "rather, anyone who is able to compose such transcendental literature is our esteemed master."

"All glories to the moons who are devotees of the principal moon, Lord Caitanya-candra! Their bright moonshine illuminates the entire universe." (Cc.*Adi* 13.5) In his purport Srila Prabhupada states that only devotees of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu can enlighten the people in Kali-yuga. I thought he meant only great *acaryas*, and that would certainly include him, but Srila Prabhupada states further: "We therefore wish that all the devotees of the Krishna consciousness movement may reflect the supreme sun and thus dissipate the darkness of the entire world."

Instead we have spent so much energy quarreling among ourselves. "Yes, Srila Prabhupada wants us to help, but he didn't say we should be gurus. He's the only guru."

"No, we should go to other Gaudiya gurus."

"No, we should only follow the GBC."

No, we should . . .

The age of quarrel of hypocrisy.

The full moon that will appear on March 12 this year will be worshipable. I don't feel much capable of *approaching* it or preparing for it. If I claim that title, *Approaching Gaura-Purnima*, for my book, it might be presumptuous. Because what will happen? Let's try for it and find out.

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto the full moon evening in the month of Phalguna . . . " (Cc. *Adi* 13.19) On that day there was also a lunar eclipse, so everyone was chanting the holy name ""And Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu then appeared, after first causing the appearance of the holy name." (Cc.*Adi*. 13.21)

* * *

4:35 a.m.

O Lord, I am not fit for much of anything in devotional service, not fit for hearing the intimate Vraja-lila of Radha and Krishna and not fit for active preaching in ISKCON. Where do I fit in? I am so tired I can hardly move my limbs. Not with ease.

Paurnamasi enters carrying candies on a plate. A pun is made, then another. Within a few sentences, Krishna asks for the names of Mukhara's granddaughter. Paurnamasi replies, "Her name is Radha, and She is as delightful as moonlight." Krishna has not yet met Radha, but He falls in love just with Her name. Similarly, Radha is enchanted by the sound of Krishna's flute.

And I am bathing Their forms. What a great fortune! You who enter the world of dreams and come back with many strange stories try in vain to hold onto your fortune. Radha and Krishna in light green with gold trim.

Approaching Gaura-Purnima simply means the calendar date is coming. It also means an opportunity to absorb yourself in Lord Caitanya's *lila*.

* * *

Return to Song, Bird
& It has been two days since I sang
a magpie
twisted cork
a piece of mirth and
me
Krishna consciousness dug from
innards but here's the
truth I live by: wave a
favorable flag.

* * *

We are approaching Gaura-Purnima
and I have to get out there
to see the moon.

* * *

Jumping clock on my desk.
I mean to sing
forty Hare Krishna mantras
to redeem myself but it's
too late for that.

* * *

II
I can't even turn my neck
without a crick, but even that melody
means something.

* * *

Are these words arbitrary?
Is it liturgy? *Sloka* or that sort
of thing?
It's a song sung from the last quarter
last eighth
the tired home stretch.

* * *

III

O bird, fly high
I know I repeat myself
but I refuse to worry about that
I'd rather fly with the wild swans
the quick darters
the birds of my ken

* * *

may God allow
pure sound. "

* * *

9:53 a.m.

And then he had nothing more to say. He figured out which persona was going to answer his mail and who would take responsibility for any exaggeration or fictionalization, because all he really wanted to do was fill up pages.

I'm waiting to see his answer to Bhakta L.'s letter. He's from Detroit. Well, how come you refer to outside books, since didn't Srila Prabhupada says we shouldn't read such things? I have plans what to reply, something similar to a line I saw in an introduction to letters by Thomas Merton: "It was evident that the monk always was and always would be a writer." That's it. I strictly avoided outside reading for twenty-five years, then began again. I compare myself to Sadaputa Prabhu, a specialist who reads outside books for his service. Some ISKCONites are stricter than I am in this regard. Perhaps he would benefit more from associating with them. Issue the caveat. It's fine with me if he moves on.

Listen, can you hear the rain?

How am I approaching Gaura-Purnima? With a dull, unfeeling heart and a sense of passing days. By reading *Caitanya-caritamrta* at midnight, although the headache pain has tempered that. Surviving.

* * *

12:07 p.m.

Instead of being angry (at who? Your body? At Krishna?) over disruptions due to bodily pains, better to squeeze in a few sentences while you can.

So much smoke was pouring out of Prahlada's chimney that we thought his house was on fire. Must have been wet logs in the stove. Now I hear he's marrying his daughter off to a fine book distributor.

What is this, over-the-fence gossip?

Yeah, and didja hear what's happening with Madhumangala in his search for a fiddler? And isn't it a shame about . . .

Silver lake poems he's

trying to dissolve himself in the mist
or something like that.

"Cremation of Sam McGee." ("The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,/ But the queerest they ever did see/ Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge/ when I cremated Sam McGee.") Daydreamed of the crematorium in Trinidad "how they must be careful not to burn someone before they're dead.

Is that supposed to be funny?

Every day he just writes, and more than one said, "I wish I had his leisure so I too could write, but I am not so silly as to fritter my time away like that. Upstanding citizens work like asses. So there, silver lake, I dedicate this to Sri Krishna, Hare Krishna, and then the sixteen rounds (at least) that I chant each day.

* * *

2:43 p.m.

Told M. how I felt I had a right to my afternoons in the shed and my morning walk. I feel I'm being denied my rights by my headaches. He said the time is coming (now?) when I can't expect to have such regulated schedules. Yeah, I guess that's true. I used to feel it was my right to write twenty pages a day, but I have had to learn that on plenty of days I get only one and a half or two pages. Today, for example. A heartier lad could make his way out to the shed despite the rain, and then sit there busily going through his moves: (1) a page or two of writing of the here and now; (2) an aloud reading of *Bhagavad-gita*, recorded with comments in the *lectio divina* spirit; (3) a poem of about six to eight minutes long; (4) draw about three sketchbook pages in color, while listening to a tape; (5) a Field Work episode lasting twenty minutes. Oh, for a strong afternoon.

The birds are flapping and I see their silhouettes moving against the sky. Compensation for the pain: this room and view are very nice. The trees are winter bare, so I can see the buildings on the island. And it's quiet. There goes Prahlada with a bucket (cow's milk?) in his left hand and what looks like a bunch of daffodils in his right.

With two days of March all but gone, that leaves ten more until Gaura-Purnima.

* * *

Memories of Gaura-Purnima
& It's sad and lovely as the
boat crosses that river and we are in a mood
to celebrate.

* * *

Other Gaura-Purnimas "I remember many
good times if I could only single
them out
but they remain mixed
in with the tough stuff.

* * *

Of the first I remember
being glad we could break the fast
Rupanuga saw the moon rising from a
tenement roof and rushed into
the storefront to announce it.

* * *

And I remember being in Mayapur, of course
on a roof, a boss
and torn, I looked down at the masses
of devotees filing into the temple and felt
the specialness of the holy land.
That was the place to be on
Gaura-Purnima
where it actually happened and
still is happening
and where the people
know and love Gaura.

* * *

A Gaura-Purnima snowbound
at Saranagati
completely beside the point "
I didn't even want to give the class
and one guy showed off, as we
all will from time to time "
I wrote in the small cabin there.

* * *

Again and again I was in Mayapur "
allow someone else to become a guru?
You are the eleven best?
See Sridhara Maharaja?
Fight schisms? rush back
to a war-torn zone?

* * *

I'm glad to be alive after
so many Gaura-Purnimas
on many trips

to Mayapur
and to celebrate this year
with a quiet observance,
a little inconsequential
tear drop
for all those times
that were great
and are over and lost
in the river of time
and not always the Ganges.
But to walk back from *that* river to see
the Hare Krishna mantra lit up in
many colors
on top of ISKCON's Mayapur building,
circa 1976 . . . "

* * *

Night Notes, 5 p.m.

I heard that a bunch of top-level guests will be arriving the week of the fifteenth. I may be away at that time. The stress of meeting them all will probably be too much for me. Do I make myself clear? We pain-afflicted recluses have our rights. We need understanding, or if not understanding, at least private space.

M. making an order from Viking Office Supply. I asked for paper clips, push pins, archives storage boxes, Tombo-type coloring sticks, paper, and a few other things. The catalog depicts a friendly, white-haired company chairman suggesting that we buy a van Gogh print "to brighten your office." And, here's a special devise to deter staff theft.

Rain, close in on me and allow me to sleep peacefully. Today was a shortened day, yet I managed to push through to these pages. I will gratefully read of the Lord's advent tomorrow.

March 3, 12:10 a.m.

Oh, it's gettin' unusual bad and I ought to tell someone about it: another all-night headache, and here I am at midnight with a vise wrapped around the top of my head. I wrote pious letters that said I'm getting frequent headaches, but feel grateful.

Grateful? For what?

Right now I'm simply grateful the pain is not behind my right eye. It's not cancer, it's not an invasion of the body snatchers, it's not a tidal wave leaving me homeless. Patching together our experience of the science of God, we go forward despite everything. But I do wish I could be clear for reading and chanting *japa*.

* * *

If I am able to give the feast lecture next Sunday, I could speak from the chapter on Lord Caitanya's advent. He induced people to chant the holy name on various pleas. The

first was for the lunar eclipse He arranged for at His birth. Another was His babyhood trick of crying, then stopping only upon hearing "Krishna" or "Hari." When the ladies sankirtana. He became a teacher, and while teaching grammar, He culminated all His explanations in Krishna's name, form, and qualities (*Hari-namamrta-vyakarana*).

Regarding the concept of "approaching Gaura-Purnima," it would be more traditional to go to Navadvipa and do *parikrama* on the nine islands of Navadvipa. They would probably be starting today. Each of the islands represents the cultivation of each of the nine varieties of devotional service. The *parikrama* starts at Antaradvipa, where *Sravanam* is emphasized.

I think I'll read *Sri Navadvipa-dhama Mahatmya* and *Navadvipa Bhava-taranga*. I'll do my *parikrama* that way.

But not now, because the headache is raging.

Take an Esgic and suffer in waves.

* * *

3:28 a.m.

I took a pill at 1:30 a.m. so I could chant, but it brought no relief. I tried resting in the dark, but the pain persisted. I don't mean to draw you down, dear reader. I'll try to raise the spirit.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

I took a second Esgic four hours after the first. I couldn't tolerate the pain "it was moving behind my right eye. I wanted to break the cycle. "Forgive me." Of course, *prakṛti* doesn't forgive.

Stay tuned, folks, I'm gonna tell you of the ride of Paul revere and the rime of the Ancient Mariner, and if you have time, the Feverfew Few.

* * *

Francis Egghard
went to war
he was a bore
he read Celine
fell into a ravine
and never recovered consciousness
pure.

* * *

He's happy now
at the prow
of an ISKCON boat that is towed
by friends.

* * *

Leave him alone
so he can tell
a story
of recovery
from doldrums
and sing
on the bank
of the sacred Ganges.

* * *

Isn't it amazing? Even two didn't stop him, just as when Jambavan dasa shot his pellet gun at the bear. You can laugh, you lout. I don't think you'll find me in your sympathy.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

Being subject to physical pain today makes me somehow more open to emotional pain. I remember when my Godbrother Bhagavata dasa came to see me at Samika Rsi's house to give me herbs and an Ayurvedic diagnosis. It was during the time of the Persian Gulf War. While examining my constitution, he suddenly added, "You must have suffered a lot from disappointment when you saw ISKCON go down."

We didn't follow up on that statement, but the more I think about it, the more I realize that it is true. I would like to enter that emotion more, to let out my pent-up tears "for my loss, for the loss of my idealism, and for the loss of the world's hope that ISKCON could have represented. Today I wrote a letter to a Godbrother telling him another little piece in the puzzle, which had to do with the reconstitution of the GBC in 1986. I remember being shocked and disappointed when the reformers rushed to take the GBC seats for themselves. Of course, what else could they do? They couldn't just leave the corrupt "old boys' club" intact after they had worked so hard to dismantle it. Prabhupada *wanted* a GBC. So they elected themselves in, thirty bright new shiny reformers. But it seemed to me then that the GBC had not been reconstituted with spiritual reform.

I bear these feelings along with the sense of my own personal failure and alienation, not only from the society of devotees, but from the outer world too. I don't talk about those things so much. I seem preoccupied with establishing my life as a valid expression of Krishna consciousness. That and working through the physical pain.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

Lord, sharp pain all day.

Was talking with M. about some private art-music expression. He said I shouldn't think of it as a product. "The product is *you* "how you are at the time of death."

True! Will something I do now help me to reach the best end? Consider *that*. I write with faith in the general *process*. Process and product. But I also write to people other than myself. It is meant to be preaching. Sharing seems important to me. Is it mere ego-gratifying? No, it's art, it's preaching, and it's the fulfillment of my nature. Even when I'm alone, flute-playing in the pit, only for the ears of God until I die, I hope there's an anthropologist out there recording it for others. Save yourself, and leave a record "that's the idea.

This morning I said something about losing hope that ISKCON can save, but I do love to hear of nondevotees coming to love Krishna.

* * *

Approaching Hare Krishna
Hare Krishna is for kids
old men like it and so would squids
if they only knew the truth.

* * *

Hare Krishna is on the skids
in many countries
such as France
but give it a chance
to rise again.

* * *

I know I'll be dead
before the movement carries its weight
temples even in Kuwait
Krishna book in every home
wherever devotees roam
we're bound to come upon it
and continue y progress in *bhakti*.

* * *

Hare Krishna please forgive me
it's the pain behind my eyes
and the mind I can't control
I'm on a bad roll
I pray to you
and hope you find some good
in whatever I can do, O Krishna.

March 4, 3:25 a.m.

Sharp right-eye pain all night and dreams associated with it:

Dream: Prabhupada was traveling from country to country. There was danger in going through immigration. One of the devotees was praying to Krishna to protect Prabhupada. He was wearing rubber boots. He stepped into the ocean's foam to wash them off. I took pictures, happy to see him so playful in the ocean.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

S: You last as long as you like, and come and go. Who are you?

P: You're asking right here in EJW?

S: Yes, why not? I don't think you can say who you are.

P: I am Pain, and I have come to destroy all your plans. I rise and rage like a terrible sun behind your eye.

S: But *why*?

P: That I won't say. But I spread my crippling rays and dash your hopes, driving you to bed. I will make you a better man through suffering.

S: God must be with you or behind you, since He's in all things. But you exhaust me, pin me down, make me cringe from even simple tasks. Together we make a strange pair and have formed my life.

Greek tragic chorus: O poor sufferer! You are just learning a bit of the woes that all must suffer. Whoa to all who enter this world with its short life duration and constant misery.

S: O Krishna, I want to turn to You, but I can't read, can't seem to do anything but focus on pain. Please give me Your mercy.

* * *

Headache Daze

Daze of pain

days of rain

life passing by

while I seek relief

keep belief that

soon it will clear.

* * *

How long has it been

since I rose and read at midnight

and when will I return

to that routine?

I whimper

like an impatient cat.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

So sensitive he won't bow down to make obeisances. Leave my head alone. Just sit here and *maybe* it will go down "maybe. But don't count on it just yet. At least I see the gray-dark water with its silvery sheen wherever it ripples and think I'll outlive the jeebees. Don't total me up yet.

Like stirrings of the earliest possible spring . . . yet I know this recovery will be followed in a few days by another attack. That's life.

What about the "approaching Gaura-Purnima" theme? I have no momentum. Before I know it that day will be have passed. Maybe I should re-title this volume, "Worst Headaches Ever, Come and See." I wonder if I can approach Gaura-Purnima even after it's over.

I mean, remember it, but also do what I wanted to do now even after the festival.

Perhaps I'll find new directions.

For now, I can only deal with what's actually happening. Like the resentments I feel at having my time stolen by pain, at M. for making noise, for not ordering something I asked for, for not being more in tune with what I'm writing, for restricting my diet. But when he pulled out in the van a couple of hours ago, I forgave him for everything. Now I am left to face the quiet, waiting for the pain to decide he's danced his piece and to leave. Then I'll see what's left of this day.

* * *

4:20 p.m.

Not out of the woods yet. I may never chase the pain. Could I learn to write despite it? Sorrow-streaking rain dancing on millions of feet, falling on the windowsill and out in the fields. "Live long enough," the doctor said, "and you'll get cancer or arthritis." It's no joke.

Rain softer now, slanting.

The boats are tied up at the quay by Govinda-dvipa. I can see them from here.

"I heard you'll be moving to Wicklow by March 14th."

Said who?

There was a rainbow a few minutes ago "as if to signal my freedom from pain, but it disappeared, as if to indicate that I must stay longer in this hole. Sunshine on grass shining with raindrops. A typically fresh scene in this lake-island country. Hooded crow winging over the water, weeds even golder, evergreens bold. I'm still hoping.

* * *

New rainbow constructed on eastern
horizon spreads out like peacock . . .
but never ascends, just makes a short
column, evanescent.

We lost track recently of the exact stages of the seasons. Is winter over? He said,
"You can't have yogurt this time of year. It cools the body. You can only eat yogurt in

summer. Besides, it will cause constipation. If someone has diarrhea, they tell him to eat bananas and yogurt."

What else can't I have?

"No butter on your bread, and no sweets "no dessert. But I know if you're not happy with what you eat, you won't digest well."

Then why not leave me alone to die happy? Happy with headaches, constipated, writing two pages a day as precious time slips away like that rainbow that never quite formed before it shrunk back into the earth.

