

ELECTRONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

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Karttika Flame

and Shadow

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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

October 13, 1998, 12 a.m.

"The Next Life: It's Up To Us." What we're doing in this life indicates what we'll be doing in the next.

Everybody's troubles.

I mean, not *everybody's* "I can't open to that "but a few people "the ones I know in Ireland, for example.

It's all so relative. Are they actually suffering?

Are they right in their strong opinions about one another?

Can I stay out of their difficulties and simply offer blessings to one and all?

Can I calm the noise of my own mind and read Srila Prabhupada's books?

As long as we're mixing with any of the three material modes, we'll take birth in a suffering condition. "Therefore the best policy is to disassociate oneself from the three modes of material nature and be always transcendental to their contamination. This is possible only when one fully engages in the devotional service of the Lord . . ." (*Second Chance*, p. 53)

No one talks about transmigration but us. No one understands it clearly but through the Vedic literature. Does it seem theoretical? Yet we live our lives as if it were true. Srila Prabhupada says knowledge of transmigration is the difference between East and West; the East, especially India, knows the facts. The *Vedas* tell us we can't stop the three kinds of miseries, the *adhibautika*, *adhyatmika*, and *adhidhaivika*. Similarly, when after death superior authorities (*daiva netrena*) offer us a certain type of body, we have no power to refuse.

We are slipping and sliding in the material world, but Krishna comes Himself or sends His representatives to tell us of our eternal blissful relationship with Him. Here Srila Prabhupada mentions Jesus Christ: "Everyone is a son of God, but this son was an especially favorite son, and he was sent to a particular place to reclaim the conditioned souls back home, back to Godhead." (*Second Chance*, p. 55)

But if the *jivas* insist on staying here, then "what can Krishna or His servant do?" He doesn't touch our little free will. We have to *desire* to get out. "Surrender to Krishna begins with chanting the Hare Krishna mantra: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare."

We are sleeping under the influence of material nature. These themes are basic but vital. I could choose something from this book to speak on next Sunday morning in Dublin, but I'll want a particular angle. I want to stay out of relative affairs "like the controversy about how much sex should be allowed in marriage. Not my business. I'm a *sannyasi* and expected to be free of the need for sex and the responsibilities and troubles it brings. I do feel free of it. Better I be ready to discuss transcendental subjects and practices with those who are ready for that, in whatever stage of life they find themselves. *Jnane preyasam*: At any stage of life, chant and hear. Don't become lost in material affairs.

The Yamadutas analyze a soul's entanglement with the senses. Sense engagement is beyond our control, and intense desires imprinted on the subtle body cause us misery in

this life and the next. "Since the living entity is associated with material nature, he is in an awkward position, but if in the human form of life he is taught how to associate with the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His devotee, this position can be overcome." (*Bhag.* 6.1.55)

Hello to a new book, beginning in the middle of Karttika. I light a candle each night and sing Hare Krishna. Radha-Govinda are here. Let me embrace this life. Am I doing enough to reciprocate with what I have been given? Krishna will decide. But this is Karttika, so let me avoid sense gratification and think only of Him.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Jaya jagadiSa hare. Oh, so many things. Then suddenly, nothing. This fellow writes on writing and wants to say it is nice to be a naive painter (as well as an expressionist). He does a self-portrait from a small mirror, and it may not look like him, but that's all right. He's a guy with eyeglasses and a stout face, cans of spray paint behind him. It just makes him happy. Then he offers some oblique Krishna conscious expression with no direct propaganda connection, yet "a devotee wants to serve Krishna in a way that also pleases himself." These admissions in painting make him happy.

Henry Miller said, "Paint as you like and die happy." But I want to paint as Krishna likes too. I want to paint in a way that devotees will find pleasure in it. You can't merely dance for them. You paint earnestly, write earnestly, and bring them into the world in which you live.

I love to dress my Radha-Govinda and to ornament Them. Today, in light green and gold. Very nice. As I do this I'm hearing my disciples read *Krishna* book, the chapter on the *rasa* dance. We are all innocent, all trusting the presentation in the way Prabhupada has given it. Such trust is a rare thing, something precious. It is something we offer. Surely it can be substantiated by logic and argument, but in the end, it comes down to something simpler, and it is based on love.

I know that in some ways, my disciples' trust in Prabhupada is based on my trust in him and their trust in me. After all, I knew him, I came to him, he saved me. But I know they trust him directly, too. In that way we assure one another even of things like the fact that the Supreme Lord is Krishna and that His love for the *gopis* is not like the abominable *parakiya-rasa* of this world.

He was talking of the *Sarat* season and my mind flew to Saradbhahari. Adi-keSava dasa gave that name to the Radha-Krishna Deities in Philadelphia. They arranged everything and installed Them without inviting me, although I was the zonal guru at the time. I thought I should have had a direct part in the installation, but I was overestimating my importance. I had bought into the conception all ISKCON shared then about its zonal gurus. People don't understand it if you try to explain it now. They see only the wrong of it, and may even doubt, "Why did you take part in it if it was so wrong?" Yes . . . but it was also what we were *all* doing, and you can't understand what it was like unless you were there and are willing to admit your own part.

Hare Krishna. Sober, no Whitman's Samplers chocolates to eat, no Pepsi-cola or rum with Coke. No illicit sex or meat eating, and so on. No dream-recording even, and no Monk. All those things are concluded "things of the past. Only Prabhupada and Krishna.

* * *

When I finish this page I'll get down on the floor with an 18' x 24' Bristol board and ink and some thin and thick pens. Something will come. This process is similar to writing. The forms of this world come from the supreme source. Human beings are made in His image, even though we are presently distorted by material desires, anger, and greed, and of course, time makes our features sag in a way that never happens to Krishna.

* * *

Guantanamo Bay is in Cuba. We looked at a hill and were told that the American side goes up to the top of the hill and you can go no further. Or am I just imagining that? I am the man who wrote *The Waves at Jagannatha Puri*. The class met and went on a field trip. We are planning some things. I planned these three months in this house, and we're doing that, but they're running out quickly. I could lecture on the fact that any place can be Vrndavana for a preacher, but Vrndavana in India is special.

Oh, I've said that so many times. Let's think of something else. Something pertinent and happy in Krishna consciousness and right from Srila Prabhupada's books.

The bell rings insistently.

He wants attention.

When he is irritated and harassed, how can you expect him to write nicely?

Krishna consciousness is the book I was reading. It said that Krishna was God and the nondevotee cannot imagine Him.

* * *

Swami has to persist when it's dry
when Watusis dance in *kirtana* the
preaching is good
also we see workers give up hot dogs,
many have done it for Krishna's sake
I understand the Swami went back to Godhead.

* * *

Seeing his followers continue in the world,
which he asked them to do in his last
Vrndavana days
sincere devotees do what they can
Minnie Mouse and Donald Duck
included, if you're an expert preacher.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Just before coming out into the yard, I was inking a page and listening to Brother David. He's embarrassingly in the, "Enjoy! Enjoy!" mood. I have to convert it into Krishna consciousness before I can accept anything he's saying. All right, we will enjoy our service to Krishna in a way that He wants, not that we just bless everything that we do. Nevertheless, he has an attractive message when he says that we should bless everything in life and our task should be to be happy.

He says the word *benediction* means "to call it good." You can say aloud or to yourself, "You are good," to the different persons and things in your life "even your household plants, your cat or dog, certainly your children, your boss. Even if you don't feel like blessing your boss, you can say to yourself about him, "You are better than you appear."

I kind of like the idea of going around blessing everything, and I now have a better idea how to do it. It's like Prabhupada saying to me in a letter, "Encourage them more and more." We sometimes think it's outrageously proud to think that we can bless anyone. Therefore, we don't like the expression, "Please accept my blessings." But if you call someone good and really mean it, then they'll feel it like a blessing. Krishna's positive spirit will come through you.

This rain is good. Everything is holy. The bad times too? That's the test "if you can see it that way and stop complaining.

* * *

9:15 a.m.

"I am feeling incomplete, though I myself am fully equipped with everything required by the *Vedas*. This may be because I did not specifically point out the devotional service of the Lord, which is dear both to perfect beings and the infallible Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.4.31)

So much rain, the walls were dripping inside this defective house. Now I have the window open and can see the mist and puddles that have formed even on level ground. It's so quiet. I read Vyasa's words, but where is my heart? Dissatisfaction is caused by not concentrating on Krishna consciousness "not really knowing it, feeling it, expressing it to others. We can't be happy when we don't concentrate on Krishna because our spirit self is His eternal servant. We feel lost without Him, and if we've forgotten Him, we don't even realize the depth of our loss. Material pleasure, mental speculation, even Vedic study short of pure *bhakti* will leave us feeling empty.

I also feel empty just because my body fuel registers "empty." I know I'm not alone in that, and so we all go through our ups and downs.

While he was feeling the despondency, Vyasa's spiritual master arrived. The 1971 edition has a crude painting of this scene. Narada is descending from the sky without touching the ground. The painting is accurate and devotional, and it sufficed to help our meditation for many years. Why nothing now when I look at it?

Faith and taste.

Believe or be left

out.

Cry to Krishna, "Please
Rescue me. I want to drop
all other attachments all

distractions. Please give me shelter

at Your lotus feet. Divest me of illusion

and *upadhis*. I'm neither this body nor any cultural or religious designation attached to it. I'm really only Yours."

"Narada was smiling because he knew well the great sage Veda-Vyasa and the cause of his disappointment . . . insufficiency in presenting the science of devotional service." (*Bhag.* 1.5.1, purport)

We should be cheerful from all our years of freedom and chanting the name of the all-blissful Lord. ISKCON's ills shouldn't disturb us so much that we can't function. We should be aware of our shortcomings but confident in the mercy of guru and Krishna. "In spite of all this, why should you be despondent, thinking that you are undone, my dear Prabhu?" (*Bhag.* 1.5.4)

Vyasa asks to know both the root of his dissatisfaction and its remedy. He has full confidence that his spiritual master is aware of all confidential knowledge and can guide him. He knows his guru is a fixed worshiper of the Personality of Godhead.

Srila Prabhupada analyzes *everyone's* root cause of unhappiness: we identify the body and mind as the self. We cannot be happy like that, even if we don't know the cause of our malady.

"Sri Narada said, 'You have not actually broadcast the sublime and spotless glories of the Personality of Godhead. That philosophy which doesn't satisfy the transcendental senses of the Lord is considered worthless.'" (*Bhag.* 1.5.8) Understand this point. We do our *sadhana* practices with body and mind, but are we reaching out to please the owner of our senses, the Supreme Lord? We have to try. He will be pleased by our sincerity. If our service doesn't focus on praising Lord Hari (which alone satisfies everyone), how can we expect Him to be pleased by our dry, wasteful rebellion?

* * *

11:50 a.m.

A book on writing as meditation has a blurb on the back cover about writing free of distraction. This attracted me, but come to think of it, I seem to prefer writing with distraction. I can't wait for peak moments and consider everything else a failure. The book even starts with a Zen story of a calligrapher who had failed in eighty-six attempts at script until he did one in haste, "free of distraction." (He was doing it quickly so his critical pupil wouldn't see it.) It came out a masterpiece. Why eighty-six failures and one masterpiece? Is that the only way to go?

I have another book here too. This one is a handbook for spiritual directors. The problems with which a director may be presented are listed alphabetically, with suggestions on how to treat them. The first qualification for a director is that he or she should care for the persons asking for guidance. The directors must have a thorough knowledge of theology, prayer, and counseling. If they don't know how to handle a case,

they should be willing to refer it to someone with more experience or expertise in that area. Sounds like sensible advice to me.

Makes me look at my own duties as spiritual director. Do I care? Yes. Am I able to devote enough time for each case? I can through letter exchanges.

St. John of the Cross criticizes directors who don't know how to handle cases of persons who are entering the advanced stages of prayer and who discourage it and tell everyone to practice only the elementary lessons. Teresa of Avila had plenty of problem with the priests who listened to her confessions but who didn't understand her spiritual advancement. St. John of the Cross thinks the director should guide a person to take direction from God in the heart.

I want to encourage devotees to find Krishna in the heart too. I try to discuss this in my books. If someone feels they get guidance from my books, I don't refuse them. Sometimes they say that no one else is giving them the same kind of guidance. All right, then let me fill that gap. That will be my service to my spiritual master and a way in which I can preach "the success of my service offering."

The handbook said, "More than anything else, a director should be a fellow-journeyer, a codiscerner." I am that. And if the director doesn't himself know about advanced states of prayer, he shouldn't discourage others from discovering it themselves.

Yes, that's something of which we must be careful. But when they want to suddenly practice *raganuga-bhakti*, I repeat what Srila Prabhupada said. Anyway, everyone seems to do what he or she likes regardless of what anyone says. We tend to follow our hearts.

It's still extremely foggy out. The trees look silhouetted as their leafy branches are waving in the breeze. Waiting for lunch and for a hunch about how to take the next step forward in Krishna consciousness. Vyasadeva knew the cause of his despondency, but we tend to suspect that there's something wrong with our spouse, our house, that our problems are rooted in something more earthy, like a lack of money or an imperfect institution.

* * *

12:40 a.m.

Lunch is brief ecstatic munching
unless you have physical or mental pain.
Now if you can learn deeper appreciation
coming from Krishna to you and you to Him
the "have lunch, will feel joy" or
no lunch at all will be a wonderful
experience.

But what do I know? I'm just grateful for my taste buds meeting a simple *sabji*, rice, *dal* "the meal Swamiji taught us to honor. remember? And eating after prayer. I pray to him in the name and function that is very dear to Krishna. I have faith in that.

* * *

3:00 p.m.

Mail arrived, but it's my *Bhagavatam* reading time, so I'm ignoring it for the moment. The cause of all despondency "you don't get rid of the blues just by staying busy. They'll always come back. Listen to Narada, the spiritual master: "Although, great sage, you have very broadly described the four principles beginning with religious performances, you have not described the glories of the Supreme Personality, Vasudeva." (*Bhag.* 1.5.9)

Vyasa had "deliberately avoided" praising Krishna, and this was his problem. He was more occupied with other topics, such as *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksa*. Those topics are certainly contained in the *Upanisads*, *Vedanta-sutra*, *Mahabharata*, the four *Vedas*, and the *Puranas*. Because he misused his valuable time, he felt despondent. We understand this, actually. If Vyasa was saddened despite discussing elevated Vedic subjects, what kind of transcendental bliss can we expect when we discuss events in this mundane world?

But equanimity is still only the beginning. We have to progress toward transcendental loving service. Eagerly and repeatedly describe the path of devotional service. "Those words which do not describe the glories of the Lord, who alone can satisfy the atmosphere of the whole universe, are considered by saintly persons to be like unto a place of pilgrimage for crows. Since the all-perfect persons are inhabitants of the transcendental abode, they do not derive any pleasure there." (*Bhag.* 1.5.10)

* * *

4:17 p.m.

Tiny bug on page. rain is not tears. A stone wall is not the same as Lord Caitanya rubbing His face against it. Look out over your own wall and see the rolling rain-mist moving horizontally. ring rhyme, he's on time.

Read three little times in
massa's books today.

Better than nothing. Feel the surge of fourteen rounds chanted before 3 a.m.?

Yes.

I could paint a little, although the art room isn't open today. Sing along. The wind is strong with its own strong song. It's nice to hear that at night in a quiet, secure house. The strong wind and the strong stone house on a lonely hill in rural Ireland.

"But that's not Vrndavana. Better Vrndavana "even today's with its taxis and other noise pollution "because under it all, it's always Vrndavana, the land of pilgrims and *sadhus* and Vaisnavas and Vaisnavis and radhe-Syama. In Vrndavana, even the "common" people call out, 'radhe! radhe!'"

True. But I live here, I mix here, I can't live there except for a brief time, a tourist always.

Driven out of Vrndavana
by a Sikh
in a Nissan.

O Karttika, your sights and roadsides, your cold nights and dust, the poems you inspired, the shelter you gave while we lived at Krishna-Balaram Mandir.

I offered a flame to the Yamuna. Saw a heifer, a white Brahma cow and its steaming dung. Was I cold? Barefoot? The rickshaws bounce and jounce my joints. I carried my bottle of Esgic ten thousand miles.

O Karttika, they warned me that if I stayed in the West I would become Westernized. They wanted to know only when I was coming to Vrndavana. Perhaps they think I'll be reborn a leprechaun. Let them laugh and let me feel the flame of Krishna consciousness here. I do want to return to Vrndavana, but even more, I want to learn to remember Vrndavana even from my home on this hill where I am alone. Day and night.

* * *

6:33 p.m., Night Notes

Friends assure you. I should assure them too. "There's no friend like an old friend." I don't just wait for people to serve me and then look at their discrepancies, but I try to serve them with my writing, inquire of them how they are doing, and encourage them. I pray to be wholehearted in my relationships, but sometimes I have to just hang in there until something more sincere than the quick reply is ready to come out.

Squeeze through the narrow pass and enter the dark cave in writing. Make it more than ordinary or mundane. After all, you're carrying the *Vedas*.

Planning to speak on Vyasadeva on Sunday. But I want to tell the audience not to jump the gun and rush to apply it. Let's hear first about this mighty sage and his spiritual master, Narada. The more we can be there with them through hearing, the more naturally our lives will flow when we actually try to apply their teachings. Give the hearing time.

Night notes. Dark and beautiful rain-smearred window. The sun didn't come out at all today, but still the day lovely "closed in and foggy. Krishna accepts us despite everything.

October 14, 12 a.m.

The *jiva* is forced to act according to the modes of material nature, even against his desire. As a silkworm becomes trapped in the cocoon it has spun out of its own saliva, so the *jiva* is trapped in the network of karma he has woven for himself. Brother David says we should enjoy life with "precious five" (he used a poem by W. H. Auden as his text, and praised it), but that's dangerous advice. It may contain a spiritual seed, but many will go astray thinking that to enjoy the senses is spiritual. Here the Yamadutas point out that we *try* to become happy by sense enjoyment, but the idea that it's possible is concocted. We don't know that the actual goal of life is to satisfy the Supreme Lord. "Nevertheless, the Supreme Lord is so kind that He comes Himself to instruct the bewildered living entity how to act obediently and thus gradually return home, back to Godhead, where he can attain an eternal, peaceful life of bliss and knowledge." (*Second Chance*, p. 59)

Krishna is our only hope. We are each alone. "We should remember that everyone is responsible for his own life. If an individual becomes a pure devotee of Krishna, he is then delivered from the ocean of nescience. Then his life becomes successful." (*Second Chance*, p. 61) I can't say that Srila Prabhupada didn't warn or guide me sufficiently, but it's now up to me "to each of us. The Lord will not force us to understand.

Lord Buddha and Sankara both encouraged their followers to become free from sensual pleasure and pain. "No genuine philosopher urges his followers to pursue sensual activities."

Writing this on schedule while it rains outside. More *rain*. The electric lights are flickering. Perhaps the power is about to go off. Well, I have a flashlight and I have candles. It's almost time to begin *japa* anyway.

After discussing Sankara's teachings and their shortcomings, Prabhupada states that the tiny soul must have eternal spiritual activity. "That eternal activity is devotional service to Krishna." While in this body, real knowledge is to engage the senses in Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada then speaks of the special concession for people of this age that is available in Lord Caitanya's program to chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. The power of chanting Hare Krishna can be observed by studying the Krishna consciousness movement, where people give up their addiction to sinful habits. By cultivating Krishna consciousness, we can get out of the material world, which Lord Krishna certifies in *Bhagavad-gita* as being full of misery.

This is important to me. I'm not just doing a reading and writing exercise. I usually quote or paraphrase sacred text, then complain that I can't really follow it or that I doubt it. But this morning I detect within myself a simple and abiding faith in Krishna conscious doctrines "that the senses cause bondage when we look for happiness in anything other than serving Krishna; that the material world is miserable and illusory; that philosophies like Buddhism, Sankara's monism, and so many other concocted ideas are wrong or incomplete; that Lord Caitanya's concession is for me. He wants me to take the seed of *bhakti* into my heart and water it by chanting and hearing Sri Krishna's holy names and glories. I thank Srila Prabhupada for the faith I feel, and the conviction and urge to go forward in Krishna consciousness as much as possible. The goal "to return to the spiritual world or to become a more loving devotee in my next material body "is something with which I can identify.

While the rain beats. I am ready to chant. I'm in tolerable health. This has felt like writing a long love letter, or a letter to a friend, a preaching broadside, a poem for myself, a mission statement, like the ranting of ego, but dovetailed.

* * *

4:21 a.m.

A five-rupee postage stamp of Srila Prabhupada "did you see it? Someone painted it. I like to paint too, although I get paint on my hands and clothes and, of course, all over the canvas. But I can give my love there. Hare Krishna.

Now let us sing together. We're not so austere. We have been influenced on all sides, and not just for this one lifetime but for many lives.

We talk of our fathers and mothers, and sisters and dogs "people we've known from this one lifetime, but we give no thought to those whom we loved in our previous lives. Our children, where are they now? All shades of suffering and enjoyment from that previous life are transformed. We no longer recognize our old pains or moments of happiness.

Krishna advises we quit these rounds of birth and death, especially now that Kali-yuga is getting worse. Expect more horrors. There is danger at every step in this world. Only for those who have taken shelter of the lotus feet of Murari has the dangerous ocean shrunk to the size of a puddle made by a calf's hoof. Such a protected and fortunate soul is never really afraid.

While dressing Radha-Govinda in Their purple and gold outfits, I heard devotees reading *Krishna* book. First Narayana-kavaca read, then Syama-gopa-rupa, then Bhakta Mehul. The *gopis* gave both solid arguments and strong emotional appeals as to why Krishna should not refuse them now that they had abandoned everything and come to Him in the dead of night. They called Him the source of life, the Supersoul. Thus how could it be wrong if they wanted to leave everything and accept His shelter? Neither would it be wrong for them to have wanted to accept Krishna as their husband. He is, after all, the true husband, and He will never leave anyone who accepts Him in that role. They defeated Krishna by their presentation, and in the end, He accepted them and began to roam the forest enjoying their company.

Last night I saw the clock flash 10:30, then 10:45 p.m. I couldn't sleep. Late in the night I dreamt that my sister and I wore blue police uniforms. She drove the car out of control. I tried to reprimand her, but she threatened to tell my mother that I didn't drive well either. Then a regular policeman came by and wanted to talk with us. He'd probably seen the erratic motion of the car. I woke thinking that my sister was a subperson over whom I had no authority "a hysterical, emotional "sister." I had tried to be responsible in the dream, but I remained the "younger brother."

In that book on meditative writing, they say you should advance beyond writing down thoughts that you already know. The author compares that to a ship's captain keeping a log. He suggested a writer go further, developing stuff even while you're writing it. Be bop-a-roo, I want to.

In a cathedral he gazes up at
a stained glass window, light streaming
down on the face of the shroud of Turin
or Sid Torrin the
Toro bull he knows he has to stop this garbage
and write a better poem.

* * *

Krishna antics Krishna
serious ISKCON the
Communication's group plays Krishna reggae
merrymaking while money-
making the slant and buck
and the wok, sales for
sojourners only
who don't know ISKCON as it is.

As far as I'm concerned this is an old movement, and what Swamiji taught we will uphold. I am doing my bit. Hare Krishna. Here comes the fruits-only breakfast. We

didn't know until we wrote it, like a hunch or the outcome of a hernia operation, how we would cooperate and bless one another as soon as we could.

Today I'll call him good "the best assistant I have, the best second and only person in this house. And I'll bless my shoes for wearing well and give the paint in the jars special attention for being so colorful and applying themselves so well in their creamy textures.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

Dark morning. Wet leaves blowing to the ground. A light on on the second floor of Praghosa's house. I use the flashlight to maneuver around the outside of our building while I chant Hare Krishna. What breakthroughs are possible for me? I still have so much hope. But it will all be over one day, and whatever has been accomplished will have been accomplished. I'll be in Krishna's hands, as I am now.

Appreciating how profound Prabhupada and the Vedic teachings are, and how much I depend upon them. You can't find what he's giving anywhere else, really. Just snippets maybe, but not the complete truth. Therefore I continue to try to face Krishna again and again. The ship plies smoothly some of the time, the rest, not.

* * *

8:50 a.m.

As swans and crows are different, so "there are different kinds of literature for different types of men . . ." Crow literature is mundane, pertaining to sensuous topics or mental speculation, even if prepared in decorative language. They don't glorify God. "Such poetry and prose, on any subject matter, is considered decoration of a dead body." (*Bhag.* 1.5.10, purport) "According to Swami Sridhara, this is the pleasure of the prostitute hunters."

Transcendental literature is different. It is filled with praises of the unlimited Supreme Personality of Godhead. Even if such writing is imperfectly composed, it is accepted by the purified. There is a great need for such literature, so when we find it, we should accept it despite its outer imperfections.

Narada assures Vyasa that his vision is perfect, his fame spotless, and that he is both firm in vow and truthful. "And thus you can think of the pastimes of the Lord in trance for the liberation of the people in general . . ." (*Bhag.* 1.5.13) Here is the purport where Srila Prabhupada states that there have been many thousands of literary works for thousands of years, but "none of them have brought peace and tranquility on earth. This is due to a spiritual vacuum in those literatures . . ." *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* are recommended.

"Whatever you desire to describe, which is separate in vision from the Lord, simply reacts, with different forms, names and results to agitate the mind as the wind agitates a boat which has no resting place." (*Bhag.* 1.5.14) Narada criticizes what Vyasa has done. He praises the power of devotional service, which is always a permanent gain, whereas karmic activities result only in loss. He advises Vyasa, "You are the authorized representative of the Supreme, so please describe the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead more vividly." (*Bhag.* 1.5.21)

Idam hi pumsas stapasah srutasya va . . . Not only should Vyasa do this work but all intellectuals, artists, and workers in various fields. *Bhakti* is the purpose of advancement in knowledge. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada calls by name the scientist, philosopher, artist, poet, fiction writer, and so on. In brief, he suggests how they can preach and glorify God through their fields of endeavor. This is an important permission "and order "for all of us: engage in *hari-katha* in a creative and professional way.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

Just chant and hear, dears.

But he's worrying about marriage. Someone asks whether he can have sex with his wife without having to have children. There's that questions again. Prabhupada says one thing, but his devotee friends have told him something else. He says getting married is like placing a drink in front of an alcoholic and telling him not to drink it.

Bizarre scenarios go through devotees' minds, which they sometimes ask me to mediate. But I can't. The husband doesn't want his authority undermined, and he says that if he wants her to agree to sex, she should accept his order. The wife tells him she's not a prostitute. They both turn to the guru to see what he'll say. But is the guru aware of the new psychological emphasis that has been placed on the importance of sex in a healthy marriage? New? Does he know about the differences in the biology between men and women? Does he know that there's a revolutionary new proposal that women should not get initiated at all, so that they can be available for their husbands without guilt or vows to stand in the way?

This guru repeats the simple line. And anyway, he'd rather talk about this dark sage named Vyasadeva, whom the *Mahabharata* described as "ugly," but who was a religious author who appeared about five thousand years ago and is supposed to still be living somewhere in a cave in the icy Himalayas.

And this is supposed to be relevant for us? Look at you. You're almost sixty years old, and who knows what you're repressing?

Oh, freedom "I feel it deep in my bones. So back to the ivory tower to write my poems.

O Krishna. They want to know about the next life. Will they leave behind these questions only to be born again with the same fire growing up their loins? And me? If I am to suffer that fate, what good was it to have attained old age and the waning of sex desire this time around?

Well, at least I'll have a few years' respite during childhood before I'm plunged into all that again.

Because that's *samsara*, pal, and until you say
Hare Krishna and want nothing other than
to go back to Godhead
where you won't have any of that
ever, free of dross, and can play with Krishna,
serve Him, think of pleasing Radha
as a cowherd boy or

girl or clump of grass. Is that possible
for me? In the meantime, I seek to teach
with conviction and relevance.

* * *

Look out this window at the telephone pole and the tree. Mid-October, no Oktoberfest
of broiling beer, Thomas Wolfe was almost killed at an Oktoberfest in Germany. Stay
away from Halloween too. And what about followers? Who are they following? Who
am *I* following? The hardest things, including remaining alive and fresh toward hearing
from one's *gurudeva*. I thought if I associated with peers they could help me with that,
and it's true to some extent. But then I live alone the rest of the time. Each one does.

The dedicated poet fell over and fainted, got
influenced by Picasso and
twisted faces. Go ahead, take a picture
of Krishna and Mother Yashoda,
the one where He's opening His mouth or
start with Narada descending to meet Vyasa "you've
done it before.
Do it primitive.

There's a verse in *Caitanya-bhagavata* telling how Lord Caitanya once drew a
simplified form of Radha and Krishna in the sand. I do it over and over without fear.
Their forms are bold, but I always add squiggles, a private iconography so personal I
don't even know what it means. Around the edges I imprint sincere words, even when
they don't come from the deepest place. It's graffiti written while the cops are coming,
when the "bold pupil" was out of the room and the calligrapher went ahead and painted
the best one.

But best doesn't matter to me; I'll just do another anyway.

* * *

12:45 p.m.
Waiting for lunch.
Can't imagine I'll die
before it comes.
I write about it as if I might think that
but that's too scary.

* * *

I turn to the Eternal and escape?
Sure, why not?
Escape from death and void
dependent on *sastras*
which tell us the soul
never dies, he just jolts out

of one body, falls asleep,
and wakes up in a body new.

* * *

We pray to Krishna to please
give us inspiration to desire
no more birth
but to join You in Goloka
where Your pure devotees please
You forever.

* * *

2:36 p.m.

Narada tells how he was engaged in the devotees' personal service when he was a young boy. Devotional service is so powerful that it enabled him to become an immortal sage. He used his full energy in the Lord's service by serving His bona fide servants. I had that chance and still do. I seem to think the period of my fullest energies used for Srila Prabhupada is a thing of the past. No. My *youthful* energies are a thing of the past, but I still have energy, and it can still be used in Prabhupada's service right up until the end of life. "By service of the bona fide spiritual master, the Lord consents to reveal Himself in proportion to the service rendered." (*Bhag.* 1.5.23, purport)

The *bhaktivedantas* initiated the boy who, even at a young age, was so self-controlled. By once taking the remnants of their food, the boy became free of his sins. He became attracted to devotion to Krishna. "One can attain to the highest perfection of life simply by attentive hearing of the transcendental pastimes of the Lord, as Sri Narada heard them from the pure devotees (*bhaktivedantas*) in his previous life." (*Bhag.* 1.5.26, purport) This is especially recommended in Kali-yuga.

So, we're blessed, Prabhus. Wake up and receive the mercy. remove once again those bothersome coverings, and go out and bless others too.

* * *

3:15 p.m.

I've been having some good days these past few weeks. I hardly think of myself as a severe migraineur anymore. I've lost interest in reading about the miseries of headache sufferers as they are discussed in that on-line journal. Nowadays, a headache begins "like now, one is coming "I take a pill, and it almost always goes down. The preventative medication seems to be working.

Now, can I write after moving from a sanctuary to a place that's new for me? Breaking waves. The Krishna conscious gratefulness. I'm grateful for this science of God. It's better than anything else I have ever seen. New Agers can't match it.

O Krishna, Krishna. Strong wind this afternoon, this clear-cool mid-October afternoon. M.'s gone into town again. I wrote him a birthday letter acknowledging the

changes in our lives. It cost me something to write it, but I like the way it came out "upbeat, not complaining, yet hinting that the changes seem beyond our control now.

I'm still hoping to paint today from the captain's bridge, the hand moving where it wants while the self listens to Srila Prabhupada. I'm looking for communion with him.

* * *

6:13 p.m., Night Notes

I don't know what I'll say or who I am or how I feel toward Krishna until I begin to write. The teachings "I want to repeat them because they are the most worthy thing to say. But I also want to clean and clear my mind for Krishna. That's possible by introspection; I'll realize that eventually. Imagine thousands of devotees around the world repeating these teachings and subjugating their feelings and saying they have no opinions about anything "just repeating with no feeling. O Krishna . . .

Krishna, today I rushed around painting, carrying heavy boards outside (with the drawing page taped to them), and then worked out there in the cool, strong wind, spray-painting. I then rushed them and myself back inside. By chance "serendipity! "a few good things came out. But on one face I made the lips too small. Well, nothing I can do about it now. Hare Krishna.

Copying the masters the
great Vaisnavas
but better to follow them.

October 15, 2:10 a.m.

Woke last night at 8:30 with a headache. Took feverfew. It didn't work. Took Esgic. Couldn't sleep. Got up at midnight and chanted fourteen rounds. Now I'm thinking to rest more.

When I was awake I was thinking of a title for this volume EJW. Titles are important because they set the tone for twenty-one days of writing. In a sense, they shape my life. I thought of the Kerouac phrase, "No time for poetry but exactly what is." I also thought of Prabhupada's letter to me where he said that it was good to prepare a lecture in advance, but I had to be ready to speak at a moment's notice. I was thinking of titles like, "At a Moment's Notice," and, "No Time for Structure but Only What Is."

But of course, there is always some kind of structure. This reminds me of another of Kerouac's points in his *Belief And Technique For Modern Prose*: "Something that you feel will find its own form." I'm not against form, but I want spontaneous form "that which comes simply by writing throughout the day.

* * *

4:55 a.m.

A week's mail arrived last night. A Godbrother, writing at the end of September, says, "In a few days I will be off to Vrndavana to spend Karttika with my best friend: the holy name." He and many others go every year. I'm left behind as usual. I want to ask him when he returns how it went for him. I wonder how my brothers are able to avoid

socializing, controversies, the pressure of temple schedules, feeling foreign, etc., so that they can spend time with our best friend. And this: could they have done as well outside Vrndavana? This brother will probably reply that Vrndavana is special, then tell me that he has developed a niche somewhere in Vrndavana so that he can chant undisturbed.

Maybe I should give this EJW a Karttika title. But I'm not doing anything "Karttika" except lighting candles in the evening in an informal way. I did think of "Karttika At Home," but "home" is a word used mostly for *grhasthas*. How about "Karttika in the Cave" or, "Karttika in Ireland"? Something to emphasize the quiet that reminds me of what I would like to experience in Vrndavana.

But no titles seem suitable yet. Feeling will find form. I say no time for prepared essays. But there's no need to hold that up as a main theme or title in itself "just the fact that I write what comes. No theme but every theme.

Anyway, let me look at the mail. I already got up late with a rash and a swollen lip, my head clearing slowly. Call it good.

* * *

I dreamt that I was supposed to lecture in front of Prabhupada. I looked at the twelfth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*, but I couldn't seem to choose a verse. I asked Prabhupada if he could just speak. He agreed and said, "I can speak on the *nimiti titana* verse." He began the lecture and I scrambled to record it, but the machine didn't seem to be working. Then Prabhupada turned to me and asked, "What is that gold with . . . ?"

"Gold with no taste." He acknowledged my response, and I turned and sent Damodara dasa to get Madhu to operate the tape recorder, but Damodara refused to go. Then Prabhupada told me that if I repeat what he said, it won't matter that I couldn't record it, because I would remember it anyway.

* * *

10:00 a.m.

I feel a bit restless and incomplete today, because I didn't read Prabhupada's books "missed two regular reading times. Thus I am living proof of the fact that when you don't praise Krishna or hear His praises, you'll immediately become despondent, as Vyasadeva was. There is no other satisfaction in life. Even if we don't feel immediate joy when we read, even if we look upon it as a chore, there is nothing better for the spirit.

Last blackberries "I don't see any, but they may be out there. At Geaglum they were still picking them at this time last year. The confusions and dispersions of thoughts over many things. A man at the end of his life ought to simplify. A brother wrote me that one has to take moderate risks in preaching. Yes, yes . . . some stress is good for you. You can't just stay in a room in a house trying to avoid danger. Srila Prabhupada speaks of taking risks to spread Krishna consciousness. The main risk is that people may not like what we're doing "the nondevotees, that is "and they may insult or injure or even kill us. We risk our health, too, when we strain beyond our capacity. We risk our mental peace when we hear of the clashing opinions and face personalities so different than our own. And the risk that too much risk could cause us to fall down.

When letters come I can't patiently let them sit in their pigeonholes. I need to get them answered. Well, don't be in too much of a hurry.

A devotee referred me to a headache specialist in America. This morning I wrote a medical history starting from the 1970s and asked if he could see me when I go to the U.S.

Said hello to anyone who wanted me to say it by letter. Explained myself more clearly in a couple of cases. Then spoke with M. about choosing a title for this volume. He said it was something only I could decide. When I brought up that Karttika seemed an obvious reference, he said something like, "A Special Opportunity," or "Searching in Karttika." But it can't be *too* Karttika-oriented, because I'm not too Karttika-oriented right now.

The man in the moon I haven't seen
lately or the sun
or any Apsaras or girls
who look like them, just
my Gurudeva whom I've met in his books
and in my life.

Couldn't finish this because I just thought of something that should go into the medical history. I omitted that I'm taking a preventative medicine, and that it seems to bring good results. But I'm afraid of what it may do in terms of side effects. Is that someone on the stairs?

* * *

12:20 p.m.

Picture on a book cover, "St. Jerome in His Study." He is depicted with a long white beard, a halo, and a strong right writing arm. I'm not writing a Bible or the *Vedas*; I'm pursuing the Vedic version "chasing after it, actually.

Answer those letters and stay in the groove. Devotees seem a bit frightened or sobered, and some are angered, by the fall of the most prominent ISKCON leaders. One response is to look to one's own life and eliminate frivolities or dangerous tendencies. Because that's how they fell "the big guys. Someone writes me that he wants to be careful to be himself and not to take more responsibility than he's actually capable of handling, because "that's how the big guys got into trouble." Pride goeth before the fall.

We were going to sneak out and have a little surprise party for Madhu's birthday this afternoon (his birthday is tomorrow), but the van broke down last night and is somewhere out on the road. If he can't get the mechanic to go out and get it, he'll have to go out and get it himself somehow. We'll have to cancel the little party. But if they're going to have it, Daruka will pick me up at 2:30 p.m. and take me to the schoolhouse. Caranaravinda said she would make ice cream and EkadaSi cake, and the children have drawn pictures of M. as a punk, zooming around in the van while taking the girls to dancing lessons. We'll ask him to sing a song. I'll be there to give it credibility, if my head allows. Will I be able to do any painting? Any reading? Behind all day.

* * *

3:25 p.m.

I came out of the house into the yard. The placards in front of the flowers and plants suddenly reminded me of a graveyard with tombstones. Daruka took me in his car. I noticed a tattoo with words written on the back of his hand and an *om* sign. We arrived at the schoolhouse before Madhu. The children were all at their desks. Then he came rushing in, thinking that the mechanic was there. "Surprise! Happy birthday to you . . . "

He held up each card the children had made. Almost all were drawings of Madhu in the van taking the children to music and dance lessons or playing his melodeon on top of the van like a Chagall figure. In one, he looked like Narada in *brahmacari* dress holding a bouzouki and melodeon. One showed a harp in his room. Two men and three women were present, in addition to me and the children. No one seemed envious or uptight. They gave him little gifts. Tears came to his eyes. Little insider jokes were made. Then the cake and ice cream were served. I took two scoops of ice cream. These children are naturally well-behaved, not wild or raucous. At least not while I am around. Then Daruka brought me back to my silence. If only I can fill it with Krishna conscious effort.

I thought of the proposal that ISKCON gurus will have to attend the full morning program at a temple and chant all their rounds in public as the result of the latest falldown. I could do it in Wicklow "Santivana "chant a round with the children and attend their late *mangala-arati*. Unless someone came and inspected: "This isn't a full program."

* * *

3:45 p.m.

