

ELECTRONIC BOOK

By Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami

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Every Day, Just Write

Volume 16

Radha-Govinda,

We Hardly Knew Ya

November 15 - December 2, 1997

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

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November 15, 1997, 12:12 a.m.

Kurma Brahmana says to Lord Caitanya, "Please take me with You. I can no longer tolerate the waves of misery caused by materialistic life." Yet he appears to be well-born, and has both good family and wealth. Srila Prabhupada states that even in a so-called happy materialistic life, we have to extend ourselves to people and feel anxious to save them. "Thus one must become freed from the materialistic way of life. One has to merge himself in the ocean of transcendental bliss." (Cc. *Madhya* 7.126)

If you wonder why you cannot taste the bliss even though you chant and read *sastra*, and even though you are free of family encumbrances, it's because your anchor is still stuck in sense gratification.

We're surprised that Lord Caitanya says so strongly, "Don't speak like that again." His words are comforting, yet they break the stereotype we might have of what a renunciate says. "Better to remain at home and chant the holy name of Krishna always." (Cc. *Madhya* 7.127)

Don't run away from home, but chant always (*Krishna-nama nirantara*). Lord Caitanya must think that it's possible to become a chanter even within one's home, or why would He recommend it? But it will require a change of consciousness.

It's clearer now in ISKCON that we don't need to tell people to leave their homes and families and come live in a temple. How rashly we advised them, "Come live with us," as if that would solve all their problems. It seemed possible, and so many were doing it "either giving up their young families or raising a family in the temple. Srila Prabhupada supported it. He bought up half a block on Watseka Avenue. Now what? Now we call it *nama-hatta*.

Maybe we were wrong. Or perhaps what worked in the '60s and '70s doesn't work any more. We have Srila Prabhupada's purport that the devotee can live anywhere and practice Krishna consciousness. "It does not matter whether one lives in a holy place like Vrndavana, Navadvipa, Jagannatha Puri or in the midst of European cities. If a devotee follows the instructions of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, he lives in the company of the Lord." (Cc. *Madhya* 7.129 purport)

* * *

Swing With It

& Can you swing with someone when you don't feel like it "initially?"

That's the whole point of life.

Someone or some

thing wants us to swing

in a certain way and we

Resist.

"But I can't stay at home and be happy," said Kurma.

I'm no rubber band or ping-pong ball.

I want it *my* way. Let the world swing with *me*.

O fellow, you're no God.

* * *

Where's that other mood where you and I can make it, carrying
a tune one to the other. We must get deeper. What we have been given
may seem trivial, the
inspiration gone. But get deeper
find
the heart
then
help someone from your own discovered reservoirs
of Krishna conscious knowledge, whatever you have
now.
A Krishna conscious tune
to feel a mood and to let go
in piano and guitar, although not too much electric.
O preacher-devotee, are you happy?
Then you're ready to meet death
as an act of faith. "

* * *

5:10 a.m., Post-painting Impressions

On a 24"x28" Bristol board came a childish parade led by a curvy-spined yet erect
human (man or woman?) wearing orange *yogi* pants. right behind him/her is a red
monster, facing backward, with its mouth open. It has a long tail ending in a hairy
protuberance. Behind the monster is a bent-over horse (green) with the words "Hare
Krishna" written over it. At the end of the parade is a human with a bear claw hand and
bluish hair blowing across the front of his face. Behind his head it says, "Pay your dues.
Branch out."

Then I did two small paintings, one of a bug with a purple thorax and yellow head,
and another with tonal mixtures "not clearly representative of anything in particular.
Ambiguous expressions.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

The *pradhana* is the stage before matter becomes differentiated. The next stage the
is *mahat-tattva*, the total material ingredients. All this comes from *sa-iksita*, the glance
of Visnu.

It's inconceivable to me how
my denture looks so pink and sturdy "
it's as valuable as a good wristwatch.

Pulmonary.

Auricular-ventricle-coronary

Hives from too many strawberries,
serious people

gathered around after the accident or to buy tickets for a basketball game, a concert.

A stalwart person asks them to chant Hare Krishna or to

buy a book. It's natural that preachers develop lines when speaking to people in such situations. Whatever works. But the sensitive might be offended. Preachers take that chance and distribute books.

* * *

Don't Be Afraid

& Watch out, this one might get wild.

I'm not afraid of
jungle madness.

My Mama told me, "Don't
be afraid, it's only a movie.

It's not real,"

* * *

but it was, or it was close enough,
a real fight brewing.

I held her arm. Until I saw

"Snake Pit" and realized the people
were crazy.

* * *

She said, "I told you so," and

encouraged me to blank out,

pretend it isn't happening,

that thing that wasn't real.

A strategy for life.

We can blank out

bullets and big-dog attacks "it's just a film.

* * *

So I'm here

with tears pouring from

my eyes "tears of fatigue

although I know

I'll be okay after a little rest

and a vision of sunshine rising

on the day after Karttika.

* * *

The bazaar
is empty
onion skins on the ground
to be eaten instantly by dogs
while two spiders watch
in their poverty.

* * *

They're not interested
in Krishna's dayglows.
Swami, I know you understand.

* * *

Swami, you said they were ruined
by their bad habits, those
who were born in God's land, who hope
only for money enough
to buy Goodyear tires. "

* * *

8:45 a.m.

Yare dekha, tare kaha 'Krishna'-upadesa. Lord Caitanya tells the *brahmana* Kurma to tell everyone to follow Lord Krishna's orders. "In this way become a spiritual master."