* * *

Suddenly the brightness is gone, buried in the clouds. It's 4:45 p.m., so I can't expect it to remain light; it will fade. Then I can learn to appreciate the night. I know the moon is still small but growing.

Spring is definitely on the way. This is the perfect time of year here "just before spring is born. Beautiful. They have even more seasons in Vrndavana.

Please give me a pen or paint brush. Give me Krishna consciousness. I can't give you that "you have to get it from a pure devotee, and he gets it from Krishna. Cry for it.

* * *

Perhaps today the pilgrims went to Simantadvipa, where *kirtana* is emphasized. Praise and chant Lord Hari's name. My beads clacked quietly while I chanted my mantras, all 1728 of them. I forgave myself for not doing better and accepted my actual state. Felt the chanting pumping through me though, like blood through a living body, in a quiet flow.

Saw the fragile connections of the cobweb artistry, now broken. The spiders have started a new one. Is writing like building cobwebs? Can a book provide nourishment? Spiritual food? It takes two to make a book spiritual food: the author has to be empowered, and the reader has to read as well as the illiterate *brahmana* in South India.

The collie runs, lowers himself under the barbed wire fence, then bounds down the slope to the lake. He's alive in his moment of wildness. The smoke rises out of the chimney to meet the fresh air. My head signals more pain, but I can still feel this dusk.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:15 p.m.

Forced to quit by renewed twinge. All I know is this life has severe limits, but because I have the holy name and the duty to serve the spiritual master, I am privileged among humans. Be free "I have that potential "or at least be real.

March 5, 12 a.m.

Nine islands of Navadvipa. Oh good, this gives us a chance to convey the impression that we are approaching Gaura-Purnima. Should I tell that the electricity is partly out in this room and that I have no way to correct the problem? And that head pressure of a different variety "it's starting behind the forehead "should I report that?

Nine islands. I was going to write a whole essay (never was, but maybe some thematic attempts) for each day of *parikrama* at each island. Two days ago was Antardvipa, then yesterday, Simanta-dvipa. Now today we are at Ritadvipa, where *visnu-smaranam* is emphasized. Always remember Krishna, or everything is lost. *Ante narayana-smrti*: remember Krishna especially at the time of death. That's the end product "how we ourselves are at that time. That's when everything will be tested, when we'll see how some of the things we did during our lives were a waste of time, a sacrifice to a false idol, and that they will drive us back to worship matter again in our next life. If we worship temporary material idols, we will reap a material reward. Now is the time to concentrate fully on *bhakti* so that when we are tested at the end, there is nothing but pure devotion in our hearts.

* * *

Lord Caitanya inundated the whole area of Navadvipa with the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. He began His *sankirtana* movement just before His youthful life. "Day and night He used to dance in ecstasy with His devotees." (Cc. *Adi* 13.31)

"The *sankirtana* movement went on from one part of the town to another, as the Lord wandered everywhere performing *kirtana*. In this way He inundated the whole world by distributing love of Godhead." (Cc. *Adi* 13.32) How did it go all over the world if He walked only all over Navadvipa? Because He set it in motion, just as He sets the cosmos in motion at the time of creation. It's His desire that the *sankirtana* movement spread all over the universe, and "the Hare Krishna movement, in continuity of that same motion, is now spreading all over the world . . ." (Cc. *Adi* 13.32, purport)

My head hurts. I have to stop.

* * *

7:20 a.m.

The sun, like a blazing moon, is rising over the tree-lined horizon into white space, then covered by blue clouds. I'm going to take a walk for the first time in about a week. Took a pill at 4 a.m. I need some up-time. Now I want to hurry out before I get cut down.

* * *

7:30 a.m.

It's snowing, but I know it won't stick. Still, spring never comes easily.

I'm recalling what Madhu said about my artistic expression: the real product is you yourself, what you'll be at the time of death. In other words, it's not important to fashion a product for others; the only criterion should be what's good for my own self-realization.

Of course, there's no either/or duality here, because at the time of death I would like to be one who shared himself during his life. It's not that I'm claiming to be a more advanced person, and that's why others should listen to me, but I'm committed to sharing

with and preaching to those who are interested to hear. What have I got to share? The wonderful gift of Krishna consciousness. Even the attempt to practice it is worth sharing.

* * *

9:32 a.m.

Lord Caitanya induced people to love Krishna "simply by chanting and dancing." That doesn't seem possible for me. Srila Prabhupada sankirtana isn't only with *mrdanga* and *karatalas*. There is the *brhat-mrdanga*, the printing press. (A devotee wrote me and spelled it bread-*mrdanga*. Yes, it's my bread.) But simply dancing and chanting is what they actually did in His presence. I dance, beyond discursive thought "no doubts and reasons. Just sing the names of God (no fancy lyrics required). Dance in any way possible.

Dacoits. They make it dangerous to live at holy places. The Krishna-Balaram Mandira is a fort where dacoits cannot enter. That place where rupa Gosvami sat under a tree "it's so dangerous now that even the *sadhus* who tend it stay there only during the day and leave nothing valuable overnight. Govardhana Hill is also dangerous. It's your money or your life. A young householder couple told me that they would like to have their own house outside the ISKCON property in Mayapur, but, "It is too dangerous."

Am I any safer on the bank of lower Lough Erne?

Another danger in the *dhama* is the premature pursuance of *raganuga-bhakti*. Everything comes gradually as we practice *sadhana-bhakti*.

Somehow or other, remember Krishna. Obstacles to our service, risks, dangers "do what you can realistically and with fervor. Chant on beads, read Prabhupada's books, worship at an altar, offering *prasadam*. Do *some* kind of preaching.

Before Lord Caitanya appeared, the Vaisnavas of that area of West Bengal used to gather at Advaita Acarya's home. They practiced pure devotional service.

We all want to practice pure devotion. ISKCON preachers decry the practices of *jnana* and karma. Sometimes we sound strident and sectarian. I want to be true to Srila Prabhupada saying that we don't compromise with others, and "we simply stand on the platform of devotional service and preach the same principles all over the world." (Cc. *Adi* 13.65, purport)

Still, I can't claim we are (or I am) better than everyone else, or that no one else knows anything about love of God. I'd like to preach gently and yet purely.

I'd also like to engage in *kirtana* as Advaita Acarya and the others did. Earlier, I mentioned sharing, wanting to be a sharer. Joseph Conrad wrote a story called "The Secret Sharer," which told of a subperson observing our actions. I'm interested in the phrase "secret sharer" in another way. I want to experience privately and share that. I want to preach, but not in the stereotypical way. I empathize and admire the *vyasasana* orators, and I orate myself sometimes, but I want to do a secret sharing.

The world is suffering for lack of Krishna consciousness. "A devotee onlooker is very aggrieved to see such a situation in the world." It's also painful to see this movement, which is intended to save the world, filled with disorder. Even when we speak the right philosophy, which we often do, we can tend toward righteousness and an overburdened institutionalism. I want to give some of my heart back to ISKCON, but in my own way,

by setting up a *bhajana-kutir* where I practice a simple, decent life, and from which I can write and share.

Advaita Acarya prayed that Lord Krishna Himself appear to distribute Krishna consciousness and to pardon the people ""The Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, or a person especially empowered for this purpose." Srila Prabhupada possessed that capacity. I want to follow him, the embodiment of Lord Caitanya's mercy.

* * *

Approaching the moon of Lord Caitanya can be done at any time of the year. It isn't that after March 12, 1998, His moon will fade. Stay in the moonlight. His mercy is always available, His hands always raised in benediction, His smile sweet and beatific.

* * *

On Bird As Divinely Inspired
& There are plenty of ways to please
Lord Hari
your mind
must be
on Him.

* * *

Yes, I do like the bird
its song is not *kirtana* but
it can be.
I hear it and say
inside, O Hari!
You're the one who lifted
Govardhana lifted
the earth on Your tusks
sent Srila Prabhupada
to lift me
and my generation.

* * *

You enable singers to sing
and we hide Your glory
we misfits "but You are the source
of all song
of all sound
vibration.

* * *

It takes concentration to praise Him
a stumbling a pushing
a trying our best
to make melody
at a quick pace.
Why so fast? We must out-race
maya and dance
on the temple room floor.
Because we are made to dance. "

* * *

12:12 a.m.

Watching Arjuna dasa roll a big steel milk container down to the quay and onto the rowboat, then roll an orange propane bottle in the same way. Now he is rowing himself, the bottles, and Maha-mantra and her shopping bags over to the island. I'm about to ingest my one teaspoon of Lavanbaskhar Churna before lunch. No pain just now, and the sun is out. If pain arrives, though, between now and Sunday, I will not be able to take more pills. Had my limit.

Use the sunshine while you can. Planning my first trip to the shed in what seems like days. Will hear Srila Prabhupada dictating *Krishna* book during lunch. What *else* can I say? Ah, I located that book "*Bird Life In Ireland*. Maybe I'll be able to supply a few more names in my description.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

Made it out. Good. Abhaya was standing outside the house when I came out. I asked about her children and the school. She told me that Manu's son, Jayananda, might transfer to the school in Wicklow. Oh? I told her I've been having a bad time with pain. She said she was just writing me a letter about the great homeopathic doctor in Belfast. "We're going again on Friday," said her daughter Yamuna from the car. "I'm impressed with him," her mother said. I don't want to travel so far to see yet another doctor who gives little pills and wants to see you again and again to monitor your progress. Don't they know these pains have their origins in the mind? And the soul? And your karma? Besides, I'll soon be moving to Wicklow.

Passed the outbuildings, the cows "I see a Kerry has joined the brown one who wears the bells Prahlada brought her from Vrndavana. Will these sights hamper a deeper, more solitary mood when I reach the shed?

Here I am. Open *Bhagavad-gita*.

* * *

Don't Take For Granted
& We survived the power
failure putting

on our coats and hats
chanting beads
or at least fingering them.

* * *

Did they conquer
the ISKCON jury and judge
and is that a bona fide wig
you're wearing?
No! Cut this out "it's
like a *sannyasi* playing
tennis for his health
although only swimming
is a Vaisnava sport.

* * *

O Lord, I worry about
the littlest things. But man,
I take *nothing* for granted.
Hey, don't take nothing for granted
'cause whatever we have
comes from Krishna "that wisdom of here
and now so show a little surprise.
I'd like to tell someone that
but I met no one
and got no chance.
Now it's too late.

* * *

A gray heron calling
a romantic devotee hears Krishna
and spills ink and antics so why
take stairs when there's an elevator?

* * *

He's the ritual, the herb, ink,
the priest, the mother, the creator
Vedas, omkara,
Camarillo,
tax, annoyance
"all comes from
God "

* * *

in truth.

No, don't take anything for granted. "

* * *

Field Work

#5 Headachy returns to the Job

"Been out of work a long time, eh? Now come and be happy. Where ya been, Jack?"

Oh, I've been sick with headaches. Headaches grip your inner head mighty powerful, like.

"You'll get more, no doubt. I take Tylenol myself. Wouldn't want to miss a day's work."

I didn't bother telling him what it's like.

* * *

I work within myself "it's like having two jobs at once, like when I was a white-collar spy in Arnold Constable's basement. I cheated everyone while they worked me like a coolie. Me the artist, the poet, the prose-writer, who stole striped, drip-dry shirts and leather wallets to give as presents to my friends. After all, every man can use a wallet. But if he steals, he too can be robbed.

* * *

Two paragraphs and where's the Krishna consciousness? I tell you, this background isn't much inspiration. Try something else. I need a *merry* lift, novelty.

* * *

That old guy, he's muttering to himself. Same old. Seems dissatisfied. Wanted to be a guru, but now he doesn't know *what* he wants.

Give him cranberry-currant juice and shut him up. They speak so high-falutin', but give 'em a Good Humor ice cream on a stick and they quickly forget their rilkean angst "I've seen it all before.

* * *

That old guy with the headaches, he wants to be a devotee, but plans to do it while living in a house in Wicklow "*alone!*" and read and chant and write. There's no glory for him, just

cold feet.

O Krishna, *You* are the truth

the ritual herb

and cowherd boy

extraordinaire
I want to taste *hari-nama*
but not for free. I want to *earn* it
me, this headachy boy
who can't seem to strain
against his handicap "the handicap
You gave me.
Do I need to perform some other type of tapasya?

* * *

That's how that old man thinks. And man, I believe him. One more shift and he can go home, although this work is his link to Krishna.
Try to understand.

* * *

This last shift, work, boys. Be nimble. I want to see the steam rise.
Took a cue to go inside and chant Hare Krishna Hare
Krishna
faster and faster
deeper
to find the self-realization
of the soul. I had an inclination to give up my attachments
to things of any world
other than His
because I don't want to go to any planets
that do something other than love Krishna purely. I want to be Krishna's devotee and love only Him.

In the meantime, I have to examine my claim, to discover the truth about what it is I do unfortunately want, to see where my purest love of God is lacking. Otherwise, to say I have it pure and easy would be a scandal

as we in ISKCON have seen
again and again.

My work is to dig at truth
not to go to some "Yudhishthiraloka"
where truth is highest
but to find self-honesty and not to bluff.

That's this man's last outburst on this late-afternoon shift. The whistle's blowing and I'm free to go.

Harry! Harry!

They know me for who I wish to be. They think it's funny.

"Yes, Hare Krishna to you too," and I wave back.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:35 p.m.

Cc. ASraya just arrived, two advance copies, beautifully done. Madhava, on behalf of Gita-Nagari Press, thanks me for giving them the book, but it is they who have given it to me. I began to read and found (I didn't remember it) that it's an absorbing story of a person ill with headaches deciding to stay at Inis rath-Geaglum and to enter the world of the *Caitanya-caritamrta*. I was taking three Esgics a day! It makes an interesting human story. Plenty of Sastric references, notes. I also like the book's design. It looks professional.

Time is moving quickly. I paid for this clear day with that Esgic at 4 a.m. Tomorrow I'm prepared to suffer. What happens will be up to Krishna. He is everything.

Goodnight, Inis rath with your silvery-blue lake strait. Prayers of little white clouds high up.

* * *

6:50 p.m.

The atheists say things happen by chance. I want to hear from the Vaisnavas so I can experience the Supreme Person behind everything. Krishna reveals Himself fully only to the pure. We practice with that simple faith.

The curtain is pulled over the window for the night, so I am facing brown velvet instead of the sky. My Lord, Adhoksaja.

March 6, 12:14 a.m.

The fourth island in Navadvipa is Madhya-dvipa, and the fourth item of devotional service is *pada-sevana*, worshiping the Lord's lotus feet. Advaita Acarya wanted Lord Caitanya to personally appear. He worshiped the Lord (in His *Salagrama-Sila* form) with *tulasi* leaves and Ganges water. "By loud cries he invited Krishna to appear, and this repeated invitation attracted Lord Krishna to descend." (Cc.*Adi* 13.71)

After losing eight daughters at birth, Jagannatha MiSra and Sacidevi gave birth to a son, ViSva-rupa. They were happy and, "because of their pleasure they specifically began to serve the lotus feet of Govinda." Then Lord Krishna entered the body of both parents. There's a long purport where Srila Prabhupada makes it clear that Lord Caitanya appeared in the mind of Jagannatha MiSra and then in the heart of Sacidevi, just as Lord Krishna had appeared in the minds and hearts of Vasudeva and Devaki. It was not a birth caused by seminal discharge. All these parents are *nitya-siddhas*. Srila Prabhupada also mentions that the pastimes of Lord Krishna are eternal in both the material and spiritual worlds. "In such pastimes, the Lord always thinks Himself the eternal son of Mother Yashoda and Father Nanda Maharaja." (Cc. *Adi* 13.86, purport) "This subject matter is a little difficult to understand but for devotees of the Lord it will not be difficult to realize the statements given by Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami."

Nilambhara Cakravarti drew up the child's horoscope just before the birth. Because of the lunar eclipse, everyone was chanting the *maha-mantra*. Then "the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, in the form of Gaura-Hari, advented Himself on the earth."

On Gaura-Purnima this year I intend to give *hari-nama* initiation to the young man who was born as Pradyumna dasa. I'll lecture on the appearance of Lord Caitanya, then give the initiate the spiritual name, Gaura-Hari dasa Brahmachari.

* * *

4:40 a.m.

This morning Radha-Govinda are wearing outfits made by Maha-mantra dasi "white with blue flower-trimmed borders. I'm unworthy of Their pastimes. I am . . . and Krishna is nevertheless the playful King of Vraja. Srila Prabhupada said Krishna loved the *gopis* very much, yet He left them to kill Kamsa. This, he said was a display of His renunciation.

I often think if he were with me today, I would ask him further questions. We were so young when he was among us. Still, I have what he gave and pray to be ever more receptive toward them. I may struggle against obstacles, but I will not abandon my post. I will also help others to surrender to Prabhupada, as they help me.

* * *

We must dynamite ahead to reach further stages. In *Vidagdha-madhava*, the players often speak in asides, especially Krishna and radha. They speak Their minds, yet by theater convention we are privy to what They are thinking. That is another example of secret sharing. I am writing like that, but I can't reveal a mind attached to Krishna and radha. My outer and inner speech lacks that noble, playful transcendental purity and passion for Krishna.

Just keep speaking. The truth is, They went to a hill to collect roses. Krishna was after rosewater to make ink for a love letter to Radha. He was trying to make up for his mistake in rejecting *agunja* garland Radha had offered Him. Radha and Her *gopis* were going to the rose garden on the pretext of gathering flowers to worship the sun-god. At least I can tell you that much.