"O great sage, as soon as I got a taste of the Personality of Godhead, my attention to hear of the Lord was unflinching." (*Bhag.* 1.5.27) All our senses should be engaged in Lord Krishna's service and not otherwise. "Such realization of transcendental activities is made possible by many, many years of apprenticeship in the devotional service, but simply attraction of love to the Personality of Godhead, as it was developed in Narada Muni, by hearing, is highly effective." (*Bhag.* 1.5.27, purport)

Narada said he heard from the sages for two seasons, rainy and autumn, and the modes of passion and ignorance vanished from his life. You get caught in the flow of devotional service.

Be plain and gentle to receive the guru's instructions. Have strong faith in him. Follow him with body and mind.

I did, and I pray to continue it, although now in the strain of what seems like long separation, my own mistakes and deviations, and the disappointments caused by falldowns among his prominent men.

"As they were leaving, those *bhaktivedantas*, who are very kind to poor-hearted souls, instructed me in that most confidential subject, which is instructed by the Personality of Godhead Himself." (*Bhag.* 1.5.30)

* * *

6:15 p.m.

If today is typical, then the title of this volume might be "The reluctant Guy Pushes Out His Pages and Wishes He Could Write Literature and Poetry and Believes He is Doing It and Serving the Krishna Consciousness Movement in that Way." Or, "I Know I'm Not in Vrndavana, and I Look a Bit Odd, but I'm Pulling My Weight." Now if only I could . . . do more. Something that reinforces and directs the inspiration and the aspiration. Or, "Everything Comes from Krishna."

Read a paper by Bhakti-caru Maharaja, or rather, scanned it. I agree entirely with all his points: Srila Prabhupada has a special position as founder-*acarya*, and we must emphasize that, yet we need ISKCON gurus, need GBC authority, and so on. Well said. Needed.

October 16,12 a.m.

Ajamila was a well-behaved *brahmana* as a youth, but one day he saw a *Sudra* embracing a prostitute. Srila Prabhupada discusses how being an actual *brahmana* requires more than scholarship. There are various items of *sad-acara*, "including daily attendance at *mangala-arati* and chanting sixteen rounds of the Hare Krishna mantra on beads . . . Without practicing austerity with firm determination, we cannot approach God." Srila Prabhupada also mentions the qualities of a *brahmana* as they are given in *Bhagavad-gita*: truthful, able to control his mind and senses, clean, simple, tolerant, etc.

Another symptom is gentleness. Srila Prabhupada illustrates this quality with the story of Narada and the hunter. After the hunter became a Vaisnava, he was receiving so much food daily that he began distributing it. "Chanting Hare Krishna and distributing *prasadam* daily, he became a perfect Vaisnava." (*Second Chance*, p. 75)

But despite these and other good qualities, such as humility and nonenviousness, Ajamila was ruined by his attraction to sex. It's difficult for any *brahmana* or anyone else to resist sexual enticement, but if he's strong in chanting Hare Krishna and following the regulative principles, he can be successful by Krishna's grace. "The lusty people of today's so-called civilized society do not care for Krishna consciousness." (*Second Chance*, p. 77)

Children are sent to *gurukula* . . .

* * *

Yesterday I proofread the latest edition of "Among Friends." I particularly liked the wild writing session written in Vrndavana. But it appears in the magazine only at the end, after solid and straight *parampara* articles. It made me think of two things: (1) the advantage of being in Vrndavana and writing from whatever state of mind, senses, and being are evoked there; and (2) the advantage of wild writing, which occurs when you really let go, as in those timed sessions. I remember when I wrote that one in "Among Friends," we were staying at Tejah-prakaSa Prabhu's house. I did sessions at least once a day, writing as quickly as possible, hand moving across page after page. Lately I seem almost calm and coherent compared to those wild days. And I write in smaller

installments. I don't push myself the way I did then. I don't dig up the same gunk either, don't become too wordy, but neither do I get that stuff that jumps and flows like poetry and that can speak to fellow devotees. That kind of writing goes beyond the typical ISKCON position paper stuff, and that's the kind of writing I want to do.

Scratching my legs and arms, which are covered with a red rash. Is the rash caused by a clash in my medications? Try to resist scratching; it doesn't help. Tolerate the jacket of this body, which is ill-fitting and itches.

Krishna, Krishna. The fellow with the pills doesn't want to become another Ajamila. Would like to break loose in writing, but otherwise be well-behaved. He doesn't want to be another ISKCON casualty who claims he can start his own society or who slinks off to a private life and abandons the trust disciples have placed in him. In the essay I read yesterday, BCM gave an example of a *sannyasi* who left ISKCON, continued strictly for a while, then eventually succumbed to *maya* in the form of womanly association. BCM concluded that without ISKCON we cannot stand. Srila Prabhupada gives the example of Ajamila. I'm willing to stay in ISKCON's shelter and shape myself accordingly, but I can't do *certain* things anymore, like share a room, go to all the temple programs, and so on.

* * *

4:15 Timed Writing Session

I can write any damned thing. But I don't have such a powerful rush of energy. The contrary, actually. rough voice of Gurudeva.

Mr. Sanjooy gunned down by two masked men (black?) in front of his house. Dead. He used to give donations to ISKCON. I'm told this by letter from Nrsimhananda dasa of Guyana. Three nights in a row they chanted loudly at his house after he was killed, and Bhutadi Prabhu lectured. In one lecture he criticized the ladies of the house, who were spending time playing cards and dominos.

I agree there are better ways to pass the time. N. also sent me a photo, which was dark, as if it were taken on a rainy day. But perhaps it was just the Guyanese technology. Showed a frumpy ratha cart and devotees going down one of those roads I know so well in Guyana, with houses on stilts by the roadside. Is there a gunman waiting for any of them? Is Death a gunman? Or might he come in a gentle way, as Emily describes, "Because I could not stop for Death "/ He kindly stopped for me "/ The carriage held but just ourselves "/ And Immortality." Gentle like a cat carrying its kittens.

Bhagavata Purana dasankirtana, japa, and worship of his Govardhana-Sila are all very good. Said ISKCON troops were arriving every day for Karttika. Asked when we might be coming to Vraja. Others I know went there and are taking advantage of Vrndavana-dhama.

Hare Krishna. Don't stop. Do you mean that Ireland is not a good place to celebrate Karttika? What about the song of the thrush? The falling leaves? Anyway, I don't want to get either goofy and goeey. It will give me indigestion.

I already have it. Concern for this day. Listening to devotees reading *Krishna* book while I worship Radha-Govinda. None of it is ordinary "the story, their reading it, my

hearing it, Prabhupada's purports. Earlier Krishna told them that He couldn't repay their love.

I hear tinkles on the windowpane. When I go out, I had better wear the green rain gear, top and bottom.

A disciple writes me after three years. Says she has nothing to remind her of Krishna in her house, but that she feels His presence by the fact that she now sees her life as empty without Him. She wants Him back. I assure her with the verse that says even if devotees fall, they are not ordinary and Krishna reclaims them and gives them the taste of His lotus feet.

Brahmanas don't take political posts. I'm tired. Tears in my beads. Just go one more minute.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

Cold and wet outside. After I chanted a round out here, Madhu emerged from his house, and I greeted him with a "Happy Birthday!" I'm going to trudge around on the gravel for just a few more minutes to see if I can shake any ideas loose from this old frame. I wonder if that headache specialist in Baltimore can help me. How long am I supposed to live? What about this writing session business? I was just thinking that instead of digging and searching for a title for this book during these very first days of writing it, why don't I write more? Get into the writing life the way I used to during the *Shack Notes* days. It was exciting then and can be exciting now "the adventure, the freedom, going the distance, and yes, even how much of it I could get down. Even if I can't move my hand at a hundred miles an hour as I used to, I can still follow the dictum, "Keep the hand moving." And if I've grown more conservative or sober, I can still go wild and not fear that it'll be printed. That principle is still good "that I should express whatever comes and trust.

* * *

8:50 a.m.

Fog and rain. I got up from a nap at 8 a.m. and went into the workroom, but I was still sleepy. I tried resting while sitting in a chair, but it hurt my neck. I didn't want to go back to bed, so I laid down on the floor. Imagined I saw a big, deserted hill, like what you would see in the wasteland wilderness of the far North. I roamed in it and saw black moose or caribou. Then was I an art student? I was walking by myself muttering rounds, and suddenly I came upon my Aunt Madeline, who was wearing a fur coat and was also alone. I explained in a quick word or two that I was out walking. I didn't tell her I was chanting.

Then awake by the open window, hearing the roaring of the unseen mountain streams. I can see water puddled on the farmer's pasture. And I can see fog. O Krishna, if I don't specifically hear about You, my thinking and feeling will go out and wander, and where would that get me? It would be like relying on dream symbols or messages from the unconscious. I could choose a way to understand them or leave them unexplained, but I

would feel lost without You. I have to turn to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and receive Your association.

The letter from that long lost disciple was really sad. She said she ran away from Krishna and managed to forget Him, or at least to have no external sign of Him in her house or life, but she now sees that this new life is empty of meaning. The freedom she sought and seemed to have attained she now sees as a product of her own material desires. She sees a living lesson from *Bhagavad-gita* before her in her own life: the futility of attaining happiness with the senses, devoid of service to God, which is our eternal *dharma*. She says she knows it will be hard, and probably a long and painful process to come back. It would have been better not to have left. Let that be a lesson for me too "that sorry voice coming from the soul that was almost lost. Let it make me grateful. I could read that letter to devotees who gather without mentioning who it is from. Let's turn to Krishna specifically. Read *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, chant Hare Krishna, and pay attention to the holy name. Hear Srila Prabhupada earnestly, and do your service while thinking of and hoping to please guru and Krishna.

* * *

9:17 a.m.

God is not one of the created, finite beings. He exists eternally and is the entire cause of creation, maintenance, and annihilation. After material annihilation, He continues to exist in His eternal abode with all His paraphernalia. How do we know this? The *Vedas* tell us, the Lord tells us, the *mahajanas* tell us, and our spiritual master tells us. That's enough evidence. We don't need to oppose their words with the words of so-called authorities who disagree. Knowledge of the Personality of Godhead can only be known by devotees (*jnanyam guyatamam*).

"By that confidential knowledge, I could understand clearly the influence of the energy of Lord Sri Krishna, the creator, maintainer and annihilator of everything, and knowing that, I could return to Him and personally meet Him." (*Bhag.* 1.5.30)

We are marginal entities. Now we reside in the material energy, where we suffer, but we can hear the confidential knowledge Lord Krishna offers and learn that we are spiritual in essence. If we give up material activities, we can join Him in the spiritual world and serve Him personally "which is the stage of eternity, bliss, and knowledge. Narada attained it. "And the ways and means are open to all, provided one agrees to follow in the footsteps of Sri Narada."

Narada then imparts the dynamic lessons of engaging one's work in the service of the Personality of Godhead. "If one is a . . . poet, then he should employ his learning to establish the supremacy of the Lord." Use everything in relation with the Supreme Spiritual Being. Srila Prabhupada again and again lays out what has to be done as our life's work within single purports, single sentences. It can't be achieved all at once, but it's clear what we have to do. Work for Krishna (*karma-yoga*). "This service attitude will induce the great souls to be more favorable in bestowing their mercy, which injects the neophyte with all the transcendental qualities of the pure devotees." (*Bhag.* 1.5.34, purport) Gradually you will attain attraction to hearing about Him.

* * *

10:20 a.m.

Michael the electrician is here, drilling and hammering in my workroom. I'm exiled to the bedroom. Look out the window and wait to be allowed back in. The drill reminds me of a dentist. He's creating new outlets so I can use a floor lamp for artwork on the landing. Then he'll make a place for a light outside the building, and an electric bell system for the front gate. All this presumes I'll be staying here for some time.

But sometimes I think of moving around. If my headaches were to dramatically lessen, or especially if I felt the inspiration or call to serve Prabhupada away from this hideout, I would go.

"I've developed an attachment to deep seclusion." I imagined myself saying that to Samika Rsi, whom I imagined suggesting that it would be mentally and physically healthier for me to meet with people more often. Not long ago I read a poet's biodata, which said that he used to work at NASA in Houston. Now he lives in seclusion. When Brother David was introduced before his lecture, the MC said he spends most of the year in seclusion. It's a way to live and serve like any other.

* * *

10:40 a.m.

If Michael doesn't clear out of my room soon, I won't be able to do Srila Prabhupada's *puja* on time, or at all. I hear M. hammering in his house. He's tidying it up because the TV men are supposed to come by at 3 p.m. to film him. They'll show him in his cottage, then film him as he drives the van. They'll do an interview with him while he drives into Dublin. Then at 10:30 p.m., before a big audience of Irish traditional music lovers, he'll be filmed singing his two prize-winning Sean Nos songs.

Good, good. I just want to get back into my room, if possible, splash some paint, then fall asleep by 7 p.m. (after inviting Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda to go to bed too).

* * *

The mad poet ate a shark
in a bedroom dark
as compensation for a quiet life.
He didn't like strife and
begged off if he could
from plenty of suffering.

* * *

But the *sastra* says unless
you suffer you'll not be blessed
by the Lord who wants to
see how much you

love Him by your penance.

* * *

11:03 a.m.

Still exiled. Michael's stuff strewn all over the floor of my workroom. How will I be able to bathe Srila Prabhupada? It looks like it won't happen. I'll be lucky if I can get back in there for lunch. Srila Prabhupada, please forgive me; this is beyond my control. It shows me how I'm attached to a controlled situation and not willing to live without it.

Preachers tell us what's wrong with ISKCON and how to right it: keep Srila Prabhupada in the center. They write and lecture on this, then go to lunch and talk more and hear proposals and go somewhere else and lecture on *sastra*. Good. I call it good (benediction). Bless the hills for being the best hills. Bless the foggy mist, which is curling atop the hill (like a cat?). Bless Michael and his labors and M. and his. resent nothing, you fool.

I bless Srila Prabhupada "I call him good.

What about those who hate what I'm doing and actually hate *me*? Can I bless them? Yes, but secretly and from a safe distance, so I don't commit *aparadhas*. Sit off by yourself and hear the strong mountain stream after several days of rain and probably before several more days of rain. Thank God for what I have. Specifically:

1. Krishna consciousness, the topmost science of God.
2. The best spiritual master and a personal connection with him in my own history in this lifetime.
3. Eyesight while it lasts. A debility, or at least potential resources to draw on if I face worse.
4. Knowledge of the secret of gratitude and *tat te nu 'kampam*, as well as "Surrender unto Me" and Krishna in Vrndavana.
5. Just think these over: I am eternal soul. I don't die. The soul leaves the body and takes another one. I have a chance to complete my spiritual work. If I don't succeed, there will be another chance.

* * *

12:02 p.m.

I got back into my room around 11:15 a.m. Worshiped Srila Prabhupada, but distractedly, since the electrician was making noise in the hall. I forgot how to put on Prabhupada's *dhoti*. Attempted it again and again before I got it right. I plan to have lunch in the kitchen so Michael won't get the impression that I'm some aristocrat who is served in his room. I won't be able to rest in my bed later; the house won't be quiet enough. But I may at least rest a while on the rug in my room.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

The Supreme Lord wants us back in the spiritual world free of suffering. But to go there, we must be free of material infection. He teaches us how to purify ourselves

through work. "When work is, therefore, performed to satisfy the Lord, the performer becomes gradually purified from material affection." (*Bhag.* 1.5.35, purport)

"While performing duties to the order of Sri Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one constantly remembers Him, His names and qualities." (*Bhag.* 1.5.36) This is similar to Krishna telling Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gita*, "remember Me and fight." Srila Prabhupada advocates that we preach, spend money to propagate *sankirtana*, sing, dance, and honor *prasadam*.

* * *

3:05 p.m.

Prabhupada is at the door greeting the chanters as they return from *harinama*. remember that memoir from Gujarat? Hare Krishna. Just before lunch I listened to part of a lecture by Jungian robert Johnson, "Your Shadow: Friend or Foe?" I felt influenced. But during lunch I was influenced in almost an opposite direction by Bhurijana lecturing from *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Johnson says we have to find a symbolical way to allow the dark side of ourselves to express itself and to attain a balance of powers. Krishna consciousness doesn't seem to address this but tells us to act to please Krishna and engage our propensities in that way.

It's an unusual day with so many nondevotees inside the wall doing things that disrupt my routine. My eyes feel tired, and I'm on the verge of a headache. I can't go into the yard to walk or the art room to paint because of the workers and because of weakness.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

I'm attracted to robert Johnson's concept of the Shadow. He says we all have one. One look at a person and someone who knows Shadows can guess what his or hers is. For example, here I am, a reclusive, celibate monk, spiritual master, apparently humble, private, yet I write and publish books, and I paint wild pictures. Is that the shadow showing through? Thus I appear to have already attained some balance or outlet for the "left" side. But perhaps my Shadow would demand more wildness if it had the upper hand. I also live with pain from headaches. What's the correlative of pain? My father's strength?

I say I'm attracted to the idea of the Shadow, but I don't want to mess with psychological "inner" work at the cost of absolute spiritual work. They usually conflict. Sometimes psychologists *substitute* theory for religious truth. I gathered that was what Johnson was doing when he said the ceremonies and sacrifices in the Old Testament were mostly ways to satisfy the Shadow. He seems to say that God is really a psychological reality to be assuaged, not a Supreme Person who must be pleased literally through the sacrifices He requests. When the psychologists go that far, getting involved in their work or their processes can be dangerous.

I feel I'd like to talk with someone about this, but perhaps I'll have to talk to myself. I started reading Johnson because of his mention of "active imagination." He said he dialogued for weeks with his Shadow, who wanted him to give up his stuffy

respectability as a psychologist in San Diego and live on the beach as a drug-running beach bum.

October 17, 4:20 a.m.

Up late after subduing a headache during the night and contending with M.'s late departure (lights on, banging doors, TV men's voices) for Dublin. Karttika flame and shadow. The theory is, if you don't saffron and behave like a strict *sannyasi*, following all ISKCON form, then a shadow self runs out to the other (left) side of the teeter-totter. What does he do? How does he live? He may take himself out destructively on others or act in uncivilized ways toward them. The solution? Create a symbolical way the Shadow can act without wrecking your life.

I want to give myself in full expression.

Yes, but Krishna has *His* idea of what I should do. Why does that so often sound unpalatable? Why do I resist it? Am I a rebel?

* * *

4:45 Timed Writing Session

I can only give this ten minutes because then I have to get ready for my walk. Can't say I hear Vrndavana dogs yowling, but thank God and my lucky stars I don't have to go through that pressure. I don't *want* it. I feel so much relief just following my own schedule.

Flame and shadow. Medieval contrasts. I look into dark areas. Flame is devotional, is light, is rightness, is reading *sastra* with the electric light on. The good person you can depend on who is the medium to Srila Prabhupada. Shadow is selfish, the one who wants things his way and who resents everything else.

Or Shadow is the unconscious you don't know, the mystery person. You don't know who he is or what he wants. You can't see him because he's in the dark. He's the Mr. Hyde nature, the hider.

Hey, you had better sit down and try to understand this psychology stuff better.

I don't have to. I can be a Krishna devotee without it.

Good enough.

I repeat *sastra* "my *atma*, myself, different from the body, that me who never dies.

We are people aside from our persona egos as Hare Krishna devotees.

Are we?

We feel so much pressure to be straight. When an ISKCON guru or leader falls, the pressure increases. The rest of us *have* to be straight or . . .

Or what?

That pressure's not necessarily *good*. We have to relax a little too. We can't be uptight all the time because someone else fell down. People are looking at us, wondering who's next. It's easy to condemn the guy who fell, but it's not easy to think we have to give up our own funny little tendencies.

Hare Krishna. Up your rounds to thirty-two and you'll look better. Also, accept less worship and watch those artistic excesses.

I risked an Imitrex last night. If I do have heart trouble in my family, I'm told I shouldn't take it, but how would I know? I don't know *what* there is in my family

because I haven't spoken to anyone in it since I died thirty-four years ago. The old man did die of a heart attack, but he was, after all, seventy-eight. Was it heart disease or was he doing something extraordinary, like breaking down a door in a burning house? I don't know.

I need Krishna. I love Him. Those parts of myself are what count the most. Sorry I missed my *Second Chance* reading this morning and that my rounds felt mechanical.

Don't resent M. or his music. But I don't have to pretend I'm more interested than I am.

We think we have to pretend to live. But I'm tired of that. I just want to be myself.

So in this last twenty seconds, say, "Hare Krishna." The Shadow is the nonsense person who doesn't pay attention to the holy name. Let me give him a ceremonial pat on the head, fool that he is.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

We've got a new outdoor light, so I no longer need a flashlight to zip around the boards. Have to make my own breakfast this morning. Found a title for my book.

Sometimes I think if I allow myself little excesses, such as in art, I could lose out on eternity. But one could argue that if we repress ourselves, we could just as easily lose out on eternity. I mean, we'd have to come back to explode in another body. repression means we haven't renounced it but have allowed whatever it is to live dormant within us. Perhaps if we let it out in small measure, we'll be finished with it. Either way, we have to free ourselves of *all* material attachment and focus on Krishna "whatever it takes to do that.

I agree with the theory that we have different subpersons. I have a strong devotee persona within me who's certainly dominant. But we shouldn't assume the nondevotee personas are dead, or even that they're completely evil. We can use their energy and convert them into devotees. Furthermore, the devotee persona may in some way be shallow, nominal. I want to acknowledge and exchange with my subpersons. The goal, I know, is to become fixed on Krishna and to do whatever He wants, but I have to use various strategies to accomplish this.

It seems simple enough and very, very stark to say that everything extraneous must be given up at once except reading scripture and behaving as an ISKCON *sannyasi* does right down to the tee. But if you *can't* do it now, then ask yourself why not? Why keep making futile attempts at even subtle enjoyment?

Be realistic. That may be an even better strategy than pretending to be ideal. So when I say "Karttika Flame and Shadow," I don't mean it in a simplistic way, like the difference between good and evil; it's more complicated than that. That which is Flame and that which is Shadow can be interchangeable in terms of which one is best for me at a particular time. However, I know the *prayojana*. Step-by-step *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, then *prayojana*. Step-by-step on these boards.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

I'm lightly reading the *Bhagavatam* verses where Narada tells of his previous life as the son of a maidservant. (We don't hear who his father was.) The sages left and the young boy was dependent on his mother's affection. Then she died suddenly.

"Confidential devotees of the Lord see in every step a benedictory direction of the Lord. What is considered to be an odd or difficult moment . . ." (*Bhag.* 1.6.10, purport)

Although still so young, Narada then wandered constantly, trusting in God even in fearful places. Srila Prabhupada says that such risk-taking needn't be done today, "and one who takes the vow of renunciation of family life need not imitate the *parivrajakacarya* like Narada or Lord Caitanya but may sit down at some holy place and devote his whole time and energy to hear and repeatedly chant the holy scriptures left by the great *acaryas* like the six Gosvamis of Vrndavana." (*Bhag.* 1.6.13, purport) That's a good one for me.

Narada sat under a banyan tree and began to meditate on the Supersoul, as the sages had taught him. right away the Supreme Lord appeared in his heart. His senses became ecstatic. Then the Lord disappeared, and Narada felt a shock. We are seeking the Lord's form life after life; nothing else will really satisfy us. Still, we haven't attained the Lord's *darSana*, so we may not be able to imagine how blissful it was for Narada to gain it, and what a shock it was to suddenly lose it.

Narada tried again to meditate, but he couldn't produce the same result. Thus he lamented. "Seeing my attempts in that lonely place, the Personality of Godhead, who is transcendental to all mundane description, spoke to me with gravity and pleasing words, just to mitigate my grief." (*Bhag.* 1.6.20)

* * *

Dialogue

My premise is that within a given session the parties can be identified or not, or their identities can gradually come forward. For this first one I'll just start out with two voices, although I have no opposing parties in mind.

One: You've got to have the opposing voices speaking clearly.

Two: Well, I don't. Isn't simply talking good enough?

One: No, it has to be something you work out, like in therapy.

Two: I don't agree. I think we can just sort of sing or be a play for two voices.

One: You can't have a voice unless you are a definite persona. Otherwise, it's fiction, and our author doesn't like that.

Two: There can be a voice that just comes through the pen. He sometimes allows fictive touches for a while. The main thing is that we discuss *Krishna-katha* or at least dig at any falsity we find.

One: Okay, I can go with that. So we have a title for this EJW, huh? How do you feel about it, *Karttika Flame and Shadow*?

Two: It's okay. I hope he doesn't get too much into Jungian psychology though. But we're already into Shadow, the underside of what it is to be a devotee. Even that we don't dwell on. I heard Srila Prabhupada say that if a person is morose, he's not a real devotee. It's a test.

One: Shadow doesn't have to mean moroseness. I think the Jungian context makes it a game for us. If it's not strict Krishna consciousness, we can't take it as absolute, but we may sometimes use it to express Krishna consciousness "if it's favorable.

Two: I agree. I'm afraid if we "you and I, One and Two "get too agreeable, we'll stop talking. It's as if we are two elves watching SDG's affairs.

One: Yeah, and I say we should not talk unless we have more formal identities and even disagreements, or else we'll become Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, or the twin assistants in *The Castle* who go under one name (Arthur). They say the Shadow is hard to recognize, although another person can quickly identify our Shadow. Anyway, if we can pick up that sort of thing, we can discuss it in friendly disagreement.

Two: I hope this doesn't become another of those proposed repertory items that soon peters out because it seems contrived. That's why I said we should be permissive about it and just let two of us, like you and me, talk without worrying about the personas or the development of a logical debate. Voices of surrender "that's what we should be. Voices of the wind. Or of brothers and sisters, or two brothers, up late talking in the bedroom with the lights out about what's going on in their shared life.

One: Sooner or later a position has to be expressed.

Two: A position paper for ISKCON.

One: Or a comfortable position in a chair.

The two voices continued for awhile as the wind buffeted the house. What's an authorial fellow like you doing living in a big house? Why do you complain when you're not served hand and foot? Why does your body break out in rashes but not into smiles? I think you ought to paint. Narada's story . . . better get your lecture outline ready for tomorrow's foray into Dublin.

* * *

11:41 a.m.

During Prabhupada *puja* "and I'm grateful I was able to do it "I heard Prabhupada dictating *Krishna* book, the episode of Satrajit. I appreciated how stupid Satrajit was to go to Dvaraka and show off the jewel the sun-god had given him. He didn't even want to see Krishna or to honor Him. Neither did he obey Krishna's wishes when the Lord told him He wanted the jewel for Ugrasena. Of course, I thought I was better than Satrajit. But perhaps I too would show off such a marvelous jewel if I got my hands on it, and would be more interested in that than in worshiping Krishna.

My interest in anything that is not direct worship of Krishna is rooted in the same false pride Satrajit experienced. He at least had a magnificent, gold-producing jewel. I have nothing of which to be proud. And he did relent in the end and give his treasure, his daughter (Satyabhama), to Krishna, who accepted her. What do I have to offer Krishna that can equal that? Anyway, I heard it and thought about Satrajit's foolishness, how blind he was to strut around Dvaraka without offering respect to the Lord.

Then I heard and appreciated the fight between Krishna and Jambavan, whom Prabhupada called "*rika*" (pronouncing it Bengali style rather than in Sanskrit). I sympathize with the typist trying to pick out all those words while knowing neither Bengali nor Sanskrit. We did our best in those days; now they can make fun of us and

criticize the early editors. For twenty-eight days and nights straight, the Lord and Jambavan fought. I thought how the Lord likes this taste "fighting with His devotee, the chivalry involved "and of the devotees who fight with Him. He really wanted to get into it for an extended time, just go on and on, not a short fight, like when He dispatches a demon in a moment. This was a delicious mock fight with a worthy opponent. It is inconceivable. Robert Johnson could never understand it as anything other than some kind of collective unconscious ritual for purging oneself of the Shadow. We are so much more fortunate than that.

* * *

My, my, aren't you proud. Oh yes, are you the one? Who *is* this talking to me? Don't you know I'm a Hare Krishna fellow? Don't make fun of me. Anyway, even if you do, I will go inside. I am not accustomed to suffering. I am trying to avoid it. I won't expose myself unnecessarily.

My problem is that after being given freedom to pursue spiritual activity full-time, I'm not able to do it. Each day I practice an abridged version. You might think that if you have nothing to do other than to read scripture and chant more beads, you would use your freedom to dive in, but that doesn't seem to be the case. It's not just lack of desire; sometimes it's pain. But the taste should drive me forward. I'm still aspiring for such taste. Anyway, I've faced the issue that it's not just how much I read or chant or write or lecture but the quality of each of those activities.

Still, this is a wonderful life, and I'm grateful for it. When I get to talk with others, I like to tell them that Krishna consciousness is nice. My own experience of it is different than theirs. Those who turn to me for an example like the way I live and wish me well. It helps them to know someone has it honed down to the quiet and simple basics. My little trials are often inner ones, states of mind, searching for authenticity, and so on. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

* * *

12:36 p.m.

Waiting for lunch again. I can tell myself it's late and become angry or even sarcastic or silent toward the devotee who is preparing it, or I can use the extra time to write. Let out the steam in that way and don't offend devotees.

Hey, let me put out the paper towels in front of Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda so the altar doesn't get stained by any spills. And I'll take off Krishna's hat and flute, and Srila Prabhupada's beaded bag, so they can all eat.

The body can't bring us happiness "not by sense engagement or by the mind's creations. Only serving Krishna will make us happy.

* * *

2:34 p.m.

The Supreme Lord spoke to Narada: "I regret that during this lifetime you will not be able to see Me anymore. Those who are incomplete in service and who are not

completely free from all material taints can hardly see Me." (*Bhag.* 1.6.21) Srila Prabhupada mentions that we should live in a place beyond the three material modes. That means the temple where the Lord is worshiped. Nowadays, however, who will insist that living in an ISKCON building is best for everyone? It is often too stressful, too demanding. Some devotees prefer to worship the Deity in their home and visit the ISKCON temple occasionally. Some prefer to think of their own bodies as temples, and to keep them (along with their minds) sankirtana and be pure, then, wherever you are.

Lord Krishna says He wants to increase Narada's desire for Him, "because the more you hanker for Me, the more you will be freed from all material desires." (*Bhag.* 1.6.22) Hanking is increased through service to Krishna, by which we can experience His presence.

I think back to the service mood I felt in my younger days in Krishna consciousness. Would I like to remember it more systematically? I have already done that in *Letters From Srila Prabhupada*. The years after that too. Light and shadow. Whatever I did then will never be lost, but I'll still have to wait until I am fully mature before I go back to Godhead. We easily admit we're not saints yet.

So relax a little.

But be anxious, too. Srila Prabhupada says push hard, go all the way, don't live with taints. Try again and again to become unalloyed.

But . . . what is real and possible? What does "overendeavor" mean? Is it possible to be in too much anxiety in Krishna consciousness?

As Narada heard Krishna speak, we can too "by hearing His words in *Bhagavad-gita* and other *sastras*. Narada says he took to chanting the name and fame of the Lord, and traveling and preaching, and practicing humility. "Such devotees have no desire for material gain. They are conducted by one single desire: to go back to Godhead." They preach according to their personal capacity. Narada's body became spiritualized. He was free of all karma.

* * *

3:19 p.m.

Front bench. Past mid-October. Wearing a winter coat and thinking thoughts. In autumn, sex desire seems to be incited in conditioned souls, but Krishna and the *gopis* perform the *rasa* dance free from such things.

Light and shadow "is that like my mix? Contrasts. Good and bad. Johnson quoted Blake: heaven for form, hell for energy, then marry the two. But I don't want to engage in sin just to get "energy." Anyway, it's not required. Learn a way to tap energy from spiritual sources.

Anyway, you have a shadow. You're not a saint. So what to do about the shortcomings and material desires? Deny they exist? Hope they'll wither if you don't give them attention?

I write what Narada and Vyasa said in their perfect book. Life with the perfect masters "I couldn't take it with mine after six months had passed. My shadow was bouncing off the walls, going crazy. I needed my own space in which to serve Srila Prabhupada. Again, not perfect, not fully surrendered.

Then why don't I associate with Prabhupada's best followers? Why don't I go to more ceremonies or beat drums and leap and shout? Why don't I preach against the Devil?

Because the front yard here is hanging in there, despite the change in season. Just look at these lobelias and marigolds.

The roar in the chest of the trees "the wind in their leaves. Now as sunlight slants onto the page, casting long October shadow . . . Hey! My pen has a shadow too! But my right hand firmly guides it. O Krishna.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

Coming from the art room. It was a good physical workout. But toward the end I felt disappointed. One mask was too typically flat and happy, painted in circus colors with no character to it. The canvas under it was good, though, and the hermitage I drew in acrylics with Chinese-like mountain peaks and a blue spray-painted sky. Got a good beginning on a painting of Radha-Krishna, too, but even that was humbling.

Tomorrow we're bound to Dublin, where I'll give a lecture. I'll remind them about how fortunate they are that they have Krishna consciousness. I only hope they feel it themselves and know that the heart of it is the Hare Krishna mantra.

October 18, 12:00 Midnight

Ajamila took the prostitute in as a house servant, then spent his money trying to please her. It's an old history. My mind is filled with questions regarding my own life. I'm not degraded like Ajamila, but I'm wondering if I'm doing the best thing. Should I be living in a temple despite my handicaps? Should I be inquiring from and surrendering more to Godbrothers and not being so much of a loner? These questions come up regularly for me, but I can only keep telling myself that I'm doing the best I can right now.

"This rascal Ajamila, although born of a *brahmana* family, lost his intelligence . . . Because his intelligence was pierced by her lustful glance . . ." He misspent his long life and transgressed the scriptures. Then the Yamadutas concluded that he must be punished for his own purification.

I hope we will be able to get to Dublin (the van keeps breaking down) and that I may surprise even myself when I lecture. I'll be speaking about dissatisfaction of the self. I want to first read that letter from the disciple who has left Krishna consciousness and felt blessed years later with a vision of the emptiness of her present life. We are within the shelter of Krishna conscious life (living in a temple or with a Krishna conscious family, congregation, etc.), yet we may still have that feeling of emptiness. I assured the fallen, lost disciple that Krishna had not abandoned her and that whatever she did for Him will never be lost. I told her she could return to His shelter. But how do I reassure a person who is doing all that is required, yet still feels shortcomings? Yes, I hope to surprise myself when I lecture.

Yes, a life of self-scrutiny reveals both the flame and the shadow. "There are two kinds of servants: Maya's servants and Krishna's servants." (*A Second Chance*, p. 81)

Which are you? "Krishna is the only enjoyer." Do I realize that? Am I willing to accept and submit to it? How do I do it? The way I did it when I was twenty-six or thirty-six or forty-six is not the way I do it now. The way is not as important as the doing.

When we forget our service relationship with Krishna, we become servants of our senses. Then we are subject to illusion and punishment. A *gosvami* follows the dictation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A renounced devotee acts for Krishna as Arjuna did: "It must be done. It does not matter whether I like it or not. Krishna wants it and I must do it." (*A Second Chance*, p. 31)

But I say I can't do it. Or I don't know what Krishna wants me to do. Or *both*. If I knew He wanted me to be an active manager in ISKCON again, how would I be able to surrender to that? Can I face what I actually am? I depend on His mercy, and He accepts me. I'd like to say I know He accepts me as I am and I'm grateful for that. Your love, my Lord, is such. I tell devotees that, but here we read about the stricter side of renunciation. Is it ideal?

"The independent nature of the living entity is that he does not want to follow the instructions of another living being, however pure." (*A Second Chance*, p. 83) But when we follow our spiritual master's orders, our life becomes perfect. Some Godbrothers followed, became prominent leaders, and told everyone else to follow *them*. They gave hard orders about exactly *how* to follow, *hard* orders on Srila Prabhupada's behalf. But some of them snapped suddenly and did what they themselves wanted to do.

* * *

Dream: A huge, gigantic person of unlimited strength appeared. People were afraid of him, but he remained friendly. There were two of them, actually, and finally the only thing that subdued them was time. They finally died. People started saying that perhaps they had never existed. We were hoping another one would be born. It was quite a story.

After that, I dreamt of someone wealthy "an heiress or a Ford or something" who appeared on television with some devotees. The heiress gives one of the devotees leading lines, and he preached *Bhagavad-gita* to millions of people. It was wonderful.

I woke thinking that maybe these dreams related somehow to the Shadow. The unconscious was represented by the giants, and was somehow connected to the second part of the dream. Over-intellectualization?

* * *

4:22 a.m.

We have to make our mousy-tender Satsfer sound. We sing of *some thing*, but it's actually Krishna we're looking for. No other way but to find Him. Hare Krishna. Are you going to rest this morning or keep going? No, let me go out there, I guess, in the cold. Why not? I'm not *that* fragile that I can't stand up and walk. There's no place I'd rather be than a tent-air-walk-alone (admit it, with Allen Shorter and Young Tchicai behind Shepp in those days). O Hare Krishna.

Regrets? No, I have to shout and blow a horn.

And improvise
which means

I don't really know what I'm doing until it's getting done
you and me are
Krishna conscious sorts
and we will not give up the pretense "I mean the attempt I
get scrambled.

Abhaya dasi will be there, and others, who expect me to deliver something of my
own. I won't tell M. what it will be, because I don't even know myself.

Just plan to sing to Krishna
because it's a tender and loving thing
I feel
for my Lord
and His devotees.

Concentrating on my offering makes me appreciate theirs. We don't express that
much in our too-ordinary give-and-take "barely notice it, in fact "but I feel it in my gut.

Go write this in your Shadow book: the "lover man" is for Krishna, and I didn't
abandon any principles. I stayed in Krishna consciousness as far as I could. I recited, but
I didn't weep "yet. I still have hope.

We heard how Krishna's flute bewildered the demigods, turned cows and calves as
still as pictures, and led the demigods' wives to feelings of conjugal love. Hare Krishna
is like that for a good chanter. Srila Prabhupada demands that we become like Arjuna
"so in love with Krishna, His friend, His warrior "but how is it possible? We always seek
compromise. We think we need to take care of our needs too. We want pretty sounds day
and night and to surrender to Him, but not everything, not
everything
for the Lord.
O Krishna, save us.

* * *

5:23 a.m.

It's so cold it's biting at my fingers. I wonder if I'll be able to keep walking out here
much longer. The sky holds some bright stars tonight, but not too many. I rarely see a
star-drenched sky in Ireland because of the weather. But I do see constellations like the
Dippers.

Walking around and around the house, chanting without attention, but happy "happy
"to be alive and to be an aspiring devotee. I'm also hopeful that I'll be able to go and
lecture. Happy that I have the pep to write and sing. Everything will be gone in the end
except the Krishna conscious essence of it all.

Even that example that you can see the moon through the branches of the trees "well,
over the maimed, half-silhouette of the sycamore tree, which is just over Madhu's
thatched roof cottage, I can see the Big and Little Dippers. It's as if they're pouring
something down on this cold night onto that tree. Sometimes I think I see a shooting star,
but it's just a trick of my eyes. Or maybe if I look long enough "and can bear the cold for
long enough "I would see a shooting star. In fact, the more I look, the more stars I see,
but they're faint, background stars.

What am I looking for? Krishna is the real object "that Krishna whom Narada saw just briefly, then not again. Krishna said, "That's it, Narada, you will see Me no more in this lifetime, because unless one is free of taint, he cannot see the Supreme Lord."

* * *

9:10 a.m., Bhadra and Silavati's House

A light frost on the ground. Trees with yellow, crinkly leaves. M. had the Irish music station on for a few minutes, so heard a singer doing, "The Fair Maids of Loughrea," then some banjo instrumental.