I am planning to give the Cc. class on Sunday, using the notes I had planned for the talk I had to cancel last week, about Ramananda Raya's third and fourth proposals. Lord Caitanya rejected them. Ramananda Raya's fifth proposal was accepted. Then the two types of pure devotional service, *vaidhi* and *raganuga*, are introduced. We will stop there. I won't talk about Lord Caitanya's advent until His actual appearance day. Now I must review my notes to make sure I'm ready to speak.

Do you like yogurt? Yes, why do you ask? I want to know if you like yogurt even more than devotional service to Krishna. No, of course not, that's a ridiculous question.

Then why do you think of yogurt while dressing Their Lordships and hearing of Their topmost pastimes? And on catching yourself tasting yogurt in your mind, why did you not become ashamed like Madhavendra Puri did when he desired to taste the *ksira* offered to the Deity?

I am like old Jatila or Mukhara, neither whom can see well. When they become agitated, they go home and take a nap.

Sleep? Srila Prabhupada says sleep is a waste of time. A devotee hates it. He's enthusiastic to serve Krishna and doesn't want to be stopped by sleep. We seem to have no choice.

There once was a man from Trice
who fixed his love at a price.
Love said, "I'm not for sale,"
and the Trice man went on strike
to *jnana's* leaky boat
and became tired. In another *yuga* he suddenly awoke and remembered where he had left off.

Moral: Don't let this happen to you. Stay awake, remain non-envious, and don't kill fish even in dreams. Or yourself either. Pray for *bhakti* and uphold ISKCON's flag.

Rhymes run out
buildings tout
for tallest *karmis* pride
Monopoly hotels
along the boardwalk
crushed
by death.

* * *

Smooth Birds
& The bird I saw was not in
the book. The Cc. describes a bird
flying home to Krishnaloka at
dusk and yearning for moonbeams
another for rain from
the Krishna cloud.

* * *

Peacocks make pure devotees
dizzy and they faint in love
of God down into the dust of
Vrndavana. Those birds
don't sing a few choruses and
then sit down but praise all day
and night.

* * *

O Krishna You subdued the *gopis*
and Srila Prabhupada
told us to simply cry
for You. He told us to be chaste.

* * *

When chanting *japa* rounds
the sun yet to rise
we walk with *japa* heartbeat
strong for the time being . . .

* * *

Bird you sing and I hear, "Wake
to be serious."
O Krishna, Hare Krishna
please take me. "

* * *

"There Was Once A Man"

He couldn't remember when he was supposed
to go home, he kept wailing and it wasn't just
business it was *love*.

I was with the Tots watching from the wooden grandstand
in the gymnasium,

waiting to get out like everyone else "so afraid, playing games, wanting to be seen as
cool by the right guys in the crowd. To be seen with girls or at least by girls, to be
cynical about everything, to cover my heart.

That was supposed to be *fun*?!

O guru, where were you when I needed you? How could I possibly free myself from
that crowd without your help?

And now we have done it again "created a crowd, posturing, perhaps with more
sophisticated patterns, with higher interests, but not quite free of game-playing or
wanting to be seen as cool by the right guys in the crowd. Wanting to be seen by
women? I'm afraid so.

Although we have in mind some pure instructions
and although we may become tired of official interactions,
we don't quit our duties or try to escape.

We have hope.

Once a man from Blast
had a seizure in Nast
and gave vent to Krishna
and relieved himself of *trsna*.

* * *

"I don't dig it," said the piano
man, and I told him that in *my* country
piano means gas.

He laughed, and with a wink,
we entered the temple hall
on time.
The TP eyed us as we
bowed down and I
blanked out.

* * *

He asked me to lead the singing. I took the mike: "There was once a man from Jizz
who lived on raspberry fizz
then he met a Nama Hat
a mad hatter and sat
in the hall of fame-watching.
Then they asked him to leave
but he said he'd shrieve
grieve the demise.
Oh, don't overdo it.
It's not so bad. Good times
are still here.
He bearded his cheer
and decided not to chance the singing.
He remained quiet in respect
as a better man bellowed
and all this was in Italy.

* * *

8 a.m.

When I reached the outer road, a hare was running in my direction. He didn't seem aware of me. When I shuffled my foot, it turned and ran in the other direction. A little later, I saw two beautiful swans and a small duck at the extreme edge of the lake. They didn't notice me either. If they had, the duck would have flown away. Further down the road I saw two more large hares sitting on their haunches. They eventually got the "word" and bounded into the green fields. A lot of action for a misty morn.

In the woods, orange-breasted robins and fellows of a similar chunky shape, maybe sparrows or wrens "I collect them all. More bird song than I have noticed before "trills, twitters, thrums, whistles. It gives me courage to face the rest of my day and the possibility of pain.

* * *

9:28 a.m.

Head fog coming on, so I've been sitting here doing nothing much, as if I'm trying to negotiate with the oncoming pain for the rest of my day. It comes and goes on its own, so I had better say something while I have a chance.

Out of touch from the midnight reading. If I were clear, I'd dip into *Cc. ASraya* to see how that 1996 story went with that fellow taking time out from travel obligations to practice reading and writing. He was also staving off headaches to the tune of three pills a day. That was a short-lived course, and I realized it a month later that I couldn't take that much medication safely.

If I had a clear head, what else might I do?

Oh, if I were strong and clear, I'd read more *sastra*, chant more *japa*.

Be aware that you *can't* do those things. Don't become confused later thinking the only reason you didn't read or chant more was a lack of spiritual taste. I just can't push myself. I need a lighter, less demanding path.

Read of a twenty-nine-year-old musician, then of a young Rilke. It makes me aware that I'm near the end. Some old men die off before they're dead. Some keep going. Srila Prabhupada kept going despite illness. Traveling preacher. How will I be? The day is slowing down, gripping me.

* * *

11:36 a.m.

It has seized me in the right eye. When it moved in, I was reading the mail. Just imagine in your last hour of life, will you fritter it away? raw pain. But within me is a spirit soul who can benefit even from pain. I don't have to lose. Krishna . . .

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Krishna, Krishna.

Gaurahari's full moon "approach it. Imagine bathing your soul and body in its healing rays. Even if the body has to experience pain, maybe it doesn't have to *hurt* at the center of self. The self is free of pain, but I identify with the body. Think of yourself within, secure, unhurt, not suffering. Don't dwell on misery; dwell on spirit soul and the Supreme Lord.

The headache may force me to withdraw from the outer world, but can I dwell within anyway, or will I be caught by physical pain and remain focused on it and whimpering? I am free to follow the dance of pain or Krishna's dance.

* * *

1:05 p.m.

Date ball dessert, no butter on bread . . . I ate all the bitter *kerela*. Now waiting for the "damage," like a man waiting for his after-dinner bill.

Oh, there must be some mistake. This is too high.

No sir, you had three glasses of wine.

Still, so much reaction? I'm a pious person, some even consider me pure . . . a devotee.

Our arithmetic is correct. Please pay promptly. Will that be cash or credit card?

Just a minute. I'm summoning my powers.

* * *

I just received a letter from Abhaya dasi. She says she noticed when she recommended the doctor to me yesterday, it made me recoil. She writes, "I've just been reading the story of the *Avantibrahmana*: 'The *brahmana* understood that all his suffering "from other living beings, from the higher forces of nature and from his own body "was unavoidable, being allotted to him by Providence.'" Abhaya dasi adds, "I know by reading about the *Avanti brahmana* that he would have spurned material health just as you did today. He was so clear that it was only his attachment to his body that could make him suffer. Once he detached himself from body and mind, nothing could affect him." She referred to my section on pain in *Memories*. In that book, I say I don't want to simply surrender to pain because I want to use my energy in Krishna's service. Now I'm training myself to live through it. Service doesn't have to be active. From *Memories*: "It can be subdued. It may be reduced by consciousness, or even in the pain-filled state, we simply maintain an abiding faith and love, which we offer to Krishna."

* * *

1:28 p.m.

Did it go away? Are we home-free? Can we go out and play? Oh no, it never left.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

I'm not going out to the shed. Do the *Bhagavad-gita* "prayerful" reading here. Write the old songs as the rain hugs the ground, the sky hugs the ground.

British Army powerboats out proving something, high-speeding even in the slashing rain. People don't have to know I'm ill or better, but I want to be a God conscious person. Look up to Lord and guru. Where's your actual experience, Prabhu? I'll tell you, don't worry.

* * *

Field Work #6

Work As You're Able

22 minutes

I don't know how long I'll be able to work today. Thank you for the intro and applause. I thank you . . .

Fellow workers toil, and they might like to write their own notebooks.

* * *

Say the thing I want to hear.

I want to work in the Elysian field of devotee cotton-pickers, march with them on St. Paddy's Day, but once you start, it becomes like a Kumbha-mela (350,000 attend) and you can't get out and have to be in top shape.

* * *

I can't walk barefoot or in
Keds in the way they say you
must in the Pyrennees
in khaki pressed along the
Kyber Pass.

* * *

I can't work in five and time register in standup long hours
but all powers
to those who do.

* * *

All I can do is say Krishna Krishna Krishna
and assure you that I mean no harm.
Can't work on a farm
or even in a cabin
because my life is
guarded and arranged
by God all-mighty
and *this* is what
He chose to arrange.

* * *

In five years the faulty biography
of the unfaulty devotee came out
and everyone called, "Ole!
Ole!"
Translate: "*Haribol!*"

* * *

These screams were released from the
doldrums in a workday jump-
suit. O Krishna, Hare

Krishna
please may I say it right.
Drink water and
push on.

* * *

Stories told in the evening
as Lord Nityananda told Saksi-Gopala and
Lord Caitanya told the other.
No opus lost, nothing found redone, revised with better color.
Work straight for Krishna and
kick home when we feel
we can actually give love.

* * *

Krishna! Please meet us at death.
These days do we have to go further
to show You we're sincere?
But I'm worn-out fragile
folded up
and doing all I can do.
But when work becomes play
becomes
calm resolve
becomes praise of
the God of gods
then I will know
I've succeeded.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:55 p.m.

Answered a few letters. Now get ready for rest. I purposely kept close track during today even when I was in the grip of right-eye pain and thought that I'd be so for twenty hours or more. I prayed or *wrote my way into* a consideration that the inner self need not be affected by the pain. I saw the oncoming pain ordeal as a serious challenge. Then suddenly, while eating lunch, the pain lifted. I immediately took advantage and did some afternoon writing. Now let me express my gratitude to Lord Krishna. Of course, I should be grateful to Krishna even if I can't write, even if I have pain, but I cannot help but be pleased by the release from pain after only four hours. And the encouragement to keep writing realization as much as possible, even while in difficulty. Writing is a way to approach insights for better spiritual attitudes.

March 7, 12:10 a.m.

Try to find out what brings headaches and avoid that. M. said yogurt, then backed down. Maybe getting up at midnight isn't good. I got that idea because last night, my sleep was interrupted at least five times, and I had difficulty getting to sleep again. O peaceful rain - I got up and opened the Cc. for one shot in twenty-four so I can *write about it*, as I did in *Cc. ASraya*. Give the impression and make it true that you're in touch with *sastra*.

"Thus by His causeless mercy the full moon, Gaurahari, rose up in the district of Nadia, which is compared to Udhayagiri, where the sun first becomes visible. His rising in the sky dissipated the darkness of sinful life, and thus the three worlds became joyful and chanted the holy name of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 13.98)

In Santipura, Advaita Acarya, joined by Haridasa Thakura, suddenly began dancing at the moment Lord Caitanya appeared, but no one knew why they were dancing. "Seeing the lunar eclipse and laughing, Advaita Acarya and Haridasa Thakura went to the Ganges in jubilation." They knew only that the Lord had appeared, but the joy His appearance would bring. Because they cared for others, the two devotees were happy for them.

When the Lord appeared, the devotees gave charity by mental strength. That means that even if you're not physically wealthy, you can distribute riches in your mind. I'm crippled "we're all crippled in some way or another until we become pure devotees "but we can at least give whatever Krishna consciousness we have to others, if not always by physically going out, at least by mental strength. We too can feel compassion and express it with heart.

Kadi hari sankirtana, nandana kaila manah bali (Cc. *Adi* 102) "not just those three devotees (Advaita Acarya, Haridasankirtana, and gave charity by mental strength on the pretext of a lunar eclipse, "their minds overwhelmed with joy." Then people came to see the newborn child. Wives of the greatest demigods came disguised as ordinary ladies bearing gifts. It reminds me of the story of Jesus in the manger, only without the oppression. Gaurahari didn't have to flee Nadia.

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Red and gold Friday. The long shiny gold flute with its golden peacock head, and Krishna's mild, sweet smile "He's such an innocent boy. radha is shy in Her beauty, Her chastity, Her love for Her Krishna. Lord Nrsimhadeva rips apart the demon. May He protect me. All these aesthetic forms, pictures and *murtis*, on the broad plane of my altar. At first I don't want to focus on each one, but take in the whole panorama in a glance. Then I take the time to see the details, and get an inkling of what it means to "drink nectar through the eyes."

I like to listen to *bhajan*s glorifying Srila Prabhupada. I heard one song that praised his preaching and the many qualities that make him dear to Krishna. I heard another that was filled with the names of Jagannatha, Balarama, and Subhadra. While I bathed Radha-Govinda and wiped Their forms dry with a soft tissue, I heard the poetry of *Vidagdha-madhava*. The section was describing how Radha overcame the obstacles in

Her approach to Kana. Krishna was regretting that He had not embraced Her today. Paurnamasi joked with Him, then arranged for radha and Krishna to meet.

Later, I heard Srila Prabhupada say that we're each small *iSvaras*, but we're also controlled. Only Krishna is not controlled by others. The purpose of the living force is to bring the mind back to Krishna's lotus feet. Srila Prabhupada cited a scholar, who said that we don't have to worship Krishna but the spirit within Krishna. People like that scholar think of Krishna as an ordinary person with a material body. Of course, we do not accept this opinion. Krishna's form is *sat-cit-ananda*. One who knows Krishna goes back to Godhead and does not have to return to this world of birth and death.

When the tape recorder or typewriter stops, if you listen, you can hear the rain in the dark night. And the clock. This is a peaceful shelter. I could go to bed and sleep, but wakefulness is better. Life is about engaging in devotional service, and allowing everything around us "the sound of the rain, the dark night "to remind us of Him. What else can we do with our mind and senses? And for me, I like to weave that into words.

Paurnamasi says His flute pastimes are charming. Madhumangala commented that she had only mentioned the flute pastimes, when "Just this morning, I saw my friend steal the *gopis'* garments." Krishna looks at Madhumangala with knitted eyebrows; He doesn't want His activities revealed. "O friend, I speak only the truth." His devotees embarrass Him, and they please Him.

Srila Prabhupada said that people don't really know Krishna. It is not enough to know only that He was born in Kamsa's prison house. That knowledge is nice, but we must know Krishna *intattvata*, in truth. Krishna's life is not the life of a great human being. His pastimes are the activities of the cause of all causes. He comes into this world not as a created being, even though He accepts human form, but as the spirit within all. Foolish persons are bewildered when they hear about Krishna. They can't accommodate the elephant on a dish. That is, they cannot understand how the greatest can enter this small material world and appear to be contained by it.

So don't forget Krishna. The time factor will destroy all, and we will be left only with our deeds and how they have impressed our consciousness. That's what karma is about. Do we want to return as a powerful tiger? What next body will help us enjoy matter the best? A disciple asked, "How will I meet up with you in the next life?" Just trust that it will happen, and work for purity in your life and in our exchanges. And remember, Hare Krishna comes straight from Krishnaloka.

Standing in a Hare Krishna kitchen with Yamuna-devi's cookbook, he makes a concoction.

Madhu will be back today to tell me of the progress on the house in Wicklow. Then we'll decide when to move in.

I have just a few more hours of this special quiet before the phone is plugged in again and I hear his hearty laughter, the door slamming behind him.

A breakfast of apple and pear, yogurt and honey, raisins and few old cashews from India. I just want to say that Srila Prabhupada, looks handsome in shades of pink and saffron, the textures of wool and cotton, crocheted and sewn. I just want to say I'm the servant of his servant a hundred times removed. I don't aspire to become God or even Prabhupada. I simply want to serve. I just wanted to tell you that.

"Til human voices wake us and we drown," cling to the sound of the holy name.

* * *

Sages Sort It Out
& Tip tip he was willing the chatter
a foolish man wanted to take his time
but when he turned to play
his music his pleasure was lost "
absorbed in the work he was
made for. It's like that "
when I get a pat on
the back and get lost in
a riffraff you
say I was made for this
although I never skipped school.
This is obviously a man unripe
in *bhakti* prevented by
his pains.

* * *

A woman said she was a quark in
a past life and now lives two lives at once
but I told her to let it go
let yourself go
and become detached from what you were
and what you think you must become.
The ink spurts out like black blood when I talk.
That's how I flow.

* * *

Clap, clap, now sit down
you clown who can't even figure out
why he has a body so delicate
it breaks down and grows grotesque old
one that can be put into the most awkward condition
of howling pain and pleasure from the same
bones and nerves.

* * *

We really ought to hear from
sages who can sort that one out. *They* say the body
comes from wrong desire and that
God really wants us to return to our spiritual body
His servant and better dancer.

What I want to ask those sages
is, "Can we who ache serve?" "

* * *

8:47 a.m.

It's like spring today. At dawn I happened to be standing in the bathroom, and I heard many songbirds. I refrained from walking this morning because there seems to be a cause and effect connection between the morning walk and the morning headache. I'll have to be satisfied with watching the outdoors from here.