Varroom! M. sped through the trafficless Sunday morning. I was not noticing much. When we left the house, I was so spaced out (or confident?) that I forgot to bring my Esgic, but then decided we should go back and get it. I lay in the back of the van, but I was shifting around too much, so came up front again. rehearsed some of my speech.

I may tell M. on the return journey about my understanding of Jung's Shadow theory. It's just that "a theory "but I find it interesting.

I had another dream that would fit the Shadow pattern. A cruel man was trying to kill two other men. They were almost dead, but a passerby came and, not realizing that the cruel man wanted to kill these two men, suggested how the poor victims could be revived. The adventure continued.

Coming into a town, a billboard showed an older citizen (he looked a bit like me) wearing a crash helmet and smiling as he rode a motorcycle. The blurb said something about how to spend your retirement years. Am I as foolish as *that* in my attempts for retired enjoyment?

I hear a church bell pealing. For Mass? Seems like more devotees here than usual. They know I come out to lecture twice a month. Despondency is caused by lack of Krishna consciousness "but what is Krishna consciousness and how do we practice it?

Silavati's two noisy young boys have decorated the stairways and hallways with rectangular strips of colored paper. They are hyped up more than usual by the guests in the house.

I was saying, that I was not aware of the scenery's charm on the way out here, or even the freshness of the autumn morning and the Irishness of the places as we drove through them. Years ago, I did a writing retreat in autumn and was charmed to notice the same things I saw today. Now it's too everydayish for me. I wanted to write notes as we traveled, but it seemed too hard, and I wanted to preserve my energy for the lecture.

* * *

12:25 p.m.

On the way back in the van, M. and I spoke the whole time. My energy was high from having spoken, and perhaps because I had managed to subdue a headache. We spoke about the Jungian theory of the Shadow and related matters. I realized that no one else can practice introspection on our behalf. No one can open the dialogue with Krishna for us either. M. said he does some things he knows he ought not to do, but he always talks with Krishna about them. We spoke of how as men we never cry. He says when he visits

his mother, he holds her hand. He holds his oldest daughter's hand too. He's trying to open his heart.

* * *

2:58 p.m.

"Having been awarded a transcendental body befitting an associate of the Personality of Godhead, I quit the body made of five material elements . . ." (*Bhag.* 1.6.28) Yes, I quit. I'd like to quit.

Yeah? Well, do you even believe in the spiritual body and the Lord's associates? Where is your proof?

In the *sastras* and in pure devotees "in those who actually have those spiritual forms.

But that's not an easy proof. I mean, it's easy, but not necessarily accessible to those with no faith. Narada now travels everywhere in the transcendental and material worlds. He's not afflicted by disease and old age like we are. He has no doubts about *sastras* and guru, no deviation into sense gratification, and he is always full of enthusiasm to preach. He's also fearless. No one can restrict him; no one can control him.

"The Supreme Lord Sri Krishna, whose glories and activities are pleasing to hear, at once appears on the seat of my heart, as if called for, as soon as I begin to chant His holy activities." (*Bhag.* 1.6.33)

This is a good verse and purport to savor and lecture on. Lord Krishna likes to hear His glories sung. He's attracted when devotees chant, so He appears in their hearts.

"Narada Muni penetrates into the presence of the Lord by the transcendental chanting." (*Bhag.* 1.6.33, purport)

We are always anxious when we are absorbed in sense activity, but we can cross the ocean of nescience on the boat of *hari-caryanuvaram*, "the constant chanting of the transcendental activities of the Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 1.6.34) Satisfaction of the soul comes from offering devotional service to the Personality of Godhead.

I'm reliving impressions of the visit and lecture at Bhadra's. I feel it was successful. Fire in fireplace, typical Irish devotee setting. They heard me speak, this group. They looked at me with fond glances. I feel confident in the role of relaxed guru. It's a role, yet it is who I am. Or so I think. I pray never to dishonor it so that those fond looks turn to disappointment or accusation. I pray to be protected unto death, following in Srila Prabhupada's footsteps.

When you hear from a devotee like Narada about his life, you can know it to some extent. These things are hardly even taught in the *Vedas*, but only in the devotees' lives and in the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

3:35 p.m.

I'm feeling too tired to go out and walk a round or paint in the art room. Talked or read enough about the Shadow for one day. "Can't" read more *Bhagavatam* either. What to do? It's too early to go to bed for the night. If I sit here long enough, an idea is bound to come. I don't want to feel the emptiness we were discussing this morning. A life of devotional service is satisfying.

I told a friend that I don't "see" autumn in Ireland "the changes aren't as pronounced as in other places "but I can see that summer is long gone. Yes, and there's a little patch of yellow trees by the roadside, a light frost on the side of a pasture. The sheep stand in the cold. The narrow roads were uninhabited as we sped to and from Dublin. M. expressed his satisfaction at being able to speed in such an unhampered way. Is this not autumn, even though you don't see the spectacular fall foliage of a New England fall? Even passing Army trucks seemed friendly to me today.

I heard that Praghosa may stop the Sunday feast program at Govinda's. All the work falls on his wife. Just now it's too near the end of the day to start thinking about it. But I want to be active for a little longer. A living being cannot live without desire. I don't desire a beard like Bhakta-Rupa's, or a small one like Krishna-katha's. I don't wish to get married and bear children. Or debate.

I am lucky to be in the generation initiated by Srila Prabhupada. Live it out a little longer, then . . . what? *Everyone* can become fortunate. In the meantime, we suffer in various ways and try to remember Krishna through it. Someone had to go through Vietnam, someone else's guru falls down. Take shelter of Srila Prabhupada.

An ISKCON leader wrote an essay covering all the possible crises with in-depth arguments and solutions, and concluded, "We must keep Srila Prabhupada in the center." Now no one should be dissatisfied. No one should take a contra position. But they do. They have their reasons why they're not convinced, why they don't take the politically or spiritually correct action as outlined in the authoritative position paper. Their quirky free will directs them, for example, to take shelter in a guru outside ISKCON. You can't prove to them that they are wrong.

Oh, and I'm not all right either. I ate a piece of cake with warm custard and apple slices. That doesn't make me better than anyone else. It doesn't make me worse, either. I pray that Krishna will please see and direct me. He is the father of Pradyumna, who was kidnapped by the Sambara demon and thrown into the river. He was then swallowed by a fish.

I'm tired, but wrote this as a ploy to keep myself going. Seems I no longer free-write in the old way. Got something coherent and reflective to say.

October 19, 12:02 a.m.

Always chant and you'll be saved from the dangers of this material world; especially, you'll be able to remember Krishna at the time of death. Chanting *hari-nama* will prevent you from the many dangerous times when falldown could occur.

Hard as a thunderbolt or "harder than stone." Lord Caitanya, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is sometimes liked that and sometimes softer than a flower. We can't always understand and shouldn't presume to judge Him.

Srila Prabhupada is here discussing illicit sex and how sinful it is for one who takes *sannyasa* to later have sex. He discusses Lord Caitanya's behavior with Junior Haridasa. On the other hand, we know Srila Prabhupada forgave his disciples who did this. He wanted them to become *grhasthas* again and to remain in devotional service.

It was hard for me to get up when I saw my clock say 11:47, but I did it and I'm glad to be reading this hard yet merciful instruction. Sex life wrongly used can be the cause of so much ruination. The holy names deliver one even from that.

Reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* Sixth Canto, the source of *A Second Chance*. The Yamadutas are arguing about why Ajamila should be punished. Now the Visnudutas will speak. They'll accuse the Yamadutas of punishing an innocent man.

I should be careful not to act like a Yamaduta in my mind. I mean, it is not I who needs to ascertain justice and then mete out punishment in each case. Similarly, we shouldn't be sentimental when coming to understand God. We should know Him with our intelligence. "However, once we have accepted the philosophy of Krishna consciousness and taken initiation from a bona fide spiritual master, we cannot argue with him. We cannot challenge. To do so would constitute an offense and a fall from spiritual principles."

The government should be responsible. . . .

My thoughts drift to thinking that I'm secure from invaders here in this Wicklow house (not necessarily true). At any rate . . .

My dreams last night showed me helpless in the world when thrust there alone. Let me then chant and chant, and hear the scriptures. Let me produce the best EJW volumes I can in the quiet concentration and the dedication to writing.

"One who betrays the confidence of a living entity who takes shelter of him in good faith, whether that living entity be a human being or an animal, is extremely sinful. " (*A Second Chance*, p. 92) This is said of governments, but it can apply to gurus too. When we agree to initiate someone and act as his or her advisor, we should be aware of what we are doing "the degree of responsibility involved. We can't abandon it later, even in favor of what we deem our "personal needs."

The Visnudutas then declare that the holy name is the best atonement for even the worst sins. "Simply by chanting the holy name of Lord Visnu sinful persons attract the attention of the Supreme Lord, who then considers, 'Because this man has chanted My name, My duty is to give him protection.'" (*Bhag.* 6.2.10)

Absorb this glorification of *hari-nama*. We may not be so outwardly sinful, but we need to hear and chant the holy name. Our "sin" is that we are offensive to Nama Prabhu "one of my greatest offenses that can be committed is toward the holy name itself! But even inattentive chanting has power. Don't sell it short. The Lord hears our attempts and will help us chant better.

And remember to insert prayers while uttering the Hare Krishna mantra ""Please help me to chant better, to chant with attention to the sound vibration, and to pray as I utter the words Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare."

The Yamadutas considered only the outward situation. The Visnudutas instructed them on how chanting frees one from sin. Srila Prabhupada: "This is why we are stressing the chanting of Hare Krishna so much . . . no need of any other process of yoga or atonement . . . "

* * *

4:35 a.m.

It is not fall time but is ink time, it is time for my thumb and forefinger to grip the pen. Holy Moley. I did the holy things "the worship of the sun-god (what?!) and bathed in holy waters in the bathtub. I gave a cow in charity in my mind to Akrura, I said the Okie-fenokee *Samhita*.

Well, you are being watched by your enemies. Catch twenty-two is the material world.

No, no, I came upstairs, then noticed I was two or three minutes behind schedule. Damn schedule, each round pumped out like out of a toothpaste tube.

Toothpick. Come on, make your pages. Radha-Govinda in purple and silver, Krishna with a silver flute. I am a reverent guy.

Shadow Wilson. Shadow cannot stand in the light of Krishna-surya. The Shadow is compared to illusion. Jung's whole thing is driven away by Krishna when a devotee chants Hare Krishna.

The piano of McCoy. The elvin sticks. The Stevie stinks. The dear, dark one can save you from the worst, Robert Bly said
he was in such a jam he could only get help
from the energies of the Shadow "as in the time
of Noah and the flood, different birds went out but
none could find land. Only the crow landed
his feet in the mud.

Well, how to apply it? Don't live to tell a sad story later: "I depended on Jung instead of Krishna and Prabhupada."

It is the man I love. It is the God I love. The guru I follow. The time we wanted to be with Krishna and stopped finding fault with every little thing

like the dialects of readers "my own New York Staten Island small-time bite on the language.

You poor skinny coward we know you

Staten Island Community College kid
you are a laugh and

your old Brooklyn College buddies knew you sex-starved . . .
He has to admit he's been a fool.

Gave pints of blood away without
courage but strength from
hearing the music.

No more no

more. It carried him but now he is in a different boat.

He worships.

* * *

I worship in my own way. I love God and feel the call of God conscious patriotism. I'm in the right camp now, and choose songs others can relate to. But I still like to play deep into that song line, spreading cheer and inventiveness, and remind everyone such energy and bounce comes from God.

Krishna never leaves Vrndavana. It's all explained in *Krishna* book and in other places. *Krishna-smaranam* it's called "the way to always be with Him. He lifted Govardhana, He stood on the chariot with Baladeva and Akrura (but that's one most devotees prefer not to recall).

I recall living in Vrndavana and going to Mathura for light bulbs in a motor rickshaw. Those days shocked a disciple who read about them and said, "I thought you only had that affection for Srila Prabhupada."

I could tell him that affection I also had for Trane and roy Campanella and Gil Hodges. And that affection was then captured . . . Swamiji . . . it's a legend, don't be shocked, I'm restored now, not doing anything bad, a good fellow. O Krishna, it's You only, and my Prabhupada now.

Anyway, time to suit up for a quick walk around the cement house. Pray for me. Krishna will help me too.

You publicity hound

ISKCON is good

take our food

believe our movement can save the world or at

least you should take a sweet ball and

visit our boathouse or the Fisher mansion, take a book, and don't ask where our gurus go after they drop out.

Here, look, look at this picture of the spark of soul in the chest

and this diorama

this dollar bill with "In God We Trust" written on it "see?

See this *Mahabharata*, this *maha-burfy*, this "You-gotta-reform-your-life, Mr. Nondevotee" book and

I will help you

to grow your plant

of devotion

to Krishna

if you're willing.

* * *

5:26 a.m.

When I came out of the house, it seemed that there was smoke hanging in the air, maybe from Madhu's chimney. Not quite as cold as yesterday out here, but still cold. A few dim stars looking like puncture holes in the universe. I can see a little distinction between the sky and the land, which I guess means dawn is coming. Or maybe it's just the nature of this night. No moon in sight.

I encouraged myself in my writing as I walked around and around, thudding on the boards until I get tired. As soon as I saw the light under Madhu's door, I began to wonder when he would come out. Life is so simple here. If I gave anyone the message that I didn't like it here, I have to retract it. I want to stay here and write. Walking and chanting, thinking of ISKCON from far away.

* * *

9:03 a.m.

"O Suta, the great and transcendently powerful Vyasadeva heard everything from Sri Narada Muni. So after his departure, what did he do?" Srila Prabhupada also taught us, then departed. He didn't die; he went somewhere else. And he's still with us through his *vani*. Nevertheless, we admit he departed; we observe his disappearance day.

After Narada left Vyasa, Vyasa sat in meditation. Now he knew he had to compose a literature that focused on Sri Krishna. But he'd have to get insight for that. Me, I just keep writing along without enlightenment or vision or knowledge or *sthayi-bhava*. I know at least my prayer is "to think of oneself as lower than a blade of grass, more tolerant than a tree," and to offer respect to others without expecting it for myself, "and in such a humble state of mind, to continue chanting the holy names of Krishna."

"Thus he fixed his mind, perfectly engaging it by linking it in devotional service (*bhakti-yoga*) without any tinge of materialism, and thus he saw the absolute Personality of Godhead along with His external energy, which was under full control." (*Bhag.* 1.7.4)

How was he able to do this? It's not something any ordinary devotee could repeat. Thus he is Vyasadeva. He saw and meditated upon not only the impersonal and Supersoul aspects of the Absolute Truth but upon everything "everything coming from the Personality of Godhead.

I need to pray "to free myself from envy, which is a block. I thought of a preacher and his preaching center and my ill will toward him. I corrected it and offered him my good wishes in my mind. I saw there was no reason for me to envy him, and I saw my tendency to be selfish and to care only for my own interests. I need to pray to overcome my distaste for the message of Godhead and my offenses toward the Lord's pure devotee as he delivers the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

Anyway, I know Krishna will reclaim me (and all of us) through His punishing agent, which makes us want to give up our false lordship and sin. He also reclaims us through the spiritual masters within and without. Vyasa saw the *jivas'* predicament and how they could become free. "The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyasadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth." (*Bhag.* 1.7.6)

I could go on copying out the translation to these *Slokas* and feeling their power. Deepening such feeling is the purpose reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Don't leave it sitting on a shelf to gather dust. The *Bhagavatam* can link us to the Lord in devotional service.

* * *

9:55 a.m.

Got to find a way to be, hour by hour. Slice your place. Huh? I sometimes read the *sastras* and sometimes write. When I write I could say . . . a small car just pulled up. It broke my mood.

Things come and go so quickly. I feeling shortcoming in my relationships with my servant-friend and my spiritual master. Beginning to question, "Who do I think I am to act as a guru and to write out a work list for someone I don't pay?" Why should he think that working for me gives him a blessing from God? A thought like that could paralyze me. I simply can't go forward with it. Too much is built on the assumption that I *am* a guru and that's that. I can't join the ranks of those who are already attacking me and the other gurus.

Then there is Prabhupada's position. One devotee wrote me a letter saying he's trying to understand and deepen his faith in Prabhupada. He says he never used to think about that; he simply accepted that "Prabhupada is a perfect pure devotee." Now, he says, "devotees" (and he puts the word in quotes) are questioning Srila Prabhupada, so he thought he ought to go to Prabhupada for himself. He's praying, but he wonders what it means to pray. He's listening to Prabhupada's lecture tapes for the first time, and of course reading his books. He also said he has a connection with and gains faith in Srila Prabhupada through me. Yes, each person has to work on it on his own. Nothing seems to come easy for any of us. Or sometimes it does, and sometimes not.

M. helped me sort out a big stack of my quickly-done paintings. I want to put them into three categories: favorite, maybe favorite, and not favorite. It was a humbling experience, because none of them seemed very terrific. Many are exercises, something I felt good while doing, but in unmixed, primary colors "animals, gnomes, and elongated, funny, cartoony creatures, and words written here and there like "*Vande guroh*," "Prabhupada," and so on. How can I claim . . .

Perhaps I am also deceiving myself in other ways.

Such thoughts floating down the stream of the morning like twigs and autumn leaves. Some of these subjects are too deep for me to grapple with. They just twirl around on top of the stream, and I notice them, then let them float under the bridge and out of sight.

A certain "something" in the air. I can see it from indoors. Autumn, reminding me of past autumns? I would insert a few autumn haikus here from Blythe's book if I had it. Where is it? Left in America. Living in the city makes it harder to see the seasons, but they're not absent. You have to seek them in hard-edged observances of city life.

O Krishna. I could go out and walk around the yard, or even outside the gate, but I just can't right now. It's hard to be a recluse, to be aware . . . what? I forget that I am actually cut off from regular intercourse that might give me more areas to observe. But I prefer it this way. Keep the boundaries tight, then see what you can see from there. That allows for less distraction in the end.

Even if I read only twenty minutes at a time in the *Bhagavatam* three times a day, at least I get that. And the other things "the sips of water, sips at the fount. Just don't forget to note things down. And come back to some of those topics you mentioned that were too deep, like letting go of envy, how to improve my relationship with Prabhupada, how to become a lover of Krishna, how to be an honest person, and how not to resent M.'s new life. Give him his space.

And while you're at it, be some kind of example. Yeah, I'm in prison, that's a good example for them. They can say, "I have an initiating spiritual master who never goes outside his yard. He prays "at least I think he does. Last I heard he was okay, because he never *goes* anywhere. But I can't say it for sure. I think he chants his rounds and rings the little bell." That's called setting a good example for disciples. "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna" issues from my mouth like a cold vapor at the end of October. Single crow on a branch.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

I thought of planning a trip to Vrndavana with some of the Wicklow men. They could protect me, insulate me, yet go about their *parikramas*. Maybe all of us could live at Bala's house.

Then the reality of Vrndavana's exterior came back to me. I won't discuss it again. I still feel exiled from Vrndavana "unless I can reach a point where I am ready to face all that, or where I'm brave enough to live somewhere on the outskirts of the Krishna-Balaram Mandir but not attend the temple programs.

Looked at the writing I did in Vrndavana in 1987. I used to jump up and down and join in the temple *kirtana*. During that visit, I wrote on separate index cards in different categories. It's what Peter Elbow suggests you do when you feel low energy. Just "cook" in little pots using whatever energy you have, and put them together later. One was a numbered group of short reflections written day after day at raman reti "newspaper report on what was happening, *not with me* but in the field with the animals and birds. Another group was on something else, and single cards on monkeys, trees, flowers, and so on. Put them all together and you have some Vrndavana writing that stands up even today.

* * *

12:06 p.m.

Y2K "the millennium bug. On January 1, 2000 the world's material facilities may break down. Hare Krishna dasi of Maine has written a paper describing the scenarios as she predicts them, from mild to extreme distress for everyone on the planet. She sees it as a great preaching opportunity, if ISKCON can provide for neighbors during such an emergency. What do I think of it? What am I doing about it?

Usually I reply to doomsday scenarios by reminding devotees that the main point is to prepare ourselves for internal, heartfelt dependence on Krishna. We must learn to chant. Preparing for a disaster is no different than preparing for inevitable death. It's a fact that I do lean on material comforts and technology to print and distribute my books. Am I ready for all this to be taken away?

It may be consistent with my being a nonmanager that I say I am not in a position to say *what* ISKCON should do (or not do) and how much time and energy they should spend on preparing for predicted shortages.

Y2K: excitement, fear, anticipation, distraction. "If we are indifferent to the challenges and opportunities presented by Y2K, we might just get blown away. We need

to get to work now!" Don't expect to depend on electricity and food from the market and safety in the home. Criminals will take advantage . . . They may be extreme in their fears, but it's not wrong to be sober and prepared to at least live not for material comforts but for the needs of the spirit.

What about my rescue and preventative headache medicines? My GNP? It can be taken away. All of it "along with the bed and the warm house and the regular meals and the privacy. All that I love here. The quiet reading of Prabhupada's books, my having time to work out my *anarthas* (maybe I have too much time for that) could all be starkly reduced. Even the mental satisfaction I have that I am leaving books that will live after me and let me feel I have made an honorable contribution could be taken away if there's no world left to read them. Is the goal of my life to keep as warm and well-fed, as protected and headache-free, as possible until I die? All material. I seem to reason that the material comforts support my practice of Krishna consciousness. I'm not strong enough to perform austerity, so comforts are helpful. Anyway, it all comes down to the chanting, no matter who we are or what we think of ourselves. It's the only preparation.

* * *

12:50 p.m.

No lunch yet. The cooks are tired or ill. M. suggests I eat *kicchari* three times a week and a simple sweet. Okay. Don't make any demands.

What is my lecture schedule? Think about who you dislike "his (or her) prominent traits may be your Shadow. That preacher "I envy him, think he's a phony. Not interior or sensitive. This is my way of not recognizing my unused Shadow power to preach more, or so the book says.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Saunaka Rsi asked Suta Gosvami why Sukadeva Gosvami underwent the study of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. The Lord is all-attractive (*atmaramas* are attracted to Him). I'm looking at the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verses and considering them lightly. What if there is a breakdown in the year 2000? Ordinarily, we might be traveling in the Caribbean at that time, or have just arrived in America. Should I schedule myself to be here in Ireland instead?

Lord Krishna is described . . . it has to
filter through my brain
and cultural conditioning . . .

Some of the English words are old-fashioned, and the whole notion of Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead coming through Srila Prabhupada's books is a very particular route. It's sometimes slow or hard to traverse. I think chanting *japa* is a quicker, more direct way for me to connect. Because it doesn't have to go through the brain in the same way. But when my mind becomes uncontrolled, the chanting doesn't seem effective either.

Lord Krishna appears as a person in the *Bhagavatam* narration in the seventh chapter of the First Canto. Arjuna turns to Him in difficulty when ASvatthama hurls

the *brahmastra*: "O my Lord Sri Krishna, You are the almighty Personality of Godhead. There is no limit to Your different energies. Therefore only You are competent to instill fearlessness in the hearts of Your devotees. Everyone in the flames of material miseries can find the path of liberation in You only." (*Bhag.* 1.7.22) This is a way to pray to Krishna when one of those doomsday scenarios hits. Now He who was not so real to us "the all-powerful God, our best friend "is all we know to turn to. Everything else is shaken or gone. Our all-powerful protector is all we have left. We chant and pray, but does He then appear and turn on the heat and electricity and provide the food we lack? Maybe not. He may want to wean us entirely of material amenities. But we ask, "Then You please become real to us so that we can depend on You only."

* * *

5:30 p.m.

Is this the Shadow? A lonely, late-teenager talking to his friend of the loneliness but in the shelter of art-music? Or is that just a man relaxing at the end of day? O Krishna, I am not forgetting You.

I keep going keep
getting
ideas and
some of them
may not be right
may even be
mistaken but I
keep moving and
feeling the beat
of life
Krishna the answer
always.

Imagine I'm at the back of a theater. Am I able to distribute books there? Some security man wants me to leave, but I bluff him, get to stay a little longer. But the people are absorbed, don't want to take books.

What is it called, the millennium bug? The Hare Krishna
virus and other things
that will knock civilization
as we know it
to pieces. It's already such a fragile
web
hung together with economies and
our faith in them.
Forget everything but Krishna consciousness.
Improvise the future even as you remember
the past.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna "I pray a moment to ask You, please, that even though my day seemed ruined by a rumor that the life as I know it "as we all know it "is about to

end, please don't let me forget You. Please let me remain in spiritual life. Give me whatever wake-up call I need.

* * *

If we knew we had only a little time left with our amenities, would we try to enjoy them as much as possible or would we renounce them? When we think of world disaster, so many things no longer matter. We look for what's valuable in our experiences instead.

I imagined us "a small band of devotees, or perhaps not only devotees "wandering the hills with no residence, the cold cutting through us like a knife. Would we lose the whole context of our Krishna consciousness under such duress? Might it just be uprooted, the whole thing that happened in this lifetime with the Swamiji and ISKCON? I hope not to be tested like that. It's so hard to measure our depths when we live a life of ease, though. "May Lord Krishna protect you from calamities," Srila Prabhupada wrote on the top of my letter of regret, in which I pledged to serve him and combat my whimsical mind. Thank you, my master. May I serve you always.

October 20, 12:04 a.m.

Thought upon rising: "Why not be a preacher and have the satisfaction of pleasing Srila Prabhupada that So-and-so has?" But my headaches! Dreams seem to say that my security and comfort will be taken away: Can I face and bear that?

Picking up again *A Second Chance* where Srila Prabhupada praises the chanting of the holy names of Visnu or Krishna. By chanting, we become free of sin. A devotee may again commit sin, but he sincerely repents. The worst offense against chanting is to deliberately commit sin on the strength of chanting.

Did I worry that by living in one place my life and EJW writing would suffer from sameness? Well, it won't happen. Life keeps changing, not only subtly or within, but outwardly too.

Srila Prabhupada tells how Haridasa Thakura, in an assembly of Vaisnavas, praised the holy name as granting dormant love of God and liberation. The three stages of chanting are like the ripening of a mango. "An unripe mango tastes sour . . . Initially we may be reluctant to chant, but when we become liberated the chanting is so sweet that we cannot give it up."

Chant while following the regulative principles. The *acaryas* say that Ajamila chanted Narayana inoffensively in his youth and even during his life as a victim of the prostitute.

The Visnudutas continue praising the effects of chanting. It's the best atonement because it "completely eradicates dirt from the heart." Even if you are unaware of the effects of chanting, it still acts just as a medicine may act without a patient's understanding of how it does so. After speaking thus, the Visnudutas released Ajamila, who felt great relief. Srila Prabhupada discusses atonement in the *Vedas* and other religions, but atonement doesn't act as powerfully as taking shelter of Krishna, which we do primarily by chanting His holy name.

Am I anxious about my physical well-being? Do I feel that I'm a spiritual failure or underachiever? Do I aspire to love of God, actually? Am I interested in artistic creation

and wish my own to be accepted as Krishna conscious? Do I want to grow in my remaining years? Am I just stuck in a phase of being mechanical with no courage to go further? In any and all cases, the chanting of the holy name is a prime opportunity to love Krishna.

Devotees go to Vrndavana. I watch them go and come back. I can take advantage of the essence of Vrndavana if I chant the names of Vrndavana-candra and VrndavaneSvari, Krishna and radha. Let me do so now, begging Krishna to give me presence of mind. Allow me to notice distractions and return my attention to the *maha-mantra*. Don't treat chanting as something to get through so I can do other things. The chanting itself is important "most important. It's what enables me to turn all those other acts into *bhakti*.

* * *

I dreamt that the place where I was living was suddenly turned into a Christian retreat center. We got no warning. Suddenly, many, many Christians descended upon us, turning our temple and *aSrama* into meeting rooms and lodges. Of course, as in any dream, I totally believed it "had entered into the situation. I was feeling bad that I would have to leave, since my place had given me so much facility. I even thought of staying despite the Christians, but I understood that I would have to leave and felt the shock of suddenly becoming homeless.

Just as the dream was ending, I heard the van pulling up. Madhu was home. I suddenly realized the dream wasn't true "I didn't have to move. But it made me aware of the temporality of situations. Maybe I had that dream because of all the talk of Y2K.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Moving along on the waves of ecstasy of well-being, status quo . . . it's both spiritual and material. There is hot water, warm rooms (although it's cold outside), and the prospect later of a nap in a well-blanketed bed, after porridge. All these are part of my spiritual life, and they may all be taken away. Therefore, the *sastras* warn us not to take more than we need. Then we won't suffer so much reduction. If to get hot water, breakfast, and a house at a certain standard you have to sell your soul to material civilization, then it's *Srama eva hi kevalam*.

Ho hum. Don't relax me too much, or I'll fall asleep right in your lap, even while you're reading *sastra* to me.

Witty.

He was keeping a train of thought, but lost it for someone else's train. Like mail. He tells me he cries when he sees Govinda with dots decorating His cheeks and a flower emblem on His chin. He asks if it's wrong to be so softhearted? Then he comes home from work and squabbles with his wife. What can I say? I encourage him in the spiritual life he lives and in the gratitude he feels coming back to the spiritual village after a hard day's work. I feel good reminding him of the five most important items of *sadhana-bhakti* and whatever else I've picked up from psychology, Christianity, football, music,

and from not refraining from seeing my own shadow projected to the right of the face of the person I'm talking to.

All familiar ground. Just leave me alone for a little while and I'll come up with more. But I don't want to lose my cool, my concentration. Lord, I do this for You.

* * *

Radha-Govinda in white outfits made by Maha-mantra dasi. I'm getting into a taxi and going to town. Baladeva of Trinidad is driving. He works his taxi only two hours a day now. Afterwards, he sings and lectures at Hindu temples. He has a new son, new

sun

too

every day.

Is it really gonna crash? Man, it already did. Baladeva knows a sorrow so deep you can't comprehend it, because his first son died. His name was Abhaya. Vasudeva and Devaki lost eight children. You have to taste those tears in salt.

But there are men who play their music straight through all losses, who keep the beat, and who never sorrow in silence.

And one last thing I'd like to say: Ani's coming over. I'll let him take some paintings. Sentimental?

Yes, that too.

But don't pour effusive jazzy honey on pancakes

no cigs

no figs even

this guy gets headaches. But

here, take a drawing and put it

on your wall

because the millennium may end

so I want to give out these paintings

as soon as I can

while the going's still good

and remember that

bhakti is never lost

Krishna willing

Krishna reigning

Krishna only king

kick-ass *jivas* don't know

only pure devotees. Okay I'll work too

protect me or not.

He said this.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

My morning walk *parikrama* is dark today "no stars, no moon. It actually is a *parikrama*, isn't it? The stone wall can remind me of the similar cement wall at the

Krishna-Balaram Mandir, except here I have no fear of suddenly turning the corner and coming face-to-face with someone I haven't seen in ten years. We'd bow down and I'd ask him, "Are you still living in Transylvania?"

No, not likely. He probably hasn't been there in six years.

"What about you "you still at Gita-nagari?" Before I could even answer, he would have made an appointment to see me. He wants to talk about the *rtvik* philosophy, maybe, because it's what he thinks Prabhupada wants.

And oh, my God, how can I wander around Vrndavana wishing I hadn't come?

In Vrndavana when it's cold I couldn't wear the clothes I wear here and just relax "I mean the fleece. Of course, relaxing here doesn't let me hear peacocks and Brijbasis, and my senses can't be absorbed in the *dhama*.

Because there's a great difference between Vrndavana and the West. I sometimes forget that.

But in Vrndavana, the austerities are forbidding. I don't mean the cold weather or the simpler food, or even the electricity turning itself on and off. I mean the austerity of heavy temple demands and the controversies that seem to swirl endlessly there. The headaches increase, and I have to go to class or give it, and the headaches increase and I worry and worry.

* * *

8:47 a.m.

"Citing the stringent laws of the Almighty and their reactions upon living beings, Lord Sri Krishna and the Muni began to pacify those who were shocked and affected." (*Bhag.* 1.8.4)

Srila Prabhupada says that we take this spot-life as our permanent existence, and under *maya* we fight for false possessions. "By cultivating spiritual knowledge, we can realize that we have nothing to do with all this material paraphernalia." You (meaning your body? No, the soul within) get jerked out, away from the body and all possessions, including the house "out of the house itself, family, everything. All of a sudden . . . And then it's too late if you're attached, because then your state of mind forces you into another body.

Relatives, survivors, are shocked when one of them is taken away. The sages were reminding them of the unbreakable laws of nature. We want to ask the sages, "Did my father (friend, wife, etc.) go to the spiritual world?" One usually can't say for sure. But we can say that their *bhakti* will never be lost. They will at least get a good human life next to complete their progress toward going back to Godhead.

Lord Krishna was going to start for Dvaraka. Uttara prayed to Him as a *brahmastra* thrown by ASvatthama approached her: "O Lord of Lords, Lord of the universe! You are the greatest of mystics. Please protect me, for there is no one else who can save me from the clutches of death in this world of duality." (*Bhag.* 1.8.9)

That's a prayer I could also use. I'm officially an old man. The iron arrow of death is flying toward me. In a previous purport, Srila Prabhupada states that old people (along with *brahmanas*, cows, women, etc.) should be protected by religion. "The protection of old men gives them a chance to prepare themselves for a better life after death."

Hearing Uttara's prayer, Lord Krishna took up His *sudarSana-cakra*. He had promised not to fight, but "He is better known as the *bhakta-vatsala*, or the lover of His devotee . . ." (*Bhag.*1.8.13, purport)

* * *

9:55 a.m.

What are you going to read, man? Or hear? Or do? You are a combination of West and East, of nondevotee and devotee, of unsundered and true, hurt and unhurt.

Yes, and I've been thinking. It could all break down. Then what? I'm so eager to produce my record, but what is it worth? Now, dear reader, please go at it and find yourself through what you've been willing to take from here. That's the main point.

Krishna's carrying His long flute today. Radha is wearing a cream-colored *cadar*. I'm glad for that. That was my offering to Them. Each day I try to offer something a little different, and I feel moved by Their beauty "me, a tiny soul but with free will, feel my heart move within me.

Rain. rainy. Play with words sometimes. Ma rainy. Christopher Smart. Turn to India and once there, find the Ganga-Yamuna, and if you're lucky, a Gaudiya Vaisnava, and revere the connection. It might be hard for someone to pierce through ISKCON's institutional covering to find its heart, but it's there, flowing from Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura, Srila Prabhupada, and now too from their sincere children. The whole disciplic succession connects us with Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna. Are we ready for such a connection?

Hare Krishna. At least today has been peaceful so far. 10 a.m. moving toward 10:30, which signals that I had better prepare to approach Srila Prabhupada.

I left out a lot today. I paused over considerations, and this created gaps, air pockets, omissions. No one can expect me to say it all.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Looking mostly at verses in my reading today. A good reading method for a day I have a stuffed head.

The prayers of Queen Kunti. A hope in my breast, eternal: may I always live to read these and similar verses as our spiritual master translated them! They are safe and sweet and come from the ripened tree of Vedic literature. Prabhupada recorded himself singing these particular verses "the Sanskrit only of course "while he played *karatalas*. *Namasye purusam tvadyam/ iSvaram prakrteh param . . .* Srimati Kunti-devi said: "O Krishna, I offer my obeisances unto You because You are the original Personality and are unaffected by the qualities of the material world. You are existing both within and without everything, yet You are invisible to all." (*Bhag.* 1.8.18) The Lord doesn't fall down like us.

At lunch Bhurijana Prabhu was stressing the purport to the first of the *catur-Sloki*, *aham aham aham*. Sometimes it's too much if my head isn't strong. But if I can put up with it, it's good to hear the emphasis drummed "God is not impersonal, the Absolute Truth is a person, we are not all and each God.

He is invisible; He reserves the right not to be seen by those who are not surrendered to Him.

Sorry folks, time to go and lie down with a feverfew. Maybe I'll be back.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

It's standard for me that if I don't have a headache, I want to know why I'm not writing. Go to the bedroom and face that window with the view of the telephone pole. right now it's heavily misted out there. Probably raining too, although I can't hear it. The poor leaves are shaking with cold. Therefore, the scriptures say, "More tolerant than a tree."

Well, that was my Vedic "hat" and now I've taken it off. I've been forgetting that there may be big trouble ahead for our civilization. I better plan ahead and get new prescription eyeglasses so I have a backup pair. Oh, Mr. Magoo, sailing along, are you?

I intend to write through whatever comes. Bly said the Shadow material was dug up for T. S. Eliot when he was grieving over a broken marriage and an insane wife. Wallace Stevens, however, didn't change his life, so he didn't grow. You have to change your life according to the things you learn, and you can't ignore the Shadow.

All right, all right. Don't ignore the celebration going on in the basement "I get it. Don't bury things you try to deny about yourself. Are you learning how it goes, the theory? Don't let it replace Krishna consciousness, though. Shadow? No, eternal parts of Krishna; sparks from the fire. For now we have popped out of the fire and are losing our heat. We belong in the fire, giving pleasure to the Supreme.

M. and I read *Govinda-lilamrta*. He likes and remembers a section where the boys steal *prasadam* from Krishna's *brahmana* friend Madhumangala, who begins to cry. Krishna then steps in to protect His friend from Balarama's taunts. This is in the end-of-day pastimes after Krishna and radha have separated and Krishna is back at His house.

Face that telephone pole, face yourself. Tomorrow for Govardhana-puja, the children have rehearsed a song and are excited to present it. I'll go over to hear it. They will also have created a small Govardhana Hill. Hare Krishna.

* * *

Saturday is Srila Prabhupada's disappearance day. I don't know if they will have a group observance here or not. If not, I will observe it on my own. *The Nectar of Devotion* says we should not ignore special days. If I'm left to myself on such a day, however, I usually find myself saying that every day is blessed, and my service is always being offered to Prabhupada. Group observance means official rituals and liturgy gatherings, and I don't see that that necessarily makes for a better or holier observance of the day. Still, it's nice to hear the other devotees' realizations. In the end, though, I always seem to feel restless if I hear one dedication after another. I can't help but feel that their sincerity is expressed more eloquently in their life's dedication than their often awkwardly phrased speeches.

Anyway, let me think of something meaningful I could do. For example, I could spend some time preparing material for a lecture geared toward Prabhupada, which I'll

give next month, or I could listen to a reading of the *Prabhupada-lilamrta* about Prabhupada's last days.

No, maybe not that. This year I feel I don't want to come so close to that painful memory. I don't think I have to face his disappearance like that every year. Actually, Prabhupada observed his own spiritual master's disappearance in the same way he observed his appearance. He said that too "that the appearance and disappearance of the guru are the same. The eternal liberated guru comes and goes, but he is always doing the same thing "glorifying Krishna.

Facing the mist outside and the shaking of the tree, the twigs and branches. They remind me of the *Bhagavad-gita's* banyan tree and how attached we are to it "so attached that we can't get off. Chant Hare Krishna. Please, master, give me the strength to do it.

* * *

5:28 p.m.

I live in the time of ink blots, so don't disturb me "not even you, Madhu, as you come through the door.

See these ink blots?

After this, I'll take a sheet of Bristol board and cover it with color and words. I'm an unusual combination, she said of the American-turned-Hare-Krishna. I'm a self who won't (can't) give up his Americanness, his existential despair, but who transfers it to his attempt to realize the eternal. She said, "You don't cop out and repeat only precepts."

Bly said Taoists think we should spend the second half of our lives avoiding institutions. Taoists wanted to become men of no rank, and two poets could walk together under chestnut trees and talk without worry. Bad poets, crazy-mild. My Dad said he studied me like a hawk. I wonder what he found. I'll never know. But I was weak, not strong like him. Is it because he was away during World War II when I was young, so there was no father to help me conquer my fear? Only a mother to soothe me and hug me to her breast. When he came back, I had years with him, a role model of a strong guy with Popeye forearms. He could beat anyone to protect his family "or at least so he convinced us he could.

Govinda *smaranam*, Radha *smaranam* "to save me! That's the strength I want now. Hare Krishna stuff.

She told me that when civilization breaks down, it will be a good time to make friends with the neighbors. She plans to go on *harinama* with a lantern, and she feels that people will come out of their freezing apartments to accept *sabji* from her hands and join her in the temple overnight to stay warm. We'll live and die all of us, by electric light or lantern light.

October 21, 12:02 a.m.

"You are invisible to the foolish observer, exactly as an actor dressed as a player is not recognized." That's *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I'm supposed to read *A Second Chance* at this time, but I'm also interested in making my own book full of longings for the goal.

The purificatory power of devotional service to Krishna, beginning with chanting the holy names, is praised in the Ajamila section and elsewhere in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. "The special advantage of devotional service is that it frees one of all material desires." (*A Second Chance*, p. 108)

I'm not always sure what material desires are. After you remove the serpent's poisonous fangs, it's no longer dangerous. When someone offers Krishna the results of his acts, it could still be that he retains desire. That makes his offer *karma-yoga* and not *bhakti*. Nevertheless, this is the best way for him to work. Does not a thing which causes the disease, when treated therapeutically, bring about the cure?

But someone told me of an American Buddhist who's actually teaching, "Do your own thing," as long as you put your heart into it as the highest truth. We say service to Krishna is highest. Sometimes preachers say (abruptly), "Give up all sense gratification, serve Krishna fully right now! The only way to do this is to move into the temple and to work under my authority." You know my complaint about this. Yet we do want to understand practically and personally *anyabhilasita-Sunyam*.

Pseudo devotees commit sins on the strength of chanting. Write what counts; live what counts. The *sastra* counts. Hear its codes. "Whatever you have done I shall excuse, but do not do it again," Lord Caitanya told Jagai and Madhai. When you take to spiritual life, give up the sinful habits of eating *bhoga*, mating, etc. Practice austerity.

"If one chants the holy name of God "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare "eventually he will see Krishna's form, realize Krishna's qualities and remember Krishna's pastimes. That is the effect of the pure chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*." (*A Second Chance*, p. 111) Acts of atonement don't promote us to pure devotional service, but chanting does, sankirtana! Lord Krishna personally purifies the heart of one chanting and hearing His names and glories (*Srnavatam sva kathh Krishnah*).

This is our austerity "to chant and hear. It's easily performed compared to other acts of penance. Mayavadis can't chant and praise God because they think He has no form. He has transcendental form. He is a person, but not limited like you and me. He sees, knows, and remembers everything. He has transcendental pastimes. Anyone who knows this is immediately liberated. "Simply by chanting the holy name of Krishna purely, one can come to understand the pastimes of the Supreme Lord and become liberated." (*A Second Chance*, p. 114)

A devotee desires only to please Krishna. "We simply care for Krishna and how Krishna will be happy. That is real happiness." This is the crunch, as *Bhagavad-gita* teaches and as is passed down by all representatives of Krishna consciousness. Can we feel that way? If not entirely, can we work toward feeling that way? Do we even know how?

I lay in bed listening to the rain. Such a nice sound, rain. I thought about the many people, Christians especially, who think they have only one life. I don't, of course, ascribe to that idea, but I want to feel some of the weight of that too. It will make me more grateful, more appreciative of the rare and sweet opportunities I have been offered. I wish to thank Krishna for each moment.

"The pure devotee's business is to satisfy Krishna, and as soon as he chants the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, he remembers how to do so." (*A Second Chance*, p. 118) We tend

to act for sense gratification because the mind and senses are drawn to it. "But we should draw the mind to the eternal by the practice of *bhakti-yoga*." Sense gratification brings us karmic reaction, quickly entangling us in birth and death.

Enough said? We need to hear it. And *practice* it. Burn up lust; be pure.

* * *

4:22 a.m.

Listening to the tape disciples made of themselves reading *Krishna* book. So many dialects. They made this tape for my pleasure, but I am not really worthy to receive it. Everything I do or think is so material, and neither am I generous.

But I want to be a live fellow who stays awake in spiritual life and who is ushered into the kingdom of Goloka. What makes me think I deserve it?

Talking to no one in particular. Or maybe I am a little loony. Let me be sober, since it's Karttika. Light a candle and think of the Lord.

Uddhava read Krishna's message and explained it. It was for the *gopis*, but even more so for empirical philosophers. He wanted to prove that He was everywhere and that we can never become separated from Him. All His energies are everywhere "so you can never say, "Krishna is not here." realize this.

I did a little, when I read it for the first time while living in Boston. Krishna "but it was an intellectual sort of realization. Love is something more than intellect. Krishna is everywhere. The Gosvamis felt separation from Krishna in Vrndavana. They never claimed, "We saw Radha and Krishna and now our mission is fulfilled."

* * *

He was playing and said he felt he was under the influence of the *karmis* when he was selling, but was relieved to return to the peninsula, where only devotees live. I agree it is a special patch of land where Krishna is recognized as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

To recognize that we have to be devotees first and foremost. I dressed Them in red "bright red "with gold trim, and wrapped red *cadars* around Their shoulders. Krishna and Radha agreed to my ministrations; They stood and received.

* * *

Sometimes we feel desolate, sad, or at least quiet. Can we make poems out of that? When Krishna is not present, His pure devotees feel the ache. They lament, "Where is Krishna?" They don't want to hear about anything but Him. They may even say the opposite, "Let us *not* talk of this blackish boy. He simply causes us grief." The problem is, they can't stop thinking of Him.

Vipralambha. I'm going outside so I can stay awake. We pitchfork our way through life. We pray to Krishna to deliver us from the worst situation we may be experiencing. We can be grateful if He simply assures us of His presence, but He may not even do that. Then we have to prove our *nistha* by not giving up. He may make us brokenhearted by

not being present before us "those are meaningful lines even for devotees at our stage of practice.

That preacher wanted to pry into my privacy and ask what I was doing. I'll tell him I make desolate sounds sometimes, but I'm basically okay. Why does he ask? He's curious, or bored, maybe.

* * *

5:24 a.m.

It rained most of the night, but it has stopped now. It's considerably warmer this morning. I leaned against the building, tired of walking, and looked up at the tall trees illuminated by the electric light attached to our building. Strange sensations. I seem to recall when I could actually just *be* and feel sensations, as in childhood, and not think so much beyond the feeling. Imagine being like that in a Krishna conscious state "to feel separation from Krishna, or just be in Krishna's land, His servant, without intellectualizing it all. At present, we're always thinking, worrying, wondering, analyzing, thinking over doomsday predictions. The person who sent me those predictions was pontificating, as if taking an *acarya's* role for the members of ISKCON. Why should she take that position over something like this?

But what if she's right?

We want to go on our merry way and not think about it much. There will be another day, mild or cold, rainy or not, but peaceful. But maybe not.

This body is tired. Sensations . . . Whatever we do, we could be completely in the sensation of being.

Or maybe not. I really don't know. Maybe it was terrifying to be a child and live like that, even though adults tend to think it would be wonderful. Children are so easily shaken. Adults have a more philosophical handle on life in this world. Philosophy can sometimes help us hold our fears in our heads, although we can pray, "Prabhupada! Please protect me!" as we go down the chute.

* * *

8:30 a.m.

Head full of visions of marriages and people's opinions of what ISKCON should be. Each time I slump my head forward it's like that. Why not read if I can, and shape it according to the purports on Queen Kunti? I don't know . . . I may be too head-stuffed for that.

* * *

9:26 a.m.

"You Yourself descend to propagate the transcendental science of devotional service unto the hearts of the advanced transcendentalists. How, then, can we women know You perfectly?" (*Bhag.* 1.8.20)

What I wrote earlier regarding "marriages" and vision came from a dream in which I met a fallen Godbrother who had grown long hair and become thin. He told me his

viewpoint. Earlier in the dream, another Godbrother was asking me to teach him how to draw pictures so that he could use drawing for relaxation. But he wasn't planning to change his life in any way. As for that first Godbrother, I couldn't approve his minimization of Prabhupada's instructions, but neither could I discern his actual needs behind his words, so I realized I didn't need to judge him.

Little waves coming. Tell the editor that I know she'll cut these things, but I like them too. I'm a little wave myself. Yin and Yang; what stays, what goes. Gratitude and acceptance, blessings for all. That's the view . . . of someone I heard, not exactly me, but it sounds good.

Queen Kunti and Srila Prabhupada. The Lord knows who is sincere. Women generally assemble in a greater numbers at any religious function, and their devotion is generally not showy fervor.

Nanda-gopa kumaraya, govindaya namo namah. Queen Kunti loves Krishna as the best of incarnations, because "He is more approachable." He played as an ordinary cowherd boy in blessed Vrajabhumi, not as an inaccessible king like Rama. *Gopas, gopis*, cows "everyone got to be with Him.

Obeisances to the lotus-eyed Lord. The Lord descends in the *arca-vigraha* in different elements and forms, which are then decorated with garlands of flowers. Queen Kunti describes how Lord Krishna rescued her and others from "a series of constant dangers." She mentions them in brief, each one a terrific test. "I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again so that we could see You again and again, for seeing You means that we will no longer see repeated birth and death." (*Bhag.* 1.8.25) That's not my prayer, but it's one of the greatest prayers, and I respect it, remain in awe of it. Many more ordinary devotees do experience at least a tinge of this prayer, remembering how Krishna comes close to them in crisis. They hanker for more of His association and mercy.

* * *

M. said he would like to put a mail slot in the front "gate." Then devotees who come with a letter don't have to turn it into a long visit with Madhu. Just now he was massaging the back of my neck and the front bell rang. I hope to be able to write more this morning before going to the schoolhouse at 3:00 p.m. for Govardhana-puja.

* * *

11:43 a.m.

Pole penance: that means, sit facing the telephone pole and write. I remind myself to write in categories, but then I don't do it. Still, I have a Vrndavana category, a dialogue exercise "the kind taught by Kay Adams, Ira Progoff (his method is copyrighted), and others "and there was another category I can't even remember. Here's the dialogue.

He: I ate a tart.

She: Don't get so smart.

He: I wield an ax.

She: Don't get so smart.

He: "I'm about to render the world senseless," said Balarama. Or at least He said He would drag Hastinapura into the river, and anyone who opposed Him was mad. When that man went to seek shelter against Krishna, the other man warned him that Krishna and Balarama are not to be conquered by anyone. That's the story of the Syamantaka jewel.

As for Vrndavana, yes, when you live there, your strain is transcendental. You may walk out into the lane and meet a Prabhu whom you definitely don't want to meet. In fact, you may not want to meet *anyone*. So to go there means entering a different frame of mind. It's not secluded like here but has become the Grand Central Station of ISKCON, all done in the name of pilgrimage to the holy land. How ironic that we have managed to combine the two: visiting the greatest spiritual *dhama* with the most intense social intercourse in ISKCON. It's a place to seek peace of the soul, to seek direct access when crying for Krishna, yet we can't concentrate there because of the controversies that swirl around our heads. When we get there, our mind is plagued with much more than what plagues us here.

Nevertheless, when I was in Vrndavana in 1993, staying at Tejah Prabhu's house, I wrote some wild writing sessions on Ecology notepads brought from the West. They were timed exercises, but done with passion. I drove myself against the clock for almost an hour each session. The driving myself might have been due to the long hour in which I would write, but it may also have been the fact that I was in Vrndavana. There was something desperate about my being there. Vrndavana creates desperate feelings.

And the sights and sounds that entered the room from the nearby dogs and *bhajan*s. I was beset with my usual headaches, yet I was teaching a VIHE course. This hour-long session was my one shot in the day to write at all. The words poured onto the page. I followed the rules I'd practiced "kept the hand moving, didn't allow myself to censor, went for the jugular. We have been publishing some of those sessions in "Among Friends."

Anyway, it's not so simple for me to go back to Vrndavana right now, even if I did like writing there. rather, I'll look at the things I wrote in Vrndavana and let that remind and carry me to do something here.

The other category, dialogues, I already mentioned.

He: I want to be a person in charge.

Servant: But I'm also a person. Nowadays, the master and servant relationship is not so popular. We are equals after all. I mean, we're all Prabhupada's followers. In fact, we are all servants of Krishna, *ekala iSvara Krishna*, and no one else is the controller.

Master: Yes, but you can't avoid having authorities besides Krishna. He has deputed agents in this world, and even in the spiritual world there are higher devotees we must follow. Don't become an anarchist.

Servant: I won't. I want to keep my job. I want to please you. I must, however, live out my propensities.

Master: Oh, yes, and I want you to. I believe in the importance of that completely. So let's make peace and find a way to keep our lives running smoothly.

Another category: poetry. I usually read one, then write one of my own. Here are the first two lines of an old Chinese poem:

The fragrance of red lotuses has faded.

Autumn settles at my door.
Okay, here I go:
The sycamore has dropped its leaves
the maimed tree
he cut down
to protect his roof.
I was sorry
but what could I do
in this world of passionate men?
Am I a delicately hued flower
unable to withstand rain?

* * *

2:24 p.m.

"My obeisances are unto You, who are the property of the materially impoverished. You have nothing to do with the actions and reactions of the material modes of nature. You are self-satisfied, and therefore You are the most gentle and are master of the monists." (*Bhag.* 1.8.27) We renounce something in order to get something better. Krishna is best, and He's not partial.

Fifteen minutes before we leave for the Govardhana-puja festival. I'm relaxed right now, but I'll bring an Esgic just in case. I'll be back by four. Will I paint then?

Queen Kunti says she's bewildered by the sight of baby Krishna crying in fear before Mother Yashoda's stick, "although Fear personified is afraid of You." The Supreme Lord prefers this kind of service exchange with His devotee, where pure affection supersedes reverence.

Mother Yashoda wanted to tie up her naughty, transcendental Damodara. Seeing the rope, Damodara began to weep. Kunti-devi adores this picture of the Lord. She sees the Lord with reverence and does not forget His position, and thus she acknowledges Mother Yashoda's superior position. Mother Yashoda could "control even the all-powerful Lord as her beloved child." (*Bhag.* 1.8.31, purport)

* * *

4:10 p.m.

A sweet and easy family program at the schoolhouse. They offered me a chair, because I had nothing to perform. I was able to just relax and watch the children's play and songs. But the room was warm. I felt uncomfortable, but hesitated to take off my sweater, thinking I'd be leaving soon anyway. Sweat trickled down my sides. Now I'm back in my room alone, but I feel tired, and I feel a weakening behind my right eye.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

I'm alone in the house. They said the telephone company would come to see where the house is located. I don't have to worry. I popped an Esgic. I'm alone. "Please bring

me closer to You, Lord," M. sang in the schoolhouse. Yes, yes, that's a good idea. No nonsense bop. Drinkin' hard man. Great. Great. Burps and blips. Sounds.

I was simply too hot. *Any* strain on this body . . . This *kurta* is ripped, the cuff stained with ink. Well, go on anyway and
build a sacrificial fire
to Krishna
to please Him/ I don't
mean to burn anyone to
hurt anyone but we shout
the cars, the cards
coming
tumbling down.

* * *

A monk like me could be
tempted. He prays that he
wants a new blanket and safe
bed alone and rise you
mean from a dream
eclectic.

* * *

Those dreams mean what?
He wuz not a hippie
not a heady priest or
tiger or papier mache
target bomber

* * *

he's got control. Calm as he
Reaches out/ a priest/
standing before a stained glass window
the *garda* bursting in or worse/ masked men
leering while he turns to inner resources.

* * *

Squeak and squirrel/ on guard
he's praying to Lord Krishna whom he
trusts with his keys
his life because he knows
he has to trust he has
no choice.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Alone. Owning your shadow? I suggest you write a little. Be calm, captain. You will light the candle, pick out the Lord's clothing for tomorrow, order books you will be relieved not to read (better to read only Prabhupada). It's hard to be so exclusive, but I try. I hear a clock alarm. Enter the familiar philosophy. Only Krishna could enter the long tunnel leading to Jambavan's cave. One devotee remarked to me how it was disturbing that the residents of Dvaraka spoke against Krishna when things appeared inauspicious. Things happened there while Akrura left with the jewel. They were superstitious, it seems. These things happen in *lilas*. Therefore, we understand them according to Prabhupada's teachings.

Dancing and singing in Lord Caitanya's movement. He was seen in the audience enjoying the play. A young girl played Krishna. Her torso was covered with dusky blue powder. She said, "Indra is poofed up. I will show him a lesson!" They made Indra a modern guy with black glasses, black pants, and a black T-shirt. He shouted with preadolescent rage that the *yajna* was not being offered to him. I was glad when that part was over "so loud! They sang a Mangalananda song. It was nice.

Govardhana Hill like an umbrella and everybody under it. For a week. Indra was defeated. He forgot his lines and Mother Dina cued him from behind the scenes. I gave her my garland. We applauded. M. sang two songs. He should write more.

Now may you sleep well under a blanket that reminds you of being six years old and sleeping at Aunt Mary's apartment.

* * *

6:30 p.m., Night Notes

A *Second Chance* stacked on top of the *Bhagavatam* volume, ready for me to open at midnight, if Krishna will allow. Then I'll burrow into the familiar "yet astounding, authoritative, not-to-be-found-anywhere-else" teachings of Lord Caitanya coming down through Srila Prabhupada. That's my prayer "to rise and read with faith, then move to *japa* with hope.

October 22, 12:06 a.m.

Woke up with the alarm clock from a dream. Devotees were reading a novel that disparagingly described ISKCON as "the evangelistic movement." They sent a devotee to become a full-time student at the university, where he went about in full uniform, harassing the students in the name of preaching. "And of course not a single person ever joined their movement from this." I was convinced this was true and was going to show it to M. to prove how ineffective this kind of preaching can be. Instead, I showed it to Hridaya-Caitanya. He said, "No, we *do* make devotees by such preaching," and he showed me evidence.

A *Second Chance*. "Here the Visnudutas advise us in the same way: If we want to be freed from the reactions of karma, we should glorify the Supreme Lord twenty-four

hours a day. That will purify us." (*A Second Chance*, p. 118) If we practice one or more of the nine processes of devotional service throughout our lives, we will be sure to remember Krishna at the time of death. We cannot *only* chant, so we do practical services and thus remain constantly engaged. Although Srila Prabhupada says this about practical service, he then goes on to cite verses that state that constant chanting is recommended. It's really the way to be practiced for the time of death. "The chanting of Krishna's holy name is like a sun rising in one's darkened heart." (*A Second Chance*, p. 121)

"Krishna knows everyone's intentions or motives, and His mercy is especially meant for those who are sincerely engaged in His service." We don't take Krishna's mercy and protection, however. It's up to each individual to do so. As we render more and more service, we become capable of receiving more of Krishna's mercy.

Srila Prabhupada gives examples that the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra is effective even if we don't have faith. Medicine works like that. Srila Haridasa Thakura also said that chanting Hare Krishna loudly will benefit every living entity.

Ajamila gained an extended lease on life. He returned to full consciousness and became free of fear. He offered prayers to the Lord's devotees, the Visnudutas. Srila Prabhupada explains that the Six Gosvamis undertook the laborious task of researching Vedic literature to present his conclusions nicely in their own writings. They did it out of compassion for humanity.

The next section is called "Ajamila repents." Srila Prabhupada states that it's a symptom of a devotee's purification to lament past grievous conduct. If we actually repent and refrain from further sinful acts, and if we go on chanting and serving the Lord and His devotees, we will certainly be purified.

We are indebted to many living beings. The only way to liquidate the debt is to take shelter of Krishna's lotus feet.

All right, enough quick reading and note-taking for now. I'm passing quickly over the subjects. Ajamila is repenting his past behavior, but now his debts are absolved. At each step in his story, there are lessons for all of us. I noted them and hope to apply them. Don't go after prostitutes. Protect yourself by *hari-nama*. Try to chant without offenses, especially the offense of committing sins on the strength of chanting. Hear the glories of chanting and believe them. Hope to remember Krishna at the end of life by practicing, practicing, practicing while you live.

My body was full of rash when I woke at 10 p.m. It was hard to refrain from scratching or even to fall asleep again. But now here's a clear patch, open enough to make a run into chanting fourteen rounds. Go for it. Note the distractions, then note the combination of names. Hear Srila Prabhupada chanting so earnestly and maturely. And keep track with your clocks. May Krishna grant you mercy.

* * *

I dreamt of an idea for how I could change my life. My parents were involved, offering me material facility and wanting me to somehow stay with them. But I wanted to travel and write, like a monk. I thought of Santoka Taneda "not of him, but a Krishna conscious version of him. I even thought of taking a group of students traveling with me.

But I feel attached to my parents, who are growing older and more needy. I would want them to understand what I was doing, and I would hope to visit them on my travels. But they would have to accept me. I tried to build resolution to ask Krishna to help me with this desire to be a wandering *sannyasi* who preaches through his poetry.

I tried in the dream to explain all this to Rama-Raya. I told him how Taneda wrote very short poems. He didn't preach his message to his audience but gave them images that would awaken their own spiritual awareness. He gave only details: "The rain fell into my begging bowl/ it became my afternoon meal." No lengthy discourse, but you feel his renunciation. I want to preach like that.

* * *

4:24 a.m.

I worshiped my Deities with a touch of haste, because I wanted to get in a writing session before "we" (I mean, me) go out for our walk. Bird calls "I can't hear so many this early in the morning when it's cold.

Srila Prabhupada talking on *bauma* Vrndavana. There is one in each universe, and the pure lover of Krishna and Radha goes there after his life is over for further training. After that, he goes to the original Goloka Vrndavana. As Prabhupada spoke, some boys entered the lecture area. Srila Prabhupada stopped his talk and asked that they be given *prasada*, "One in hand." This was in Vrndavana 1972. Nice.

The week's mail has arrived. It was sitting in a bag in the front hallway when I went down at 3:15 a.m. I opened the packages and found among the letters three sets of clothes for Srila Prabhupada, tapes of a Godbrother's lectures, three sentimental letters from the same young girl, letters from someone in jail, and many with no return address. I didn't reply to anything yet, but I'm stuffing the lower pigeon holes with them.

Every day I just write, me and Krishna. If the tiny soul is so powerful that in a second it can travel to the spiritual world, just imagine how powerful is the Supreme Soul. The *gopis* think of Him as the handsome youth of Vrndavana. They love Him as the best of all possible youths.

I can't say it right "can't talk of subjects meant for liberated persons "but I'd like to honor Him. Therefore, I go as far as I dare in trying to love the Lord at any moment of time.

But first a little song.

Way down yonder in New Orleans
there's a temple for Krishna that used to be
under a tree.

Sad stories to be told
by all who participated
there.

Now let's hear something good and transcendental. I told you the souls come into existence. They are reborn, so if you

gets the chance
to dance with
tulasi and Lord Caitanya

count yourself lucky.

Sing a little song of grace and know Krishna is the source of all. He was before creation with all his *parisads*, and now His energies sustain both spiritual and material worlds. After creation He'll be the only one. He "alone" means that He is with His dear ones in the liberated *dhama*. That's the truth we live by, and a lot more than that. Keep it in your hat. And don't forget that your spiritual master is one of the dear ones. Because of him you don't live through countless blues (except the transcendental kind) but countless blessings.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

Dark out here. I can see only one distant star. It rained last night, but it has stopped. I say it rained all night, but if that was actually true, I'd be hearing the streams louder. At least it rained some of last night.

It's quiet now. I see the garden there, my inner garden too, waiting to be cultivated. Therefore, I am eager to be alive.

My mind was playing last night with the idea of the best place to die. Of course, the official and obvious and true answer to that is Vrndavana. If I die in Vrndavana, they say, I'll go back to Godhead. Yet I felt myself hesitate. I wondered how it would be to die in one's *prabhu-datta-deSa*, not thinking of the "old sod," but meditating on Vrndavana, projecting my desire. The real point is the state of mind with which we leave the body. The irony is that we tend to think less of devotees who don't die in Vrndavana. I don't have an anti-Vrndavana attitude; I'm talking about something else.

* * *

10:35 a.m.

Answered mail. Swansed some hayers. Humored some galwarts. Assembled some triggers and rebounded to you. I told a correspondent, "So now you're in jail again, but I pray it may be illuminated by love of God." Someone who was really stressed wrote and said he hoped he wasn't giving me a headache. I replied, "I have a way of insulating myself against that." But then I started to get one. Maybe I'm not as insulated as I think. Someone said I seem interested in humor, but that seemed to drain my sense of humor and I made no jokes. Someone else sent me a poem, the twenty-third Psalm, their . . . you know "gripes and explanations. I'm doing pretty well, from my point of view, at least in terms of whittling down the pile.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Queen Kunti states that different persons have their opinions why Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears in the world. He appeared to diminish the trouble of the world when Lord Brahma prayed for Him to do so. "And yet others say that You appeared to rejuvenate the devotional service of hearing, remembering,

worshiping, and so on, in order that the conditioned souls suffering from material pangs might take advantage and gain liberation." (*Bhag.* 1.8.35)

"O Krishna, those who continuously hear, chant and repeat Your transcendental activities, or take pleasure in others doing so, certainly see Your lotus feet, which alone can stop the repetition of birth and death." (*Bhag.* 1.8.36) People may even repeatedly hear *Bhagavad-gita* but not have the proper vision. One has to hear from the right source.

Then Queen Kunti asks the Lord, "Are you leaving us today, although we are dependent on Your mercy?" She says the Pandavas' fame depends on their receiving Krishna's mercy. No one should be proud of whatever he has. Only because we are guided by God do we have any standing.

We taste tiny drops of mercy when we read of the privileges of Kunti-devi and devotees like her who have worshiped the Supreme Lord face to face. She said that their kingdom was beautiful because it was marked by the impressions of His feet, "but when You leave, it will no longer be so." (*Bhag.* 1.8.39)

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Front bench. Crow accusing from top of tree. Now M. is whistling a bird imitation, and that seems to puzzle the crow momentarily. Fire in our yard "burning the letters I answered today. Little pieces of ashes float toward me, all those cremated words. Satisfied that I answered all the mail.

Gray and not so cold this afternoon. The lobelia is shriveling. They are my little "disciples," who sit at my feet. I notice more the velvet coverings of moss where it grows on treetops and rocks. We'd like it to cover our walls "want our garden to mature.

It's all due to the Lord "everything. Is that a car coming up the road?"

From a letter: "I have met caring persons, but to meet someone who's caring and also a Krishna devotee is best. Other spiritualists just can't know what we mean among ourselves by 'Krishna.'" We probably can't know what they mean by Jesus, Allah, Buddha, No thing.

Some letters I might have looked at again, but too late. Ashes now. Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:11 p.m.

Whew. rescued that canvas that was so shellacked and dark and hard on its surface, and so completely cold to Vaisnava feeling. I scratched over it with a blessed white oil stick a stick man with an orange *dhoti*. Then I wrote to the left of that, "Enter the future," and, "Hare Krishna." Maybe a little pseudo profound, as if I was reaching for an eerie effect, but what the hell, a rescue's a rescue. I had to do *something* to save it.

And that other one too "I leaned heavily on added words to bring it out of nondevotee obscurity. It depicted two figures looking to the right at some icon or symbol. I wrote, "Krishna men look back at where they came from." I'm pleased with that.

After all that, drew a simple but bold Krishna with flute to satisfy that part of myself. He from whom all living beings issue forth "I can't imagine It. He's beyond realization. All glories.

Tracked paint around the room with my shoes, and got paint on my *dhoti*. Oh, well.

* * *

6:04 p.m.

We read of Krishna's coming home at night with the cows, which to the demigods resembled the two streams of the Ganga and Yamuna flowing to the left and right of Krishna. Krishnadasa Kaviraja says the best pastimes have playful jokes in them, and that jokes that don't please Krishna are not funny.

Lit candles. We can be happy in Krishna consciousness, even in an empty house. Krishna protects us.

Dialogue:

It's hot in here.

So open a window.

It's too late for that.

No, it ain't.

You are gonna be a good-boy-old-man.

Vrndavana memory: We walked down a sand lane, saw an old-timer cow, a hog, and a disenfranchised human no longer part of ISKCON. I smiled skinny to him, then saw a GBC man, who said, "Get over to the temple," and neither bought a *lassi* nor a lass from the Middle East. He came up and bowed his head, wanting to touch my feet while Brijbasis looked on without approval.

Old man, dovetail your melancholy into a last song for the Lord tonight. But entering the future can be frightening.

October 23, 12:05 a.m.

People engage in pious activities for their results, rather than engage in devotional service. Pious activities won't save us from death. We should act for a better next life. "A devotee is never afraid of death. He simply prays to Krishna, 'I may die and take birth again repeatedly, as You like, but I only ask that, in whatever condition I may live, by Your mercy I will never forget You.'" (*A Second Chance*, p. 135) Whatever devotional service we render is never lost.

Ajamila wanted to see the Visnudutas again. He had been a devotee of Lord Narayana early in his life and had associated with devotees. From within, Lord Visnu had inspired him to name his son Narayana, and that had saved him. "remembrance of Krishna at the time of death is generally possible only for persons who have established an intimate relationship with Krishna throughout a lifetime of devotional service." (*A Second Chance*, p. 137)

Ah, such a standard. I'd like to aspire for that. Be fearless, serve Lord Krishna twenty-four hours a day, and know you are under His protection. Know also that there is no

other thing or person whom you can trust against the forces of time and death and rebirth. Only Krishna can save you.

Chanting the holy name of God makes life auspicious. Before we came to Krishna consciousness our lives were sinful, so we should be grateful for the opportunity we have been offered and be careful not to fall down again.

Ajamila was determined now. He wanted to be Krishna conscious and to become the well-wisher of every living entity. That is the position of a devotee-preacher. "One who is interested only in his own salvation is not as advanced in Krishna consciousness as one who feels compassion for others and who therefore propagates Krishna consciousness. Such an advanced devotee will never fall down, for Krishna will give him special protection." (*A Second Chance*, p. 143) We've seen many preachers fall down, especially since Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. Often, it's because they neglected the spiritual master's primary order: to chant and hear. Unless we read, what will we preach and how will we maintain the determination to remain simple devotees and resist the lures of *maya*? We need to realistically assess our own preaching capacities.

I woke from a strange dream where a disciple betrayed me (scribbling over a page of the *Bhagavatam*, although I told him not to). He said he'd now become someone else's disciple.

I woke and thought about this dream. I could read books into it. But what's the use? Better I just read Prabhupada's books and chant Hare Krishna.

" . . . we stress that one should chant the holy name of the Lord and keep oneself free from the contaminations of this material world, especially the contaminations of lusty desires for illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication and gambling." (*A Second Chance*, p. 144)

I'm thinking ahead about what to tell the devotees who join me for my birthday at the end of November. We'll keep it simple and talk about the struggle to maintain Prabhupada's standards. I must maintain it myself, to set the example for others. No hypocrisy, please.

* * *

4:18 a.m.

So, you have a viewpoint on ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada?

Yes, but I don't think you want to hear it. It's a little pessimistic. Since his disappearance, I don't think we can recover the spirit we had when he was here. Not the *rtviks*, not the GBC, not by "rallying around his instructions," *varnaSrama*, book distribution, or so many other ways. We will always miss his presence, that *central* presence. My pessimism is to say that despite the teaching that the guru is most present in his *vani*, actually I felt him most present when he was with us. We cannot seem to come together as we once did just by hearing his instructions. We seem to have lost our collective submissiveness. It was that submission that made this a movement.

On the other hand, I am optimistic about the fact that any individual can still receive Srila Prabhupada's mercy through his books and teachings. So I acknowledge that it's not the same, and then I make the best of it.

* * *

Such a mixture I am. Radha-Govinda in pink and gold and thinking of the Five Spot upbeat trumpet of Booker Little a few months before he died at twenty-three. How fast he could go before that. He played in pain, and playing helped him forget it. They were trying to get out of the conventions, but were not sure yet how far or where to go beyond the restraints. Calling on the gods. Calling on Govinda I am . . .

People smile. This is something new. Like Ornette in 1960. I am not turning my back on my Westernism *or* my Vedic heritage in Krishna consciousness. Keeping the saffron. Calling out. Living with the eagle and the peacock feather and whatever fluffy birds live in Vrndavana.

When I heard my Godbrother was writing ninety-five volumes about Krishna, I said to meself, "I'll write ninety-five volumes about the cry of the peahens and the noise of those blaring loudspeakers."

Boy, temples pounding today. I want to offer homage to Srila Prabhupada, but I don't know if I'll make it. O Krishna, please let me not be hampered. Even if I'm faulty and have to offer my faultiness. Please accept whatever I can offer You with love.

Little bug with wings hopping on my blotter. I moved my pen. No motive but Krishna's pleasure. But is that where I'm at? Keep mentioning the truth of what may be painful "the gap between the ideal and the now.

That Five Spot drummer driving to his utmost. Push me, O Krishna, Your aspiring *bhakta*. I heard a brother went all the way to Surinam, distributed seven thousand pieces of *prasadam*, collected money, lectured, and desired so strongly to deliver Krishna consciousness despite all bodily inconvenience that he succeeded. I have to do something equivalent.

EJW on a platter

They keep telling me . . . Hare

Krishna on the move

internal family wrangle.

Official, grassroots rumble

never settled,

never agreed upon "no worries

about outcome except to find

surrender in the holy name the

reading and writing

the hope.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

From now on I'm going to always wear my green rain pants over my sweat pants when I go out for a walk. Today I wore only my sweat pants and I was cold and wet by the time I came back in.

When I started ten minutes ago, the sky was pitch black, but it has already begun to brighten, and just now I saw the streak of a shooting star. That's supposed to be inauspicious. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare. There, that will make it auspicious. Chant to the burning star.

But how wonderful it is! The bright stars all over the sky, and that shooting thing "what was it? A huge planet burning out after trillions of years? How tiny we are in these bodies, talking about sweat pants and getting wet. Somewhere up there, an entire meteor or planet or chunk of burning matter was just extinguished. Yet although we're tiny, within our heart is situated the powerful soul. The soul is more powerful than a material planet. Hear from the *Vedas* "that's theism. Prabhupada said that theism isn't only to say, "I believe in God"; we have to accept the Vedic injunctions and directions.

Look at all those stars, pinholes, connecting angles, and pictures if you know how to read them. And down here in Wicklow, see the rain drip-dripping.

* * *

8:55 a.m.

"O Lord of Madhu, as the Ganges forever flows to the sea without hindrance, let my attraction be constantly drawn unto You without being diverted to anyone else." (*Bhag.* 1.8.42) It is natural for the living being to feel affection, but it's usually expressed as some kind of sense gratification. "When this desire is changed for the satisfaction of the Lord, it is called devotional service."

We think, "Why should we have to analyze our ties of affection?" Well, then don't. Just read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and keep your thoughts on its verses, personalities (like Kunti-devi and the Pandavas), and think of ISKCON or "the living entities" and not yourself.

For how long will that be possible?

Just don't watch the fish-pale hand that grips the book. Avoid him if you like "if you dare.

But you'll have to land again, like a crow on a treetop. The guy who looked up at the stars last night is reading scripture this morning, and he wonders if other human beings are just like him, in West Africa, say "looking up at stars and wanting to forget themselves while remaining absorbed in themselves.

Arjuna wanted to act on his own account and not fight, but when he heard the Lord's message, *Bhagavad-gita*, he realized Krishna's desire. He became a famous devotee. We either tend to think it's hopeless to try to become like Arjuna (there we go, thinking of ourselves again "see how hard it is to avoid) or to think we have already attained a similar measure of surrender, sort of. I mean, aren't we engaged in devotional service? Who are we doing it for anyway? Are we failures or not, or both?

Kunti-devi ends her prayers by declaring that Krishna, Arjuna's friend, is in so many ways the unconquerable Supreme Person. "You possess all mystic power, and You are

the preceptor (guru) of the entire universe. You are the almighty God (Bhagavan), and I offer You my respectful obeisances." (*Bhag.* 1.8.43)

The Lord is satisfied by prayers offered by sincere devotees, even if the prayers are imperfect. And of course, all prayers *will* fail to fully enumerate His glories.

We are not other persons. I mean, it's not shameful to love ourselves in relation to Krishna. Srila Prabhupada says a devotee is not afraid of death, but he is cautious. Similarly, we are cautious to see that any self-love we experience, or self-awareness, is part of our link to guru and Krishna.

* * *

10:29 a.m.

Without asking me, M. ordered the film of Srila Prabhupada in his last days. He thought I might like to watch it on his disappearance day. I don't. He asked what I would be doing to observe the day. I'll fast until noon. I said Srila Prabhupada didn't distinguish between his spiritual master's appearance and disappearance days. Maybe we can watch some other film of Srila Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada, on your disappearance day, please don't disappear to me. I could try to write a poem or something, but it might not be sincere enough.

I'm happy to serve you in your *murti* form. I will offer him the new clothes that arrived. I don't want to merely think, "He died on this day." He went back to Krishna "he is with Krishna *now*. I can join him.

I tend to be sunk in spiritual poverty and my pain. But I love him.

* * *

12:12 p.m.

The waves at Jagannatha Puri, the wind at Wicklow, the *kicchari* cooked by Madhu "find a theme, or many, to ride through poems.

The telephone company is coming today. It's even possible they could install the phone. Happiness in the material world. Top secret in my little life. Wrote a "quality of life" statement in my medical journal. remind myself "and anyone else who's interested "that I'm a migraineur. I am sensitive, and even between headaches I am close to them. If I say I am feeling less severe pain lately "that's good news "but I'm still close to severe pain "that pain behind the right eye.

Therefore, I assert and defend my right to be sensitive to pain and to care for myself. If the GBC or *Sannyasa* ministry declares that I have to live otherwise, I'd have to refuse. Let them do what they feel they must do, but I won't run around in pain because someone else says I should.

But if civilization collapses and I have to forage for food, live in a room with ten others, or am forced into a jail cell by some quirk of fate, that will be a different story. What I am speaking about here are the rights of a headache sufferer who wants to live with his pain in the context of a gentle life. That's all. Yeah, I know, not all of us have that privilege, but still I bless and bless everyone I know, and I'm grateful.

Some say we can control our pain. We have to first learn about ourselves. Talk to the body. Migraineurs are sensitive to their surroundings and therefore can be sensitive to the needs of others.

Sing a song of sixpence
a pocket ripped
on old *kurta*. Sing a song
of Nat King Cole the merry departed
soul. Madhu and his fiddler
and me and my wish
to be a devotee.

* * *

2:37 p.m.

The fog in my head makes me hesitant to read. Bhisma next. But I need it. Go ahead a little, stunned, tired . . . King Yudhisthira was overwhelmed . . . the *Bhagavatam* calls it "deluded by affection." He thought he was the cause of all who died untimely, just to put him on the throne.

I can hear a thump moving toward the front of the yard. I looked up and saw a quick-moving white cloud. So Maharaja Yudhisthira went to consult Bhisma, who was dying on the battlefield. Lord Krishna went with him, and they all bowed before Bhisma, their elder, together. Famous *rsis* and their disciples were also there. Although on his deathbed, Bhisma was fit in mind and "could utter sweet words with hearty expressions." Bhisma knew Krishna was the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and he worshiped Him.

* * *

3:45 p.m.

Don't feel so well today. Sunk in easy chair, can't find inspiration. Bhurijana Prabhu lectured on the second of the *catur-Sloki*. It defines *maya* as thinking anything has no connection with Krishna. We see the glitter of the material energy and want that car or person or country "whatever.