Anticipating the sound of the van and Madhu returning. Silver-white sky, rain-gray clouds high over head.

I just read *Caitanya-caritamṛta* to prepare for tomorrow's class. I'll definitely take a pill before I have to start if I feel shaky. Otherwise, I'll have to cancel again. This next section covers the rejection of Ramananda Raya's third and fourth proposals, acceptance of his fifth proposal (supported by the *jnane preyasa* verse), then the two verses Ramananda Raya composed to describe regulative and spontaneous devotional service. He says we need hunger, greed, to reach spontaneous love of God. I'm prepared to lecture, or perhaps I can send the lecture-man expansion of myself over there to give the rehearsed speech.

* * *

10:54 a.m.

Motor driven saw. It's still cold. Where are we? You can't love the air or sky, Srila Prabhupada said. Listening for the deep guttural sound of the Ford van. One of the rowboats has only one oar; the devotees have to face the boat backwards to paddle across the strait. Cc. ASraya "I'm getting through it. Hare Krishna.

* * *

12:18 p.m.

Get serious. Don't come back. Srila Prabhupada says people don't know and don't want to hear that. They banned *Bhagavad-gita* in some places. But the members of the Krishna consciousness movement are gaining ground. People take it easy, live only to eat and have sex, and are not serious about the purpose of their lives. Human life provides such a rare opportunity to improve ourselves toward a better destination in the next life. It also provides the doorway to the lower species, where there is no scope to understand life's purpose. People simply don't believe there is a next life.

* * *

My Krishna is golden and He holds a flute. Radha stands beside Him. Yes, Krishna is *Syama*, but the *murti* is golden (brass). Do I want a blue *murti*? O Krishna, be as golden as Lord Caitanya or as *Syama* as You like, but please make Yourself visible to me.

* * *

2:24 p.m.

Forgot to bring a tape recorder to the shed, so I can't tape myself reading *Bhagavad-gita* aloud.

I like the story behind *Cc. ASraya*: this guy's got only a few days left before he travels, and he realizes he cannot live always intensely absorbed in *sastra*. But he plugs away through those last days to finish the *Antya-lila*. I'm still doing that.

And when I write, I'm no longer like Rilke, waiting and gestating for something perfect to emerge. I just pick up my pen and go. It's not forced or hasty or jotted; it's joy. That's all. The end product? Myself at the time of death.

* * *

Saturday Sat-Song

& You can't write so many songs you've got
to get the exact right sound, I know
it can be done.

And please stop clapping when I sing
you can't keep time so good.

* * *

I'm not a bunk shooter or
a mad artist
you are bewildered
by where I'm coming from.

* * *

Separate the voices and find inside
a boy wan and worn a
crap shooter who pretends
he's a holy lad, guru,
pretends he cares, loves,
loves word pretends
he is alone
that's it "loves solitude.

* * *

You get mixed up sometimes.
I want things polished but
there are so many cartons and
belongings piling up in this room.

* * *

I want to be serious and God
conscious and Krishna-centered "
the one God imminent and
tell you so you are surprised I'm
so right on.

* * *

But here's the truth: cool air
coming through a shed window a
big fly buzzing me privately writing
at no Confession this Sat. evening
because (*sat-sanga*) I
want to keep it a secret my
privy.

* * *

Sunshine square on this page.
Krishna is the residence
country we live in
He meets us at death and
sustains us till then.
What else
is there to say? "

* * *

Field Work #7

Essay On Work And rambling

16:28

Work out whether you like it or not. A thick padded sandwich "we need appetite
and (*laulyam*)

patience and *utsaha*

and Prabhupada

and authorization and guts

and a GBC to tell us

and a group and a Deity

soul

to eat it.

* * *

Work has a purpose. Sell a product in a *karmi's* company, or work for the city. It's all racket unless it's done with devotion for God. I don't just mean the factory owners, but the workers each. Each is at a desk or somewhere working away for the group effort, a boss standing over. That fly in here, buzzing big "Srila Prabhupada says it works all day just to eat. A human has more facility for higher business. That's how it should be.

* * *

Take Srutadeva. He didn't have a job in the *karmi* sense, but he got by and met his needs. He was a learned *brahmana*, and Krishna loved him. Or BahulaSva: he was a king and devotee.

* * *

#2

Thanks for the essay on work, but you can't solve people's work problems with it.
Boss-worker relations,
pay, security, time off for
accidents and illness and profit
and competition and product sales . . .
No, I can't.

* * *

I work, but in this little Pukka
Pad notebook. I work. See? "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna."
I play too, as much as I work
although I sweat through both
and continue to grow older
more retired these years
than I used to be.

We talk to one another with question marks at the end, reaching up, then diving down to taste nectar.

* * *

Another topic: people working for Krishna will solve the problem of the division of labor and haves and have-nots, because everyone will be sankirtana. We will be happy when the temples are clean and everyone who works can have a pretty wife and non-belligerent teenagers.

The clouds work under the pressure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and the sun moves under His direction. I do too.

* * *

Sounds of work like tapping marble
with hammers, sanding it with the elbow
strong, tap, tap, *sweep* "
although in this country they use
horrible drills, jack hammers, the motor-driven
wood saws, pile drivers enough
to drive you crazy.
Work could sounds like
music looming, people at peace
producing pieces of goodness.

* * *

My own scratchy pen works through the receding stack of pages, and I feel the
drowse of work done peacefully under a master's gaze.
The work of *bhakti* "of finding it "
because for one who lacks devotion
work is said to be the means
but for the spontaneous fellow
it's pure *bhakti* pure
love, no drudgery of
a paid slave.

* * *

#3

Now tired of work under gray clouds. Just give me peace, Gray Cloud, Chief Tender
Doe-eyed, Black Hawk, Gray Mercy Cloud, Blue Sky, give me Gaurahari. We'll be
approaching Him soon enough
and I can't wait
to do that work.

* * *

For now, ruminate as the day darkens.
If I knew what you wanted I'd write it
fast a Krishna conscious message "everybody chant
God's name He's present in His
names. In this age
no other way is possible.

* * *

4:58 p.m.

Back from the shed. My notes for Madhu are all piling up; I thought he'd be back by now. What to do now? Another round? And read a little. I seem to be waiting for something. In an hour, this day will be over for me. The collie makes his rounds, ducks under the wire fence.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

Madhu returned. He said work is going slowly on the house because of rain. He got a fifty pound speeding ticket, and when he went to pay it, he got to preach to the sergeant, who mentioned something about us being a "cult." When they finished talking (M. explained the four rules and the sergeant said that Madhu had been "gambling" by speeding), the sergeant asked Madhu to pray for him! Now we have definitely decided to leave here on March 14. I'll stay at Daruka's house with the idea that after a week, I'll be able to move into the other house. (What to call it? Don't call it mine).

March 8, 1 a.m.

Stayed in bed an extra forty-five minutes. Dreamt of being in the Far East (China-Japan) with Bhurijana Prabhu and his wife. Something about Oriental ways being taken over by Western culture in a last attempt to salvage them for Krishna consciousness.

* * *

3:25 a.m.

From rainier Maria Rilke's Letters To A Young Poet

"A work of art is good if it has sprung from necessity. In this nature of origin lies the judgment of it: There is no other."

Rilke's statement asking the artist, "This above all "ask yourself in the stillest hour of your night: *Must* I write? Dive into yourself for a deep answer. And if this should be affirmative, if you may meet this earnest question with a strong and simple '*I must*,' then build your life according to this necessity; your life even into its most indifferent and slightest hour must be a sign of this urge and a testimony to it."

I liked this statement. It gives me confidence that writing is my service and that it is not material or separate from my self-offering to Krishna.

* * *

Then this famous statement, which I find meaningful in my own Krishna conscious service: "Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart, and try to love the *questions themselves*, like locked rooms and books, and like books that are written in a very fine foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. *Live* the

questions now. Perhaps you will gradually, without noticing it, live alone [some distant day into the answer."

Rilke is giving this advice to a young man, but even at sixty, I still ask myself questions such as, "Am I a devotee? Can I hope to go back to Godhead? Will Krishna be kind and reveal Himself to me? Am I pleasing my spiritual master?" and I still live with the questions unanswered. Is it because I would be unable to live the answers?

* * *

In a letter Rilke wrote to his wife, he said, "Everyone must find in his work the center of his life and thence be able to grow out radically as far as may be. And no one else may watch him in the process . . . For not even he himself may do that. There is a kind of cleanness and virginity in it, in this looking away from one's self; it is as though one were drawing, one's gaze, bound to the object, in-woven with Nature, while one's hand goes on in its own way . . . "

* * *

4:40 a.m.

Krishna wears a gold turban, and both He and Radha wear pink with peacock patterns and gold trimmed dresses. Yes, it is Sunday again. I listened as much as I could to Krishna and Radha, Krishna and Candravali, Madhumangala, Lalita and Padma. Then I turned it off. I couldn't take more in. I am glad I did the basic *puja* and can now sit back for awhile. I need to take care so I can get through the morning and make it to the temple at 8:15 a.m.

What will I put in the moving cartons? Dry art materials "that is, everything but the liquid paints; drawing papers, and a will to work at least in the A4 or A5 size. Krishna allows me to move my hand. It is remarkable to me that artists generally don't concentrate on preparing their souls for meeting God at the end, but instead concentrate on using His inspiration. They are mainly concerned with leaving art here in this world for posterity. Their desire to uplift others is nice, but their methods and reasons are beside the point. Most artists say that preachers are too direct, too blunt, and that they actually turn people away from seeing the beauty that is in this world for what it is. But what is it? To help someone know exactly what is and where it comes from is real help.

To live a life fixed on the point in *Bhagavad-gita* that the soul must transmigrate soon enough, and it will suffer for its attachments in the modes of passion and ignorance. Never avoid the absolute truth, so clearly given in the Vedic literature. Especially never avoid Bhagavan Sri Krishna.

Devotee artists want their writing or drawing to come to that point. They may have to pass through periods where they honestly have to assert that Krishna is not standing before them in His threefold bending form. They may have to learn to feel separation. And they may want Krishna to appear in their art in an organic, natural way, not forced or contrived. The point for them is to give themselves to the process of evoking Krishna, to give their hearts to that, and to share their yearning.

Listen to Rupa Gosvami:

"O Krishna, O Padma, this grove of *kadamba* trees is very fragrant. Maybe the master of the *gopis* was recently here. O Krishna, You are like a bumblebee drinking the nectar and then flying away, going from one *gopi* to another."

Madhumangala denies that charge. "My noble Friend is . . . "

Just hear the music and allow its phrases to move through your mind and heart, even if you cannot fully grasp their significance.

"O my Friend, I thought that You wanted to see Candravali. Therefore, I brought her here." Madhumangala had made a mistake. Krishna wanted Radha. When Candravali arrives, He says "Radha," and she becomes filled with jealous anger.

"O Candravali, you are so beautiful."

"Oh, I'm offending You," Candravali responds. "Now I shall leave."

But Krishna is tricky. We hear what He is thinking.

Hare Krishna, Radha and Krishna. He loves Her more than any other.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

Daffodils blooming on the island. A frost knocked some of them over, but winter is over. I spoke up to the *jnane preyasam* verse and pumped out replies to the queries. This is my last Cc. class for the residents at Inis rath. I'll be gone before next Sunday. It is a beautiful place, this island and its mainland Geaglum, wrapped as it is in the little struggling world of devotees attempting to perform devotional service. The class was on perfection and how to achieve it. As I left the quay, talking with Manu and others, I said we have the best thing in the world to give others. We shouldn't stop giving it even if ISKCON is bogged down or we are bogged down or we appear insignificant in Kali-yuga. Follow Prabhupada in that regard. He never gave up. Then full of the preaching spirit, I bid good-bye to my little audience and stepped into the rowboat. Now, my chest expanded, I hope I don't get a headache.

* * *

2:24 p.m.

"They are working hard on your house. I hope you like it . . . I'm going door-to-door to all the shops in Ireland, selling Srila Prabhupada's books. HarikeSa Maharaja sankirtana and take *prasadam* together."

Got a song, old-timer? I'm neither a temple devotee nor a door-to-door salesman. I'm in the rear *Sannyasi* department. But I submit an annual report. "Lord Caitanya's moon is rising/ and it isn't a bit surprising/ that they're dancing in the streets."

Nervously grip the edge of the note pad, assert yourself. She said, "Psychologists say be your own friend "" and she's going to use that as a springboard to say Krishna is our best friend. In class today, someone asked, "Should we analyze ourselves, or just perform *sadhana-bhakti*?"

Yes, analyze, but according to what? Shall we analyze the body according to a particular system of medicine? Should we psychoanalyze ourselves according to Freud and Jung's theories? Analyze yourself according to the explanations of the science of *bhakti*. Where are you on the path and how can you progress?

I did all right, man. I'm no HarikeSa Maharaja, but I did all right. And I admit when I'm stumped. White Cloud, that's me. Chief White Cloud, with few worldly burdens.

Srila Prabhupada wanted us to be simultaneously white clouds but dark with the rain of mercy. Light of this world, but heavy with *sankirtana*. Pour it on the people.

* * *

Field Work #8

Going Off Just A Little

20 minutes

My hand shaking I

begin. It's 3:30 in the afternoon, and

I have been working

all day an

honest John. This is my report.

The report? The shed is darkening quick but

I'll have enough time to let you in. Perhaps I'll even report in two parts, because when a man is questing, he might have more to get around than a man who is not; it might take longer to say, and the method of saying it might be more roundabout.

Krishna says, "I am the ritual and the herb. When you worship the demigods, you are actually worshipping Me, but not directly or properly." Those words contain the gorgeous sound of work.

Oh, don't poeticize, old soldier. Just say, "Krishna, Krishna," and let your heart skip a beat. Don't be alone, but be with your master. Pray to God. Give up anger and turbulence. Or, just be!

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna/ things are cracking up.

Just look at the dandelions "someone has knocked them over.

Is there peace anywhere?

Halloween kids look in windows

and there I am, hard at work.

Did you know we work daily, even when we try to get out of work?

* * *

A man can only scream so much even
when he detonates all bombs and commits his genocide "
he can only ruin himself and a few others
then finally bow to the Supreme
Control. Better he had lined up in uniform
and learned to say the prescribed words
handed down from master to disciple.
In other words, we should all live straight
in Krishna consciousness
lecture on Cc.
and make a beeline

to the master's feet

* * *

because whatever goes in
must come out
somehow. O Krishna.

I know this isn't very coherent. I seek permission to find the truth contained herein.

* * *

#2

Here it is: I'm lost with these people who disregard structure and who believe in free time/ but I can't get hold of it no-how.

Well, good, 'cause we're no *karmis* seeking on our own. We have a tradition to uphold.

* * *

"Go! Go to Radha!" said Candravali, since He had uttered Radha's name. Krishna told her not to be angry, that she had misunderstood His meaning.

* * *

It's getting darker.

I desire that those words make a mark on my heart.

I know she's waiting for me to make sense. I can, sure, in a minute.

Srila Prabhupada said the opposite: I can write *Srimad-Bhagavatam* real quick, but I have to think how to make it understandable for the mass of people. I say I can make it clear and studentlike, but I have to unscramble it on my own.

Just look at the Mayapur building. I always want to be close to the *chaukidars* and domestic animals there,

calypso "no,

I mean, Bengali

and under

control. It's because

I don't want you to put me into any categories.

* * *

I take no dares. I'm afraid of *maya*.

Happy Krishna consciousness!

Krishna consciousness will win me over in the end, and any good that comes from this will

be

on record.

* * *

5:03 p.m.

I finished reading *Cc. ASraya*. It moved quickly at the end through the last chapter of *Caitanya-caritamrta*. We didn't discover whether the note-taker was going to travel in his van or stay a proclaimed invalid at Geaglum-Inis rath. All power to him, no matter what he decided, and all glories to Krishnadasa Kaviraja, Lord Caitanya and His ecstatic madness, and to Srila Prabhupada, who kindly presented *Caitanya-caritamrta* in English, taking time from his translation of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to do so.

Now I want to prepare my talk for Gaura-Purnima. Guests or weekend *sankirtana* devotees landing on the mainland after the Sunday feast, many wearing backpacks. The dog seems nervous. He's dirty, as if he's been wading through mud. Hooded crows flop around as if they own the place. Darker. M. made up some boxes for me, so I guess I might as well start packing.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:45 p.m.

Sri Krishna Caitanya. round out the day. People and me. Heart beat. Oh, and a trice or less. At any moment. He clutches. All his pages. Smoke rising. Solid as brick.

Join the master and go to Goloka. Mere words from this side. Who knows? Break the veil, cross over. I told them this morning, "You have all heard of the Viraja river, I'm sure." But what do we know of it? We know only court cases, *kirtanas*, the big parade, how today went, a man walking with a woman, the dog with a mad gleam in his eye, looking for a bird to land in "his" tree so he can chase it. That's his instinct day and night, his DNA, his karma. What's ours?

March 9, 12:10 a.m.

The announcement states, "Gaura-Purnima Lecture, 8:30 a.m., March 12." I am thinking of lecturing on the advent of Lord Caitanya, *Adi-lila*, Chapter Thirteen, but the chapter may go into too much chronology and early life background. It's supposed to be an initiation lecture, and I should also focus on Lord Caitanya and the holy name. I also want to play an excerpt from one of Srila Prabhupada's lectures, a section where he says Lord Caitanya has made surrender to Lord Krishna easier than Krishna made it Himself. He is more merciful.

Some verses to be quoted:

namo maha-vadanyaya . . .

Krishna varnam tvisam-Krishnam . . . (Bhag. 11.5.32, quoted in Cc. Adi 3.52)

vairagya-vidya nija-bhakti-yoga . . . (Madhya-lila 6.255)

Surely I can assemble, paraphrase, and quote from such verses and say what people want to hear, what is worth hearing. We need Lord Caitanya's mercy. He has both given us the easiest process by which we can attain Krishna and taught us this highest goal personally. Lord Caitanya distributed love of God freely when He was present, but that

same mercy is still available to us if we want it. He set it into motion, just as Krishna sets the universe into motion at the beginning of creation.

* * *

Every day is a struggle. I start out thinking I may be able to do "everything." By early morning, pain signals its arrival. Sometimes it simply signals but doesn't develop. On Thursday I have to give a lecture; on Saturday I'll travel to Wicklow. Will I make it? We'll see. I'll try to build up my strength.

I need to prepare for death, and I aspire to think of the highest goal, *but realistically*, every day I need to cope with my immediate condition. I *use* Krishna consciousness for that. I shouldn't be ashamed of such an application of whatever Krishna consciousness I've gained. Today, my energy will be dedicated to chanting the best rounds I can and to read or hear some *sastra*. That's also a way to think of Krishna in the ultimate sense "to get through this particular day. I don't know how else to do it. Each day, each hour "it's not quantity, but constancy, practice, evolution.

* * *

4:27 a.m.

Be lost swimming in *puja* consciousness while you hear Krishna explain to radha where He was all night through Srila Rupa Gosvami's poetry. I am unworthy to hear this, yet I am not listening with envy. I float in the simple duties of the *puja*, while the poetry reveals what is possible under Prabhupada's shelter. Hare Krishna. radha has stolen Krishna's flute. He accuses Her, but She protests to elderly Mukhara that She has never even stolen a twig from the Vrndavana forest.

"Then why are You smiling as You say so?" Krishna asks.

Later, He leaves with Madhumangala and describes Radha's two natures (contrary and pleasing). Both bewilder Him. His incarnations subordinate Themselves to Her.

Too much for a broken vessel like me? O Krishna, I pray to You for Your mercy. May I at least dress You both nicely. This morning I am a wealthy man. Krishna stayed up all night, and so did Radha, and now only before dawn do They meet. Enough.

On my way to the bathroom this morning I was able to see the moon for the first time in over a week. Now it is egg-shaped, and the moon-face open-mouthed, eyes hollow. It sure is cold out there. After, I was looking at the pictures on my altar "Panca-tattva, our recent *acaryas*, the Six Gosvamis. Then my mind drifted to Vincent Van Gogh. I used to read his letters. He was such a tormented man, one of the world's loneliest persons. Why did I include him in this morning's reveries? If I lived in India, I would be closer to the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. I think, though, I would still remember Van Gogh's lust for life and art. I would use his energy and his example in my preaching. But right now I have petered out. I'm like a garden hose with a knot in it. The tighter you pull it, the less water you get. Or like grass in the dark "the brilliant green becomes obscured. Hare Krishna. O master, the glow of dark nights and loud fights, of words allowed to come, to repeat themselves "to sankirtana. Because the Lord was personally delivering the *dharma*, it is enriched with love of Krishna. We can accept it in this form and age, and derive the highest benefit. But we have to accept it despite the fact that we don't see the pure saints

described in *Caitanya-caritamṛta*, we see each other and all our faults. We hear the temples have no heat or good management. We hear other things too "the crack of a tennis ball hitting the racket in the player's hand, the wind playing with the rain, and we thank Krishna, thank Radha, for Their munificence in appearing as Lord Caitanya. He carries Her golden complexion. They want us to return to Them. Gaurahari has come to give us the path back to Godhead, to purify our ears so that no matter what we hear, we hear only Krishna.(skip)Heart Is A Melody& The tiger loosedthe swan ran through the water.He's good with song his heart is melody.(skip)Please release me from the bonds of sleep I don't need. I want to sing in my own God-given tone that Krishna is the one and only.(skip)Give me time on a radio show and I'll glorify Krishna as neatly as I heard a Christian do it the other day but these countries think we are cultists. We have to fight back. Madhu

does it cheerfully
and is satisfied to
win someone, just one person
in a talk. I can too,
but tend to feel the burden
of it.

* * *

Instead I feel the trauma
of society's opinion "me, a cultist?
Alienated. Alas.
Poor Rilke, we knew him well
Horatio
and the dawn birds who fly
as the cold moon sets
their rhythms set
to the alone melody
of Time.

* * *

Spring cabbage springs to
land while birds fly up
in Spain.
Their melody "let it carry us back
to Krishna to
Vraja
like
husky voices in
Vidagdha-madhava
although we're not fit to hear them "
let that nectar pour into our ears
to carry us.

* * *

Now everybody on beads sing same
chime. When, oh when
will we raise that song to
an actual call for
Lord Hari?
O Krishna, are You teasing me>
Withholding Your mercy?
Please at least never take
the beads from my
hand. "

* * *

9:23 a.m.

When you pack, you put part of yourself into the cartons. I am using thick cardboard boxes from Viking Office Supply. The fog is descending into my head, but I want to finish this job. I have boxes piled three high in the corner already. Forget intelligence: you are just a packer and lifter, a disassembler of your own life. Fortunately, it's portable and it doesn't seem to be the time of the final letting go. What do I have to fill so many boxes? Five volumes of Srila Prabhupada's letters, seven volumes of *Srila Prabhupada-lilamrta*, nine volumes of *Caitanya-caritamrta*, chestnuts, and paint pens I didn't remember I had.

"There are more songbirds this year," he says. "Did you notice?"

I didn't notice *more*. I did notice the beautiful etched quality the bare trees have when seen against morning mist.

I want to tell them on Gaura-Purnima that Lord Caitanya came to deliver us. That sounds hackneyed, but it's completely true.

Bhakta Joe wrote me a letter and included a crushed marigold from Ekacakra. He said the Deity there is the one into which Lord Nityananda merged when He left this world. The *pujari* told him, "This is a powerful Deity," and Bhakta Joe gave a hundred rupees ("I can use the mercy"). He needs mercy, he says, because his book distribution scores are down. While he was in India, the devotees invited him to leave his *yatra* and to join them in their services in some other place.

Lord Caitanya is a person. It's important that we all chant Hare Krishna. I'm tired. What's new? I plan to say all that. Then we can sit and hear from some enthusiastic senior devotees. I will then name Pradyumna Gaurahari dasa. It doesn't matter *so* much what I say on that day, as long as I mean it and it's strictly *parampara*.

Do I mean it?

I do. I'm earnest, and I mean that I'm tired. I need . . . want . . . I know I may not get much more in this lifetime.

Lord Caitanya induced people to chant the names of God when He appeared. I want to tell them that too. Then I'll analyze a few verses. He seems distant sometimes, but even so, we follow His instructions. We have to do the work to discover Him, not in a

romance or a dream, but in real life. Through hard work and surrender. And no complaining. In the beautiful mist outdoors and even the one in my head. It's all Krishna, because that's all there is.

* * *

11:42 a.m.

Why not improvise on Gaura-Purnima and speak on spiritual poverty? Be open to that, and trust that Lord Krishna will speak to my heart when I approach the audience to preach. I want to relieve myself of the "prepare a lecture" burden. Better I prepare through prayer, dependent on Lord Caitanya's mercy. After all, He is *audarya*.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

Voices. I was headed out to the shed with pain and didn't want to meet anyone. I wasn't given that opportunity. He told me he went to India with his family. Early each morning, he went off by himself on *parikrama*. He said he needed to be alone because he was carrying a mental burden. What could I say? I had no answers to his practical questions. I'm not a very practical man. I was interested, though, to hear of his *parikrama*.

But sorry,

sorry

they have to move.

It's a green-belt area and you can't have a house

if it can be seen from the lake

by rich men in powerboats.

My precious thoughts nurtured and carried out here in an egg basket " by the time I finally got to the shed, there was nothing left of them at all. Those voices got them.

"We will go to literally every store in Ireland" (selling books).

"The rath cart is ready and they gave it a test run."

"I'm moving."

"To Wicklow?"

"Yes."

"When."

"Can't say."

He's moving too. A pity.

* * *

Dig He's Audarya

& My pore self wants to be a friend but I got

nothing to offer but time

and don't know the art neither.

* * *

So a song. Mary was a lamb had
three legs so sat down
somehow glad she was alive
man and she was.

* * *

Tell me wiggle or wait the
forward move. Sonny, you are the man we
want to be with
if you could only tell us this one
thing:

* * *

that we should chant Hare Krishna.
Less and less people write to me.
Is it because I tell them, "Hey, kids, you are pretending
to be on a rowboat, but
wait'll you grow up
and your cat dies
and the daffodils get tramped
and you are left alone
to crack or sing this song
alone
and
Resigned."

* * *

Hey kids, bow down
to this great mountain
the trumpets
erstwhile.

* * *

Bow down to the emperor's young
wife and to stones on this path
to all
as servant of
guru as servant.

* * *

Kids, beware the irrelevant ditty

that'll keep you in this world.
All you need to become a pure devotee
is time.

* * *

Goatey had three legs and
gave a cross-eyed stereotyped
look. He didn't really want to be slaughtered
or sold
or even fed hay.
His eyes plead: Tell them not to.

* * *

Gopis only for pure souls
so clean yours of dirt
and chant Hare Krishna with pain or
without
(pills in pocket to help that cause).

* * *

Kids, rif and roll knots in wood
pop out while I'm gone
paint and rotting walls "do you
ache for me to return?
No?

* * *

Power boats waste so much fuel.
I'll vent my sorrow

* * *

tomorrow and four days hence "
another scene
no better than this one.
I'll have to work it out
as days go by
and the curtain hesitates to move
the breeze unsure
but surely we are closer
to grabbing at that rope of mercy.
Gaura-Purnima "dig He's *audarya*.

Try the sweet rice.
No sand "understand? "

* * *

Field Work #13
Work For Visnu
23 minutes

Work must be offered to Krishna, and that in itself is hard work. But don't worry, I won't tell the secrets of labor. I'm too smart in my overflowing simplicity, and feel the ecstasy of turbulent stamina. This John Henry is a steel-drivin' man.

Walter Reuther for the CIO-AFL. Ford goons. Carl Sandburg told it "he didn't want to be part of the army of misery, tried to sing to them.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada didn't hold work as sacred "work in hellish factories to build cars and enhance sex and intoxication. He wanted to know why we wanted to work so hard! After all, Krishna has already given us all our necessities, and we do not have to undergo so much trouble to enjoy them. Simply save time to chant Hare Krishna. That was Prabhupada's program. At other times he said we should offer Krishna the sweat of our brow "not the sweat, but the fruits attained by the sweat. Grind for a purpose, in other words, and don't be a *mudha*.

* * *

An artist can also become a slave, although he thinks he's free "a slave to an ideal, and to the mode of passion (creation), lost in his serious talking on art, as if it is synonymous with religion, putting in eighteen hours a day on a canvas or his horn playing, writing, rewriting, whipping that piece into shape. Most artists also like to walk, but few perform *yajna*
for Visnu
with devotion.

* * *

Now if in life, we put out to the nth degree, then return after death, would we say, "Why couldn't I have done something more gentle and sensible to give kindred spirits more of a definite idea of God's presence?" Would we find ourselves saying, "I'm sorry"?

But we would be left with our work, left out on a limb by it, a testimony to whatever we were and will become.

* * *

O Krishna, You gave us *Gita* and said this process would be easy "I mean, it's easy to be a pure devotee. All we have to do is give You a little water and maybe a leaf, and that would bring a marvelous result. Oh, and don't worship demigods. Be devoted to You alone. I tried, but I haven't succeeded. Still, I love You. That much I can say.

* * *

#2

We told you a tender moment of feeling toward God is the only work that counts. Other work binds us to this world. If your employer is demanding, John Henry, or even if he's not, if you work in a New Age work place where they want you to have your own space and produce in a constant but mellow mood, it's still *maya*. At least do something constructive with your coffee break.

Bif told me he takes out his *Krishna* book and reads how Krishna's flute enchants the *gopis*. They said, "If everyone else can enjoy Krishna's flute, why can't we?" To see that canopy of clouds form over Krishna and the cows!

* * *

When Bif's break was over, he stashed the book and went back to his furrowed brow. What *does* he do at work? He files reports. I used to file reports from interviews I had faked. Does Bif use a hammer or talk to the secretary. I type with ten mistakes per line and bruise the emerald bug.

Perhaps he assists the boss as gofer, or stands in for the *pujari* when he or she gets sick. Goes to the kitchen to cut veggies, or helps the book distributors get ready to go out "washes the van, the pots, repairs the drum, assists the one who hands out priorities. Does Bif give lectures to Chinese *bhaktas*? Do they provide him a translator?

O Sats, sweat it out. Air that sleeping bag, and if no one is looking, sneak in a few lines in this diary. And don't forget to wind that clock.

This sentence is work.

A letter: "Dear Bruce, how are you?"

"Yes, you may worship Radha-Krishna Deities. Don't put them away. No, *tulasis* cannot be sown in beds."

I ply my trade calling, "Duty, duty," the whole time. I also jingle keys. Yes, work to save the fallen souls and be yourself redeemed.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:40 p.m.

Don't tell us everything, just say Madhava dasa is rowing across the lake. He's fifteen years old and says he has doubts about Krishna consciousness. He doesn't like much the program.

The water is an olive drab; reminds me of the Tuscarora. The strait is wide and still, like that creek at Gita-nagari (except after the rains), and both sides are rimmed with

golden grasses. It almost looks like corn stubble "I can't quite describe it, but it's beautiful. Piles of clouds in the sky, and once again I am making a good-bye. It's as if I never really leave for good. I always come back at least to visit the old haunts. I still go to the Philadelphia temple, to Gita-nagari, to Mayapur, to Vrndavana, and one of these days will be my final exit. So goodnight, Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are.

"Handsome young boy." That's what they call Krishna sometimes, or, "O noble boy." Sometimes they call Him a rake. He's innocent, He's omniscient, He can do whatever He likes and never be tainted by sin.

The tall poet from Belfast "that's who was in the boat, not Madhava dasa. Hare Krishna. I chanted on Pradyumna's beads, thought of stuff. That's it for today.

March 10, 12:15 a.m.

I invited myself to improvise the lecture on Gaura-Purnima morning, but I just located the wonderful prayers Sakhira Malika and Dabhir Khas uttered before Lord Caitanya at Ramakeli in Cc.*Madhya* 1.184 . I'd like to read them to the devotees, then ask them to imagine that we have come along with the brothers to both hear their prayers and accept them as our own. In this way I hope to invoke Lord Caitanya' presence. Lord Caitanya is known for and by His mercy. Then I'll tell of the second time Rupa met Lord Caitanya at Prayaga after Lord Caitanya had visited Vrndavana. There Rupa prayed *namo maha-vadanyaya*. While describing that verse, I could also quote the other verses I have already selected. Yes, it would be nice to improvise "and I can do it within this framework of glorifying the Lord as He who delivered the fallen by giving His holy name.

Also, I can read the verse describing how Lord Caitanya is worshiped by engagement in *sankirtana* (Cc. *Adi* 3 77.81).

I want to add a personal request that devotees not ruin everything we have been given by dissension. Disagreement is inevitable because we are all individuals, and Srila Prabhupada compared it to disagreements among loyal government servants. Although they see things differently, they have the country's needs at heart, and are all dedicated to protecting it. Don't disrupt the lives of others. Live peacefully.

* * *

3:20 a.m.

Once again I got the mail cleared from the in-basket, and once again, a mail pack is about to be forwarded from America.

Move on in the meantime, and breathe deep as you load your boxes. I am so grateful that these are different days, and I no longer am forced or obliged to serve motivated authorities, am no longer burning the candle at both ends. Is this the secondary gain of chronic pain? I'm afraid so. Now chant and read, and especially, write. Worship Radha-Govinda. Hear your spiritual master speak. Fight doubts. Sing poems. Pray things may continue without uproar or confusion, violence, hate, or collapse. As long as possible. Keep alive in that real sense. Respond to the waves of time, because Krishna, as Providence, is writing an interesting script for each of us.

* * *

Swamis worship Radha
with Krishna, and serve in Their
amorous pastimes, soothe,
make sense control that way
in disciplined measure.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Yes, I will go and fetch Them. He exits. The monkey Kattaki steals the flute, or rather, Jatila throws it at the monkey, who then runs off with it. Vrnda-devi accepts it from the monkey and gives it to Radha. One of the *gopis* then disguises herself as Radha. News circulates that Radha has gone to worship the sun-god, under Abhimanyu's order. Wonderful! Krishna will turn that to His advantage.

They say going to Navadvipa is an important way to serve Lord Caitanya. I heard a swami told the ISKCON devotees on Govardhana *parikrama* to close their eyes and visualize Krishna's pastimes taking place. The devotees did it with pleasure, children too. Then let me close my eyes here and transport myself to Navadvipa. I promise not to get annoyed if the *panda* doesn't seem to know what he's talking about. Yes, my spirit is willing to take this walk, but there never seems to be enough time to do everything I'd like to do. At least let me chant.

* * *

I'm just a few feet away from my altar, but I cannot see the sweet faces of Radha-Govinda. Srila Prabhupada I can see, because he is a little bigger. I have to come closer to see Krishna shining sweet, and Radha's demure beauty. Hare Krishna.