I thought, "But what if there's a band playing music "or a car or a building even. Are those things *maya* or are they connected to Krishna? Devotees tend to define almost anything as *mayawhen* they get down to practical definitions. Doesn't the definition of *maya* depend on the consciousness of the devotee? In *Memories*, I connected so many pre - Krishna conscious states of my life to a Krishna conscious presentation. *Now* I see in connection to Krishna. *Now I* see it that way.

The telephone men know how to bring a line from the pole to the spot in your home where you want your phone. They drill a hole, affix the wire, climb a ladder and drill another hole, and carry the wire through, down into the window (they do it rather crudely in Ireland), and you are connected to the world. Similarly, you can be connected to Krishna by the pure devotee and by yourself learning the art.

But don't try converting *too* much wild energy. We don't connect meat eating, meat serving. We don't connect marijuana. We don't connect illicit sex. There are limits. That means there are also austerities. One disciple vowed to follow the four rules, then gave

them up, then a few years later, vowed to follow them again (many have done this), then gave them up again "because he (she) wanted to *live directly*." "I guess I'm a romantic. But suddenly Krishna consciousness seemed to be all restrictions and austerities "or do I have it wrong? Isn't that what it's about? Don't get me wrong. I still love Lord Caitanya . . ." But no more rules. Embrace the *timingal* fish, the reflection that appears to be in darkness.

I should talk. Who am I to give restrictive sermons? I still remember the Five Spot of the 1960s. Then link it up. And tell the truth of it. What does it mean to your Krishna conscious self? Thus a monk without an e-mail hook-up can still hook up. He wants yoga credits for his trouble instead of college credits. Let it be eternally to his good. "This man pleased Me" "we want that certificate, as Prabhupada told us we should. If Krishna likes it, our work has been worthwhile.

* * *

5:13 p.m.

M. may come in while I write, but he'll back out when he sees me under the desk lamp. Grit my teeth as if to say "Give me this time." Oh, man . . .

Then we can light our candles. This is for Damodara too. He has jurisdiction everywhere. We could have *kirtana* with "instruments" like we offer in our services "it could be done. Because we don't pollute ourselves by forgetting Krishna.

That girl (who has gone away for now) sankirtana. Can we let such thoughts in? Like those collages I made that said, "Can we be initiated?" "I want to be initiated." I had drawn strange and rough people, real parts of ourselves.

Now the first signs of blue fading. I have to work. I will call M. up and we can read for a few minutes in the world of absolute personalism, Krishna coming home, covered in the dust from the cows' hooves as He walks among them. Amen.

We say the body isn't important, but it's all we have. It's our vehicle, faulty, sweaty, growing older. It carries the soul. Donkey, he called it. Our master came to us in a body too. Everyone I know.

But yes, I believe in the soul I can't see but have only heard about in books, and I aspire to feel the *samadhi* of devotion where I will be wholly connected to the Lord's service.

* * *

6:10 p.m., Night Notes

The robber king of separation from Krishna fled when he heard the bugle Krishna blew as He returned from the forests in the evening. Both Mother Yashoda at her home and Srimati Radharani at Her home were cooking for Him. Krishna walked slowly toward His village. He stopped and heard patiently the demigods' prayers. When the demigods left, the *gopas* conjectured why they offered prayers to Krishna, and they made fun of their mannerisms. Krishna then allowed each of the cows to drink in the Yamuna as He called each by name. We read this and more, and recorded it for later hearing.

I guess I salvaged something of this day. Krishna and Radha wearing orange with white trim this evening.

October 24,12 a.m.

How are you observing Srila Prabhupada's disankirtana of those pressed around the bed. It is twenty-two years later. I've gone through a lot since then. *ISKCON* has gone through a lot. We say we want to "keep Prabhupada in the center as founder-*acarya* and *Siksa-guru*," but there are conflicting opinions as to what that means. As in 1977 in those last weeks, it seemed futile to expect him to stay. Now it seems futile to expect *ISKCON* to be the way it was when we were all with him. I've become pessimistic perhaps, but I won't abandon my *guru-seva*, and he will not leave me. I will cooperate as best I can with Godbrothers and Godsisters who want to push on his movement. But what my contribution will be is highly personal. My offering is limited and shaped by forces I understand better than others.

Come to Prabhupada now, in his books. "If you want to know me, read my books," he said. Hear the essential message of Vyasa given in the way Srila Prabhupada gives it. It's what he taught consistently from the beginning. It still challenges us. "The first necessity is to become freed from the bodily conception of life." Srila Prabhupada tells how after Ajamila was rescued by the Visnudutas, he went to Haridwar for further spiritual advancement and took shelter of a Visnu temple. Nowadays we do this in the Krishna consciousness movement and worship the Deity. It's also a fact that one can worship in his home, if he's a *grhastha*. It's also a fact that I'm living in a house. A proactive preacher or temple dweller might say I am "doing nothing," but . . . that's not true. On this day of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance I plead to him to please exonerate me, honor my position. Please accept my service. Allow me to connect it to his purpose and to help people in Krishna consciousness.

When Ajamila's devotional meditation on Lord Visnu had matured, the Visnudutas returned to him, this time to take him back to Godhead. "Such perfection is not available to anyone but devotees of the Lord . . . If one actually desires to get out of the material world, he must take to devotional service, which begins with *Sravanam kirtanam visnoh*." (*A Second Chance*, p. 147) This is *sastra's* essential message, which I receive with faith from Srila Prabhupada: by practicing the chanting of the holy names throughout my life, "it is quite possible that even at the time of death he will be able to properly chant the holy name of the Lord with love and faith." (*A Second Chance*, p. 148) Srila Prabhupada mentions that if at death our bodily functions are too disordered and we can't chant distinctly, we still receive all the benefits of chanting the holy name.

Now the final section of *A Second Chance* is "Yamaraja's Instructions On The Holy Name."

I'm looking forward to my personal observance of Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. Our heart feeling doesn't depend on formalities. I just want to reach toward him, pray to him, and try to do it sincerely, without pretense. I realize I need help.

Pray to Lord Balarama, the original guru, to connect you to your guru in surrender. As *Bhagavad-gita* says, the elements in approaching a guru are to render service and to inquire submissively. Aside from special attempts to express this today, I will dedicate

all my activities, as usual, to him. I am not an ideal devotee, but I still want to be his man if he'll accept me.

The Yamadutas asked their master why his order was foiled when they tried to carry it out by punishing Ajamila. They told how the Visnudutas arrived when Ajamila cried "Narayana!" Now they ask Yamaraja whether there were many authorities or only one. In this connection, Srila Prabhupada mentions that *sastra* controls civilized men. "From this word comes the word *Sisya*, meaning disciple, or one who voluntarily accepts the control or guidance of the spiritual master. Those who are not gentle must be controlled by *astra* or weapons." (*A Second Chance*, p. 153)

Let me chant *japa* now, voluntarily, gently, submitting. I don't want to be counted among the rogues who have to be forced by guns and clubs.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

O Prabhupada, who gave us books to learn the science of Krishna and who directed us into the secrets of realization. O Prabhupada, who taught by example to always work for Krishna, and who expected us to work as hard. Master, I am tired, I cannot do as you did or even what I did when you were here with us. But I want to serve you still, master, and that is your blessing on me.

Prabhupada, you are still leading the charge in your temples and in the hearts of your devotees. Devotees come to you by reading your books and by hearing and seeing the devotion in your older disciples. But all can become your disciples. I am one of them. Do you see us meeting and quarreling? But you may also see good signs. You said as long as the holy names are being sung . . .

Prabhupada, I don't want to waste my human life. I heard Narottama dasa Thakura declare, "I won't hear any other talk." He wants only to hear the pastimes of Radha and Krishna and associate with the devotees of Their Lordships.

Prabhupada, this is your disappearance anniversary. I tend to think of it as sad. Grieving, we are. Or I'm afraid sometimes that you suffered so much, that you actually experienced death. The transcendental explanations are not always satisfying to my heart.

You are the lord and master of the devotees. I write my official sentences, but I'm praying to you now, from the heart.

Prabhupada, I'm happy enough, and hope it's not sense gratification when I ride waves of creativity, whether in sunlight or shadow.

I know the rules for a strict *sannyasi*:

Don't care for the body.

Don't care for the world.

Don't listen to nothing but Bengali chants.

Don't go anywhere but Uttara-pradesh.

Follow the temple schedule.

Wear the right clothes.

Talk out of the right side of the mouth with correct political views.

Preach to nondevotees.

Sign and recite the oath of allegiance.

Don't stuff your mouth.

Don't recognize anything as life-giving unless it has been approved and handed to you from the right sources.

But what did you tell us? Don't be afraid. Be concerned. Don't regret what you left behind.

All these mixed and elusive things I mean to offer to you and your followers who seek real ways.

* * *

Prabhupada, you are with us, but you are also your own person, someone we don't really know.

I feel cautious in this dark and dangerous world, so I always come running back to you like a lost child. I only lament that I am not better. I can't blame my Godbrothers or the fates or the *devas* or *asuras* for that. I already know who's to blame, and I accept it.

Prabhupada, you live in your Vrndavana
me in mental Vraja
or physical, without eyeglasses
writing with enlarged handwriting
PrABHUPADA
to help me remember you.

* * *

Please, master, realizing you
requires nectar and work
I was always on time you said
but I failed to keep up the pace.

* * *

Hanuman the great *bhakta*
understood how to please his master
Prabhupada is worth all and I am
attached to him in a sometimes crazy
didactic handstand way of my own
that always ends in prayer.

* * *

He's our master. We're bowing to down to Lord Siva, Lord Brahma, and the lesser thirty-three million *devas* when we pay respects to our own *gurudeva*, Srila Prabhupada.

We work for him when we remember, "He told me to do this," as we chant and toe the line again. Abashed, shamefaced, sheepish, rogues ourselves, I tend to go away from the fighters. But by wandering alone, Srila Prabhupada, I wrote to you.

Some sentimental force is in me too, short of what is best. Ah, I'm yours still and you will teach me further, but I wish I could shorten the time and give up the wrongs.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Slashing rain and cold. Only a fool would take a walk on a morning like this, but I'm happy to do it, around and around the house, chanting, mumbling. It would be worth it if I could pay attention! But the holy name is so powerful that it works even if I don't. Even the failing student gets credit. Then what to speak of the good student! round and round between two cement walls and a narrow passage. reminds me of Krishna-Balaram Mandir, and that's where I should be mentally. That's easier to do anyway.

I won't be there tonight at 7:00 p.m. when they gather in his room. I'll be getting into bed. But all day I'm going to work for Prabhupada and pray that he accepts me every day.

Rain shining on the leaves, all the little plants shivering and blowing. My thoughts here and there . . . so puffed-up, so self-willed, so happy with life, happy for that connection that I have with Krishna, and grateful although a fool . . .

* * *

8:15 a.m.

Looking at *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Bhisma on this deathbed with the Pandavas standing gently by his side.

At 5:30 a.m., instead of breakfast, I spoke for an hour with M. about my feelings for Srila Prabhupada, especially since his disappearance. I admitted to struggling with over-familiarity with his books and his way of presenting things. This is my daily reality, but I am meeting the challenge by continuing to read. It's a problem I didn't have twenty years ago. I also confessed that I want to be more than a mailman for Prabhupada's teachings, and I spoke of the soldierlike mentality I maintained for many years and how I'm different now. I can no longer do things I don't want to do "associate too much, go through temple rituals, endless meetings, etc. M. asked how this attitude affects those to whom I preach who may also be tired of the soldierlike mentality. We churned these topics. Maybe I spoke too strongly and freely about wanting to be who I feel I am, complete with a "shadow," which I usually repress.

I want Srila Prabhupada to accept me, yet I do things I would never do in front of him. Could he accept that I've grown up and changed from when I was thirty years old? ISKCON was run like an army then, and people were either in the army or in *maya*. Maybe we'll talk more about this as we observe his disappearance anniversary.

I admitted that I see his disappearance in everything, and I don't feel his *vapuh* anywhere in his institution anymore. How will ISKCON find heart and unity and yet strictly follow his instructions? We will have to find new ways now that he is gone.

Things I do that I didn't used to:

- (1) Experience a breakdown in health and take care of it as my first duty.
- (2) Because of the health breakdown, move out of the temple.

(3) Avoid meetings.

(4) read outside literature.

(5) Write improvisational poetry and express other free-write boldness in my books.

(6) Draw and paint.

(7) Wear sweat pants when I walk in the morning or in my room during the very early hours.

(7) Spend a lot of time alone.

M. asked me what I thought was Srila Prabhupada's most important instruction. I said the chanting of Hare Krishna and following the four rules.

I could be criticized for what I say and do. They want Prabhupada mailmen in mailmen uniforms. They have a stereotype of what it is to represent him faithfully. Our society has been wrecked by proud, independent gurus, they say, but it has also been eroded "made uninhabitable by those who follow the letter of the law (or who claim to) but who squelch the human spirit.

Bhismadeva expresses sympathy for all the sufferings the Pandavas' mother experienced. "In my opinion, this is all due to inevitable Time, under whose control everyone on every planet is carried, just as the clouds are carried by the wind." (*Bhag.* 1.9.14) The changes and sufferings brought about by Srila Prabhupada's disappearance and what happened after that are also the effects of time. "Everyone has to bear the actions and reactions of time as long as one is within the conditions of the material world." Don't begrudge being controlled by Krishna in the form of time. Continue following the *brahmanas*, Vaisnavas, and religious principles.

"O king, no one can know the plan of the Lord (Sri Krishna). Even though great philosophers inquire exhaustively, they are bewildered." (*Bhag.* 1.9.16) Srila Prabhupada: "It is useless also to inquire about it." Best to abide by the Lord's order as it comes through destiny, Providence, *kala*.

So Bhishma advised Maharaja Yudhisthira to take up his kingly duties. A devotee accepts tribulations as the benediction of the Lord.

Writing this while rain strikes noisily, yet reassuringly, against the skylight. It's a dark day.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

I have a lot of homework to do; I have to prepare two lectures for November 30, and eight programs for January 7 - 10 at Gita-nagari. Maybe I can ration half an hour a day for lecture preparation. I can't go into these events without some idea of what I'll say.

* * *

2:24 p.m.

I spoke the *anarthas* in my heart. Perhaps I didn't make it clear that they are unwanted, dirty things "*aparadhas*, *ninda*, against pure devotees. Maybe it sounded as if I were expressing a "viewpoint." I did say the fight to uproot them was one I accept as my challenge. I'm active against them. I just hope it didn't sound like I endorsed those views. I also hope the disease is not so developed. One wants to admit what is.

Srila Prabhupada argues against those who deny Vedic authority. I used to follow his arguments and accept that he had defeated the opposition by whatever he said. I repeated the same argument in a lecture or to my own mind when necessary. For example, people usually accept knowledge by receiving it from authorities. When scientists say they went to the moon, men believe it. "The authorities speak and the people in general believe them. But in the case of Vedic truths, they have been taught not to believe."

(*Bhag.* 1.9.18, purport) By accepting the material authorities and denying the *Vedas*, "people have degraded." That always impressed me, conquered me. Does it still? Is it harder to care about that point? Is there some defect in his argument? I ask you to at least always see that Srila Prabhupada is arguing on Krishna's behalf with pure devotion, using whatever he can to fight against the nondevotee conclusion. It is best to be on his side.

Some of it is just hard to face. Tribulations offered by the Lord are for the good of the devotee. "Therefore, when material resources are withdrawn by the Lord, the devotee is cent percent attracted toward the transcendental loving service of the Lord. Thus the Lord snatches the fallen soul from the mire of material existence." (*Bhag.* 1.8.19, purport)

I can't ask him to do it.

I liked the extra preparations at lunch today, especially the *kerela* and the sweet rice with strawberries.

Snatch it away so I can become more Krishna conscious? Yes, that will happen. Today I accepted this form of *prasadam*.

Bhisma says Krishna is the Supreme Truth. Equibalanced. "Yet, despite His being equally kind to everyone, He has graciously come before me while I am ending my life, for I am his unflinching servitor." (*Bhag.* 1.9.22)

"The Personality of Godhead, who appears in the mind of the devotee by attentive devotion and meditation and by chanting the holy name, releases the devotee from the bondage of fruitive activities at the time of his quitting the material body."

(*Bhag.* 1.9.23) One's desires are not killed but applied in the cause of devotional service. "This qualifies the desire to be transferred to the spiritual sky."

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Facing the telephone pole out the bedroom window. What have I got to say? I read more of my "O Prabhupada" calling out poems, and might do more before this day is over. I want to write these rather than paint today. I want to try to observe how securely I sit in his shelter.

Walking in the yard. It's blowing autumn wet today, with gusts of rain. The ground is covered in wet leaves blowing.

Still feel sorry for that maimed sycamore. I will always feel it, but I have forgiven the perpetrator.

The wet thatched roof, the snug fire he seems to have lit in there "smoke issuing out from the chimney. I walked, hardly aware that I was chanting. O Krishna.

Declared that I mostly want to stay here. Began facing the fact that I have ten lectures to prepare and that I don't want to spend much time on them. I'll leave here, yes, but I'll come back. When he asked me about my favorite occasions with Prabhupada, then how I felt in 1977 toward the end, I told him a few things. I said if there was a bigger audience, all eager to hear from me, I might be able to say more. When he asked me to speak about how I feel right now, I said a lot. I told of the high and wide wall of separation from Prabhupada and the hole of absence from which ISKCON suffers. I expressed a lack of hope, but that's not the whole truth. I am hopeful that individuals will stand in Krishna consciousness by virtue of their love for Srila Prabhupada and their willingness to follow him exclusively. I have faith that the movement will carry on one way or another. We'll get through this period.

Paraphernalia. He could take it all away until I became like the pilgrim in *The Way of the Pilgrim* or Sergius after his fall down. Would I lose myself, like Sergius, among the peasantry, lost, but finally experiencing true saintliness? Or like one of the many prisoners who suffer and turn to God?

Anyway, I always hope these things won't happen to me. I hope I can find true saintliness by an easier road. Yet Srila Prabhupada says the Lord sometimes snatches away our material resources so we will depend more fully on Him. Then He is able to pull us out completely. Bhurijana Prabhu also said that in his lecture: as long as we are attracted to *maya*, we can't love Krishna fully. Srila Prabhupada said that sometimes a person is attached to a house or a piece of land, so he is born next life in the same household, but perhaps in the body of a serpent. Think of the hogs in Vrndavana.

These are heavy stakes, and we don't always want to consider them when we are trying to enjoy sweet rice on his disappearance day. My blood sugar was low from fasting, so the pain was beginning to build before I broke fast. I tried feverfew, then the shock of a hot-cold-hot shower. That helped a little. It wasn't wrong or sinful to break the fast with a nice meal, and they did cook it for Prabhupada, but I shouldn't be attached.

He said people, whether men or women, think as enjoyers. This is meant to be only God's mentality. He is the only real male, the *purusatam*. We are meant to serve Him, and in that sense, we are all female, *prakrti*. Drum that into your skulls, because until we accept it, we cannot live fully joyful.

Okay, that's my little pole penance on this misty day. It was also simultaneously my enjoyment. Some devotees rebel and say that they don't want to follow this philosophy anymore because they don't want to think they can't enjoy life. They don't like to feel guilt over things the rest of the world considers normal. What do I think myself? Am I a rebel, like a newcomer *bhakta*? We tell those *bhaktas* that if they leave the company of devotees and give up following the four rules, they may go to hell. At the least, they will miss the chance of perfecting themselves, a chance that comes in the cycle of evolution only after millions of lives. They will displease the Almighty and get a bad reaction.

"Stop! Stop!" They don't want to hear this punishing philosophy anymore. They want to *embrace* life. They think they can find the Divine in the present, which is true, but not through sense gratification. There's no real Krishna in orgasm. They want to stop worrying whether going to the movies is pleasing to God.

Okay, I know how they feel sometimes. But it's illusion to think that they can embrace life without Krishna, that they can actually enjoy. I admit that I too find preachers overbearing sometimes. Therefore, I'd like to be a more pleasing kind of preacher myself, but still get the message across that this is a place of suffering and that Krishna wants us to return to Him in the spiritual world.

* * *

Prabhupada, this is a confused message "
Adore your feet, always a fact I
decided to serve you and will never
abandon that vow. *If you'll please
keep me.*

October 25, 12:30 a.m.

The clocks went back last night. I had a headache all night. Took an Esgic five hours after an Imitrex, so it didn't end up in the right eye. Then the electricity went out. There were high gale winds, up to eighty miles an hour, and it was whistling on the wires. Now I'm sitting in my room, but it's getting colder by the minute. Light dies with the death of the body. I'm too much aware of my different aches and pains. Two votive candles lit to give the room a low, trembling light. This could be a nice prayer atmosphere, but I'm too distracted. Nevertheless, I count my blessings.

Madhu said he wanted a copy of the talk we had yesterday morning (we recorded it). I wonder what it was he liked about it. Perhaps what I said about having been soldierlike, then developing a different mood. He said that the soldierlike mood is generally good for devotees at the beginning, but it's not something most can keep up forever. He wants to hear me admit that, I think, and to find a way to extend it to others so that no one has to feel guilty when they grow up.

Another point he seemed to like was the discussion about being Prabhupada's mailmen. I know devotees like to hear me say I am Prabhupada's mailman, but the truth is, I want to be more than a mailman. That was an honest admittance on my part, although it may be an unpopular thing to say in today's ISKCON, especially if it's said by a guru.

But something in the talk made me feel uneasy. What was it? That I spoke openly about my lack of sweet submission and enthusiasm when I hear Prabhupada's tapes and read his books? It's just over-familiarity, and perhaps even a kind of *aparadha* on my part. It's one thing to admit such things to myself, but it was hard to say it openly to someone else.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

While dressing Radha-Govinda "had to bathe Them in cold water, because there was no way to heat water, although at least the room is beginning to warm up since M. brought in that portable gas heater (which I hope doesn't asphyxiate me) "I heard

Bhurijana Prabhu reading "Ten Appeals for a residence at Govardhana Hill," by Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. I am away from that.

In any case, the spirit wants to go to Krishna over all distractions. Even the one of trying to be an American Vaisnava poet.

* * *

Devotees gathered here last night at 7:25, but I was in bed with a headache. Now I'm burning with fire. The shadow is in my hand. There's no electricity, but the ink can still flow. Let me not praise with hollow voice.

Shadow is the part of me that wants sense gratification. The down side. It's the pain, the dark, but it must exist where there is flame in this world. Do flames in the spiritual world have shadows? If they do, there is no suffering attached to them; they are simply another natural hue. Why should their flames *lack* anything like a shadow? In the shadow, the *gopis'* sidelong glances are that much more piercing, the cowherd boys joke more, and the rumors of demons do not raise much concern.

Kill the shadow of evil for me. Or let him leap out in a way that's good for my whole self. Here I am swimming to you, Krishna. That which appears to be not connected to You, You say, we should know to be Your illusory energy, the reflection that appears in darkness. Know it as the shadow. But I do see everything in connection with Him, especially my pen as it works from left to right drawing the connection out.

Please accept my fallen offering
tainted with a little mud I guess
but offered with spirit
to the boys and girls
men and women
animals and trees . . .
unafraid and human
yet always striving
to meet You at the end.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

Out for my *parikrama* walk without electric light. Full-time service of a small flashlight. I see stars, then a small airplane or helicopter moving quickly with its own lights and red tail. How fragile . . . they could crash. The immensity. I tilt my stiff neck and look up at it. Lower down there's some kind of mottled look to the sky "clouds I guess. It's cold out, and a few slashes of rain hit me, then no rain. It's dark everywhere, but I can see the hill in silhouette.

Why do you care what's happening with me? Why do I care what's happening with you? These are real questions. We resent it when people don't do something to make us more comfortable, or blame ourselves for not helping others. We suffer in so many ways. But we just have to cope and push on, doing what we have to do to survive, and learning to transcend body and mind for Krishna's pleasure.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

It's like Vrndavana when the lights would go out at Bala's house and I'd write to candlelight or a battery lamp.

* * *

Nothing feels like it wants to be written, so let me draw. Sometimes the drawings say more than the words.

M. and I had a meeting by candlelight and discussed 1999 and the year 2000. We also acknowledged that the unbroken peace of staying in Wicklow has already been broken by thoughts of upcoming travel.

* * *

8:58 a.m.

If there's an economic collapse or crisis caused by a millennium bug, where would I want to be? He said, "Not landing at JFK airport." Maybe Gita-nagari. Not a city. This house in Wicklow is good. See what happens.

But I think I'd be a target in any case, weak old man. I had better prepare, not by stocking a gun or grains but by becoming increasingly dependent on the Lord. I want to have the ability to turn to Him no matter what.

* * *

9:22 a.m.

The Yamadutas asked Yamaraja about the supreme controller. They were submissive in their inquiry, and Yamaraja was not a puffed-up teacher. rather, he thought of the Supreme Lord's lotus feet before he replied. He was pleased that his servants had uttered the name "Narayana" in his domain. He told them that he and the other demigods were under the Supreme Controller.

If we're not inquiring, we should read submissively. Despite modern views, doubts, speculation, forays here and there into sense gratification, we must learn to acknowledge our spiritual master's authority as he presents the Vedic teachings.

Aside from submissive hearing, we are advised to work to please Lord Visnu within *varna* and *aSrama*. We need the Supersoul's direction to go about our activities.

Next, Yamaraja told the Yamadutas something confidential about Lord Visnu: *Dharman tu saksat bhagavat pranitan*: "The real religious principle is enacted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . ." He mentioned twelve *mahajanas* who understand this, and he praised the holy name. *Despite* Ajamila's sins, he was saved because he called out "Narayana!" The holy name has the power to abolish all our sins. This is the confidential religious system of the twelve *mahajanas*. Other religionists are attracted to rituals or speculation.

Yamaraja told his servants not to approach the devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, "They are always protected by the club of the Supreme Lord."

"My dear servants, please bring to me only those sinful persons who do not use their tongues to chant the holy names and qualities of Krishna, whose hearts do not remember the lotus feet of Krishna even once, and whose heads do not bow down even once before Lord Krishna. Send me those who do not perform their duties toward Visnu, which are the only duties in human life. Please bring me all such fools and rascals." (*Bhag.* 6.3.29)

* * *

10:23 a.m.

Pole penance. I am clear now, so I should write facing the pole.

But it's cold. Still no real heat.

A hint of austerities to come? I say I'll go on the road with my bottles of medicine, but I could lose those too and face a different kind of reality.

The worm, the roar of the lion "the big guys planning out what to do despite scandals. Keep on going, they assure us, because they are going to boost the market. The Asian markets are low and the Western capitalists can sell to them. Everyone is affected in this fragile spider's web. Krishna is the ultimate spider, however, and it all comes out of Him and is wound back into Him. The wisest know this and turn only to Krishna the way a sunflower turns to face the sun. There will always be upheaval in the material world, Srila Prabhupada writes, but the devotee is fixed on Krishna.

* * *

12:08 p.m.

St. Iranus says a man of God is full of life. Be open to God in naked sincerity. Maybe you're slow or bogged down in your relationship with Krishna and Prabhupada. You expect they'll accept you as you are, because they are great and kind, but if you're supposed to do more . . . if the army generals (God and guru, like Bhishma and Drona) are demanding and you're saying no, then life may fail. I may be a devilish rebel to say no, I won't surrender, I'll be myself.

I don't want to become the "public pump" some say a priest should be. But I have to do something. In his book, John Powell, [Is John Powell the name of a book? Could not find that title anywhere. If it is a title, the comma should not appear after "book," and "John Powell" should be italicized. If it is a person, then some other revision is called for.] S. J. says the act of self-disclosure is an act of love. Yes, I understand that. Hare Krishna.

12:15 now. Lunch not far away. End of lunch also near. Think lightly for the next twenty minutes.

Lightweight champ, welterweight
paperweight snow falling inside glass dome . . . tiny
flakes come down
in miniature make-believe
world whereas the real grind is in
New Delhi "go on short notice
for your last stay. But
if the nations crash before that "

he said even ISKCON could crash "
we'll be still happy enough in
Prabhupada *seva*.

* * *

2:43 p.m.

A pure devotee doesn't mind where he is sent next life. He depends on the Lord's will. "Bhismadeva wanted this much only: that his mind be absorbed in thinking of the Lord and that he pass away thus. That is the highest ambition of a pure devotee." (*Bhag.* 1.9.24, purport)

Bhisma spoke right up until the end of his life. I'm overcome by sleepiness but keeping that purport in mind "Bhisma able to speak coherently on intricate complicated subjects right up until the end. Then he prepared to leave his body. "Thereupon that man who spoke on different subjects with thousands of meanings and who fought on thousands of battlefields . . . stopped speaking . . . withdrew his mind from everything else . . . and fixed his eyes on the Personality of Godhead who stood before him." Srila Prabhupada states, adding emphasis with italics, "*The subject matter which attracts the dying man becomes the beginning of his next life.*" (*Bhag.* 1.9.30, purport)

* * *

3:45 p.m.

M. said the leaves fall off the trees all at once in one day because it's so windy up here. As soon as they get brown and loose. That explains why we don't see spectacular fall foliage in Ireland, unlike the autumns in New England. Out walking in the sunny cold. It hailed earlier, and there were ice patches on the ground. Small leaves crumpled and piled in the corners of my walking boards. Walk and walk "I know it's good for me. Maybe when I am nearer my end, I will sense how important it is to chant with more urgency. I'll increase.

Scarcely a day goes by these days that I don't have a headache, and *that's* why I don't go zipping into Dublin every Sunday to lecture. I think it's the tall sycamore in our backyard that has the long green leaves in packets with polly noses, dry and crinkled, still hanging on the branch. Useless gifts which will eventually drop. Clouds moving "the epitome of the quick-changing "against the clear bright blue of the sky.

I admitted to M. that I am sometimes irritable. I take it out on him sometimes. He says I am usually so mild that my irritability is more easily noticeable. My irritation comes out in sarcasm. It happens especially when I'm in pain.

I have stopped reading the on-line migraine journal. It's as if I no longer think it applies to me. I used to feel some camaraderie when I read it. But I'm also feeling pinched for time, and that journal is not as important as other things.

Hare Krishna. Here's a little free-write from yours truly. Once a man was fishing and was asked to stop by a Hare Krishna authority. "You enjoy . . . and suffer," the authority quoted. Worse is to sin (and all sense gratification is sin, isn't it?) and think to yourself, "It's all right because I will wash away the wrong by chanting the holy name." Little by little he fell into disrepair, forgetting the Sastric verses he had memorized. He found it

harder to bend at the knees, and we never saw him any more. Finally, he was spotted buying a Good Humor ice cream bar at the St. Louis Zoo (or was it the Bronx Zoo?). He had become One of Them. A devotee was distributing stickers and saw him. He said, "Aren't you that old *sannyasi*?" What could he say? It was immediately broadcast. His paranoia came true.

* * *

4:04 p.m.

We must move along as quick as the heart beats. He built it up nicely without a hitch. Thinking. Thinking. Not just rushing. He has a heart and sentiment, like love. He is who he is. And I'm not obliged to tell you who that is.

Yeah, a guru is not obliged. The *Sisya* asks submissively and doesn't challenge. The guru can deny to disclose if he thinks the disciple is not yet ready to hear. But the guru isn't puffed up about that. rather, he thinks of the Lord's lotus feet and asks, "Do I dare?" Connected to Krishna directly and indirectly, within and without.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Can't get out of this chair. Soon the candle. Went out on the cold landing and did a watercolor of Govinda playing His flute with a boy on either side of Him, dancing. It was from the mood of *Govinda-lilamrta*.

Cold, although I have the gas heat. Again under the illusion that electricity will keep us warm without fail. All backup systems will be lost too.

I'll try to be cheerful and mild with Madhu, and he with me, and that will be especially true if there is a crisis. We can get our excess passions out in ways other than on each other.

Halava for lunch today. Take it away, deny a person's interest in eating, and it will not automatically turn into service to Krishna. There has to be a higher taste. Otherwise, we'll lament for the things we lost.

I chose the topic "Humanism in Krishna Consciousness." What did I mean? I didn't mean a person's right to eat *halava*, did I? Or a person's right to grieve, to read psychology books, and so on? I'll have to think over what I meant. But it's not exactly the conservative approach. I was thinking about self-honesty when I coined that title. "Conditioned soul" means he's human, not *sat-cit-ananda vigraha*. It means he's in *maya*. But beyond that, it means he's in process, gradually improving. It means he's in the form of life where Krishna consciousness is likely to occur if he strives for it. He has the potential to go back to Godhead.

All too human. Milk of human kindness. Less than human, we sometimes say about certain people. We preach to humans.

Each of the proposed lecture topics simmers slowly. They are all in pots, so LIS (let it simmer), and even the unconscious will work on them. I can offer love in the form of lectures to the devotees who gather to hear and sit with me in (we hope) the cozy cabin. That's all we all want "to be together once again, a reunion, a family's annual time. We want to squeeze out some spiritual juice together. I'm the juice-giver, like a humble

street vendor who squeezes oranges and sells their juice in Manhattan. It's a genuine offer of *Krishna-prasadam*.

October 26, 12:10 a.m.

Yamaraja informed the Yamadutas about the Visnudutas, who are always alert to protect devotees. "Sometimes the members of the Krishna conscious society are afraid of the impending danger of world war and ask what would happen to them if a war should occur. In all kinds of danger they should be confident of their protection by the Visnudutas or the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As Krishna proclaims in the *Bhagavad-gita* 9.31: *kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranisyati*, 'O Son of Kunti, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.'" (*A Second Chance*, p. 165) Assured in that way, the devotee should engage fully in devotional service, preaching, chanting, etc.

The Yamadutas knew ritualistic religion, but they had no awareness of religion's confidential essence "surrender to the Personality of Godhead. Yamaraja now informs them.

Surrender to Krishna right here and now, being who you are. Face yourself. If you try to make dramatic changes in your character or habits, they probably won't last. We have to live with our personal temperaments too, and those temperaments drive us more than we may think. When we were younger, we did so many things we feel we can't do now. ISKCON has also changed. So face yourself and offer what you find, not what you wish you found. That requires that you are at least somewhat happy with what you see "that is, if you want to make it an offering. It also requires overcoming the restlessness that comes from thinking you should be something other than what you are. Accept self-truth. "You have made your bed, now lie in it," the saying goes, and we have each made a bed in which to lie in this lifetime. Therefore, within the limited sphere we have been offered in this lifetime, chant, hear, follow the spiritual master, and preach on his behalf. But do it as yourself. Find from that place what would give Srila Prabhupada pleasure, and try to do that.

By executing devotional service, we will gradually come to understand Krishna's name, fame, qualities, and pastimes. "If a person is fortunate enough to understand the Supreme Lord in this way, the result is that after giving up his material body he no longer has to take birth in this material world (*tyaktva deham punar janma naiti*). Instead, he returns home, back to Godhead." (*A Second Chance*, p. 168)

"There is no need to conduct research into the significance of the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. The history of Ajamila is sufficient proof . . ." Chanting the holy name is the only process recommended for removing sinful activities.

It's good to quote *sastra*. It's a prime way of proving a point. The nondevotees deride scripture, or at least don't accept it as authoritative, and even preachers sometimes say that "text-proofing" isn't sufficient to convince. Yes, we have to live the scripture and present it in a meaningful way. Yet at the heart of our own life and our presentation to others is the *Sloka*, the Puranic history, or the words of our spiritual master.

Chant with a strong vow. If Ajamila was saved, why not us? As we *continue* chanting, our offenses will go away and we will come to chant offenselessly. That chanting will

increase our love for Krishna. Our main desire should be to develop attachment and love for Krishna.

Ceremonies and costly *yajnas* may be put on to impress people who need to see that, but *sankirtana* is more important, and it is all that the devotees really need. Engage in devotional service not as a matter of show but wholeheartedly.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

Radha-Govinda in red and yellow. Heard the sounds of Vrndavana on tape while I worshiped. It carries me there. A *sarod* played (no video or *karmi* radio or constant bus engines, motorcycles, motorized rickshaws, as I'd actually hear if I were there). Here the rain on skylight. Send me to Vrndavana, at least in mind, as I bathe and dress the Divine Couple.

O mind, why are you not a Vaisnava? Why don't you take the straight ISKCON diet, sandwich, sand, and sweet rice? How come you never learned how to run your own computer?

Hey mind, whatcha doing in the places I find you? For example, poor fellow, why those nightmares where you wander in the crime-ridden streets of a city and can never find safety? What's the dream director trying to tell you?

Here I sit and see the picture of Lord Nrsimhadeva's foot resting on the torn-apart chest of dead (glaring-eyed) HiranyakaSipu. I don't have any questions. Some things are settled. I know where I'm going, or at least where the *bhakti* path leads. Prabhupada is preaching clear enough.

Dear mind, you were in Guyana and read the first verse of *Manah-Siksa* to the devotees. I remember that year . . . Last night I fell asleep counting the uncles on the Guarino side, ralph, Johnny, Steve, Jimmy, and Mickey. And two sisters: Mary and Josephine. Then the men they married, Sal, Sessa, and Something Cottone. And Uncle Vince "who was maybe as old as grandpa himself "a friend of his. An intense Italian (don't use the other words). And on the maternal side, so much weaker ties of flesh and blood and scenes to remember, just mother and the two sisters, the Sullivan girls. Never met their mother and didn't even hear of their father. Hare Krishna. Fell asleep with that and woke an hour and a half later.

Hare Krishna. A canto is a song, and thus it is the word used for each book of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. *Skanda*, it's called in Sanskrit. Prabhupada . . . in Vrndavana lecturing, saying the impersonalists have spoiled the world. They'll have to wait many lifetimes before they come to Bhagavan realization. It's not an easy step for them to make. Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana. Lecturing . . . saying the Brahmajoyti is impersonal but rests on the Personality of Godhead. I heard it and wondered how people could come to accept that His bodily aura is the light of lights ""just as" the sun is composed of the glow from the bodies of all the inhabitants.

He learned a lot of things, then said, "Okay, I want to be a devotee and walk in the rain. I want to chant better rounds than I've been doing so far."

* * *

5:23 a.m.

When the TV man talked with Madhu, he decided to do a feature story on him. The theme would be that music was always in his life "in the beginning before Krishna consciousness with the "Threat" band, then as a devotee musician, now back to his roots with Sean Nos singing.

I'm like that too with writing. Writing this Svevo legend, the strict BTG essays under Prabhupada's guidance, now still under his guidance, an independent contribution. Prabhupada said he made a kind of independent or extra contribution to Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura too "beyond what he was ordered to do "when he decided to bring ISKCON back to India. My tiny offering I lay at his feet. So write in the rain, while walking between narrow rock walls, while walking back and forth on the wooden deck, adding to the book even if there's no one who could possibly read it all. Add to it like a mad man building a wall that no one wants him to build. Add to it a trailing, meandering, up-and-down wall of Krishna consciousness for a world that lacks it. *Anartha prasamam saksad bhakti-yoga adhoksaje*. This material world is full of suffering, but the *jivas* do not know why. Krishna sent Vyasadeva to bring this wonderful literature, *cakre satvikam samhitanam*, the flawless, pure *Bhagavatam*.

But that was five thousand years ago, and we need more, we need drips, we need rain pouring, even now with ISKCON prone to split amid the rock 'n' roll culture "we need to feel human.

* * *

8:27 a.m.

Krishna consciousness is a technical science. Sometimes the mind shuts off when we hear the teachings yet again, but the *parampara* guru, either in Prabhupada's voice or the voice of another representative, is saying something we need to hear. We haven't actually mastered the topic. We've heard that we're not the body many times, but we still act and think according to our bodily designation. Come forward and speak the science when it's your turn, and include the way you feel about it as you've experienced it, even as you've failed to experience it. The soul is originally pure, and so too are the senses. "By material contamination the senses assume the role of imperfection and impurity. By revival of contact with the Supreme Pure, Lord Krishna, the senses again become freed from material contamination." (*Bhag.* 1.9.31, purport) Each line is solid teaching from Prabhupada, from Vyasa, from Lord Krishna. In particular we understand through Lord Caitanya's agents, the Six Gosvamis of Vrndavana.

Bhismadeva was at the end of his life. Lord Krishna had come before him, so he attained pure meditation on the Lord. Bhismadeva then spoke, "Let me now invest my thinking, feeling and willing, which were so long engaged in different subjects and occupational duties, in the all-powerful Lord Sri Krishna." (*Bhag.* 1.9.32) That sounds like an ideal meditation for the end of life. Our minds tend to wander all over our services and things related, but at the end, we want to find that one-pointed concentration on the Supreme Lord Himself.

Bhisma prays to see the personal, all-attractive form of Krishna, "and may I not desire fruitive results." In his purport to *Bhag.* 1.9.33, Srila Prabhupada writes that we should

not jump at once to the relationship of conjugal *rasa* in imitation of the damsels of Vraja (or, one might add, Radha's *manjaris*). "The eternal relation with the Lord is evolved." reading this, I'm thinking of dropping a lecture I was planning for the January meetings. I had called it, "Radha-Krishna as the Ultimate Goal." It might be presumptuous.

And here's the first sign of my old friend, the twinge, starting up in the right eye, the way the sun first appears in the east. Let me start with the minor weapon, the feverfew.

* * *

9:44 a.m.

Wholeness in a vignette from the "Design Mind." That's what Gabrielle rico is trying to teach her students through the clustering technique. I'm not sure I even want that. Come through who you are without it. Male hang-it-all-out, tough, with an eye-ache in socket. Free-associating, yes, I also "socket in car where cigarette lighter goes, M. uses it to plug in his radio to hear Irish music. No, I have the wiring wrong.

Plug in no more. Plug in, we say, in higher sense if you want to use that word at all. Tune in, connect "yoga is the word for "link" (plus) with the Divine. How's that, rico? No cluster involved.

Hear an engine as I write. Is it the farmer about to do something with his tractor again? Oh, I need peace. Writing this with pain. Imagine going to India today. That I keep pressing on this point assumes that I am feeling a little stagnant in Wicklow. My reports are too Western. Well, I am where I am, and I'm seeking Vrndavana from here. What else can I do?

But this *pressure* to go to Vrndavana "is it less than pure yearning? It comes partly from the ISKCONites who live there or who travel there frequently, then pressure the rest of us, "You should go as much as possible." It's a kind of ISKCON elitism, like the book distributors who say there is no other way to please Prabhupada. It's not necessarily so. We may be able to adore Vrndavana just as well from here. remember the section in *Caitanya-caritamrta* that mentions the great *bhaktas* of Lord Caitanya who never went to Vrndavana? That list included Ramananda Raya. Satsy, you is a right-eye weaky. Better you stay where a friendly bed is a moment away. Go deeper into thy self and admit you don't really gain access much when you go there in body anyway, then try to worship the essence of Krishna's holy lands Navadvipa and Vrndavana.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Not up to pole penance right now. Polecat. I'm here to do Ecology-pad penance. It's austere to keep within the narrow margins and lines, but it's less taxing on the hand. Don't have much time. Took an Esgic after the feverfew failed to subdue the pain. I don't *want* that pain, not if I can help it. But while lying in bed propped up by two pillows, I did get some good ideas, some creative, some clerical.

Bottles of pills. Horizons of blue sky. My life is "little," as is that of my devotee neighbors in Wicklow and elsewhere. Penance.

Hare Krishna. Take a walk around house later today. Who will pay the medical bill? I don't mean in dollars, but in what it does to your body? Two Esgics on the first two days

of the week. Are you going to go over your limit of three in a week this time? Seems like I have pain every day. In spaces between pain, I move in fast and write as if "it" never happened.

* * *

2:10 p.m.

Bhisma recalls images of Krishna, ones he either personally witnessed or heard about, and prays, "Let my mind thus go unto Sri Krishna." There is no question in his mind of doubting Lord Krishna's existence or that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. My prayer might be more like this: "Please reveal Yourself to me in any way so that I may be convinced of Your existence as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and my dearest friend. Please confirm what I have read in *Bhagavad-gita* and other Vaisnava literature, and what I have seen confirmed in the dedication of Srila Prabhupada, who is 'very dear to Krishna on this earth.'"

Bhisma wants to recall Krishna in the chivalrous mood as he knew Him on the battlefield, protecting Arjuna, receiving Bhisma's arrow wounds into His transcendental body. Of course, I have no experience of this, but can I honestly claim I'm more attracted to Krishna with the *gopis* or in Vrndavana? I've heard what is best. That's all. I know four-armed Lord Narayana is not as attractive as two-armed Krishna, and that the impersonally tinged Paramatma worship is even less attractive. Less attractive still is Brahmajyoti realization (*sayujya*). So as a dutiful follower of Lord Caitanya, I give more attention to Krishna in Vraja. But I might frankly ask myself if I have any taste for *anything* in Krishna consciousness. I might do best to use my limited energy to chant the Hare Krishna mantra (because it's most recommended) and in reading Srila Prabhupada's books (because he gives the best overall approach to Krishna). Then Prabhupada will direct me in his expert way.

Bhisma recalls that Krishna delivered Arjuna from seeming ignorance by His teaching transcendental knowledge on the battlefield. "May His lotus feet always remain the object of my attraction." (*Bhag.* 1.9.36) And of course, Bhisma recalls the scene so dear to him where Krishna rushed at him with the wheel, "Fulfilling my desire and sacrificing his own promise." The Lord would rather save Arjuna "and even kill Bhisma" than keep a vow He'd made not to fight in battle.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

I am going to take something from whatever I read and do. I am trying to restrict myself as much as humanly possible to a completely Krishna conscious intake. Focusing on upcoming talks and how I want to be a true elder of this cultural clan. But that means . . . he really does it. Can't be Jungian or Lester Youngian but Prabhupada's man in my own jaunty and crippled way.

The Prabhupada man sat behind his low desk and smiled. Then he took out his teeth and placed them on the desk . . .

No, he was a stalwart of right and expected behavior. Hare Krishna in his snort. Now Hare Krishna reports come back. "Dear friends, today I'll speak on *japa*, which, after all,

is our prayer, our meditation. It is recommended by Lord Caitanya as the only way. I mean *hari-nama*, either in singing or on beads . . . " But if I talk on that, I have to chant.

You see, I ramble. I can hear someone blowing his nose a floor below. Into my ears the sound comes, along with the faint tremble of a car engine. I was out walking on the boards and saw Praghosa in his yard pulling weeds. He has a rare day off because it's a bank holiday today. Indigestion and daily prayers. No wonder I turn to drawing with ink in hopes that it will reveal something I can't find in words.

* * *

4:34 p.m.

You Stephen, come here! Are you like this at home?

Did you read *Iron John*? Are you a fierce and wild man, decisive? Or are you soft? What about your father? Where did he hit you? What about your guru? Your Godbrothers? The movement you gave yourself to and which sustains you? Did it?

What about the greed in your own heart and the desire to be worshiped? Why did you fail to see it? What are you going to do now with the remainder of your years? Start answering some of these questions.

Uh . . . I don't know. I'm influenced. That's one reason I'm trying to stay alone. I'd like to be simple and Krishna conscious and to make the best attempt to attain eternal life, yet I want to be honest about what's going on inside me. I'm not such an intellectual. My capacity, especially in terms of time, is quite limited each day. I have to spread my thinking out. And if I hitch a ride with Robert Bly (I already decided not to ride with Johnson), where will he leave me? Not at the lotus feet of Krishna. So I won't be reading *Iron John*, although I looked at it on a friend's advice.

Now, today as it gets dark, we plan to read aloud from *Govinda-lilamrta* about Krishna in the evening at Nandagram. That's my absolute reality. World myths, we say, are partial expressions and come from *Krishna-lila* originally. Or at least from Vedic culture. Be simple, spirit soul. If you're simple, little other than Krishna really matters. Write that down, then call M. in to read.

* * *

6:25 p.m.

Mine is also a discipline. To do nothing but this, to live this, to expect nothing more than this "I call that discipline. I write and shear away with each line any coherent structure which to me looks like scaffolding.

When interpreting dreams, Johnson said we shouldn't make self-congratulatory notes. Better to choose something we didn't already know, and don't shift responsibility away from yourself. Learn to live with the bigger themes in your life, even things that cannot be resolved immediately. Time reveals all. Enigmatic. Those same rules for interpretation hold well for writing, though: don't make out in your argument that you are the best in your own written world. Try to write without knowing in advance what will come, even though it all ends up so similar. Don't blame your brothers. God will judge all. See to yourself. That which is uncertain cannot always be resolved once and for all.

O Krishna, I'm almost ready to go to sleep, but I feel reluctant. Will I have to face another one of those dreams where I'm lost in a crime-rough ethnic street, me always the victim? What do these dreams mean? A parable on transmigration? My fear of being thrust out of the security I live in? Is that what's showing up in my dreams? What does it mean? I'm too afraid, too secure? O Lord, please protect me wherever I go, whether inwardly or outwardly. I am no great hero. I would perish without Your mercy.

October 27, 12:05 a.m.

People don't know that the goal of life is to go back to Godhead. They are bewildered by Krishna's external illusory energy. They forget their duties to Lord Visnu, so never chant His names, bow to Him, or remember Him. They are the ones who are punishable by Yamaraja.

Yamaraja considered that he and his servants had been offenders, so he prayed to the Lord for forgiveness. Sukadeva Gosvami then concludes the narration of Ajamila by praising the holy name. Even if at present one chants with offenses, he's advised by the *sastras* to go on chanting. Chanting is also the means to nullify offenses. "There is no other way, no other way, no other way."

I surprised myself by finishing *A Second Chance* this morning. I haven't planned yet which of Srila Prabhupada's books to read next. I like reading with the awareness that this is his personal presentation of the Krishna conscious teachings.

Since I haven't chosen something else, let me look at the *Bhagavatam* right now. Bhishma prays at the time of death, "Let my ultimate attraction be to Sri Krishna, the Personality of Godhead." Again, he's meditating on a visual image of something he saw during his lifetime. The whip was in His right hand as He stood on the chariot, protecting Arjuna. "Those who saw Him on the battlefield of Kuruksetra attained their original forms after death." (*Bhag.* 1.9.39.) We don't have to be a contemporary of Lord Krishna to see Him within ourselves. "A pure devotee of the Lord constantly sees the presence of the Lord within himself because of being transcendently related by loving service. Such a pure devotee cannot forget the Lord for a moment. This is called trance." (*Bhag.* 1.9.39, purport) This is not a mechanical meditation but spontaneous love.

An extraordinary feature mentioned in this verse is that "all living beings who participated on the battlefield of Kuruksetra, on both sides, attained their *svarupa*, as confirmed by Bhishma." Whoever looks on the Personality of Godhead as he dies, either within or without, attains his *svarupa*. I want a picture of the Lord, of Radha-Govinda, to be before me when I die. There is that line in *Krishna* book where the *gopas* are in the forest fire looking to Krishna the way a dying man looks upon a picture of the Personality of Godhead. The picture may also be within. The holy names . . . I remember Pradyumna dasa, after his hernia operation, telling Srila Prabhupada that he was not able to chant but was thinking of Swamiji. Srila Prabhupada approved that as sufficient in the hour of difficulty. But while I have tolerable health and the best attention of which I'm capable, let me chant and hear as practice for the end. (That's more important than scratching at my rash, which should not be done anyway.)

"Let my mind be fixed upon Lord Krishna, whose motions and smiles of love attracted the damsels of Vraja-dhama (the *gopis*). The damsels imitated the characteristic

movements of the Lord (after His disappearance from the *rasa* dance)." (*Bhag.* 1.9.40) How different this picture is from the military scenes which Bhisma witnessed. This is more intimate "Krishna in His original form. Bhisma is repeating what he has heard from authoritative sources. He wants to also treasure these "memories" in his heart. Srila Prabhupada states that Krishna's relationship with Arjuna "is undoubtedly praiseworthy for devotees like Bhismadeva, but the relation of the *gopis* with the Lord is still more praiseworthy because of their still more purified loving service." (*Bhag.* 1.9.40, purport)

I thought of canceling a January lecture about "Radha-Krishna As The Ultimate Goal," because of something I'd read in an earlier purport in this section. It suggested an equal approach to all five *rasas*. But here the ultimate truth is stated. Still, maybe I should not suggest that devotees meditate on it. Any suggestion of imitation isn't good. This purport emphasizes that the *gopis* were given equality in their dealings with the Lord, where all interests are eradicated between lover and beloved.

* * *

4:19 a.m.

I must always be ready to give up EJW or my life itself. A depression, an odd thought, so I choose not to stay with it. I know I have to stay with life in Krishna consciousness.

Hey, don't just stand there spacing out and listening to your inner music. Work out. You dressed the Deities, and somehow showed Krishna's feet for *darSana*, although the pink *dhoti* was made to cover them. You are a Hare Krishna monk. Why the grimace? You can't seem to shake your Westernized mind "that seems obvious. You're not one of the converted who chooses to reside in India or in any transcendental *dhama*. Yet this place is transcendental because it is the scene where you and others strive in Krishna consciousness.

Hey, I asked why you were standing there so spaced out? We pay you to fill pages from left to right with calligraphy. You and Mickey Mouse "he needs *tilaka* "and who's that man with the guitar, and is that his mother? She's playing tenor sax. Odd. At least give them some *prasadam* before they leave.

And so it goes. He flinches at the predictability of his life, but he decided to read *ISopanisad* next. It's not the living that gets him "I mean, the sameness of the living "it's the reporting of it. To live small, mild changes is fine with him, but they're embarrassing to record. "I folded the paper towel, wetted it in the warm water, and wiped the Lord's body with it." As if that were a commonplace thing! Actually, it is wonderful. Imagine how from this body, the entire creation comes. The *arca-vigraha* is not a material creation, not an idol.

So why be ashamed of the little things I do? This is my Vrndavana *bhajana*, and it lifts me above the modes of Ireland and the rain I have come to live with.

Yes, even my almost-daily headache and my risky treatment of them with meds is not really commonplace. I treat the headaches so I can stay active in my art, and the art is my gift to any audience who will accept them. Even the resolution to do this work day after day, for Prabhupada's pleasure, is wonderful, because it comes from the Lord. Hare

Krishna. We live in a *haribol* heaven of *prasadam* honorers, and that's no ordinary thing either.

* * *

M. came in surprisingly early. As if caught in the act, I suddenly raised my pen from the page.

The Pirate Club of one went out earlier and splashed in his guaranteed stay-dry rain gear, making *maha-mantra* mud pies. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna . . .

Imagined that I was at a high school dance (I've done this before), and instead of Teddy rice playing sax and me playing wallflower while Ned Finley and others dance with the girls under the bowers of sagging crepe paper, I played the sax and (it's 1956) blew a tender ballad just like Prez. No one can really appreciate such artistry. Then something more sprightly, like "Tea For Two." That swings, but it's still graceful and gentle, a dry and delicate sound that is my musical self.

Is that man remembering Krishna? I say *this* man is. When he's tying his shoes he's chanting Hare Krishna, and when he pours the cup of cold water over his head, he chants some more. In his fantasy he always comes around to a Krishna conscious stand somehow, although how Swamiji could have been there in the late '50s, I'm not sure. He is though, in my fantasy, and I'm not this particular American body filled with the particular hang-ups I had but with him in India suddenly, free in spirit.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

This is the heaviest rain I've walked in yet. A real test for my water-resistant raincoat. I have my right hand in my pocket, and the rain is already soaking through my woolen glove. Water pours down off the roof eaves and slugs onto my right shoulder. I can't see well enough to avoid it by keeping to the left. Why go out in weather like this? Because if I start staying indoors in bad weather, then I'll never come out here. I need to walk every day. Anyway, I've managed to stay fairly dry in flesh and dry in the spirit.

* * *

8:55 a.m.

Bhisma shifts from image to image. He remembered Lord Krishna at the *rajasuya yajna*, where He was worshiped as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the recommended meditation on the personal form and activities of the Supreme Lord. Impersonal meditation is a waste of time. Bhisma also meditates on Lord Krishna as the Supersoul: "He is in everyone's heart. The sun may be perceived differently, but the sun is one." (*Bhag.* 1.9.42) Bhismadeva thus entered a deep *samadhi* of Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada recommends that others can also attain what Bhisma attained. He recommends hearing Krishna's words in the sound incarnations of *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

Those present concluded that Bhisma entered the spiritual world to be with his worshipable Partha-sarathi eternally. Maharaja Yudhisthira then performed the funeral ceremony, and the sages returned to their hermitages.

* * *

9:40 a.m.

The guru says, "Eat more! Eat more!" to his disciples, especially at the beginning of their spiritual lives. The mothers, led by Yashoda-devi, also told their sons to eat more at the evening meal in Nandagram. I say to you, dear self, writer, "Write more! Write more!" Exert your discipline as Yeats and Bach exerted theirs. You have to work if you expect to find gold. Eat more, my darlings, of these scones I baked for you. Do they have scones like this in Goloka?

Ah, the double meaning, the pun, the fun. Am I willing to stand up for this? Murray Mednick is gone from my life, so I don't really care what he says, but he did tell me that "rumi was fearless," implying that I'm afraid to step outside my own mind. Bly says the courageous ones were Freud and Jung, who were willing to go down into the pond and see what they could find "the Wild Man who lives there. Yes, I am a Fred Astaire dancing in the rain in a scripted play. But it's a Hare Krishna play. I *am* afraid of death and its messengers. I *do* take shelter in Govinda and my master, Srila Prabhupada.

* * *

9:55 a.m.

Our gamble is that the full-time service we are offering is the best way there is for us to spend our time. We calculate the time and dedication it takes to present the best we can and realize that it takes an entire life compressed into that one activity. Now if only we can put this little dish of ours on a corner of the altar, where 1,008 plates already sit "savories and sweets sitting amid offerings of money and books and other things. There, put it there. There's always enough room somehow at Prabhupada's feet.

* * *

Am I willing to take the "Zeus energy" of male leadership on behalf of Srila Prabhupada? I hope my answer is yes, but I know I don't mean that "yes" in the way most people might interpret it. I have a different sense of where my responsibility lies. I'm no manager now, and I don't want that kind of power.

* * *

12:13 p.m.

Ecology pad and easy chair. Wounds. Initiation. *Iron John*. He knows a lot about America and its men, women, and culture. I know about a narrow world, and not so much about that. Sometimes I wonder what "they" (people like Bly) would think of me, how they would categorize me, put me down. They don't believe Krishna is God, so as Srila Prabhupada said of his Godbrothers, "They can't do anything to help us, but they

can hurt us very much." Protect yourself within the high walls Srila Prabhupada built around his disciples. But sometimes you wonder . . .

Krishna, Krishna. You wonder if you have denied yourself something, not tested yourself in a way that will prevent you from attaining your spiritual goal. For example, you have no soul-bonding with other men, not even devotees. You struggle in your relationship with the departed (and yet present) master. You don't like the figurehead institutionalized version of yourself or your spiritual master, but look for him as an intimate master-friend. You feel distant sometimes from the demands, even your masters. Yet you want to please him, want to love him wholeheartedly, want to offer him everything you have. It can be confusing sometimes. You wonder why you feel so ignorant, so without direction, but only on some days. On other days, you feel quite directed. When you meet your brothers, you see that you are not so different from them, even if you have a different service and lifestyle. That's reassuring. But you know you'll die if you enter the managerial center of the institution. You couldn't handle it. You'd have to refuse to live there.

And you don't even count in the larger, nondevotional society, except as a cult member who has to raise money or live in a building like everyone else. But it's distant and impersonal, our connection with the nondevotee government, society, police, etc. Sometimes we get dragged into that world by a stay in the hospital or something, and then we try to tell them about Krishna. We see that despite the distance, we have a shared humanity. At such times, we have to protect the flame within us even more to remain on the straight and narrow *bhakti* path, as it exists within the material world. Thus Lord Caitanya told us to stay away from the nondevotees (except to preach). *Asat sanga-tyaga*.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

Maharaja Yudhisthira reigned well, and even the weather cooperated with him. The people and animals under his protection were peaceful and not disturbed by "mental agonies, diseases or excessive heat or cold." (*Bhag.* 1.10.6) Feeling pangs of separation, the Pandavas then saw Lord Krishna leave Hastinapura for His own kingdom of Dvaraka. Pure devotees forget everything of the mundane world and stay in contact with the Supreme Lord. "By associating with pure devotees and by hearing them submissively, attachment for material enjoyment becomes slackened . . . " (*Bhag.* 1.10.12, purport)

Srila Prabhupada keeps emphasizing the potency of hearing about Krishna and how by this process one can become attached to Him. Therefore I practice it on his word and as the conclusion of *sastra*. "Absorbed in the thought of the transcendental qualities of the Lord, who is sung about in select poetry, the ladies on the roofs of all the houses at Hastinapura began to talk of Him. This talk was more attractive than the hymns of the *Vedas*." (*Bhag.* 1.10.20)

The ladies at Hastinapura praised Lord Krishna as the origin of creation. He can be known only by devotional service. He's revealed in confidential Vedic literature. The land of Mathura is glorious because He appeared there. His residential place, Dvaraka,

and His queens are most glorious. The *gopis* of Vrndavana are mentioned also in the *parakiya* attitude of love for Krishna. All such ladies are in their eternal *svarupa*, which is usually attained only after many lives of penance.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

A writer writes. When he walks in the yard, he breathes in the fresh air, looks up at the yellow-leafed trees. Is he a writer even then? Yes, because he's either writing or getting ready to write. He's aware of his green boots, green pants and jacket, and the hood that covers his head, the slightest edge of a twinge beginning, and all of it is part of the writerly way as soon as he finally commits them to words on paper. He wants Krishna consciousness in its pure form, so he tells things the way they are. Practicing always.

Lord Brahma prayed that he wanted to create on the Lord's behalf, but he knew it was passionate, dangerous work. Therefore, he told the Lord that as the Lord had instructed him in the *catur-Sloki Bhagavatam*, so he wanted to be spared any false notion that he himself was actually a creator. "I only act on Your behalf."

That's certainly true for me too. Krishna allows any creativity we may experience. We say we'd like to find personal expression in Krishna consciousness, and we may even have in mind how we would like it to come out, but we cannot forget that it is Krishna who will both inspire and allow us to serve His cause.

Of course, if we're less surrendered, you may say in effect, "I'll do it my way, but I'll offer it to Krishna. I already know how to write. I've worked hard at it." Obviously, we are forgetting that the creativity and inspiration actually come, every inch of it, from Bhagavan Sri Krishna. We have claimed proprietorship over it. But at least we're willing to offer the results.

Smartavyah satatam visnoh. Write while you can under the umbrella of His feet. I say that and maybe don't know what it means in its entirety, but it still means something to me. As I write, Srila Prabhupada sits and sees. He's wearing saffron, of course, and a swami hat with the chin straps hanging loose.

October 28, Midnight

Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu describes how he was faithful to Srila Prabhupada's translation of the *ISopanisad* invocation, *om purnam adah purnam idam*: "The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes." Another guru called this a wrong translation. This is the test: to remain true to guru.

The *ISopanisad* is coming down from time eternal. Srila Prabhupada described the authority of *sastra* in the lecture he had edited as the Introduction to this book. I'll read it later, though.

Took rest at 6:00 last night because I felt head pain. It went down, and I now have another chance to live out a day. I'm in the Krishna conscious army, but in the solitaries

division. I've been assigned to an outpost where I can write, read, and cope with my handicap.

The Absolute Truth, the complete whole, must not be formless. He's Brahman, Paramatma, and Bhagavan. The non-Vedic teachers and their followers won't accept these points, but I do. We teach them to whoever may favor them as the best explanation of total reality. Existence isn't a chance, random happening. That it could be is a scientist's speculation. It's an atheistic idea. Such persons prefer God to be dead, and so He remains dead to them. Often, though, they step back from that position and seek an impersonal, "pure consciousness" or a contemplation of the void. That the ultimate being is sentient and intelligent escapes them.

God's creation comes complete with its own elements, time scale, and whatever else it needs for maintenance and subsistence. Within this world the living beings have facility to realize the complete whole through self-realization and God realization. "All forms of incompleteness are experienced due to incomplete knowledge of the complete whole." (*ISopanisad*, p. 3) This purport is an essay on the harmony of the Complete and His parts. It is an essay on wholeness, *purnam*, which exists as God and His emanations.

We get hung up, diverted by side issues, addictions, illusions, etc., and miss the bigger picture. We are happy only to attain harmony with the whole. That means we are servants of the Supreme Lord and need to act, think, and feel in that way. Too often we forget Him and try to act as an enjoyer. A life with sense enjoyment as the goal is misleading. "When everything is dovetailed with the complete whole, the attached parts and parcels also become complete in themselves."

ISavasyam idam sarvam. All living beings have four defects. The Vedic knowledge is *apauruseya*, not delivered by faulty persons. It's infallible, coming down from the Supreme Lord through the *parampara*.

God is the proprietor of everything, the Lord of the *para* and *apara praktis* (energies). Therefore everything is His property, and we should accept what He gives us as our quota. There won't be peace in the world unless the nations follow the principles of the *ISopanisad*. Otherwise, they'll destroy themselves with their nuclear weapons.

The laws of God are also known as the laws of nature. Break them and you will be punished. But humans have special responsibilities. We must also recognize the Supreme Lord by taking lessons from Vedic literature. For example, we should eat only vegetarian food, and only that after offering it to the Supreme Lord. Act in this way and become eligible to go back to Godhead.

* * *

4:23 a.m.

Floating in the excitement of bathing and dressing Radha-Govinda while hearing of Their pastimes. Let me keep my mind on that while I can. Stay with this moment.

"Is this a sapphire column?" Radha would ask, thinking it was Krishna She saw, but wasn't sure.

Is this . . . Krishna . . .

Radha . . . is

this allowed to be?
We know or don't know
each day becoming shorter life
getting shorter energy dying
concentration
lost.
Give the Lord and His devotees
the offering "all things you are
all things they are to you
their joking and poetic words
as they exchange
my own lists don't amount to much.
In my hands, the metaphors seem clumsy
the Krishna bee looking for the Radha flower
I grope for
Reality
a way to surrender
but I'm still inclined toward matter
limited and beaten
in my Hare Krishna daze.

* * *

5:26 a.m.

Out in the cold, blowy dark. Strange how the mind wanders, even during *gayatri*, while the feet crunch on gravel. I remember starting a train of thought about *Iron John*. Bly was talking about the son's relationships with the father. He said that one way to become wounded was not to be with your father during your early years. My father was away at war when I was quite young. (As I wrote this last sentence, the first word I used instead of "my father" was "Prabhupada." I often do that.) My father was a sailor in World War II, so he was gone for about three years to the Pacific. He was a fireman, and his duty was to put out the fires that started on ships. At that time, we lived in an apartment on 76th Street, off Atlantic Avenue, in Queens, New York. Sometimes my mother and I went to the movies, and sometimes we visited her sister-in-law, my Aunt Mary. I have very few memories of that time. Then after all his adventures and all the history that became that war, my father (again I said "Prabhupada") returned. My mother put a special bed out in our living room for he and my mom. Why? Did they not have a bedroom? I don't remember.

My strongest impressions of my father start when we moved to Great Kills. That's where he lived out his version of the American Dream by buying a house. If I had thought it was important, I could have asked him more about it, but now those days are gone, a past life. I walk the boards with cold fingers while I live both outside and very much inside Krishna consciousness. This morning I felt myself bouncing off the walls of true Krishna consciousness. I mean, I haven't yet been admitted by Krishna. That's a

well- known fact between Him and me. And in a way, it's the source of our loving exchange. We understand it together.

* * *

8:38 a.m.

The Lord left Hastinapura. Maharaja Yudhisthira accompanied Lord Krishna with some military divisions. "The Maharaja did this because of the enemy, and also out of affection for the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.10.32) Everything between the Lord and His devotees is done out of affection. Krishna doesn't need anything from us. So I'm reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* (which is still a bit of discipline for me), hoping to develop spontaneous attraction to Lord Krishna. "The basic principle for all transcendental exchanges between the Lord and His devotees is exhibited to enjoy a transcendental bliss for which there's no comparison, even up to the level of *brahmananda*."

When Lord Krishna reached Dvaraka He blew His conch, and all the residents rushed out to greet Him. Speaking of "that sound," which here refers to the sound of the Lord's conch, Srila Prabhupada mentions another sound representation "as was sounded by Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in the following sixteen words: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare." (*Bhag.* 1.11.3) The sound of the Lord in whatever form banishes fear. "We can take advantage of these sounds and be free from all threatening problems of material existence."

The citizens of Dvaraka came to Lord Krishna with gifts, and He gladly accepted them, although He is "the fully satisfied and self-sufficient one, who, by His own potency, incessantly supplies others." (*Bhag.* 1.11.4)

* * *

10:02 a.m.

M. asks whether I want to find a replacement for him. "No," I say.

Read a few pages of a book by a man who could communicate only by blinking his left eye. I'm writing for what I'm worth with my faculties intact a while longer. Be grateful.

I found reading scripture tedious, so started something new: reading aloud onto tape a few choice passages. This helps me fix my mind on Prabhupada's book and lets me preserve it to listen to later. Hope it works.

M. cleaned out the silver and gold pens, but they have already stopped working again. It's their nature to be dysfunctional. The cheapo "No Nonsense" pens work away, week after week.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

That book by Bauby, written when he could only blink his left eye, published two days before he died, an international bestseller, is well written. It makes me want to become more determined to get my words out. I write differently than him, and I write

every day. I am grateful that it comes out so easily most of the time, nothing like the experience he went through. But in other ways it's not easy. I should write more, I should write deeper, be more of a poet. Bauby is determined to communicate. He isn't holy, religious, he doesn't profess faith in God, but he offers simple slices of life. He likes to read the letters people send him rather than hearing people speak on grand themes, such as the soul. Yes, I understand what he means. But it's too bad that after his stroke he didn't meet a genuine guru and have a conversion experience. Don't worry, I'm not going to judge him, because he still gave a gift in his book.

For me, his book says to write Krishna consciousness in as charming and disarming a way as I can. I shouldn't be a bastard but a decent person who is willing to plumb depths "as deep as my own diving bell will take me, without losing the lightness of the butterfly he mentions. Find the real me, then offer that with gratitude for Krishna's mercy.

I wonder how hard it would be to be grateful if all you could do to communicate was to blink your left eye so many times to represent each letter of the alphabet. That was Bauby's condition. Of course, he was also dependent on others to take down his dictation. Would I be able to turn within and chant Hare Krishna? Would someone help me chant? Would I learn how to read Srila Prabhupada's books more and more, even if only in small installments every day? We imagine our taste escalating when we are so stripped, but it doesn't always happen that way. It depends on what we want. To see everything material as fleeting and to taste Krishna as the real goal "would I be blessed to experience such reality?

* * *

12:32 p.m.

Waiting for lunch. M is scheduled to leave at 1:00. I'll be alone today. read the on-line migraine journal, or rather glanced at it. They suffer, but have a strong energy to communicate with one another, especially to offer solace. A neuro told a migraineur she had to change her life. She vented to her fellow sufferers. "Imagine! I'm supposed to change my life just because I get migraines!" Her words reflect the new righteous attitude that migraines are a primary disease, biochemical in origin, and that headache sufferers no longer want to be told they're crazy. They want their disease treated with right-for-you combinations of meds or a nondrug therapy that works. Psychological causes may be triggers, but hey, don't lay any trips on us. The pain is not "only in your head."

Laughter, light, quiet
undulated words now
made Krishna conscious
by the chanting.

Radha-Govinda have been in my life for almost a year.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

By "mistake," I opened the *Bhagavatam* to a chapter I read a few days ago. I closed it again and moved ahead "but wait a minute, that was an arresting verse: "The Personality

of Godhead, who appears in the mind of the devotee by attentive devotion and chanting of the holy name, releases the devotee from the bondage of fruitive activities at the time of his quitting the material body." (*Bhag.* 1.9.23)

If I (me and you and everyone concerned) can do this at the end, that's liberation. Lord Krishna will help us even if the material stress is too much. He can take over if we can no longer pilot our own ship. It's as if He's saying, "He has always tried to think of Me and chant, and at this end of his life, he'd like nothing more than to think of Me. But this stroke (or whatever the form of the death blow) has disabled him. I'll take over and make the yoga."

But we have to show Him we want Him for as long as it's within our power to want anything. Otherwise, we will be given what we really want "something other than Krishna's loving service.

Illusioned living beings forget that they are the predominated and that the Supreme Lord is the predominator. "The clear consciousness of the cognizant living being is God consciousness, in which one bows down unto Him in all circumstances." (*Bhag.* 1.11.6, purport)

The residents of Dvaraka pray to Lord Krishna on His arrival, "O creator of the universe, You are our mother, well-wisher, Lord, father, spiritual master and worshipable Deity. By following in Your footsteps we have become successful in every respect. We pray, therefore, that You continue to bless us with Your mercy." (*Bhag.* 1.11.7) They were praying not from a great distance but face to face with Him. They also recognized their fortune. This is our original state of life, and we can regain it only by practicing devotional service.

* * *

4:47 p.m.

Painted. Some of it was okay, but I didn't think it was so great "the words "*nanda-tanuja*" (from Prabhupada's *bhajana*) appeared on the top of a sort of broken-shaped man. I painted him the way he seemed to want to be, though. If the man looks at it later and doesn't like his portrait, what can I do?

What else? Darkening day. When I paint wild, I don't notice loneliness. But maybe I miss out on something else. Both the quiet and exuberant men have to take turns. I could have clustered toward the lectures I must give in two months. So *many* lectures. Hard to believe I used to speak every day. Now I feel as squeezed as a toothpaste tube. But I'll remember what Prabhupada said on the various subjects and at least say that. That's my surrender and also my happiness.

* * *

6:04 p.m.

Walked in the dark front yard. Lights on in the house next door. The chanting *is* a friend. It joins me to the thatched roof and the night and this peace. It joins me to my real self.

Someone said that ISKCON scandal mongers are looking for the lowest common denominator so we can all become complacent; no one is better than anyone else. Only

Srila Prabhupada is the best, and no one else has or can achieve anything more than that. Therefore, no one else should demand much. That's one way to think.

* * *

6:28 p.m., Night Notes

Beat the *anarthas*. Beat the cycle of birth and death. The rain pinkels down on the skylight. I figure I'm safe in this house. It's time for M. to sing at Govinda's. Pack a wallop, Madhu.

It's sleepy time down South. Mr. Stephen is winding up. I already put Radha-Govinda into Their bluish night clothes (the same clothes They were wearing when They arrived from India). Soon I'll put Them to bed.

I just went downstairs to look at the paintings I did today. Some of them need to be housebroken or tamed. They're not coherent in terms of our canon. What else does the Wild Man want? To bring us all to bed while Hare Krishna floats beneath us. O Krishna, please give me another chance to become a better devotee. I can't talk this out with anyone, even with a best friend or guru. It comes back to me in the end, me and Krishna, and the regular work I have to do.

October 29, Midnight

Nuthin's easy. I'm not Bauby or Etty Hillesum, and by comparison, it is *very* easy for me right now. But it's not easy to practice and write and achieve what we want. Not easy to love and pray. Not easy to give up false ego or bodily identification. It's not simple. Yet I know there is no other way. So in that sense, it's easy for me to know what I have to do "simply continue with Krishna consciousness. Lord Krishna is leading me along gently, seeing that I'm averse to suffering and quickly stung into paralysis. I feel alone.

Don't want M. to think I'm clinging to him or that I can't live without him. If he needs to fly the coop (as uncle ralph used to say and do), then I'll leave the door open to his cage. But neither do I want to tempt him to go.

Let's look at *ISopanisad*. "No one wants to die, and everyone wants to live as long as he can drag on." (*ISopanisad*, p. 12) The best work we can do is to free ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. Positive knowledge is to realize the Supreme Lord's authority. When we work like that, it's called *naiskarma*, and it does not bind us. "Factually, no one has to do anything more than render devotional service to the Lord." (*ISopanisad*, p. 13)

But in the lower stages, we tend to be attached to some kind of work. Fine. Then we should dovetail that work with the *iSavasya* conception. We ask ourselves what's best. We might say the most surrendered activity would be to give up all business and family and to move into an ISKCON temple. But that's not always the case. We have to find ourselves, where we're at, what we can do best to advance according to those realities, and measure it all against the actual opportunities to which a pure *bhakta* aspires. For me, I have it boiled down to these places throughout the day where I'm most able to read, write, and chant. When I write, I do several things at once: (1) I purify myself; (2) I

engage in *sadhana* by glorifying Krishna; and (3) I perform a kind of preaching by writing to spread Krishna consciousness.

Human life is a special responsibility. With it, we are meant to develop Krishna consciousness. That's why we have more comfortable sensual facilities than the lower species. They are not meant to be enjoyed; we are not meant to live a more polished animal life with our better-equipped sensitivities. A highly placed servant is given more facility than a clerk so that he can become cool-headed to discharge his higher duties. Act according to this higher calling, and keep any necessary sense gratification simple. If we don't use our human life for self-realization, then we are forced to work as animals, either through our present human body or in the next life with an animal body.

M. returned at 11:30 p.m. and dropped off the week's mail in the front hall. I want to chant for a couple of hours before I get into that. It's hard enough to concentrate on the name, so let me keep things gentle for now.

Do I act with the gravity befitting a human being and a spiritual master? Not always. I'm honest with myself about that.

* * *

4:17 a.m.

Just serve and don't complain or punish yourself for your impurity. All you need is *bhakti*. But you have other desires, so dovetail them. Kiss the Blarney Stone if you must and shock a reader, or give ammo to your enemies. Yes, all that.

Krishna danced on the Kaliya snake's heads. He was not (and His devotees were not) on the bandstand in some smoky dive. They were sometimes in a spotlessly clean and well-ornamented temple, and sometimes in the forests by streams of purest water. Or they might be any place "city streets, universities, shops, or train stations "because they are always interested in reclaiming fallen souls.

A devotee leaves Vrndavana to serve Vraja-Krishna. When his work is done, he returns to the *dhama*.

The people I know want to please Lord Hari. These are my friends. We want to be with them. We forget other things. Bauby in the diving bell, "locked-in syndrome" they called it, spent his time remembering the life he had lived with his senses before the stroke. He had no hope of physical sense gratification after that.

* * *

Krishna, now it's just me and the pen. What happened to those promised timed sessions? I seem to have copped out on everything. I am like a puffed-up guru asking my servant to stoop and kiss my ring. I tell you, it's good for you to be humbled. Y2K, is that it? I'll have to look it up. O Krishna. I'll pray to You today. I was hacking them out (my rounds) at 8:20 per minute. No trace of drowsiness though, but no prayer content either. I kept glancing at the new stack of letters and wondering what they held.

While painting, I forgot to hold onto the chain as I descended into Radha-kunda. You want to be independent? I want to be Krishna conscious out of pure desire, and if not, then feel for a few minutes what my desire *is*. If not Krishna consciousness, then what?

He ascertained that his heart was okay, he doesn't have cancer, a shortage of food, or . . . No, it just won't be, will it? Hare Krishna.

Then Krishna comes to mind. I feel restless. If I get batteries, I can hear his lectures. I don't need batteries to read his books. Keep the supply lines open as long as you can. Pure devotees pray, "Even if I can't go back to Godhead, wherever I go, please allow me to remember You and serve Your devotees." Pray like that too.