Wind rattles at door. Is there some other cause to that noise? The clock ticking. Soon M. will awaken, then I'll hear the morning's first birds.

The devotees are working hard to make their participation in the parade a success. It will be seen by hundreds of thousands of people, and they also have to please the parade judges, who disliked last year's sloppy and even rowdy performance. No prams, they said, no hangers-on in boots to bring up the rear, no disorderly gangs. They suspect we come to take advantage of the parade so we can preach, that we are not interested in anything more than that. We have promised to improve. Devotees will also come from England to help. Devotees who don't get along with one another will choreograph the performance.

Slowing down. He walks and He does not walk. He is far away, but very near. He doesn't walk, but He outpaces all others running. This is the inconceivable nature of the Supreme. The scriptures tell us that He's a person. The Supreme and all His parts are spirit, eternally existing. Krishna is the Supreme Soul. Simply accept this and become a perfect theist.

Chant Hare Krishna and be the best Vedantist. read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* and become a strong man (or woman). Take part

in *sankirtana* and worship Lord Caitanya. And keep chanting throughout.
Offer *tulasi* leaves at Their feet and answer questions. Wait to be alone and talk.

* * *

When Surrounded By The Influence of Kali-yuga
& I have to resist the bad guys
make for the good
food, a hooded monk.

* * *

I am not going to be downed by fellows
who waste time in grungy ways.
All this I declared
at initiation.

* * *

Remember the time we went to the park with the Swami?
We sang a song sang
our hearts out.
Hare Krishna "was that Krishna we felt?
Yes, He was there
although I know these are complicated
post-modern times
and that's difficult to believe.

* * *

So let's not discuss it just
give out *halava* and orange juice
yogurt and a light lecture
followed by a guy playing banjo
and a girl with lipstick
dancing something Bharata.
India "exotic, ya.

* * *

Plain oatmeal matching my spirits this morning
as I fight against the sands of Kali-yuga.

* * *

Tubas march in their own ways.
It doesn't matter how because
they're not in our parade.
Krishna chant you
people ought to be nonviolent
but to tell us all is *illusion*
how can we rise to such truth?

* * *

#2

We had to put up with a judge and
merchant and long queues of cars' headlights
but fortunately there were young preachers
among us and they got out and went up to
each car a crazy person inside
gave out books and
food for life.
Some were too crazy
they ridiculed the devotees
as prudes or fanatics
or they wanted to crush them.
Their advisor called them back
to the temple when they could insist on dancing
their two-step dance
and chant
to appeal to *that* crowd
because
we have our ways. "

* * *

8:50 a.m.

Navadvipa-dhama is chief among *tirthas*. If we simply remember the holy *dhama* of Navadvipa, we will receive the benefit of visiting all *tirthas*. The holy *dhama* can be seen in meditation, dreams, or with the naked eye. Having visited Mayapur just once, we will attain liberation.

Hearing this I thought, "I don't have to go to India again and put up with all that travel, the many meetings, the mosquitoes, the laws, the foreignness, the austerity." I simply have to overcome my bodily designation and renounce any speculation I may have about the *dhama*.

Hmm . . . but that's not so easy. I seem to remain an American "poet" wherever I go, and a complainer of headaches, an ISKCON leftover. My mind fiercely refuses to accept what I see for what it is. Even if I manage to accept things theoretically, I don't taste

what a submissive, pure devotee tastes when he hears the scriptures or from devotees speaking Gaura's *lila*.

Still, let me try again, from here this time, from my armchair. Let me read Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Navadvipa Mahatmya*. He writes, "Whoever walks around the 6 - 8 miles of Gauda-mandala will quickly obtain the treasure of Gaura *prema*." Walk with your own bare feet. No proxy can take the walk for you. The thorns have to enter *your* feet, the pain your mind and head. Then? I will get no mercy this year or ever if I don't go back. I've certainly performed many austerities in that *dhama*, spent *hours* at GBC meetings, committed my mistakes in the *dhama* and suffered for them. I have also seen Srila Prabhupada in Mayapur, was even his servant during 1973 - 74. I'm sure I have received some benefit from those austerities. Only humility can increase their value.

Navadvipa-dhama. I can't do *parikrama* even by reading this book "it's too late to cram it all in in two days. Navadvipa-parikrama takes nine days, and climaxes on Gaura-Purnima. Still, something is better than nothing.

* * *

Remember ? You were in the bathroom drying off, and Srila Prabhupada was saying, "*Amanina manadena . . . a maha-bhagavata* devotee offers respect to all other living entities but doesn't seek respect for himself."

* * *

In *Navadvipa-mahatmya*, Bhaktivinoda Thakura can see what is going on in the future and in the minds of persons such as Lord Nityananda. He tells us that Jiva Gosvami went to receive Lord Nityananda's blessings in Navadvipa. Lord Nityananda ordered him "saying it was Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's order "to go first to study *Vedanta-sutra* from Madhusudana Vacaspati in Varanasi, then join rupa and Sanatana in Vrndavana. There, he should write books glorifying pure devotional service to radha-Krishna, and establish that the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is the natural commentary on *Vedanta-sutra*. Then Jiva Gosvami asked Lord Nityananda to reveal to him the nature of Navadvipa-dhama.

Lord Nityananda replied that Navadvipa is eternally revealed in Krishnaloka. Krishnaloka exists in two states of emotion, *madhurya* and *audarya*. *Audarya* is munificence "we say generosity, forgiveness of offenses, distribution of mercy. "And that place where *audarya* is eternally predominant is called Navadvipa in the *Vedas*."

Jiva asked Lord Nityananda to take him on Navadvipa *parikrama*. The first place they saw was Mayapur, Antaradvipa. I too have been there, and to the Yoga-pitha, the houses of Lord Caitanya's associates, Srivasa's courtyard, Advaita Acarya's house, other sacred places, the holy Ganges. It is nice to hear and remember those days, like receiving warm sunshine on a misty Irish day.

Lord Nityananda spoke of a time when Mayapur's holy sites would be covered by the Ganges, then again would become uncovered and temples built. "One exceedingly wonderful temple will appear from which Gauranga's eternal service will be preached everywhere." All glories to the ISKCON devotees who have brought this about.

Jiva asked Lord Nityananda how Antardvipa got its name. Lord Nityananda told him how Lord Brahma felt bad that he had been so proud as to have misjudged Lord Krishna's *lila* in Vrndavana. Brahma went to Nadia to perform austerities. Lord Caitanya appeared to him and granted him permission to appear in His *lila* as a humble personage (Srila Haridasa Thakura). Prideless, he would chant 300,000 names daily, and would pass away in Lord Caitanya's presence.

Tell me more. I feel the cleansing.

* * *

12:20 p.m.

I can't seem to read *Navadvipa Mahatmya* in just any spare moment. It's so rich in detail and *lila*. The details are esoteric; not found in other scriptures. To believe it seriously and to receive it meaningfully requires peak perception. I don't like to hear tons of far-out *lilas* even when I go on *parikramas*. Few of them were given to us by Srila Prabhupada. When I get a constant deluge of them, it makes me feel restless.

Everyone, great incarnations and devotees of Satya-yuga, etc., Bhagiratha, Prthu Maharaja, Goddess Parvati, etc. came to Nadia to have *darSana* of Gauranga. On the back page of the *Navadvipa Mahatmya* edition I have, there is a photo of a long stream of ISKCON devotees walking barefoot from ISKCON Caitanya Chandrodaya Mandira to the Yoga-Pitha. They visit, then most return to their *prabhu-datta-deSa* and their lives and problems. How do we actually benefit from our stay in the *dhama*? Greatly, immeasurably, and imperceptibly. Sometimes so imperceptibly that we don't appear to have changed at all.

* * *

Swami waiting for lunch
with teeth glued in
amanina manadena
a devotee should be
humble.

Even those of us who are not *maha-bhagavatas*.

They think like that. The *swami* on *parikrama* said we should close our eyes. I am working hard to open them. India is a good place to describe our miseries at failing to have achieved *bhava*. Ireland is more peaceful in that regard. Srila Prabhupada says the Krishna consciousness movement is running simply on *utsaha*. His disciples follow him to India or stay in the West simply on enthusiasm.

* * *

2:18 p.m.

Head pressure "like a weather front moving in. "This may be the last time ever," r. writes to me, thinking I won't come back to Inis rath. But I intend to. rain splashed. Met no one on my way out to the shed, although the collie trailed me, a quiet companion who minds his business.

Sound of rain another kind of companion. Gave up the idea of cramming *Navadvipa Mahatmya*.

Dear *Bhagavad-gita*, let me speak a little. Lord Krishna is speaking in You, and now may He speak through me?

V. writes, "I am a man, I don't want to be mushy in expressing myself to you." Then he says he's in a cocoon. Either he should live content, or . . . get out? I should know what's best for him, right?

I write to young Mr. Kappus to be alone, accept the difficult, write poems from the heart, and know solitude and patience.

Krishna, *sadhus, sastra* "we Vaisnavas establish clear links of communication.

* * *

Insist On God

& As rain splashes I hope I can find a voice.

Is that like climbing into a railway car and finding a seat?

Some words earnest through the covering, words
like rain.

* * *

Dark theaters are good
places for the lonely women
men dogs and mice of this world.
(You can't say a dust ball is lonely
although it is alone, personified, and pitiful.)

* * *

O Krishna, I remember You
and my self "Krishna
conscious soul stuff.

* * *

I remember in time that I
am a representative of God "
always a missionary "even in
these fatally insular
parochial poems.

* * *

People don't care one way or
another and die out after their best
efforts to become eternal "if there

is such a thing "Socrates, Pascal, Descarte
Aquinas, Joyce, Pirandello, the list
is aimless and growing.
But love of God is all
He'll accept.

* * *

#2
Ink finger roundelay
my Lord "I'm never bored
but only want
to improve my verse.
The *sastras* say women are broad
"a broad expanse
plush border
I hesitate to speak
from experience.
O Krishna, You sure creamed
Dhenuka
and created a panorama
of screeching asses.
You want to see it?
Love required.
So make your intention clear
while you're still alive. "

* * *

Night Notes, 5:35 p.m.

I cannot suddenly become an ecstatic lover of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Nityananda, or a great compassionate preacher-guru, or a fired-up worker in ISKCON. Nor can I seem to do more than I am doing.

It's always getting darker at this time of day. I'll go south to the republic of Ireland soon. Do I feel I'm in Northern Ireland and not in Navadvipa or Vrndavana? Sure. I also feel I'm in a room looking out, then looking down to a blank page. Hare Krishna. Searching for epiphanies "that's me.

Ease into a last night's notes with no reluctance. Tell them on the day after tomorrow that Lord Caitanya is *audarya*. I can talk about the qualification of feeling oneself unworthy, but even that we are unable to practice. Although, ironically, it is that inability that makes us qualified for Lord Caitanya's mercy. Just to feel a moment of true repentance. Now is the time to come out with it.

March 11, 12:07 a.m.

I am facing some stark choices. They make me think that moving to Wicklow and starting a new EJW will be an opportunity to improve myself. I really need to get down to the business of facing my oncoming death and the need to increase my consciousness of Krishna. Of course, I can't make any radical changes in my life; time has proven that. But on this zigzag path of truth, I can always work harder to make sure all my zigs and zags move me forward.

What are the stark choices? (1) I can take up a more *babaji* kind of life, accepting a deeper level of austerity, chanting more, hearing, cutting away anything that does not fall into these categories. (2) I can go on preaching through writing, developing the art of free expression, being honest, and making this my contribution to and sacrifice for the preaching mission. Of the two, the latter is more realistic and in keeping with my psychophysical nature. But I have to actually face the consequences of making that choice, and that's what makes any choice difficult. Like the world's great musicians, I would like to remain dedicated to my art right up until I'm cut down by death. Unlike the world's great musicians, I carry the burden to deliver Krishna's message through my expressions.

* * *

"If we do not take to devotional service in Krishna consciousness, we have to remain within this material world."

"Lord Caitanya is the Father and inaugurator of the *sankirtana* movement." Worship Him by *sankirtana* movement is the most glorious." (Cc. *Adi* 3.78, purport)

"I take shelter of Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is outwardly of a fair complexion but is inwardly Krishna Himself. In this age of Kali He displays His expansions (His *angas* and *upangas*) by performing congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 3.81)

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Jaya jagadiSa hare. Radha and Krishna come to me to be worshiped. They allow me to touch Them and dress Them. This is the facility of *arca-vigraha* worship. It is for beginners. They *sankirtana*. He fell unconscious a number of times in the presence of the ecstatic *avadhuta*, Lord Nityananda. Hare Krishna.

Subala disguised himself as radha, then when Jatila brought him into the *gopis'* company and accused him of improper association with Krishna, his disguise was revealed. Jatila's accusations were discredited, and she went away in defeat.

In Gaura *lila*, Narada preached to a king named Suvarnasena, who then attained *Krishna-prema* and love for Lord Caitanya. He *begged* for that benediction and it was granted. Later, he appeared in Lord Caitanya's pastimes as Buddhimanta Khan.

Who were we before? Who are we now? Who will we be in the future?

* * *

I am too tired to fetch wood and water, but keep going, even if chaos comes out. If you let the chaos swirl, you'll begin to see the pattern emerge "like the pattern of a snowflake, or the fractured look of frost on a window. There is no void in God's creation, and no real chaos. There's not even any real chaos in ISKCON. Life here is relatively pure, although the age of Kali sneaks in like a chill creeping down our hallways. You don't like the chill? run into the warm room of the holy name.

Madhumangala protects the honor of Krishna and speaks against the *gopis* when they get saucy with Krishna. Madhumangala is also interested in sweets. His mind turns to that mind-liberating *laddu*.

In the basement of P.S. #8. they served the kids hot lunches. It seemed to me only an unfortunate kid would eat there and not go home for lunch. You could smell oranges and soup and the unpleasant odor of institutional food. Kids had to sit at tables. I never examined closely what they had to eat. I was one of the kids who went home for lunch. Usually I ate Campbell's soup with ritz crackers, and maybe a sandwich. In high school I carried my lunch "always two sandwiches. No use recalling it now. Does it have any meaning in my life now? Think about Madhumangala with that *laddu*. Think of the sacred domain.

My Madhu is away today, and it's quiet here. You know the rest of the story already "although I am free of leprosy and other serious diseases, my head is in a vise.

* * *

Descent Of The Avatara

(Kali-yuga influences include influence of the *sankirtana* movement on the world. Where else did they hear of the *avatara*, the holy names, Lord Caitanya?)

* * *

& He came as Patita-pavana
and the two brothers at ramakeli said
there was no one as fallen
as themselves.

* * *

I'm tired of inane people
and maniacs. "All Bozos on the same bus."

But *everyone* is more or less crazy, we conditioned souls (not ISKCONites, of course).

No? Is not ISKCON too a mad house of bewildered careers and early childhood abuse, dysfunctional scimitars falling through the back door and us trying to quell the worst shocks with a dip into material science?

* * *

Lord Caitanya knows all about our craziness
the craziness
of our cult and others
of our cuts and deals
of our good and ill repute.

Then can we be relieved from sad times? "Avatara," he said, "please give me Your mercy."

In a shirtwaist waste no time
and stop blabbing "be a straight disciple
and change your name to Krishnadasa.

* * *

Avatara: "You are My eternal
servant

I accept you."

Fortunately, we are serious
and don't want to linger in bad noises
or voids. Sooner or later we too will
have to leave all false and/or temporary
stimulation
as in dreams.

Avatara: "Be prepared for tests of survival
narrowed down (as in a spelling bee)
until fewer and fewer tests bring
more and more ecstasy,
survival of the fittest
if we want to survive
death."

Please Krishna Avatara give me
mercy and intelligence
to tell of Your glories. "

* * *

The Presence of The Friend
& Krishna please be my
friend. There's no one but You and
You are all I need.

We each have You in our hearts
the dearest,
and all of us
are Yours.

* * *

Krishna, we share the promise
of surrender, worship, *kirtana* "
all offered to You "and Your taking us back
to where we belong.

* * *

Coming down as from stars the
cool moon almost full
it's cold out there "the moon's face
an empty O, eyes empty
but You assure me
with the knowledge and trust to accept
only You.

* * *

As a solitary lover of
Lord Krishna I aspire to know
from Him my own strength
His comfort, so I can
give Him to others. "

* * *

8:30 a.m.

One doesn't qualify at first to enter Radha-Krishna worship in Vrndavana, so one should serve Lord Caitanya and His devotees in Navadvipa. Eventually, *madhurya-rati* enters the heart and one will be eligible to live in Vrndavana and serve Radha-Krishna. Jiva Gosvami asked Lord Nityananda about persons living in Navadvipa who were not serving nicely. Lord Nityananda said they live on top of the *dhama's* covering "a covering composed of *maya* "and that prevents them from entering the eternal *dhama*.

Navadvipa Mahatmya ends with this statement: "By reading this book, Gauranga's devotees always earn the fruits of performing *parikrama*. And if one reads this book while doing *parikrama*, the fruits increase a hundredfold."

Living on top of the covering. I wonder how that translates in relation to places that are not in the *dhama*? Srila Prabhupada said that his devotees do not live in materialistic cities such as New York, London, or Los Angeles, but live in Vrndavana, when they live in the temple and serve Gaura-Nitai or Radha-Krishna twenty-four hours a day in pure, unmotivated consciousness. It's not necessary to live in a *dhama*, because "Wherever You are, that is Vrndavana." What *is* necessary is to live in the essence, no matter where you are.