Krishna with the *gopis* or on the battlefield of Kuruksetra "me turning to Him. With fellow students.

Carrots, broccoli, scones "it's Thursday.

Believe the *sastra*. Be on time. Be who you are. He dug deeper with his pen and asked God to help him write a God conscious poem starting with the word "cancer." Then he said he couldn't do it now and let himself off.

* * *

5:25 a.m., Morning Walk

Can I concentrate? Can I pray to Krishna? Can I let some emotions come? My dear Lord Krishna, please let me and the devotees come to Your lotus feet. For myself, I ask that You protect my vows and standing and that You allow me to develop firm faith in Your existence, truth (*param satyam*), and in my servanthood at Your feet. Please also let me celebrate my little life that is not so little, since it is lived in Krishna consciousness. You have given me so many wonderful things, and I want to use all of them to serve You. Please let me be kind to others. You know my foibles. Please help me.

Prayed like this while wishing on a star I saw high up over the wall in the backyard.

* * *

12:15 p.m.

Did a letter-answering marathon this morning. Pushed myself. Dear Diary, I'm telling you, this is art, religion, me and you.

I renounced follies and frivols. I who answered all those letters ought to be a stalwart. Told them, told them with strength and reason and softness and humanness, told them, spoke and crooned and approved and snorted at the opposition, stamped my foot, and quoted.

Came up short. Admit it. Conceited. Dear So-and-so, I'm glad you have apples in your cart. Congrats on being officially incorporated. Hurry up now, it's time to do so, don't you think? Dear Mister and Miss, I'm glad you are devotees and glad I am too. If bad times come, we can *chant Hare Krishna*. Dear Schwartz, Ivan, Elliage, and Yvonne, you are lucky to come to Krishna consciousness at your respective ages of sixteen, twenty-one, twenty-three, and sixty-six. I am fortunate too. No, I did not see the movie you mentioned. Yes, I sometimes went to the beach in winter. No, I do not weigh a hundred and fourteen pounds and eat only a half a bowl of cereal a day. I weigh "I don't know how much I weigh these days. Don't expect me to be cured of headaches. Don't expect me to travel to where you live. P.S. I love you.

I feel a little giddy whenever I answer so much mail in one day. Someone sent me a baby picture, someone a picture of an old man with a beard. "Prisoner of mind," someone said. "What about death to us all?" "Your letter discouraged me because I thought you were comparing me to X dasa and pushing me to be like him." But I wasn't, wasn't at all.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

There's a new Vedabase folio available with all of Srila Prabhupada's teachings on it. Costs six hundred dollars. Devotees can now replace their old one. But I still ride the oxcart of his books in their early editions. Yes, folks, buy that folio and stay off the internet. I stay off the internet too, but I do it by riding the old bouncing, slow-moving cart of a printed book.

Remove *maya's* covering and be with the Lord. Parts of the whole rejoin Him like once-extinguished sparks now leaping happily into the fire. Seeing Him face to face and not bearing His separation anymore. "The solution is given here, and it rests on us to assimilate it or not." (*Bhag.* 1.11.10, purport)

Krishna greeted so many old servants when He returned to Dvaraka. There was Baladeva, Vasudeva, Sambha, His wives, the artists and dramatists. Listen to the words that were used to describe Krishna's beauty and strength and His transcendental form. The Lord's mothers met Him too, headed by Devaki (there are seven kinds of mothers). The Lord's sixteen thousand wives greeted Him as He entered His palaces and embraced Him through their sons.

I'm not satisfied only to read; I want to write at the same time, and vice versa. I want my prose enriched by Prabhupada's, and I want to see the pages of such writing accumulate. Can't do both exactly at the same time, because I have to first appreciate the *sastra* before I can write.

* * *

5:05 p.m.

Clustered for another January lecture on reading Srila Prabhupada's books. Discussed with M. the opening lecture, which could be on limits and suffering.

Sky darkening. I didn't write much today, unless you count the letters I wrote, in which case, I wrote nonstop all morning.

Darker blue. I decided to remain silent and surround myself with the simple austerities of chanting and hearing. Decisions get undone, so we will be traveling soon. Hare Krishna. Hope they don't celebrate Halloween here. Don't want any pranksters knocking on my gate.

October 30, 12:10 a.m.

The Supreme Lord can be known only by His mercy. He is forever in His transcendental abode, yet He is simultaneously spread throughout all creation by His inconceivably powerful energies. His innumerable energies may be divided into three:

internal, marginal, and external. This is theology. Do you realize it? People argue about what theology actually is, and people of different theologies argue over whose is best. If I lecture on it to an audience, I have to accept what I myself am saying. Do you realize *that*? Pray for faith and taste.

Don't try to subject the Supreme Lord to your limited capacity to understand Him. He is the Supreme Person, and when He says He's spread everywhere by His energies, that doesn't suggest that He has become impersonal.

We each have a part to play in the whole, and when we forget that, we're in illusion. "This does not mean that the individual soul has no initiative of his own. Because he is part and parcel of the Lord, he must partake of the initiative of the Lord as well." (*ISopanisad*, p. 21) When the living entity uses his initiative or active nature properly, his original consciousness is revived. I'm striving patiently for that. I'll sacrifice anything to progress in that. Tell the people to whom I lecture (and write letters and books) that they should do the same. Inside myself I know I am always dependent on His mercy. "The Lord can be known by one who has a submissive attitude."

"The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but He is very near as well. He is within everything, and yet He is outside of everything." (*ISopanisad*, mantra 5)

Srila Prabhupada: "Contradictions are given here by way of proving the inconceivable potencies of the Lord." A pure devotee can explain them. We accept both His personal existence and His unlimited impersonal potencies. When we say the Lord's abode is far, far away, the scientists scoff, "How far? Why don't we see His place in our telescopes?" The Krishna conscious scientist can refute them all; he holds them at bay. We can't know Krishna by argument but only by His grace.

He's far away but can come here in less than a second. I like these statements. My reason doesn't feel offended by them. Lord Krishna says the fools deride Him when He appears in the humanlike form. For example, He appears in the *arca-vigraha*. Srila Prabhupada mercifully goes on to explain that the Lord's *murtis* are not idols. "Thus for the surrendered soul He is always within reach, whereas for the unsurrendered soul He is far, far away and cannot be appreciated." (*ISopanisad*, p. 26) It's important to know that there are intelligent devotees who believe this, who can present and defend it.

The Lord can appear anywhere to show mercy to His devotee, as He did when He appeared within a pillar to rescue Prahlada. When He comes as an *avatara*, it's to please His devotees. As Antaryami, He is in everyone's heart. There is nothing but God.

I read a little, feel a little rushed, because I didn't wake until the alarm went off. Two clear days in a row for me, so I'm hopeful now as I go to chant *japa*. I am not dehydrated. I've been reading the water of life.

* * *

2:55 a.m.

Writing on a calligraphy pad. I hereby signify that the bearer of this paper is in good standing, chilly though he feels in body. The oath is taken: I swear to live until I die and to remain a *Sisya* of my master.

Hey, here's is a picture of me taken when I was a young *sannyasi*. This is a trick to get me to write and you to read and both of us to practice Krishna consciousness.

Heating water downstairs for a bath. A *maha-bhagavata* (NOI says) is free of the propensity to find fault with others.

I bet he's also fearless. Unlike me.

Give special attention to humans. Owls can turn their heads almost all the way around, but they can't chant and dance or understand philosophy. Among the humans, these four hundred thousand species, please take care to protect this one, me, who is growing old and fragile. Keep him until he has to go, and feed him both grains and broccoli and clean water. He'll hatch pages in return. I am hereby ensconced in the body parchment and machine and wish the soul to speak out as SDG under oath to confer tidings and my Swami's blessings, who is very dear to Krishna on this earth.

* * *

4.17 Timed Session

They're off and running, but not so fast. It's probably going to be a slow race run simply to show off their sneakers. They just get too tired these days, and the track is confining.

Oh rabbit enjoyer, you will be happy only when you serve Lord Hari. Don't ask for freedom to write and draw; ask only for the inspiration to serve. Ask for strength, for another pen if you need one, and a younger hand and head. (Probably you'll have to wait for your next life for that boon.) But you know, youth lasts only for a few years, so better you pray to achieve the spiritual world.

A big yawn. A pest. A habit. A frown. A hint that there is a transcendental place, say Vrndavana, that can lift you and other sincere devotees beyond this world. Being in Vrndavana is both an objective and a subjective experience.

Walk barefoot on the *parikrama* trail. Some devotees know Vrndavana well, what each inch of the *parikrama* trail is like. They walk it every day. It has been impressed upon their minds and senses. They have faith that if they can be reborn in Vrndavana, they will have an amazing advantage to think of Krishna and will be that much closer to returning to the original Vrndavana.

Do I say otherwise? Why don't I live there? How can I find Vrndavana from here? Our spiritual master didn't teach me to flock to Vrndavana, abandoning my duties, but he did teach me to seek for and find Vrndavana in my heart.

Glasses of beer from the tap, poured by the bartender, each with a white head of foam. The drink appears golden, but don't be deceived. Blinking tears from my eyes, I drink hot milk with honey instead, after offering it to Krishna. I am tired, pinched, and biting my fingernails today. Took my doubts out on an *enimigos*. Went outside only to fetch water.

Don't judge me wrong, he said. It's my weak, poor health. I can't keep up this marathon pace. We'll have to lie down with a poem unsaid.

Beach ball boys they
discovered a Godbrother who was
hiding and I had thought

he would be found in a small
fishing town on the
coast of an ocean. He simply said
I'm doing what I have to do
and you? Yes, I'm happy
too, and he gave me credit
for admitting it
feeling it
and our paths parted.

Someone is writing a play based on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Srila Prabhupada was pleased with that service on principle.

It's getting warm in here. I have no drama from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* to perform. I just have crumbs and other things I offer. Krishna, Krishna, I tried to chant and will try again.

What can I expect? It's difficult to break through to reading only scripture, speaking only truth, looking always for the positive outcome. Deep in my marrow, I desire to be the Lord's and to let that single desire come to the surface like a ship heading out to sea.

The end: 15 minutes 14 seconds.

* * *

Words scattered on two Bristol boards:

Board one:

She-he wants to be a devotee, okay?
Yes, apply in room 42 of the temple.
How much does it cost?
Your desire.
Oh that's easy.
No!

* * *

Board two:

This is the true account of a devotee who persevered, then petered out, who touted himself as a big-shot and was later humbled.

He had so many petty sins that he was afraid to let them out of the dark.

Well, good! *Keep* them hidden.

The agent for devotional service is the pure devotee who comes to this world to speak Krishna's message. He cooks, and if we're lucky, we'll get some *prasada*.

(He's still available through the disciplic succession.)

Written in haste on October 30, 1998. I hope to keep living under His shelter and to tell palatable truths for the devotees.

* * *

5:29 a.m.

Spatters of rain. Perks of encouragement to write and draw come from within. Even when I fall into a valley of fatigue, that's true. When I come up again, I'll praise Lord Hari. There's nothing like Vrndavana, and thinking of Vrndavana from the outside is also nice. In fact, for me that seems like it might be best. Walking in the dark and seeing the small white sticks in front of the flowers and plants. It's like a flower graveyard out here. But there's such a thing as winter planting, and Hare Krishna dasi is going to come here and do it. She'll also come for her monthly cleaning of Radha-Govinda. Soon other guests are coming "Narayana-kavaca, Caitanya-candrodaya. Krishna is kind. He's *always* kind. I'm happy to see that. Let me go through whatever He sends and be grateful for the rough stuff too, because that's when we really learn, isn't it?

I walk around and around the house, see the white van over the wall, the little brass bell they ring to call us, and the immensity of the dark night sky above me. Let it rain, let it *soak*, and let me walk on these boards remembering my Lord. As Tiny Tim Cratchet said, God bless us everyone!

* * *

5:51 a.m.

Another page on the Calligraphy pad, "Ideal for scrolls and certificates." Award him the wooden medal for not missing any classes. Or for making up missed days. The sleepy head who persisted. "It's a shame you don't use this parchment for a pretty calligraphic penmanship," she said.

"Like Olde English, the *New York Times* logo?"

"Yes, but not only that. There are many styles and pen shapes."

Well, I'll have to write like I write. When I run out of ink, I'll use my blood and a peacock quill. Krishna, how may I serve You?

No rhetorical voice speaking to itself in the void but, "How can *I* serve *You*?" I leave my name and address and am actually ready to work when I'm called.

This is the express route to Vaikuntha. Writer's cramp occurs when the nerves can't squeeze or grip the pen anymore. Is it a rare condition? Sometimes I write uphill, then go down. No real restrictions.

But I just got ink on my forefinger. I don't like that "it's hard to get it off and might be rubbed onto Srila Prabhupada's body when I massage him.

* * *

9:20 a.m.

Feverfew at 8:45, then on my back, fingers warmed with a hot water bottle. Thinking nothing much, Lord Buckley. If I could, I'd read *Bhagavatam* now, but better I put that off until I'm clear. I want to hear more about Lord Krishna's entry into Dvaraka. I want to treat it with the utmost reverence. Those devotees have their own fun and lively talks, a private lexicon of pure souls who speak *pratijalpa*, and so on.

This morning after *just enough* porridge, I felt greed for a little more. I scooped some of the remnants from the top of Srila Prabhupada's bowl and dumped on the honey and milk from his little milk cup. Tasted nice, but it gave me indigestion. I really shouldn't take more than a little less than I need. Stop there "in all material things. I know I need a

margin of comfort so I don't push the body hard enough to send pain through it, but more than that isn't good.

The only way to control the senses is to really dedicate the little-less-than-full feeling to Krishna. It becomes a private exchange, not a show of renunciation. I hereby dedicate that little way to my Lord. To do otherwise is simply to make a fool out of myself when I cave in under sense demands.

Lord Krishna entered Dvaraka. I'll get back to it and read some so I can surrender to it.

I didn't walk on the cold and rocky *parikrama* trail today. The last time I did that barefoot, shocks from the soles of my feet traveled through my body as we practically ran to be back for *Bhagavatam* class.

Vrindavana, yes, falsity, *nyet*. Walk in mind, bearing the shocks. I imagined I was there, worrying about a monkey, and one appeared, jumped on my back, and took my one and only pair of eyeglasses "too late!"

* * *

Bhurijana Prabhu sent me this verse from *Srimad-Bhagavatam* in reference to discussions we had about Srila Prabhupada. In other words, it can apply to him: "O Narada, because I have caught hold of the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, with great zeal, whatever I say has never proved to have been false. Nor is the progress of my mind ever deterred. Nor are my senses every degraded by temporary attachment to matter." (*Bhag.* 2.6.34)

* * *

2:46 p.m.

Up with the crooked heart beating. reading of the goddesses of fortune, who cannot leave the Lord's feet. A little twinge of doubt deep in the crevices of my rock heart "how can this be true? How can there be goddesses of fortune? Isn't everything just a blind force? Are there really gods, a one God? To solve this problem, see my *Obstacles On The Path*. I answered that one there. I also addressed how we should deal with doubts lodged deep in mental crannies. When we free ourselves from doubt, the *Bhagavatam* is made sweet by Sukadeva Gosvami's realizations, which we can then hear purely, and we learn to partake of *rasa*.

I don't have to write notes about everything I read. I don't have to read everything Prabhupada wrote. Just let me know that you are alive and actively submissive. Krishna's queens don't conquer Him with mundane lust. Srila Prabhupada condemns "foolish mundaners" who "misunderstand Him." The foolish speculators compare Krishna to themselves. The Supreme Lord is actually unaffected by the qualities of material nature. "Similarly, the devotees who have taken shelter of the Lord do not become influenced by the material qualities." (*Bhag.* 1.11.38) The pure, liberated devotees, such as Krishna's queens, forget His innumerable glories due to Yogamaya's influence, and they think of Krishna as their beloved husband.

* * *

3:37 p.m.

Do I dare write a page on the bench in the cold? Yes, I can get one out. Is this my Vrndavana courtyard compound? Will Caitanya-candrodaya come and live here too in a separate place behind the shed? There is no well as at Bala's house in Vrndavana, but I am alone here. So far.

"We'll build a little home/ just meant for two/ from which I'll never roam./ Who would? Would you?"

The place I love, the place of *bhajana*, the abode of heart. The Krishna conscious elusive can be found wherever you sacrifice instead of take and enjoy. Do the *yajna* here. Write and breathe away from the madding crowd.

M. and I will start reading together *Manah-Siksa*, with Bhaktivinoda Thakura's commentary.

* * *

4:04 p.m.

Let's do a pole penance. Upright pole and tree behind now almost bare. Yes, we're back to where we were early last spring when we arrived "leafless. But not with the tight-budded hope of March. Shelley said, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Hills in outline. I can live through winter and *for* winter. remember writing *Last Days of the Year* at Colnacopague? Don't romanticize it, yet I certainly pounded away at that old typewriter. Those days are gone forever. Now I squeak out ten or twelve pages.

I'm not complaining. Think of Bauby and his left eye. He said the sounds of the hospital were hard to bear, but he had no choice.

I was looking for a Prabhupada *kirtana* tape but instead found "Sounds of Vrndavana," with *sarod* in the background. I'll play that while we read *Manah-Siksa* for some background effect. I like this tape. You can hear the mourning doves on it, and peacocks too. As Raghunatha dasa Gosvami prays and yearns for Vrndavana and tells his mind, "Please devotedly and constantly think of Vrndavana and the love of the Vrajavasis," I can hear the sounds of his Vraja in my twentieth-century American mind.

I turned it off. I suddenly heard that Westernized music blaring over a loudspeaker. It felt like an abrupt withdrawal from where I was trying to go.

It's got to stop somewhere or other "the alcoholic's last drop. He looks at the empty pigeonholes where he has answered all the mail, the two dictaphones sitting cold and black, and turns back to this pole penance, where he can fix his mind on a Krishna conscious topic.

Krishna taught the *Vedas*, Vyasa taught what Krishna inspired him to teach, and Narada inspired him to listen even closer. When Sukadeva Gosvami spoke the same *Bhagavatam*, both Vyasa and Narada were present, hearing it with amazement. It was as if they'd never heard it before. Even though it was the same material that they themselves had taught, it came through the mouth of Sukadeva's loving realizations. That's the way of sweetness. I can't say why, but that's the way it is.

Are you claiming that when you speak, Jimmy Cagney Jr., that it's sweeter than mashed potatoes eaten on 76th Street or in a Great Kills home? I claim nothing. I only try to hear. What else can a born U.S.A. man do?

* * *

Yes, I can't be condemned just because I'm white or American or a Guarino or because of my upbringing. I was there and saw the picture of the U.S. Marines raising the flag at Iwo Jima. That was supposed to be the greatest moment of our American lives, and I looked at it, thought of each Marine and his position while pushing up that flag. You see, they were raising this flag after losing thousands of men in battle, and even while the battle continued to rage around them, they claimed victory. "That was the good war," as Studs Terkel said. That's how we thought of it while we were growing up. We were safe in the U.S. because those men had sacrificed their lives to protect us from the evils of the Nazis and Japs. Hare Krishna.

No, there was no Hare Krishna in America at that time, neither could Krishna consciousness have survived in such an "American" atmosphere. Krishna waited and sent Swamiji at the right time and to the right place "1966, the Lower East Side. He came then and saved us.

Anyway, my point is that you can't exclude me just because I frown, and you can't even say that those who served and fell away are gone forever. They were at Iwo Jima fighting for the cause up until they left. It is recorded eternally in Krishna's book. So I too hold on a little longer.

Do I want to be remembered with tear-filled eyes on the ISKCON equivalent of Memorial Day, veterans making speeches, telling how this old guy is one of the last survivors "this bent-gray guy *was there* in 1966. He will now come to the podium and speak. He tells memoirs everyone already knows, because it's in the Vedabase, but he brings a chuckle to the crowd before they begin the serious business of dividing the loot and the lot of us into *varnas* and *aSramas*, deciding how to survive the millennium bug. Because there will be new troubles never dreamt of in the days before there was a worldwide institution like we have today. The old bent-gray guy goes out with a purple crepe banner over his chest while a bugle does a taps rendition over the loudspeaker. They let him go. Old swamis never die, they just fade into the saffron walls of their institutions.

And after saying that, I looked up from my desk out the polecat window to that telephone that guides my rigid thoughts, I saw only a few groups of withered sycamore leaves. This is the day before All Souls day.

* * *

5:53 p.m., Night Notes

Got our reading in while the peacocks called in the background. Bhaktivinoda Thakura says we should get free and go live in Vrndavana to worship radha-Krishna full-time. "Even those who continue to live outside Vraja may reside there through meditation."

Dark as night so early. The October night curtain comes down. All souls, all saints. Another chance tomorrow.

Krishna, Hare Krishna. Bhaktivinoda Thakura "*Bhajana-darpana* he calls his commentary. No pride, no pretense, let's look straight at the target.

A few more nights of Karttika candles. Shadow of my hand over this page. Shadow of the valley of death, I fear no evil, Thou art with me. Krishna in His name.

October 31, 12:05 a.m.

"He who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord, who sees all entities as His parts and parcels, and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything nor any being." (*ISopanisad*, mantra 6) This is the *maha-bhagavata's* vision. We can't go through life imitating this vision if we don't actually have it. But this is the goal. The word *anupasyati*, used here, means to "observe" or "see." This means to "see" by following the previous *acaryas*.

"One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of things. What, then, can be illusion or anxiety for him?" (*ISopanisad*, mantra 7)

Advanced devotees see the soul within a person. Others see only in terms of bodily designation, and they like or dislike people accordingly. Seeing the oneness of all beings doesn't mean seeing them impersonally but as qualitatively one with the Supreme Person. As stated in previous *ISopanisad* mantras, no one can surpass the Supreme Being. Therefore, the word *ekatvam* means that all spirit souls are part of the same supreme family.

We all seek enjoyment, but in the material world we attempt to enjoy separately from God, placing ourselves in the center of enjoyment. Sometimes we even call on God to help us in this vain attempt. Therefore, enjoyers of this world clash in their interests. When we attempt to serve the Supreme Lord's interests, then we can live in peace and create unity out of diversity.

Read these mantras discussing oneness of spirit and think of the kind of idealism they generate in us. rarely do we find people in this world who have reached this understanding and who have surrendered themselves fully to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Bhagavad-gita* states, *sa mahatma sudurlabha*, such great souls are very rare.

Does that mean it's nearly impossible? Not necessarily. It has been made easier to attain by Lord Caitanya. Besides, what is life for but to keep the ultimate goal in mind and to always strive for it?

Yeah, sure, I too would like to be free of illusion and anxiety (*moha-Sokha*) by attaining this *maha-bhagavata* vision. Sometimes it seems that we drag each other down. Because we are part of a Krishna conscious society, we share in its lowest common denominator, its chaos, poverty, quarrelsomeness. Anyone who tries to rise above it or go apart from it is not much appreciated. All we can do is struggle and wrangle with the rest, and that's what it means to be in this society. So it may appear.

We also share in the benefits of a worldwide movement or spiritual family. We can't take just the benefits without sharing the woes. What kind of contribution will we each make to improve the situation? We say, "But it's an *institution*. How can we love corporate life? Can we love it despite its faults?"

Whew. Will it even accept our love and offering? Is it a being with a heart, or just a series of temporary entities, buildings, computer web sites, power groups demanding local temples and zonal interests?

Oh, we can muse, my dear Prabhus, but only because it's Saturday morning. I would rather see you spend your time chanting the holy name and in that way become part of the spiritual family that is eternal and loving. Transcendental. Can we climb the ladder of mental attention in prayer? If we glimpse true prayer, even if we practice determinedly with no *apparent* result, we'll be able to encourage other members "all humankind. We'll be responding to Lord Caitanya's *jiva-jago!* call. He addresses that call to all living beings. We'll find ecstatic love of God.

* * *

3:10 a.m.

This is certificate paper. I can certify that this man chanted for over two hours this morning on his beads. He chanted only fourteen rounds. Quantity and quality. We hereby certify that he counted and timed them. They are on record with Krishna. Still the same report card, though: "Could do better."

Anyway, my chanting was sufficient to mitigate sins, but not sufficient to bring me *prema-bhakti*. Maybe tomorrow.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Sigh, sob, heave. relax and you'll fall asleep. Consider how to stay awake in Krishna consciousness. I drew with colored pencils and crayons on top of the scroll paper on which I had written. The decoration didn't go anywhere. Just three chubby flowers, too much like spring for the end of October. I wrote my name in the middle of the page, "Satsvarupa dasa." Now it looks egotistical. At the bottom of the page, in smaller letters, I wrote, "Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji." That's not right "me above him. I won't save this one. Call it an experiment, in process. It came together that way. I didn't want to draw my primitive human faces and figures on it.

Krishna, Krishna. Go ahead and walk and you'll find something you didn't know.

* * *

A blotter is for mistakes, stains, reality splotches. Here, more have accumulated, but I didn't doodle or write any teenage stuff.

What *do* you put on your blotter? Nothing deliberate, just whatever drops there.

The store had a Christmas party after hours. The front door was locked, and I could see the employees dancing to music I couldn't hear. Looked like rock music. I sat in a car "was it at a gas station?" and saw this in Catonsville one year. Pops up now "the way they were dancing, moving their hips, the way it suddenly revealed a world so different than mine, a *sannyasi* in the dark back seat of a car about to lecture at an ISKCON temple. Did I feel like young Ajamila watching the *Sudra* with the prostitute? No, this was different. Beside, I'm too old for that stuff.

* * *

Dreams. Srila Prabhupada in a dream. Note it down. I fell from a great height. I was saved. I'll spare you the details though.

* * *

On Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji's disappearance day, I'm going to eat a little fruit in the morning. Migraineurs shouldn't skip breakfast if they don't want to spend the day in pain. I've found that out many a time.

(skip

Words written on a Bristol drawing page (18x24) around doodles:

Greedy for words. Always beg a few more. *Daksina*, trick or treat. Hotspur. The door opens, I'm wearing a skeleton costume we bought at Woolworth's. That era is over. We say "Hare Krishna!" instead of "Halloween!"

Down page

download

Don't be irritable and

demanding

seek culture

in drag. Means?

Krishna conscious cape. Krishna conscious

hat and stance and walk

japa.

Be on guard sensitive nature Karttika moon.

House I live in.

Unclear, sorry about that. Chant Hare Krishna and it will clear up.

* * *

Words written on Bristol board #2 in between doodles:

Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji was a great ascetic. I protect my head. When headaches come, I rest and take a med. So please excuse me, great saint and lover of radha and Krishna in the mood of separation, dear friend of Bhaktivinoda Thakura. You reprimanded the false renunciants.

Halloween in the suburbs. In pub words

in beer no

I will be quiet.

They will guard me

my holy names.

I will write what comes, begging Krishna. To pray, the demigods stop Lord Krishna on His way home to Nandagram in evenings. The boys make fun of their gestures after they ascend back into the clouds.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Raining all during my morning walk around the building. Except for my gloves and hands, however, I am dry. I left a blanket out on the bench overnight, and now it's soaked. The cement wall is soaked too. Hare Krishna. I'm not soaked in Brahman realization "*brahma-nistham*. Anyway, as many pieces of gravel there are in the walk . . . as many lives . . . I don't know what I'm saying. Bright rain drops sitting on the leaves of the small garden plants "my garden . . . thinking of the people whom I love and who love me. Some of them will be coming to visit me here, and we'll talk. Prabhupada, please protect my faith in you, and let me hear without offense.

* * *

8:50 a.m.

Maharaja Pariksit heard from Sukadeva Gosvami like an ardent student in the last seven days of the king's life. Both shared equally the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Ardent hearing. Pray to have that. Then you can do the other service, confident speaking. "The process is simple, but only the sincere party can achieve the desired result." (*Bhag.* 1.12.3, purport)

We are hungry for a spiritual atmosphere. We can't satisfy our hunger until we are situated in immortality in Krishna's association.

Maharaja Pariksit was saved by Lord Paramatma when the child was still in the womb. Krishna is actually present everywhere at all times, "and those who are deserving can see the Lord." (*Bhag.* 1.12.11, purport)

When Maharaja Pariksit was born, the astrologers predicted that he would be great in many ways. Thus his birth and life are wonderful. "After hearing about his death . . . he will get himself freed from all material attachment and surrender unto the Personality of Godhead, taking shelter of Him." (*Bhag.* 1.12.27) Srila Prabhupada: "Material attachment and taking shelter of the lotus feet of Lord go ill together."

Try to apply this. You don't have to throw out your possessions and be homeless, but don't keep striving for these things by your own effort. And be prepared to give up whatever you have. Cultivate detachment. Place your love in the Supreme "hearing about Him, serving Him. Hearing *Srimad-Bhagavatam* itself frees you from material attachment.

I'm moving sporadically through the *Bhagavatam*, you could say, looking for something, stopping when I seem to find it, then moving along. Please forgive me this time for not reading "or reporting "systematically. That's not my responsibility just now. I don't know if I'll be able to read in this browsing way, but to attempt it I'll have to release myself from guilt at not reading in another way.

What am I looking for? Heart topics.

By that do you mean to judge some parts of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* as lesser?

No. But I have a right to look for a certain something that appeals to me at this particular stage in my journey. I don't need to justify the particular nature of my hunger, my hankering. At least the hankering shows I'm alive. I may not reverberate with everything in this great compendium of Vedic knowledge, but some things pique my attention. Besides, I've read it "all" many times.

* * *

Vidura became satisfied to place his inquiries before Maitreya Muni and to carefully hear the responses. Again Srila Prabhupada makes the point that we can't find satisfaction either in sense gratification or speculation, because by nature we are eternal servants of the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna. I want to simplify "narrow down my activities to direct service to Krishna. When I find myself spreading out, I want to center myself again. Sometimes we have to work with the conditioned self, admitting we're not already liberated. But . . . be careful of that. Take us as much as possible to the direct topics and services, not roundabout ones.

The Kauravas were pleased that Vidura had returned after such a long absence. Maharaja Yudhisthira then asked about Vidura's pilgrimage. "My lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage." (*Bhag.* 1.13.10) Going to a holy place even today doesn't mean only taking a bath in the Ganges or Yamuna and visiting the temples; one should inquire from holy persons living there. Thus wherever the holy persons are, even if they are outside Vrndavana, being with them is nondifferent from being in a *tirtha*. This is a special clause for those who are physically unable to live in the *dhama*.

* * *

2:20 p.m.

Maharaja Yudhisthira said to Vidura, "You must have visited Dvaraka, where the residents are *Krishna-devata*, 'Always rapt in the service of Lord Sri Krishna.'" (*Bhag.* 1.13.11) Vidura had returned to the palace not seeking comfort but to rectify his elder brother. So he addressed Dhrtarastra, "My dear king, please get out of here immediately. Do not delay. Just see how fear has overtaken you." (*Bhag.* 1.13.18) He's calling him "king" sarcastically. The king is afraid of death.

I tend to think Ireland is more peaceful than America, but that could be another illusion "as if death won't visit here. Vidura said, "This frightful situation cannot be remedied by any person in this material world. My lord, it is the Supreme Personality of Godhead as eternal time (*kala*) that has approached us all." (*Bhag.* 1.13.19)

Old age is meant to give notice of death's imminent arrival. It's the summons call of death. Death can't be checked, and therefore it is identical with God.

Apaksaya means "dwindling of the material body before the last stroke of death." Is some of this familiar to me? "You have passed the major portion of your life . . . invalidity . . . living in the home of another . . . teeth loose . . ." Of course, I'm not Dhrtarastra.

* * *

3:18 p.m.

Pole penance. I call it "penance" because I usually don't feel like coming in here initially. Not enough energy. I'd prefer to slump down into that easy chair and read a few pages of something.

I've been taking time to do clustering exercises to come up with topics and subtopics for the January lectures. I thought about "humanness in Krishna consciousness," but I dropped it once I started to sharpen it some. Seems too controversial. The audience will either click with me or not, and the topics are either substantial or not.

My opening lecture may be a little flimsy "any one of them can turn out that way once I get going. Talk about improvisation.

The deep preparation necessary for lecturing, actually, is constant *sadhana*. Then you can go on the stand and blow and it comes out okay. Neither do you worry about whether you will fail or succeed. You're just participating in a process.

Imagine going somewhere without preparation and standing up to speak on Krishna consciousness. I could do it. I have to think of an idea, then go with it.

Extend this pole penance a little longer. It's a very misty day, and there's a light rain splashing. It was splashing when I went out for my walk at 5 a.m. and splashing again during my walk at 3 p.m. I didn't feel like walking, but I built a momentum and began to feel like a burly police guard in my winter jacket.

Hare Krishna dasi planted some golden sedge. Now it's not so barren out there. Long-haired gold "I accepted it by touching it as I passed. It's so tall that I didn't even have to bend over. But I like best the shiny green leaves of winter-growing plants, holly and those kind.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Now I think I've said all I could and come to the end of this penance. Air blown out of my windbags. But don't worry, I'll pump them up again later.

* * *

4:12 p.m.

Calligraphy pad. Ideal for awarding *brahmacaris* or *brahmanas* or ladies to encourage them to do more service. It will encourage others too, because everyone will want a scroll to put up on their wall as if it were a medical diploma or certificate, Ohio State Hospital or whatever. Yamuna made one in Vrndavana for Prabhupada, I think, a rental agreement for his rooms at Radha-Damodara.

Legal/ official/ honors, instituted
cum laude. A little praise but not full
magna. Broke and out. Not the best.

First place in all-Ireland.

Hermit free-write division and Chinese-like

Tao poems in American prose. Best Yank

Resident and writer in Hare Krishna

fifty-nine-year old division.

No competition "prize, prize

hand writ. He doesn't eat after lunch. Virtue sustains him overnight. reads a little *sastra*. Quiet, boy. The calligrapher will write one up for whatever you want. You supply the words as long as they're not illegal. remember those phony headlines you could get made in that tourist place on 42nd Street in Times Square? You could put it up on your wall. Tawdry was still beyond me in those days, but adolescent suburbanite kid

with first crypt in corruption found harmless frivolous fun. What was I, eleven or twelve? Much more dangerous now. I don't want to even think of it.

Hare Krishna notations will save the world even if only a few take to it. They ask naive questions: "Are we staving off nuclear wars by our *hari-nama*?"

It may be true. Calligrapher off duty.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

Words scattered between doodles on a Bristol board:

Saturday night, quiet . . . take rest. *Haribol*. Innocent.

Be certain, *acaryas* say, that you exclude the mundane. Always hear about radha and Krishna in Vrndavana (a secret place).

Words fail, but love and action prevail in Krishna consciousness.

Spontaneous love.

November 1, 12:00 midnight

Carelessly dropped my pen and it started to leak ink. It was peaceful overnight, with no sign of Halloween spooks or pranksters. Glad to rise this November 1 at midnight to read. Mantra Eight: *sapayah gacchiram* . . . We used to have these verses memorized, we inmates of the Boston temple (and many other ISKCON communities), and would recite them aloud in the mornings as a group.

Mantra eight describes some of the Supreme Person's traits: ". . . the greatest of all . . . omniscient, beyond reproach . . . pure . . . the self-sufficient philosopher, who has been fulfilling everyone's desires since time immemorial." Much of our enthusiasm was simply affection and obedience to Srila Prabhupada. We were willing to let him command us. The movement was made up only of young people practically. No one had even hit thirty yet. This book was published by ISKCON Press. We were dogmatic, happy, energetic, preachy, wild, disorganized, spirited, young.

The Supreme Lord's body is not different than His soul, whereas a condition soul lives in a mechanical, material body, subject to destruction. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada gives a nice description of the *arca-vigraha*, and argues against the iconoclasts. By God's omnipotence He expands as the *arca-vigraha* and acts just as He does in His other spiritual expansions.

The Supreme Lord awards our desires. *Jivas* ask for many foolish things, and they even manage to get them. When we come to know our constitutional nature, however, we ask "to be accepted to render transcendental loving service to Him." The *maha-mantra* recitation is a prayer for this.

We write and read without deep fervor. We're not so qualified. We didn't come to this session, probably, with the deepest preparation, because we're not yet free of all material attachment and are therefore not intensely seeking *darSana*. Well, we'll have to take what we can get to increase our aspiration.

Living beings have splayed intelligence, so if they come at all to the Supreme Lord, we come with that. Spiritual intelligence is one-pointed.

Mantra nine is a comparative study of *vidya* and *avidya*. Misplaced *vidya*, material advancement, is even more dangerous than *avidya* when it comes to killing the soul's interests. real *vidya* is to know the Supreme Lord as the proprietor of everything (*iSavasya idam sarvam*). *Karmis* work hard and exclude God consciousness. Mundane educators are compared to cobras with jewels on their heads, and the advancement they offer humanity is like the decoration of a dead body. If we quote these tenets and examples too bluntly nowadays, though, sensitive devotees recoil. Many devotees are going back to school to learn arts and trades they can use to support themselves financially. It's necessary perhaps; may they serve Krishna through what they learn.

Real education, we all know, is God consciousness and self-realization. Even within religion, many are deviated by side issues which don't address the ultimate end of the *Vedas*. How much do *I* need to know aside from what I hear steadily in *sastra*? Not much. Be a real learned man; realize yourself as Krishna's dear servant and go back to Him.

* * *

4:24 a.m.

Hearing about Krishna's evening pastimes at Nandagram, where He milks the *surabhi* cows, takes His meal in the company of His friends, rests, and exchanges glances with Srimati Radharani, who is at Her home looking at Krishna from Her window. Krishna, Krishna.

On tape (Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana, 1972), phony *avatars* are smashed. All *sadhus* and *acaryas* accept the real Krishna, the eternal Krishna. Yes, just close your eyes and so much can be achieved.

What?

* * *

Moving along. At least do a page. "Call for Philip Morris!" The bellboy's stylized cry, "Grand Canyon Suite" theme in the background, all this usurped by the commercial for Philip Morris cigarettes, now defunct? How are the smoking wars doing?

The impressions of the child. Let him or her be raised in a Vaisnava family. *Haribol*. All right, if you don't mind.

* * *

Calligraphy. Here you go, son. It's your public school athletic league certificate stating that you could not leap or dunk a basketball, but you did push in six baskets in fifteen seconds. Does that sound fair to you? Here's is you cert. The Hair Dressers association certifies that you're good enough. You can edit ISKCON books. You know your stuff. I hereby pass over your name without comment.

(Tell over/ roll over, Beethoven.)

Only a thick line can keep me awake now. Grapes in unison. It's November 1st. It could even snow at any time, although that's unlikely in Ireland. Christmas season on the way.

* * *

5:00 a.m.

Words written around drawings on a large Bristol board:

"A Nov. 1 KC man wishes to draw, but doesn't know if it's direct and devotional enough an act to please the Lord and send himself to Goloka. But even *sastra* reading or beads chanted may not send you back."

* * *

5:26 a.m.

Very cold. Starlight. Gloves too thin. The bulge-out parts of the walls in this house make it look like a natural cave. The inside walls are like that too. Baladeva refers to it as "the cave" where I can stay and meditate and don't want no one coming around.

Winter planting. Hare Krishna. But my head is full of awareness that I'll be leaving here. I suppose that's good too. Travel and lecture and come back. Wind it all up, each one of us. While I can walk around, chant and hear. Got nothing new to report. It's all there in *Bhagavad-gita* already, and we all know what to do.

Why we don't do it is the mystery.

* * *

11:20 a.m.