A hooded crow caws and croaks. A man attempts to chant his fourteenth and fifteenth rounds, but keeps falling asleep while he moves the beads. Radha and Govinda are

effulgent, and wear purple and white patterned outfits with silver trim. Krishna holds His long silver flute and leans His arm on a crooked silver staff.

I used to carry a pole around Vrndavana. Sighing and breathing easy, I stay within a small circumference here in Geaglum "no walk, no Surya-namaskara exercises, no nothing "and wait to see what will develop. *Dhama*, faith, Lords, cynicism, intention, devotion . . . the words pass through me like the crows cawing, cutting to the quick. Sun filtering around silver clouds.

* * *

9:40 a.m.

In Navadvipa, there is no fault in overeating *prasadam*. If you die in Navadvipa, even accidentally, you attain pure devotion to the Lord. If you die while meditating in Varanasi, however, you achieve only impersonal liberation. If you spend just one day in Navadvipa, you receive the benefits of having spent many days at other *tirthas*.

Esoteric stories are given in the scriptures in hidden ways; Bhaktivinoda Thakura uncovers them in this book, describing the glories of Navadvipa and its intimate connection to the service of Radha and Krishna in eternal Vraja.

Ananta-Sesa wanted to worship Gauranga, and by Lord Visnu's grace he attained the form of Lord Nityananda. He composed a book called *Ananta-samhita*. Lord Siva once told the glories of Navadvipa and Gauranga to Parvati, but over time she forgot them. Hearing her lord chant "Gauranga!" in ecstasy, she wanted to know about Him. That led to the pastimes in a place called Simantadvipa, where Parvati placed the dust of Gauranga's feet on the part in her hair.

What else? Something about radhika and Her *gopis* building Navadvipa.

One approaches Vraja-Krishna and Radha by following the *gopis*, and one follows the *gopis* by chanting Lord Caitanya's names and serving Him in Navadvipa. He never leaves Navadvipa. Devotees who live and serve there are worshipable.

Blissful devotees perform the nine-day *parikrama*, then return to Mayapur on Gaura-Purnima.

Tomorrow I'll be able to relax more once the initiation has been performed. Hare Krishna.

* * *

9:43 a.m.

Hearing how Navadvipa was created by Radha and Her *sakhis* for Krishna's enjoyment, and how He went there as She played the flute, how He promised never to leave, and that devotees who serve Him in Navadvipa would ultimately become *sakhis*. He merged the forms of Radha and Krishna into Gaurahari, and Lalita and ViSakha descended in male forms to serve Him. It bewilders the mind.

Down here on this old sod, I know there's a spiritual heart covered but real. I pray for Krishna conscious taste.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Subdued by pain. Waiting for a sign. A simple Krishna conscious fellow "simplicity would be nice. Shall we go to the shed today? If I can get a little clearer, yes. I don't like to sit around doing nothing.

* * *

2:27 p.m.

Pressure on top of head, yet here I am in the shed. What choice do I have? It's not bad, never bad, to get out and do one's service. If I were to miss Goloka, or miss giving my spiritual master pleasure "but often we feel like failures in that regard. I'll talk about that tomorrow morning in the lecture, how we have failed and must be aware of it if we want to be open to receiving Lord Caitanya's mercy.

Do you mean failures attract Lord Caitanya? No, it's the *dainya*, but only if it's real. I don't know. Have I ever attracted Him to bless me? To simply be free of pretense, and to actually, deeply mean what you say. Sometimes we do that by doing the needful, and sometimes we have to find that platform by doing what we feel we want to do for Krishna. There are no hard and fast rules.

Go ahead, take the pill and relieve your head.

No, not yet, not yet. It's still mild enough. I can still tolerate it. It's good for me to feel tiny.

* * *

Give Him Your Best
& Mr. Smith had a quirk
let it work we're not
gonna quit
yukta-vairagya.
Blow steam for
Krishna? Look to the swan.

* * *

Don't give up earnest account
to worship in a church
especially the *mandira* of the
mind.

* * *

I said Lord Krishna wants the free
and doing as He likes
on a bike or car

as far as I can
chasing the *sankirtana*
van but when He asks me
"What do you want? How
do you want to serve Me?"
and I look within "for what?
Vocation "the best I know the
best I have and am "
I say I want to give Him me.

* * *

Train sounds through the mind
head cleared for action
body too "from those days
when I was young and was hampered
by stuff I'm free of now.

* * *

Krishna You sure spin us around.
Still, an earnest devotee gives his
very best for Your service.

* * *

I blow blues straight out of my head
let them shoot out like a bullet
drilling a hole clear through
to You.
I don't spend my time worrying
about this earth "just me and Krishna
my offering my
prayer
His mercy
"because this earth world is too
big for me to judge.

* * *

I know this dance is not
perfectly choreographed.
but sweet Lord Krishna, You guaranteed
Your word in *Bhagavad-gita* and
Prabhupada backs it up.
I can't lose

You. "

* * *

Field Work #11

Bless All Work And Workers

20 minutes

Workaday "maybe our last one. You mean "you might quit? What will you do if you leave this factory? Some guys work here through their seventies, you know, until they . . . die.

Not me. Maybe I'll retire on my pension to India, or go back to preach in that village in China where I grew up.

Maybe just live in a cottage. Work on my own to pay for it.

I'll never be idle, a daring old *sannyasi* like me with no income. Why, I can go door to door and preach, living on whatever comes. I'm not dependent on the workaday infrastructure, and I won't die without a nine-to-five.

* * *

He's compromising he's improvising he's
got a secret limit you can
figure out
if you try.
But Krishna is the center
and he lives in gratitude.

* * *

Lord, give me that fire *yajna*
om apavitra
give me the sense to speak on
Gaura-Purnima and ring the bell
perform *acmana* with water pure
give the speech (well prepared)
and to fast without that pain
that will erase any chance I have
to do the rest.

* * *

My work is to sweat over that fire to
make that effort to bring another soul
into the *parampara*
perform an ancient ceremony
and to be trusted and to trust.
All I know is what Srila Prabhupada gave me.

My work is to give it to others without ever getting tired
or losing taste
and to write home to the bone.

* * *

#2

He (Lord) gave us plenty of space
although life is so brief
and the choices clear:
Krishna or *maya*.
Even if we say "Krishna," He still
gives us time to show true colors
and to sift out how much we can do
for Him
or even want to.

* * *

To want to. To make an offering to the Lord of our hearts, without exaggerating our
own sweat and strain, to feel the sweetness, then to go in solitude and hope through
death's portal unrestrained.

We talk of Prabhupada's *vani*. Let's see you grasp it as if you are grasping the hand he
has offered you. With faith, guts, love, crying for God, and letting all else go.

* * *

Work? Feel love and just offer the broccoli and bread. Take a chance and be a *bhakta*.

I want the Lord to inspire me. Kick me He will, but I want to remember Him with
love and never fall down. Or just be pleasing, render Him service, chant Hare Krishna
Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Rama Rama even if I don't always conform to
Vedic rites.

They want to know what I am saying?

I'm tongue-tied stupid, but grateful to be in His care, "fragile and worn out," as people
say I am, but
in His care.

* * *

He caught all the ingredients the master gave most expertly
and played them back with a more primitive twist
but folks saw it was a suitable groove.

Each of us will have to take our turn, so please take a larger view of this.

I bless all workers and

bow at the feet of those who work to offer all their efforts to the Lord of sacrifice.

Their activities are consecrated.

* * *

Night Notes, 5:39 p.m.

I chanted Hare Krishna mantras in my mind while looking at the gray clouds moving over the island. I wanted to enter reality. My latest BTG essay spoke of the reality of the soul and God. We gain these understandings from *sastra*; what we experience only dimly. No, it's not dogma if it's experienced; it becomes reality. Whatever it is, my version of life and experience in Krishna consciousness "perhaps at some point we will see how much reality we actually missed. In the meantime, we look at clouds and hope.

"Are you afraid of reality?" an old friend once asked me.

There *is* a reality which I am unwilling or unable to face, and then there's the reality that we call life. I don't want to deny even the life reality, what I call "little life." It's my little connection to Krishna consciousness, all I have. I didn't mention that in the BTG article "just sankirtana movement coming down from Krishnaloka hasn't quite reached me yet, but as a preacher I proclaim it anyway. It's a relief to be more open here. There's not much value, I don't think, to simply reciting more *siddhanta*. We all know it already. To really slip the knife into the heart of ourselves and those we preach to, we will have to enter subjective experience and find the deeper reality.

Some devotees coming to attend the festival will probably arrive tonight. I'm having a good week health-wise compared to last week. A "good" day these days means staying indoors because a ten-minute walk might provoke a headache, but I can still read and write.

There's a faint rosiness in the clouds if you look into the gray. It means the sun has set. Savor the silence that hangs over the lake. Ah, there's the moon, suddenly pale in the sky, like a Eucharist wafer. Its face is tilted to the left and it's perfectly round. rising moon, I'm glad I saw you.

* * *

Last sounds before I take rest: peacocks (at first I thought it was Jayananda) and the insistent brass bell rung by devotees to attract the rowboat over from the island.

March 12, 12:15 a.m., Gaura-Purnima

Last look at the verse discussing Rupa and Sanatana's first meeting with Lord Caitanya. We must regret past sins, and regret that we haven't become better devotees. This *dainya*, or the words used to express it, cannot simply be flowery speech. We can't trick Lord Caitanya into giving us something we don't actually want or deserve. Rupa and Sanatana actually felt humility, and at the same time, they experienced a great joy upon coming into the Lord's presence. Lord Caitanya is Patita-pavana. Those who feel as fallen as Jagai and Madhai will understand.

We are in this dangerous material world and we are helpless here. We can't even find our way home or the security of a vocation. We are lost. Therefore, pray with *dainya*.

I'm saying all this in preparation for how I will lecture, but not only for that reason. I want to prepare myself for the balance of my life, for improved *sadhana* and concentration on Krishna. I ask disciples to improve their *sadhana*, so I must also improve mine. Is there nothing more I can do? We each also have to live with the reality of what appears to be our limits.

That's true. Therefore, we pray for a sign instructing us how to go forward, even a little. Maybe next week, after I have settled in at Wicklow, my life can become simpler and my reading increase.

Hare Krishna. When M. returns, I imagine he will tell me that they have worked hard to prepare the Wicklow house. Now I have to stay in it, face the monk's cell, and not be restless. We have to surrender to the consequences of our choices. I wanted solitude so I could practice *bhajana*, and that's what I'm going to get. I know it won't always be easy.

And I can't travel. M. constantly reminds me of how my health breaks down each time I attempt it. So if he tells me that again, I won't protest. I am not in control of my life or my pain. Accept what Krishna is offering and leave it at that. But don't become attached to a particular house or even a particular country; live only to accept His mercy and direction.

"No one within the three worlds is sufficiently powerful to deliver us. You are the only savior of the fallen souls, therefore there is no one but You." (Cc.*Madhya* 1.99)

"We are very depressed (lamenting in our minds) at being unfit candidates for Your mercy. Yet since we have heard of Your transcendental qualities, we are very much attracted to You." (Cc.*Madhya* 1.204)

"Indeed we are like a dwarf who wants to capture the moon. Although we are completely unfit, a desire to receive Your mercy is awakening within our minds." (Cc.*Madhya* 1.205)

Be bold, go forward, and beg for mercy from Patita-pavana.

Lord Caitanya assured them that they were His eternal servants. "I am sure that Krishna will deliver you very soon."

How to worship Lord Caitanya? By performing *sankirtana*. "Of all sacrificial performances, the chanting of the Lord's holy name is the most sublime." (Cc.*Adi* 3.78)

"I take shelter of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is outwardly of a fair complexion but is inwardly Krishna Himself. In this age of Kali He displays His expansions (His *angas* and *upangas*) by performing congregational chanting of the holy name of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 3.81)

* * *

During the night I parted the curtain and saw the moon high up, veiled in clouds.

* * *

5:13 a.m.

It seems that I'll do less *sadhana* today because I have to take more rest to ensure that I'll be able to give the lecture. And because we are fasting until the moonrise, I won't have my regular slots for hearing Srila Prabhupada's tapes while I honor *prasadam*. But I

can do *something* to be Krishna conscious. I won't sleep away the day. I'll get some letters when I go to the temple, I'm sure, so at least I can do some preaching.

Gauranga came to this world to deliver the most fallen. You know the follow-up to that. The humble devotee claims *he's* the most fallen, so he should get the Lord's attention first. I can't claim I'm the most anything.

Narottama dasa Thakura declares his fallen condition, but he hopes very much to gain the association of Radha and Krishna. When? When? He asks it again and again "when will he be allowed to offer intimate service to the Divine Couple? When will he attain the spiritual body of a *sakhi*, of one of Radha's maidservant, and be able to dress Her in Her garment of blue or wash Her feet and dry them with her own hair? I hear his words in his *Prarthana* while I dress Radha in Her blue dress (although today She and Govinda are wearing copper-colored dresses with gold trim, appropriate for Their appearance in the form of Lord Gaurasundara). O Govinda, You hide Your blackish hue with the gold of Radha's *bhava*. What is that *bhava*? Her mood of thinking always of You in separation. *ASlisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam*. I pray that You always preserve me. Please don't allow me to fall down and to ruin my life, my small ability to want to serve You. I pray for myself, but also for all the devotees who have rendered service and then fallen in some way. May they have the courage to return to their service, and may we all learn the valuable lesson of humility from our lives.

Gaura-Purnima is a good day to think well of others, to thank Lord Caitanya for His mercy, and to move prayerfully. It's also a good day to act as a servant and to not claim credit for your activities. Make your contribution in pure consciousness. Then live out your life. And, despite the change in schedule, let's fill the day with pages of earnest EJW. Lord Caitanya is kind and liberal, and Lord Nityananda is merciful and funny. These two Lords are the devotee's only possessions.

* * *

Good Intentions of A Dull Clinker
On Gaura-Purnima
& Cold stars and
night turning to morn " see Lord Caitanya's
devotees coming to worship Him
and bless us
with enough mercy that we can fulfill our duties
feel the *bhakti*
that pleases Him.

* * *

The blessed words sometimes flow
too freely as if we are glib
or untrue
but Krishna Krishna Krishna
free me from their influences even as
I surround myself with them.

* * *

Krishna living is nice, Radhanatha in
a jam but trying his best
Manu too and the kids and me
Running out of ink and asking for
Refills and paper
so poor we don't even know
how the mercy of Navadvipa
moves over to Vrndavana and we
are not among the . . .

* * *

Well, at least we're with devotees
today, walking into an ISKCON temple
and I'll give an authorized initiation "
"You are now
Gaurahari dasa."

* * *

Looking ahead today I ask
not for extreme originality or
genius but simply
to please by sincere and simple
chanting.
I'm so poor I ask only for
clear vision to see
Syamasundara with an inner eye.
My master assures me it
can't be done except through devotion
which starts first with the ear. "

* * *

8:08 a.m.

Extra cars parked by the boathouse. People-packed rowboat sporting an outboard motor for the occasion ferries them across. I'm supposed to leave for the island at 8:30. I'm prepared: lecture outline, books, red pill in breast pocket, *om apavitra pavitrava* verse on index card. M. just told me a householder wants to bring his baby to sit-in on the fire *yajna* because today is his grain ceremony.

EJW is on good behavior today. The writer doesn't want to be a slouch. Stand up straight! Throw the grains in the fire and pour ghee from a spoon, "*Sva-ha!*"

This is Lord Caitanya's day. In Navadvipa there is no offense taken if people overeat *prasadam*. That would be an excellent place to die, but if not, then at least die

saturated in the essence of Navadvipa "to be engaged in Govinda's service. Hare Krishna on and under my breath.

* * *

10:28 a.m.

A good family gathering for a Thursday morning Gaura-Purnima initiation lecture. On the door to the temple was a photo of me, the then ISKCON guru for Ireland, with the boy who will be initiated today when he was a baby. That was in 1983. Now he's taller than I am. I named him Gaurahari dasa, and he distributes books all over the country. I was pleased with the gist of the lecture in which I stated that we must be *dainya* and eager to elicit Lord Caitanya's mercy on the most fallen. May He fulfill His name, Patita-pavana, by granting me *nama-ruci*.

But I forgot to recite the ten offenses. I could have done it at the very end, but I let it go. I also refrained from leading everyone around the fire. One man initiated. Wish there were more.

On the way to the island, Praghosa joined us and told me about the GBC meetings he attended in Mayapur. A seven-man group was elected to carry out most of the decisions for the GBC because the bigger group is so unwieldy. One man particularly has increased powers. This news ran through my mind as I was building the *yajna* fire and chanting the *mangala-carana* prayers. But why should I be concerned over what the GBC decided? Praghosa said most GBC men don't want to hassle with all the smaller decisions. Why should I worry about them? Better I use my energy to write and read, to be simple and non-envious.

So, my dear assembled devotees, did you get the messankirtana movement.

* * *

The following is a lecture given by yours truly on the morning of the full moon, when he eclipsed his own purity but chanted sixteen lousy rounds. I mean, the holy name is always pure (*purnam*), and nondifferent from Krishna (*cintamani*), but he, the chanter, was foul and fair. So this is his lecture, delivered while minor Hare Krishna kids shouted and played with no awareness of Gaura-Purnima, and only natural *dainya* in their little hearts and brains. They don't know how to culture the serious stuff yet and can't be blamed for that, but when they band together, they sure are noisy.

* * *

12:58 p.m.

Tell the truth as much as you can. Celebrated visionary poet found in possession of drugs and narcotics, stolen money, and a Mexican mistress. Followers shocked into relief. Band of *bordellos* arrested while dreaming that the ropes of Varuna held down their right wrists. Pilot returns from Andes bail-out to tell of another world. Was *Bhagavad-gita* found there? Of course. The Committee for the Protection of ISKCON issues forth its annual paper bag. Schisms consolidate at an epic summit meeting at Copper Canyon. Plan for united launch against ISKCON empire. *Sadhus* of

enmity have rare retreat in unannounced park to plan out solitary prayer network (without computers) "U.S. Army interested.

I took out *The Nectar of Devotion* and thought I might start reading it as a project to go along with moving to a new location. Make a thing out of it to get you going. Make the reading prayerful. My conclusion in life is to stick to reading Prabhupada's books. I have read them for thirty years. Maybe I have another twenty left. But make it twenty prayerful years.

Fasting only until 3 p.m. for me. Fasting guarantees a night of pain. O Lord Caitanya, I fall at Your feet and beg you to make me a special case. But I'm afraid. What if Your desire to purify me means I get sent to Africa or some small village somewhere to perform *sankirtana*? What if I have to be born next life as a jazz musician, or a hermit living in the wilds, or "you know the sort of thing He can do based on one's actual pulse. I will admit I'm afraid of that. I only want to know You as *bhava-grahi-janardana*. Please find some *good* in me. May I be born like the lad who was named Gaurahari dasa today. May I be like that.

The two brothers said, "We cannot even introduce ourselves, we are so ashamed. Also, we are not about to stop our bad activities. But we feel very ashamed."

Lord Caitanya replied, "Please, your humility is breaking My heart."

What was I actually *proposing* to the devotees today, and how can they possibly carry it out? We are so proud and blind we think we are great, even in our so-called humility. We tend to be complacent, prefer gentleness toward ourselves rather than the ripping out of *anarthas* by the roots. We cannot press further into actual humility because we simply don't want to.

Well, then take it as another one of those ideal states, like so many other states described in the scriptures. I did tell them that actual humility was an advanced state of mind, a realization that includes the perception of the Lord in the heart. To actually pray to the Lord for special consideration as Rupa and Sanatana did is no small feat. To mean it. The most we seem to be able to do is to hear about others who have made such prayers and hope to become attracted to it. But as for practical action, just don't be proud. But be yourself. Go to the Lord. Those are the main things "go to the Lord, but when you do, realize you can't honestly introduce yourself *unless you feel unworthy*. This is a substantial point, and I'm aware that I'm just pecking at the border of it.

Connected to this is the statement that the best sankirtana movement. Sacrifice means making an offering of yourself: offer yourself and all that you have "your wealth, your intelligence, your words, and your life's energy to the cause of chanting and spreading the chanting. We may feel unworthy, but that doesn't mean there is nothing we can do to help. Even if all you do is to mind your own business and not find fault with those who are spreading the chanting. Even if all you can do is to continue with your preaching even when others try to stop you with *their* faultfinding.

My Gaura-Purnima approach to prayer: I have been approaching Gaura-Purnima. Now here it is, the day itself. I pray for *dainya*, to feel genuine aspiration, to be allowed to call on the Lord despite my pride and other foibles. O Gaurahari, please allow me to chant. Why else did You give me permission to take a human body this time around? Please make good this karma that is beyond karma. Please give me *bhakti*.

* * *

1:48 p.m.

I won't go to the shed because there are too many devotee visitors, whole flocks of kids, and I could walk into a meeting for the St. Patrick's Day parade or a tense encounter between two devotees who don't like one another. I'd be diverted from my muddy path. Tomorrow, a last visit if I'm lucky.

* * *

2:28 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada lists three qualifications for entering Lord Caitanya's *lila*. One is to give up the idea of becoming one with the impersonal Brahman. I guess I did that. The second is to hear in a fully submissive mood from a person in disciplic succession from Srila Rupa Gosvami. That's it. I'm still working on that. The person I'm hearing from in disciplic succession is Srila Prabhupada, of course. ISKCON demands that we be exclusively loyal to him, and I agree with that. But can I hear from him submissively and enthusiastically? The third qualification is to lead a pure life: "Be very poor in all one's dealings in life, remaining unaffected by the infectious influence of the age of Kali." (*In Search of The Ultimate Goal of Life*, p. 61)

* * *

After describing the talks between Lord Caitanya and Ramananda Raya, Srila Prabhupada writes, "Only the faithful can enter into the intricacies of these topics, and faith is the basic principle for making progress in the supra-mental state of transcendental love in separation."

* * *

In a dream I was in a room with Srila Prabhupada, Madhumangala, and another devotee. The other devotee wasn't paying much attention to Prabhupada, so Madhumangala was being attentive and exchanging with him. I seemed aloof, off chanting, almost as if I didn't want to be there. I realized my aloofness and drew closer to Prabhupada. As I came closer, I could see the concern on his face about his affairs, and feel the urge to help him in some way.

Then he turned to some papers on his desk. Among them was a letter I had written him, asking questions. He referred to the letter in a way that only I would know what he was talking about, and I thank him for that. He said, "I had such a difficult day yesterday, but I still answered your questions."

"Srila Prabhupada, I'll probably have to ask the same questions again tomorrow."

"Yes, that is the nature of spiritual life."

* * *

Field Work #12

Salute To Gaura-Purnima

15 minutes

Be unworthy "working that theme. I hear you loud and strong, and wish only to know how long *this* will last?

You mean?

I mean this piece, this life, this March, this being alone in Ireland "whatever you like.

Well, I don't know how long *anything* will last. Wrigley's chewing gum ""the flavor lasts a long, long time." The millennia, the European Council, free passage for knees and head "only Krishna can outlast everything.

Yes, Krishna. Krishna has us on the fast track. Our blood boils.

How long? I'm not even two-thirds done yet. Brahma's day is half done, but it is long before it will end. The inhale and exhale of Maha-visnu. Brothers gone and soon everyone. Last scatterings.

* * *

How long, world, before you recognize our saints?

"When will I serve Radha and Krishna?" Narottama asks.

* * *

No more silly rhetoric from me "how long?

I am left simply holding my wishes.

Is it better we live not knowing more than we know? Perhaps to strive is part of our eternal nature.

* * *

And so the night approaches, the full moon of Lord Caitanya rising, although we won't see it because the sky is still so overcast as we are moving toward evening. I hear *bhajan*s from the island. O Krishna "Gaura-Purnima.

* * *

Night Notes, 6:37 p.m.

Close curtain on the outer world and go to bed. Let Him take you wherever He wishes in the current of my unconscious and semi-conscious states. The Supersoul can speak to my soul. I could even wake up a different person "or not wake up at all.

Deck the halls with boughs of daffodils. Spring is on the way! They were tight buds this morning. They suffer. We all do. Humans have some advantages, though. So Rsabhadeva told his sons, "You have waited a long time to come to this form of life; don't waste it by living like pigs. Perform divine austerity to clean your soul, and then

you'll know *brahma saukhyam tvanantam*. I pray I will follow those teachings and never forget them, life after life

March 13, 12:08 a.m.

"If a person becomes a so-called spiritual master without being engaged wholly in the service of the Personality of Godhead, nobody should accept him as guru, and his activity should not be recognized. A guru's character must be fully representative of the Personality of Godhead, and this will be demonstrated by his full-time engagement in the service of Godhead." (*In Search of The Ultimate Goal of Life*, pp. 81 - 82)

Just on the verge of our move to the South and a hut for retirement, I'm feeling cold feet. Voice of doubt: "Are we going too far away from ISKCON and preaching? Geaglum is near-ideal because I can make a weekly visit to the temple and yet they leave me alone otherwise." Maybe I should have weekly meetings at the schoolhouse. Or maybe not. Maybe I should go all the way.

The first point is to be fully engaged in the service of Godhead. That seems to be the real test, whether I can make each day alone a Krishna conscious experience, with concentration on hearing and chanting.

Oh . . . I have had a few days without terrible headaches. The past three or four weeks have all been downhill, but this week has been better. As soon as I am free of headaches for a few days, I tend to think I am not doing enough. If I didn't have the chronic pain syndrome, then the move to Wicklow would be questionable.

And the point about the spiritual master. I'd rather not be one if it means only hearing about people's material problems. I want to be a spiritual master in the sense of learning how to absorb myself, and encourage others to absorb themselves, in hearing and chanting, in discussing spiritual topics, in learning how to move through matter to spirit.

We can read about this progression to spirit in the talks between Lord Caitanya and Ramananda Raya. Gradually we are led to service of Krishna through the *rupanugas*, who serve Radha-Krishna in Vrndavana. We can only gain entrance to Vrndavana through Lord Caitanya and His *gosvami* disciples. We need to focus on these concepts through every aspect of our lives; the philosophy should not be vague. We are interested in pure devotional service, and Srila Prabhupada emphasizes preaching to attain it.

Almost time to begin my *japa*. Vedic knowledge is, in a sense, bewildering, because it is so elevated. We can't understand it by artificially plunging into *madhurya* topics. We must actually please Lord Caitanya by being vitally connected to His *sankirtana* movement.

Yes, I like to be alone. I acknowledge that as a simple truth. As Rilke put it, solitude is not something you can take or leave. We *are* solitary "all of us" by nature. It may often be difficult for some of us to be alone, but for one who seeks Krishna in solitude, the difficulties should not drive him away. I would like to connect the truth of solitude to Krishna consciousness, because solitude is favorable to devotional service. Then when we exchange with devotees and nondevotees, we are able to come from a deeper center within ourselves.

* * *

I dreamt I was in a large department store. The owners were making announcements about shoplifting. Something about the announcements was insulting toward the customers, and people were visibly affected. Those who were most affected were interrogated by the sales people to find out what they had taken.

Suddenly I noticed that I had three pairs of socks in my pocket. I realized they were going to discover that I was trying to steal them, although I had no memory of putting them in my pocket. As I walked away, I reached into my pocket and threw two pairs of socks to the side. A salesman said, "A little bit here, a little bit there, a little confession here, a little confession there. Finally, everything will come together." It made me think of my writing, how it comes out, who I am, bit by bit.

* * *

4:26 a.m.

Dear Radha-Krishna, Radha-Govinda, thank You. The Lord wears a white turban with a peacock feather. Behind-the-scenes detail: blue tack affixes the peacock feather. No one mentions that except *pujaris*. It is a *pujari's* life. It tires out your body; the worship is physical. Srila Prabhupada wears a light pink scarf. The material contains some glistening threads. His cap is of the same material. "Made in Vrndavana" goods were strongly favored by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. I like them too. O devotees, please bring things I can use in my Deity worship from Vrndavana. Bring them from bazaars and *wallas* and the lanes of Vrndavana. In this way, I can see Vrndavana even from this distance. Narottama dasa Thakura prays "you know it well. It is the same prayer Rupa and Sanatana spoke when they declared themselves, before Lord Caitanya, the most fallen and therefore the most in need of His mercy.

Oh, we say, please don't come before us as you are. We're not prepared, so dress yourself nicely. One doesn't appear physically naked before others, so why should you want to be naked in writing?

Naked poems.

Because it's a different thing. Language is a way to come closer than would ever be possible with the conventions of the gross material body. To be a real person will require that we uncover ourselves. "Naked" is only a metaphor. It doesn't mean taking off clothes, but removing false pride and pretense. It means taking off your anger, becoming aware of your tininess, giving up all those credits you have given to yourself that you did not actually own. If we want to come before Krishna we will have to remove all these layers and get down to the pure soul underneath "the pure soul in that pure spiritual body that is perhaps dressed as a cowherd boy or as grass or a Vrndavana tree.

O guruji, thank you for the class, the sermon, the homily. Now what will you do? Are we at the Yamuna with you? If so, how is it that we fly back so easily to the material world?

Oh, that's because we have not actually transferred our hearts to the spiritual world. Once we give our hearts, we will never again return to this material world.

For now, I want to stop thinking about disciples who no longer think I can help them. Life is full of disappointments. I should thank them. They are helping me to become lighter, to live more only for my concerns to read and write and chant.

Now Murray Winks is tired. He says he wants spiritual dreams, that he's sick of the facetious ones from tenements and landlords and departments stores. He wants service.

O Murray, don't you know there's no point shouting? If you want to, take the Lord's help as He extends Himself toward you. Step forward and exchange with Him. Be like a shark and stay in the ocean of devotional service. Don't return to the river of material desires. Murray Winks, when you is tired, just sit on that bench. You once undressed demurely in front of the other men, and you never took a shower. Shy, I suppose, and your peers were always so demanding.

No, it was you who created the terror. You could have been less concerned about so many things. You could have even taken a beating now and then. But it doesn't matter anymore. You wanted respect, and that caused the fear. Don't look for respect anymore. Give it up. Give yourself to the holy name.

* * *

Day After Gaura-Purnima
& Hare Krishna toast and muffins
tea (mint) "he says "I'm urgent to talk with you."
Music back and forth
we speak
personal,
voice husky.
Krishna walking in that man's bones
He lets me go
home-free
because the
worst time is *not* right now
so take advantage
and be a hero
I mean a sandwich
I mean happy
and don't worry
your poem doesn't have to rhyme
but at least the lines
should divide
according to the sound
of music.
Hey, Harmonium Steve
become a Hare Krishna and
play that accordion outdoors
in Hare Krishna clothes the
expert standard musician said.

and when the music quiets,
we'll hear heartbeats
birds
the day after Gaura-Purnima "
and the full
moon.
I didn't even look for it. I forgot
because it's usually
so cloudy. "

* * *

11:17 a.m.

Busy all morning, packing for tomorrow's travel. No time to write or read. Head clear so far. No feelings of leaving, just trying to sort out what to take. But I'm aware I'm going. Feel a bubbling optimism. If I took time to write now, something nice would probably come.

Last guests rowing over to the mainland and getting into cars. Gaura-Purnima is over, and many devotees will return to Dublin, Wicklow, or wherever else they came from. Next "marathon" is the St. Paddy's Day parade.

* * *

2:24 p.m.

Madhu is opening the van doors to unload boxes from my room. I'm sitting at the desk looking out at the strait where Gaurahari dasa is rowing himself and another *brahmacari* across against a stiff breeze. It's a springlike Irish day, although in Ireland, the air almost always feels this fresh. Still, it's mid-March, and the mornings are now beginning earlier.

I found a book in Madhu's open desk drawer called *Free-play: The Power of Improvisation In Life and the Arts*. That power comes from Krishna in the heart, but how directly? Is it all right to offer Him the best improvisation? Yes, it would seem so. Better than a canned concert. "Improvisation is a mystery. You can write a book about it, but by the end no one still knows what it is. When I improvise and I'm in good form, I'm like somebody half-sleeping. I even forget there are people in front of me. Great improvisers are like priests; they are thinking only of their God." (Stephane Grappelli)

Smoke improvises its way out of the boathouse chimney, or is it following a set rule? The improvisation book begins with a definition of the Sanskrit word *lila* (fairly accurate), and then goes on to say that in the deepest sense, God Himself plays freely. He is under no obligation (karma). He creates spontaneously, independently. The problem arises when we try to create our own *lila*, "like a god." But if an artist plays his best prayerful creation for the Lord, then he or she may learn to enter God's *lila* as an eternal servant. Improvisation is not about imitating. It's about letting the heart out, giving expression to the depths of the soul. It really is about worship, like offering a handful of Ganges water to the Ganges.

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On the edge, ending the experience of this book and the Inis rath-Geaglum life "beginning both another book and another type of life. Next week, three prominent and senior ISKCON members will come in successive waves as guests to Inis rath. By then I'll be flowing south.

The one thing that won't change between the two lives is that I will continue to read Prabhupada's books, which are actually Krishna's books. There are two kinds of *Krishna-katha*: that spoken *by* Krishna and that spoken *about* Him. Srila Prabhupada's books mix both. Prabhupada is the transparent medium through which Krishna speaks in *Bhagavad-gita* or sports in *Krishna* book. Prabhupada himself is also always present in his Bhaktivedanta purports. So my new life will contain the same simple discipline as this one has.

M. said he was ready to off-load the boxes from this room, so I put down my pen to help, but he disappeared. It's going to be that kind of afternoon "no chance for a concentrated last writing session. But I'm grateful.

* * *

M.'s operating on Irish time. Equinox. Equipoise. He'll come by when he's ready. If I ask him where he went, he'll have an answer and I'll live with it, as long as we load up and leave tomorrow at 5 a.m. Notice what's happening. I'm ending a chapter of my life and starting something new.

* * *

4:40 p.m.

Last walk here for awhile. Plan to say a "see you later" to the tall, leaning tree that stands just off our property, to the black ducks who fly off at low altitude when I walk too near, to the water-lapping lake, and to the security of the devotee-owned land where I can walk on my own. Good-bye to this land where daffodils are just beginning to emerge. See you later to the entrance of Geaglum, where the wooden sign announces, "Please Drive Slowly, Children Playing," and to the bend in the road that forks to the left where I walk and the collie knows my choice. Good-bye to the mud puddles, to the sky reflecting in them, to the chestnut trees, and to the strangling vines that reveal the meaning of the saying, "A tree is tolerant." I'm glad I saw the first primroses before I had to leave.

* * *

5:32 p.m.

This is prime time. Be open and flow. This is your life; use it to serve Krishna.