I met for over an hour and a half with Narayana-kavaca. It was exciting to talk about book distribution and publishing. In his usual positive and competent way, he thought all the obstacles to both sides of the project can be overcome and that we could continue to steadily distribute GNP books. I told him how within a few years there will be no new books except more volumes of EJW. He thought there would be a good market for EJW, but said he hoped I would continue to print a new poetry book each year "and a new art book. Reciprocation is such a nice thing. Just by hearing his request for a poetry book, I felt the urge to do one. I told him that all the poems in *Waves At Jagannatha Puri* and *Songs Of a Hare Krishna Man* had come from *Every Day, Just Write*. We took them out to make them into separate books. So maybe I could do something . . .

Then it occurred to me "and I told him with a laugh ""Actually, I haven't been writing poetry at all." Maybe just by that one conversation with him, however, I could get going again on the poetry track. I'm already feeling encouraged to paint. He brought me supplies to get me going.

Krishna is very kind to give me such dear friends and supporters who only want me to be happy and creative in Krishna consciousness. Now it's up to me to fulfill their hopes.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

Now waiting for lunch while writing with a "Dr. Grip" retractable ball-point pen. It's said that this pen reduces fatigue by forty percent, so it's ideal for people with arthritis or those who suffer from "writer's fatigue."

Sounds like a hype to me. I think the "therapeutic wide cushion grip" is no better than what you get on a good Sheaffer fountain pen, but the Sheaffer flows much faster. But either way, inspired words don't come easy.

This is the source of GNP "this fogged head who knows how to write, talk, and draw inspiration from God, who in turn is the source of the Ganga, the Yamuna, and everything else.

You took the part/ that once was my heart "please take all of me/ but don't make it *too* painful. Send me goodies, although I know you're not the order-supplier but the Supreme who should be served.

I'd like to make a book full of poems glorifying Krishna. That would be nice.

The source is Krishna. *Janmad yasatah*. He's the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At the end of the world there will be hundreds of years of blazing sun. Then the universe will catch fire. Then there will be hundreds of years of rain. Everything will be flooded, destroyed, only to be wound up into Lord Visnu. Eventually there will be another creation. So where do you think you will be for all that?

This is honest writing with a therapeutic hand-grip pen, a little fog, and an appetite for my now delayed lunch. After an exciting morning talking with NK, whose back aches, I thought of how much Krishna eats in the spiritual world. Mother Yashoda loves it when He eats a lot.

* * *

4:10 p.m.

Lines written on a Bristol board drawing:

"You are in a hurry to write something, but maybe have no prayer and are too distant from *sastra*. Been a hard day? Hey, I'm talking to you. Here, let me croon you a song. Krishna is God in your heart. You'll be in touch with Him again "you just have to sing His names and maybe listen to a nice speaker telling you about Him. relax. We owe it to one another to speak about Krishna. There is no other way to become satisfied in the self."

* * *

3:55 p.m.

I can't get back on track today. No late-morning or afternoon *Bhagavatam* reading. Had to cool it with a feverfew. No outside walk, no drawing. Lucky to have done so much in the morning meeting and still be here at the desk. Can't apply myself now. What to do? M. is out. Hare Krishna.

* * *

4:40 p.m.

Vidura awakened in Dhrtarastra the necessity to leave home and to depend fully on the Personality of Godhead residing in his heart. I prefer to cling to this house. You know if you are too attached to a place, you may be reborn there. For me to depend fully on God in my heart may mean something else. It awakens "in proportion to one's

sincerity of purpose." (*Bhag.* 1.13.27, purport) Anyway, Dhrtarastra did as Maharaja Vidura ordered and left for the north without telling anyone.

Sadhu-sanga is of utmost importance. Srila Prabhupada humbly tells his own story and says that if he had not met Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati even for those few minutes at their first meeting, "it would have been impossible for us to attempt this mighty task of describing *Srimad-Bhagavatam* in English." (*Bhag.* 1.13.29, purport) Then Srila Prabhupada went to America and did more impossibilities. If I hadn't met him . . . and the same is true for all of us. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. Most people are enamored with the temporary world, which seems so real, but suddenly it will be gone, or we will be gone from it. Intelligent people concentrate on the eternal.

* * *

6:45 p.m

My dear Lord Krishna, I'm feeling blessed, so let me count my blessings. Maybe it's because of Narayana-kavaca's visit that it's occurring to me how fortunate I am. Perhaps the satisfaction comes as a reward for the service I've rendered Srila Prabhupada over the years. In any case, it doesn't matter. You have been kind to me. Even a little relief from headaches from time to time. But especially, I feel the enthusiasm to work creatively in Krishna consciousness, and I have the support of devotees to publish my work. These are unprecedented blessings. If I ever complain, it's just such an unsuitable response to this nectar.

I am in a blessed mood, and I use the word "mood" because I realize how easily I can be knocked out of it. For example, it's not a mentality. I could stub my toe, or Madhu could make a sudden noise, and I would feel the fickleness of the complaining mind again. But while I'm feeling it, I want to mention my gratitude to Krishna. I am almost embarrassed by my riches. Let me drink of them the way a swan drinks milk from a mixture of milk and water "pulling out the essence and leaving the water of any material benefit behind. The real essential blessing that You want to give me is to lift me out of this material world once and for all. I pray to grow spiritually through these blessings, and to become a worthy son of Srila Prabhupada.

November 2, 12:04 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada gives wonderful translations-purports of the eighteen items of knowledge that Lord Krishna lists in *Bhagavad-gita* 13.8 - 12 (see *Isopanisad*, Mantra 10). Some favorites of mine: "One should develop a liking for residence in a secluded place with a calm and quiet atmosphere favorable for spiritual culture, and one should avoid congested places where nondevotees congregate."

Sure, we thought you'd like that one.

What about, "One should completely refrain from practices that are detrimental to the interest of self-realization?" What about knowing that as long as you have a material body, you must suffer, so "there is no use in making plans to get rid of these miseries of the body?"

As usual when reading *sastra* and Srila Prabhupada's purports, I like some things because I think I'm already doing what he is teaching, and that some of the things he's teaching are things from which devotees have tried to discourage me. Of course, I also find things I'm not doing and which require further surrender on my part. Let me not avoid either. For example, item 16 is, "One should become an unalloyed devotee of the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and serve Him with rapt attention."

Srila Prabhupada criticizes governments and their nationalism and chauvinism. He criticizes educators and people in general for their lack of real knowledge. He asks us to develop deep philosophical knowledge (which we can get by hearing from bona fide gurus and *sadhus*) regarding the Supreme Lord as the supreme proprietor and the constitutional nature of the soul. Contemplate the tiny-ness of our nation and planet in terms of the vast spaces in God's universe.

Befooled people try for sense enjoyment during the few years of a human life allotted to them, then take birth again.

I'm not personally perfect. M. told me he thinks the greatest sin is to turn away from God, so even if he does something imperfect, he goes to Krishna with it and asks for help to give it up. Or let's say he dialogues with Krishna, assumes he knows what Krishna would say (by reading *sastra*), then decides whether he really wants to give it up. If so, he asks for help. He realizes, too, that he's not immediately eligible to go back to Godhead with his present attitudes. But we decided that at least one should never be so ashamed or rebellious that he cannot face His God.

I found nice advise for this in a little prayer leaflet that came in the mail: "You are with God not by achieving certain pious our devotional exercises in His presence, but by daring to be your own self as you reach toward Him."

Of course, one can't trivialize this attitude: "Okay, God, let's go have a beer. Don't mind. I'm hankering for sex too, so let me scratch that itch. Old God, You're my pal, aren't You? I wouldn't go anywhere without You, Old Boy."

Then how to approach Him, in awe? By restraint? Burn up what you're doing *in His service*. If you can't use it, if it's clearly forbidden, if it degrades you, *don't do it*.

Material knowledge can't save us from the four kinds of miseries. HiranyakaSipu couldn't become immortal. Permanent life is attained only by going back to Godhead. I remember the time I considered this seriously and practically "as a reality "when I first read it in *Easy Journey to Other Planets*. It's real knowledge and "it has to be learned from revealed Vedic scriptures." Our home is not in this world. Material miseries indirectly remind us of our incompatibility with matter.

I'm reading too fast now. "Been there, seen it, done it." If you're so smart, how come you haven't assimilated it? Why haven't you actualized it? No answer? Then don't be in such a hurry to read through and move on. Stop to smell the flowers, or you'll miss the essence. Stop and savor, stop and pray. *Lectio divina* advice: Mere reading isn't enough; one should read prayerfully.

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Krishna consciousness is my place in this world. I don't go other places. I shouldn't.

But I want to tell you something. I'm writing free just now, and bleeping, sometimes, like my friend Eric Dolphy, now deceased.

Here's what I want to tell you: Radha-Govinda are my worshipable Lords. I tried my best to decorate Them. Maybe you think I'm crazy in how I pick out these color combinations, but I think They look beautiful in this purple and gold. radha's skirt took some fitting, and in the end, I wasn't able to adjust it perfectly, but I tried my best. "Petite and sweet." Heard about Dhanistha carrying Krishna's remnants to Radharani, who shares them with Her friends.

He turned me on to want to produce books so people can read them, and so they can be distributed. But unless I behave properly, what will I be able to write? I have to be a good *japa* man, even if I do talk to myself sometimes. I am offering my best, however, to Krishna. That's what the musicians do in the evenings at Nandagram. They blow their horns and play their stringed instruments. Nowadays, our music is probably quite different in style, but we can still claim it for Krishna's service.

He says there's no mistake, no wrong. No right? That's not right.

We mean at least to go beyond conventions of what is right and wrong.

Go further, give your heart spontaneous and all-out.

But it's definitely meant to please Krishna. Hare Krishna. Searching in myself for that much honesty.

Srila Prabhupada says goodness is not enough. We have to rise above that. To be a *brahmana*, a good person in this world (a Gandhi, etc.), is not enough. We have to love Krishna free of all material designations. Goodness is favorable for that development, but it is not the end of it.

Then he praised his own students who had wealth "each one drives his or her own car" but who have given all that up. Now they lie down even under a tree. They are not trying to enjoy the material world.

Open doors and be happy in Krishna consciousness.

Another morning flowing.

I want to write more poems, if the Lord allows me to make such an offering. Let me continue to live at these headwaters, where the trickle suddenly gushes from the rock and where I pray to Krishna to allow me to collect the flow, the cave writings of ancient men.

* * *

5:05 a.m.

You take risks whatever you do. Stay on the safe side, will you? Don't gorge. How will you get rid of that stash of material desire if you keep inputting new ones?

You have only a few minutes left. Use it to tell of Krishna in the best way you can. I want to be a devotee. Tell people that. Now go and walk in the rain and chant. Tell people about Krishna.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Heavy rain for my walk. Stood in Madhu's doorway under the eaves of his thatched roof. I listened to the drips and saw the bright, outside light shining by my own door. Wind. A mind as scrambled as an egg. When am I going to be pure and simple and Vaisnava? I become excited thinking about all the things I can dovetail in Krishna's service, but real dovetailing is to use the voice to chant the holy name and the intelligence to read perfect scripture and to always think of one's spiritual master.

* * *

8:55 a.m.

Dhrtarastra quit home without telling King Yudhisthira or his secretary, Sanjaya, where he was going. Sanjaya said, "O king, I have been cheated by those great souls." Srila Prabhupada tells how he also "had the same opportunity to cheat the family members and leave home to engage in the service of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*." It's nice how when Srila Prabhupada was writing *Srimad-Bhagavatam* purports before coming to America, he described his whole service as rendering *Srimad-Bhagavatam* into English. He greatly expanded his service, actually, but I like to think of him as "only" a writer.

I guess I also cheated my family members "mother, father, and later, my wife" for the authorized cause. "Such cheating was necessary for a just cause, and there is no loss for any party in such transcendental fraud." (*Bhag.* 1.13.37, purport)

Narada then appeared. He is described in the *Bhagavatam* as *bhagavan*. "Such confidential devotees of the Lord are very much dear to the Lord because they travel everywhere to preach the glories of the Lord in different capacities and try their utmost to convert the nondevotees into devotees in order to bring them to the platform of sanity." (*Bhag.* 1.13.38, purport) When I read this I thought of some of my Godbrothers. I should be respectful toward them in my mind, in my writing, and when I see them in person. No one is dearer to the Lord than those who preach and try to convert nonbelievers into devotees.

Sri Narada tells them not to lament because "everyone is under the control of the Supreme Lord. . . . It is He only who brings them together and disperses them." (*Bhag.* 1.13.40) If it is Krishna Himself who is causing these things to happen, then even if events bewilder us or cause us pain, we should accept them as God-willed. We can't change our material fate, our karma. But we can act for our own salvation. Yes, the Supreme Lord is free to do whatever He likes, but it is His nature to save the pure devotees who have surrendered unto Him (see Bg. 9.30 - 31).

* * *

10:00 a.m.

I hereby show you this certificate while you sit in your dentist's chair, glancing up as the dentist approaches your mouth and leans over. You notice that he got his degree from the Ohio State School of Smelly Medicine. "Open and spit out," he says. He gives you a certificate that will free you from all obligations in religious and military

institutions, especially because you have too many bitter memories of the woolly, navy-black uniforms you wore and your mom watching you go off and return at night on the SIRT, writing "scribbled notebooks for yr own joy." But one thing to know: although the certificate gives you such breaks, it doesn't release you from birth or death. Okay?

Srila Prabhupada said (on Boston's Commonwealth Pier in 1968) "even Hans and Hema were there, and I was married, hell hadn't broken loose yet, and Swamiji wasn't even "Prabhupada" yet, Govinda dasi and Gaurasundara were sweet "but the seeds, the seeds were planted for havoc. Anyway, he said, "We want a certificate from Krishna saying this man has done Me nice service." That's not an exact quote, but close enough in essence. So where's my certificate? If I had one, man, I'd be as puffed-up as Satrajit with his Syamantaka jewel.

The real certificate is in God's heart. And yours. Can you certify that you love Him? Love doesn't sit on paper, frozen in time. You can't frame it for your office wall. It's fluid Krishna consciousness.

* * *

11:42 a.m.

Pole penance. Listening while massaging Srila Prabhupada to his *Krishna* book dictation. The kings captured by Jarasandha offered their prayers to the Lord. He replied, but I lost my attention at that point. Still, I was happy to be massaging Prabhupada's body. The kings said something about how they were always busy killing one another without noticing the approach of their own deaths. They said their life duration was diminishing day by day. I am diminishing too. I feel it all the time. I even write fewer pages.

Time also appears to be diminishing in other ways. They say in this century we can no longer expect to have relative peace. The good times are diminishing. On the other hand, a devotee goes to Krishna and becomes free of all suffering. He doesn't try to survive on his own, but goes to Krishna and brings others with him too. Krishna is pleased with him for his compassion.

I'm thinking ahead to January, to the night I'm scheduled to speak at 26 Second Avenue. I could pick out things I've written about Prabhupada and discuss how wonderful it is to remember him. Then I could hope that something more would come to me. I could also tell them how I'm afraid of this city, New York, and just imagine how Srila Prabhupada was not. I'll praise them for not being afraid to remain in the city and to preach in his footsteps. Hare Krishna.

It is not wrong, however, to be afraid of *maya*. A guy came into the storefront and said, "Are you *afraid* to take marijuana?" We were. We didn't want to fall into *maya*. Later we discussed this point among ourselves, examining the nature of fear and how it isn't a wrong emotion. I could go back to those times in my memory.

Anyway, I'm looking forward to the U.S. travel. Three weeks left here before that time. Immediately, I'm looking forward to the *kicchari* M. is cooking. I look forward to offering it with prayers before the Deities as Their small stainless steel trays sit before Them and I repeat the prayers. I am aware that lunch is an extremely brief moment in history. Better to eat the ripened fruit of the *Vedas*.

Pole penance. See that hill slope? There is a thin layer of clear sky just over the hill, then dark clouds rising high. They are a deep gray, new rain clouds, like Syamasundara. The tree next to the electric pole is almost bare. I have a good view of its slender, curvy branches. They appear silver or light brown. Water sounds "roadside streams. The caw of crows along with the peace that comes and goes.

The devotional service we render in this lifetime is not material piety, but we might use it like that. That is, we might use it to enjoy peaceful existences in the mode of goodness and think we have done enough because we see ourselves as decent people. No greed grows from such a mentality. In that sense, we never want to be still, never want to wonder if we've taken enough steps on the spiritual path just because our minds are peaceful.

We have to perform penance of a different kind, in a sense. We can be staying in, avoiding fear, even the fear of *maya*, but feeling the quiet courage of accepting Krishna's mercy and hankering always for more. Hare Krishna. Flame and shadow "keep them alive to drive you to Krishna.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Narada said there was nothing to lament in the soul's transference from one body to another or even the fact that material bodies perish. Such things are inevitable. We can't do any good for anyone else since we ourselves are under the control of the cobra of time. The best course, therefore, is to engage everyone in preaching *bhakti-yoga*, which can save people from *maya's* control.

Narada says we should look to the Supreme Lord only. Srila Prabhupada says we should become bona fide spiritual masters and cooperate with Krishna, executing the mission for which He descended. Srila Prabhupada is unrelenting about the need for us to preach.

Narada then foretold what would happen to Dhrtarastra, who had gone to the mountains to practice yoga. Srila Prabhupada explains how the technical stages of *astanga-yoga*, such as *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, and up to *samadhi*, are achieved in *bhakti-yoga* by direct engagement of the senses in loving service for pleasing Lord Visnu.

Next we will read how Lord Krishna left the earth at the end of His pastimes. I just read a little of it, then moved on. rain tinkling on the skylight. I want to go and chant a round while walking outside. Service rendered . . . less than the best, but I turn to Him through it. I can't go forward unless He brings me forward. He could do it a little at a time, or He could pull me forward all at once. It's His choice. For me, it doesn't seem possible to accomplish full spiritual development by reading and chanting, although they help me maintain at least a bare spiritual life.

I heard my Godbrother lecturing how Srila Prabhupada was a hundred percent faithful to his spiritual master and how he carried out his guru's order. This is what made him so fortunate. We cannot be at that stage initially, my Godbrother said, but we should know the goal and try to proceed toward it. Give up things unfavorable to *bhakti*, and take up whatever is favorable. His gradual message seemed idealistic and theoretical to me.

Maybe it was a bit too heavy. What would I have said in his place? I'm not sure. I agree Srila Prabhupada was fully surrendered to his spiritual master. I guess I hesitate to state the exact ways in which we are supposed to follow that surrender in today's ISKCON, considering all that has gone down and who we have all become. Do we know who we are? Are we preaching according to our realization? And who am I to talk, if I study so little?

But nothing feels so little "realization or anything "if it's ours. So we speak.

* * *

5:00 p.m.

Sri Krishna, please be kind. We are leaning forward as one might when reading the Sunday funnies on the floor, but it's Monday and I'm a serious devotee in an empty house. My neck is already strained, as is my head, soul, my entire body.

As I write, M. pulls up in the van. It's 5 p.m., and he'll want to read *Manah-Siksa* "or he thinks I want to read it. He's right; I do. But first I have to finish writing. Scribes have their rights, and I want to get in my quota while I have a clear head. Give me twenty minutes. He can clean the kitchen in the meantime.

Now preach, sir.

Yes, I want to.

Who are you, preacher?

Unless you know, how can you tell others what to do? It's important to know yourself. Each devotee has to do that introspective work. Otherwise . . . I want to warn them against preachers who would presume to guide them but who don't even know who they are.

You mean that the first work is to know yourself in something other than the *svarupa-siddhi* way? You mean give no real importance to the fact that you are a generic spirit soul but an individual? If *that's* what you're saying, how does one go about it? Is it time to explore mundane psychology?

No, I don't mean that. But take care of yourself and think it out. I'm not going to come out with it here. Find out what you need to know by plumbing your own heart.

I know I sound as if I think I have an inside track, and that's exactly why I don't want to say too much here. Let me stick to my own work. When it's my turn to lecture, I hope to tell simple truths and avoid manipulating others.

* * *

6:25 p.m., Night Notes

Sorry I bore witness against a Godbrother. When investigators ask me again, I'll say I want to be careful of offending a Vaisnava. There are two sides to every case. This kind of reluctance always disappoints the investigators, because after all, they have taken the thing on themselves, but I need to preserve my peace of mind and not hurt others, especially when I do tend to see both sides. I'm not obliged to play *ksatriya*. The investigators have the courage to go forward and name wrongdoers, and I will have to have the courage to stay aloof from it.

Rain to put me to sleep tonight. Prabhupada accepts our service. He doesn't expect that we are all the same. He simply wants us to become competent in practicing *bhakti* and in loving Krishna, and he wants us to do something to help others.

November 3, 12:00 a.m.

"Activities of the material senses are perverted reflections of spiritual pastimes. In its diseased condition, the spirit soul engages in material activities under the material covering." (*ISopanisad*, pp. 58 - 59) We need to bring down our material fever, not increase it. Krishna doesn't say to wipe out the body temperature entirely but to keep it at a normal 98.6. India's sages and saints give us a balanced program of spiritual and material knowledge.

Today is the last day of Karttika and this book. It is more flame than shadow. I don't mean a big, all-consuming flame of love and enlightenment, with no fear or ignorance, but I just don't feel a lot of darkness in my life. It's there, I know, but I don't feel its influence so much.

Anyway, I want to emphasize the light, the positive, the moving from one Krishna conscious activity to another throughout the twenty-four-hour cycle. A calm and regulated life.

Each evening M. and I have gathered, not at an exact, regimented time, but around 6 p.m., to light our candles and offer them to Srila Prabhupada and Radha-Govinda. After that, I have been dressing Radha-Govinda in Their night outfits while we continue a soft *kirtana*. Our worship is over in less than ten minutes. But we did it every day for the month, and I continued my life's *svrata* of looking for the light, staying alone to find it, remaining simple, reading Prabhupada's books. These activities make me want to be a light for others, as puffed-up as that may sound. I don't want to become contaminated or be blown out. Staying alive in Krishna consciousness is a small virtue, but it's something at least.

Mantra Twelve is against the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth that denies the Supreme Person. real light exists outside this universe, which is by nature dark and requires illumination from the sun and moon. In the Brahmajyoti, spiritual planets exist. The highest is Krishnaloka. It is pseudo religion to desire to stay in the material world and seek pleasure here by preaching atheism. The impersonalists support the atheists. Thus Mantra Ten states, "Those who are engaged in the worship of demigods enter into the darkest region of ignorance, and still more so do the worshipers of the impersonal Absolute."

Those who falsely pose as spiritual masters will be thrown into the darkest regions of life after completing their spiritual master business, which they conduct simply for sense gratification. A heavy judgment for a heavy misdeed. My little flame flickers. I pray not to mislead others. I want to do good for myself and others. Then let me cultivate knowledge and detachment. Culture devotional service to Govinda. Aspire to return back to Godhead, and teach others to aspire too.

Mantra Thirteen: You get one result by worshiping the Supreme and another by worshiping that which is not supreme. "All this was heard from the undisturbed authorities who clearly explained it." You can't say all paths lead to the same goal. I am

fortunate in that I have heard from a bona fide *acarya*, "who is never disturbed about the changes of the material world." I can't pretend I'm not disturbed. We'll have to see, when I'm put to various tests, how well I endure, but I pray to cling to Krishna and my guru's teachings.

"A person who has purchased a ticket for Calcutta can reach Calcutta but not Bombay." (*ISopanisad*, p. 71) I hope I have the right ticket. Oh yes, you say, my ticket is stamped "Goloka Vrndavana," but that may not be so clear at our present state. We *think* it's clear, we want it to be clear, but we actually may not be clear. Or we fear we'll have to get off and change trains before we reach our destination. We may have to make another connection in another life, even though our tickets are stamped with a final destination. Because we know so little and we're quite helpless to arrive on our own. We have simply heard wonderful things from our spiritual master about Krishna in the spiritual world. We still have to gain the conviction to ride the train with faith.

* * *

4:28 a.m.

"I'm a little fried," he said. Then he stepped behind his mask.

Bee-vap. They looked at him, curious, in the spotlight. What was he going to perform for Krishna's pleasure?

Was he going to do that skit about Bilvamangala Thakura? Would it be better than watching Boy George lead thirty thousand Russians at a rock concert, singing the Hare Krishna mantra? Of course, he'll probably be more quiet and meditative than that!

Looking at Conrad's *The Secret Sharer*. He was trying to discover the other side of himself. Hear that tape you made of yourself and others reading five or six years ago? Everything has changed so much since those days.

Anyway, I dressed Radha-Govinda and left behind the cigar room for dirty-minded *pujaris* who admit they're not as perfect as they appear when they're dressed all fresh and flashy on the scrubbed-clean altar, their *dhotis* low-slung as they ring the bell. Do they count the circles they're making with that there incense?

Suddenly guruji comes in. They stand at attention like gobs before their lieutenant commander. "Attention on deck!"

"Okay," guruji says, "it's not so bad. You're only eating *burfi* with the boys. As you were."

But whatever happened?

Off alone in a more serious mood to read *Bhagavad-gita*. Prabhupada says Krishna says I didn't give my full love.

So He came again as Lord Caitanya and gave it. Please take it. Therefore rupa Gosvami called Him *maha-vadanyaya*.

Ah, it's nice to be writing quickly to some place that feels like an ultimate destination "the lotus feet of guru. Dig in and concentrate.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna. Paint His image and know that everyone is related to Him eternally as His servant. It's just a matter of how we surrender and become happy in His service.

It's good the way they move along, these devotees on *parikrama*. Better than anything you can do elsewhere. I want you to know it. They start out in the dark and cold, barefoot, from the *mandira* lane, and walk quickly, even when it looks like a bull may charge them or there are other dangers, known or unknown, but they don't mind, because they're in Vrndavana, and that's good. Keep your mind focused like that in Krishna consciousness, and wherever you are will be Vrndavana. And that will be possible if you're not angry at anyone (except demons, of course). I write this in hopes you'll not reject me or my advice.

* * *

4:50 a.m.

Cold and rainy again this morning. I hope I'll be able to focus on the holy name as I walk. It certainly gets confusing when you're not a pure devotee. In Vrndavana, on the last day of Karttika "at the end, when the moon appears "they sell plenty of sweets in the bazaar, because people who took a *vrata* not to eat sweets are ready to break their fasts.

Red paint on the back of my hand. We live and live and live and live and suddenly see the yellow light ahead, but live and live a little longer. A *bhakta* finds happiness in service.

I welcome Krishna as I walk down the narrow path, singing and fingering my beads. I'm so grateful I'm not a Mayavadi. Thank Prabhupada and the Vaisnavas for that! And the previous *acaryas* who sent Prabhupada "Rupa Gosvami, Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati "I thank them all. Down the narrow path we go, a born and bred Western *mleccha* with the divine right to practice *bhakti*, because he came and bestowed the free nectar of *hari-nama* upon me, tiny that I am.

* * *

5:28 a.m.

My morning walk with a huff and a puff in the cold rain. It's really laughable how it rains every single day, but that's Ireland. That rain grows the garden and helps the moss cover the rocks. rain shining on leaves.

I was thinking how it's true that once you've been to Vrndavana, you can later remember it when you're somewhere else. I think that's especially true the older you get. Or maybe when you're older, it's easier to travel specifically in the mind. I hope that will keep us all in good stead at the time of death, even if it's so painful that we feel we are being hit over the head a hundred times. At a time like that, what will stick in our consciousness? What will we regret? Will we regret some things so much that they will stick in our minds? Will we be saved? Or will it seem ironic and cruel? No, I can't imagine Krishna being cruel toward us. Yet his kindness may look cruel sometimes "to give us what we want and then to give us another chance through the experiences that will follow from our desires to come to Him more exclusively. Hare Krishna.

Blow, wind, and crack my cheeks. It won't be your fault, you material element. O Krishna, I'm fighting my way through to You.

* * *

9:17 a.m.

Subdued a headache with feverfew and now want to do everything at once "prepare the Sunday lecture, write about that, write a poem, prepare a series of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* sections for *lectio-divina* sessions, etc. But I can't do everything. Well, let me do *something*. Okay, I'll start with something modest and disciplined and what I need most "*Sastra*.

Yeah, but where's the fun?

The *lectio* spirit is fun.

As for the Sunday lecture, I've already decided to speak on Prabhupada's free translation of the eighteen items of knowledge listed in his purport to the tenth *ISopanisad* mantra. As he translated freely (not strictly following the Sanskrit words as he did in his *Bhagavad-gita* commentary), I will speak on them freely. It might get tedious for the audience, but I like what Prabhupada did there. And it leaves me free to springboard.

The one topic is real knowledge. What it means to live knowledge (as Socrates said) "self-knowledge, God conscious knowledge, the knowledge required to conquer *samsara*, the definition and destruction of *avidya*, the cobra, etc.

I don't need to prepare more than I already have. But I think this section is interesting. Let me go with it and pace myself. The items are helpful to us (in the sense of developing the mode of goodness), but only to the degree that they lead to the sixteenth item, *bhakti*. Otherwise they are useless.

* * *

10:10 a.m., Pole penance

I can't see the pole so clearly it's so gray and rainy. Then let me clear my mind of extraneous words, repeaters and joshers and windshield wipers. Write prose to remember.

Inebriated "I finally learned how to pronounce that word, and that has made me prideless. So many others could already do it. But I will speak on the eighteen items of knowledge, even though I'm not a smart guy.

Anyway, don't try to be happy in this world of temporary resources and the fourfold miseries, and watch out that you don't get attached to family, and so on. These are items of knowledge.

What about knowing your shadow?

I don't think that's mentioned.

Well, shouldn't that list be updated?

No, recognizing the shadow is part of self-realization. We might say the shadow is obliterated in the sun of Krishna. Or there is a transcendental version of the shadow. If it is a desirable source of energy, then the liberated soul has it or he has some spiritual resources not even guessed at by Jung and his followers and their active imaginations and dream analysis. Neither could they find such resources no matter how far they searched through world religions, folk stories, and their pigeonholing things into archetypes. The spirit soul has *all* resources, especially as we approach the Supreme

Person, who is the source of all energies. God gives us anything we need to be fully satisfied and able to participate in His spiritual pastimes. Hare Krishna. Thank You.

Chilly room. I am walking a path. It is interesting how you guys have to pass your exams. We Krishnas have exams too. Perhaps I should call them "trials of arms." We fight *anarthas*, at first by following rules and regulations of cleanliness, simplicity, nonviolence, and humility. We practice living with knowledge and living *the* knowledge. Nothing remains theoretical. I will speak on this next weekend, unless I get a headache so bad I can't control it.

Just read the difference between a headache sufferer's falling into drug dependence and a junky. Very interesting. One crucial difference is that the person taking drugs for pain is not seeking euphoria, nor does he experience it. He simply experiences pain relief. If he does become dependent, it is not difficult for him to stop taking the offending drug and to seek another means of pain relief. It is rare that a person taking meds for pain relief becomes a drug addict in the classical sense of the word. That's like saying that a person seeking pain relief is not taking drugs for sense gratification but to return to the normal state, where he can contribute his mite to society.

Rain, rain . . .

May Krishna reveal Himself to us, we pray
O Lord of the universe, kindly be visible
unto me. The material world
has its forms its lures and
we look at them with morbid optical nerves
that connect so easily to the brain
our preconceptions
our social prejudices
and our pain and pleasure receptors.

That's when we can't see God.

We don't have *anupasyatam, ekatvam*, that ability
to see oneness, the soul in all persons, the Divine
Person standing with
flute in hand.

O Krishna, You promise us that by devotional service we can come to that vision. This pole penance is meant to help me attain Your mercy. By glancing at the telephone pole, I steady my mind and coax words, training the mind to want nothing else but your service. I am Prabhupada's servant, and the servant of a sage should want nothing else but to help others. I want that. It is Kali-yuga and people need help. I can first help by gaining a taste for Your holy name.

Just give me *hari-nama* and *prasadam*, some scripture and the ability to hear it with patience and devotion. Service and patience.

And when things don't go the way I like,
forbearance. And the ability to pray.

O Krishna, I am willing to be led to Your feet
to serve You here in this world
and to come back for more.

Please let me never forget

Your holy name.

Kiccari again today. Accept it and be grateful. Words have run out and I'm at the bottom of my page.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Let's do some *lectio-divina*, prayerful reading. Don't be intimidated by what a clever nondevotee might say regarding your faith in God. Leave those people behind. Pray to the author of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and to your spiritual master, who presented his purports. Sukadeva Gosvami and Srila Prabhupada wrote the *Bhagavatam* in a certain spirit, and you can join them. Here's a picture of Sukadeva Gosvami almost handing the knowledge of *bhakti* to Maharaja Pariksit. The king is receiving it with cupped hands "the young king, who is about to die.

Without God's blessing, civilization can cease to function. People are predicting that there will be a major breakdown followed by violence in the year 2000. If it happens, it will be due to some shift in the Lord's mercy. As long as things go well, godless people think it's due to their power. A devotee, however, "should not be puffed-up by borrowed plumes," and if the plumes are removed, he should be forbearing and find his inner resources in Krishna consciousness.

It's election day in the U.S., but I'm resting peacefully in this house of light. I've also already eaten for the day.

"Factually this is all due to the Supreme will of the Lord, the Personality of Godhead. Sometimes people kill one another and at other times they protect one another." (*Bhag.* 1.15.24) When people break God's rules, they receive a reaction. That's generally how the will of God acts to bring about peace or war. At a given instance, it's difficult to figure out what we are suffering from or why we are able to enjoy, but all karma is dispensed over time, whether the results are good or otherwise, and whether it results in a deeper level of conditioning or a freeing of the spirit. *Bhagavad-gita* teaches us that a wise man knows how undesirable material life is, *janma mrtyu jara vadi duka dosanudarsanam*.

Arjuna remembered Krishna's instructions to him and meditated deeply on His lotus feet (*Krishna-pada*). I don't have that kind of association with Krishna "to recall so deeply, to feel totally sheltered at His feet. I do have something like that with Srila Prabhupada. O Prabhupada, let's churn the nectar of your pastimes. Tell stories? I'm more inclined to speak from my present feelings of separation, whatever that includes. But I do remember you, and I do feel the pain of separation. Pain, but solace too, "because it has a specific transcendental effect which pacifies the heart."

Srila Prabhupada: "Lord Caitanya has therefore recommended constant chanting of the name of Lord for protection from all contamination of the material world." (*Bhag.* 1.15.28, purport)

* * *

3:47 p.m.

Went out and walked. really splendid, although I didn't feel it so much at the time. Sky partly bright, but rain dripping down from the thatched roof. Stopped to watch the sorry sight in the far distance of a man and dog herding sheep into a tight passage "the hurried, panicked movements of the flock. Saw smoke from the neighbor's chimney, but none from Madhu's. The big trees in our backyard thinning out except for two, which both have yellowed leaves. Walking and feeling good, recalling what the purport said about Lord Caitanya and about how constant chanting will free me from contamination. Even *my* sort of chanting? Yes, if I could only keep it up.

The shadow side of life. Predictions, realities "face up to what life brings. Don't try to live only in ascending higher consciousness, some would say, as if such consciousness is not quite real. Bly says that, and repeatedly criticizes those who follow gurus, habitués of *aSramas*, too-spiritual people, people of enlightenment. He says they're all avoiding the dark side of their natures. I don't know exactly what he means by that, but more importantly, I don't care. He's not my teacher. Neither does he understand anything about Krishna consciousness.

For example, the *sastras* teach that by nature we are pure soul, meant to be living perpetually free of suffering and death. We don't die no matter how we're thinking. The *sastras* are not a relative, "too-spiritual" viewpoint. They are the viewpoint of the Supreme Truth, who is in control of all the darkness and relative light, and who knows the purpose of all of it. *Tamasi ma jyoti-gama*. Ignorance is darkness. We seem to keep choosing to dwell in it, even our so-called wisemen. But we are constitutionally Krishna's eternal servants. We should drive *out* darkness by coming into the Krishna light (*Krishna-surya samah/ maya haya undacar*).

Oh, I do, although I have plenty of shadow with which to contend. Hare Krishna. We have to learn to accept what comes and tolerate living with the shadow until we are fully in the Krishna sun. In the meantime, stay on track.

Man, I like to improvise, but Bly says that's no good either. He wants meters and structure before he'll call it poetry. My life is full of structure "I follow the rules and regs, I chant my rounds, each moment accounted for "and now, I will light my Karttika candle.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

Close out your day, bub, while you still have facility. rushing blindly ahead, wanting to be respected and admired and thought right the whole way. I want my feelings validated by others. "Yes, we got together and decided you are fine. We elected you master for your whole life. You must have pretty good karma to get such treatment."

Hmm. But do they really love me? Might their love be undone?

No, they say, they liquidated their earnings and put them into safe investments while they live off the interest. Sounds . . .

true. The millennium stress requires a special psychotherapist for times of transition.

May you be prosperous, all of you (and give me a percentage?). May your children grow up as devotees and marry well. May we all go one by one to Vrndavana and pass

away in the most auspicious consciousness. May we each leave behind a treasure trove of something others will find nourishing to their devotional lives. Or at least interesting.

O Krishna "the chanting. This is the last full quiet of the year. The lights are already bright in Loi Bazaar as we wheel through it, peddling imaginary rickshaws, the air festive whether we're completing a *vrata* or not. Just to live in Vrndavana! Radhe-Syama!

* * *

5:37 p.m., Close-out Notes

Light our candles at 6 p.m. M. whistling below as he cleans the kitchen. Blotter splotted. Drew a purplish man-in-the-clouds blowing rain down on a cottage. Simple it was "gone out of my hand now. Calligraphy, illuminated page. Telegraph man types in the message across the wires. Watch out for icebergs and bad thoughts. Act on the *sastra's* direction. You can't live forever in this body. You can barely *live* at all. The *sastra* provides us with universal experience. Pray to Lalita and ViSakha. At least we have a sane life "all good things.

Appendix

Quotes from *Simply Soul-stirring: Writing As a Meditative Practice*, by Francis Dorff, which I read while writing EJW 32

"Once we begin to experience the difference between public and private writing in this way, our private, meditative writing begins to become the cutting edge of our writing practice. It teaches us how to write for ourselves alone, without intending to impress, edify, amuse, or enlighten someone else. As it does so, our writing gradually weans us away from the comparisons, evaluations, judgments, and innumerable shoulds and oughts that frequently come from writing with someone else in mind . . .

"At first, the experience of solitude involved in this kind of intimately private writing can be very frightening to us. We can invent a thousand different ways in which to avoid it, such as dusting our desk again, re-writing what we have already written . . .

"If, instead of fleeing from this solitude, we can learn to enter it and write from within, we can begin to experience what it actually means to become one with our writing and to write 'with mind free from distraction.' Then we no longer have to screen, judge, or edit our writing for the approval of others. We can simply let it flow so that it can honestly mirror to us the stirrings of our own soul.

"As our private writing begins to flow in this way, it tends to become increasingly personal, honest, and retaliatory. It tends to become the most honest reflection there may be of who we really are and of what we really are about. It begins to reflect not only a me nobody knows but also a me whom we ourselves may not know all that well. Little by little, our writing begins to introduce us to our own soul "our whole inner world. As it does so, it often takes on a meditative, soul-stirring quality that surprises us, and that sometimes contrasts starkly with the atmosphere closer to the surface of our lives.

"When our meditative writing begins to move, and to move us in this way, it often feels as though it is coming from some inner sanctuary. This may puzzle or embarrass

us, at first, but eventually, we simply have to admit that that is how it is. We have to admit, that at times, our writing has a way of taking us to a meditative place and coming directly from this deep, uncensored place within ourselves. Free to become whatever it wants to become, our private writing now begins to become a mirror of our soul, and of how our soul spontaneously moves towards what it mostly deeply desires. Our writing becomes soul-stirring.