You have to receive Lord Caitanya's order before you can become a spiritual master. You have to be empowered or trained in Krishna consciousness so you will teach the right thing. If you follow this instruction, Lord Caitanya says, "You will never lose My company." (Cc. *Madhya* 7.129)

In his purports to these two verses, Srila Prabhupada does not describe the qualifications for becoming a spiritual master. rather, that information is implicit. He does mention it in the purport to verse 130. "It is better not to accept any disciples." Stay at home as a householder "that's the context here.

Am I looking for ammunition in my fight to establish myself as a bona fide spiritual master? What about *nikunjo-yuno* and all that? What about the NOI purport that we must select a *maha-bhagavata* as guru?

Maha-bhagavata? He chants sixteen rounds and is always engaged in spreading Krishna consciousness. You'd better . . .

Lord Caitanya followed the same pattern wherever He went in South India: He stayed no more than a few days in each place, instructed and inspired people to surrender to Krishna, then left those people to carry out their surrender in their practical lives.

The leper Vasudeva was enlightened. Lord Caitanya cured Vasudeva's leprosy and asked in return that Vasudeva "preach about Krishna and thus liberate living entities. As a result Krishna would very soon accept him as His devotee." (Cc. *Madhya* 7.148) Srila Prabhupada writes, "This is the process of the International Society For Krishna Consciousness. Each and every member of this Society was rescued from a very abominable condition, but now they are engaged in preaching the cult of Krishna consciousness." In other words, Srila Prabhupada asks that we preach as *guru-daksina*. Preach and Lord Krishna will recognize us as devotees.

* * *

Go out now and take a little walk. It will be good for me.

* * *

9:25 a.m.

Didn't want to meet anyone. Turned back short of the cow gate in case the owner was there. In fact, I jumped a little because when I saw the cows, I thought I saw their owner among them. When I came to the most private part of the walk, the "tunnel" into the woods path, I saw a man, probably Bhakta Andy, and his dog, at the end of it. I backed out and walked again on the main road. A little later I tried reentering the woods because it seemed empty, but the dog was in there and began to bark at me.

I thought of devotees with whom I correspond "thought of what I might say to them when we meet. Decided I would like to tell each of them what I like about them best. Then noticed how my walk was cut off and how much I desire my privacy. Interesting how we are setting up a place in Wicklow. Should we have a telephone? I am aware my mood is rather empty right now. We all have days like this. I knew if I came back to the house to write I would be forced to write in the moment, despite the emptiness.

Part of the emptiness is my ineligibility to be deeply touched by the reading I did before going out. read about Lord Caitanya, Kurma Brahmana, and the leper Vasudeva. At least I read it.

Tonight there's a Hare Krishna festival and Madhu will sing his songs. I should use my time well. Yesterday a package arrived with two books I had written. My custom is to read them again in their published form. I will, when I'm done looking at the muddy puddles. Ireland is not so cold except in the early mornings at this time of year. The dog is out in the weather; I see him seeking shelter under an eaves.

People ring the brass bell to get over to the island. We each find ways to express ourselves. I also seek ways to make myself comfortable between headaches. If one comes today, I can't take a pill "already used up my quota. Tomorrow I am scheduled to give a slide show of our trip to Europe, and I plan to improvise. In the beginning I may say, "One might wonder how with so many troubles in the world and so many urgent pressures on ISKCON devotees, why I am holding a homey show with pictures of my trip."

No, we all need refuge from the pressures, even if the respite is only temporary. I don't have to answer that one more than that.

If people could just live simply without trying to *solve* so many problems . . .

No, I know I can't say that.

Anyway, here will be my show. I hope they like it. No apologies necessary.

Oh, man, this

is the way to go,

he said, and he walked on,

a chill creeping into his boots.

Hare Krishna "a delicious round.

O Prabhupada, today I thought of a disciple of mine who wants to please me but who doesn't always do the most surrendered thing. It occurred to me that I am asking of you what that disciple asks of me "that you please accept me and see the good in what I am doing. I also take solace in the fact that many of your leaders have fallen.

Solace?

I mean, Srila Prabhupada, I may not be doing as much as you wanted of me, but at least I haven't fallen down. At least that.

A weak argument for winning his love.

A weak strategy for going back to Godhead.

One of Prabhupada's disciples once wrote an homage centering on the line, "I'm still here."

I'm still here. I didn't bloop. It seemed to me at the time a weak argument for expecting Prabhupada's favor, but it's our truth.

* * *

KC Blues

& We are blue, and

I don't mean

in Missouri

* * *

where there is a preaching center now,

Krishna-sneha dasa cooking

halava for guests.

* * *

KC blues "state of ISKCON

women's issue, the full moon waning,

accusations that

we poisoned our *acarya*.

* * *

KC blue no

more master to

sit on the *vyasasana*.

Now two hundred little guys
with five hundred other
little guys
attacking them on forty-two
schisms, the
near gurus
underground
and no fun allowed.

* * *

Blues you have to get it out
get it out
get it out
to feel good again
unhappiness chased like a
whistle in a round sound.
They say, "He's okay. I *know*
It." Too bad they went off
into fusion.

* * *

Monk under eye of master
didn't explore too far
from home. He *can* grow
on his own "I mean, not just
be a mimic a
parrot
lost in the old times when
he was more of a
prototype. "

* * *

8:57 a.m.

Forms, music, drawing, and ideograms could come closer to each other. Express the art and deliver Krishna in surprising new ways. 1976 New Mayapur "questions and answers: "Can we see Krishna?"

Yes, what is the difficulty? See Him in the Deity in the temple. The devotees laughed. See Him in the sun and in the taste of water. Thus *man-mana bhava mad-bhakto*. Think of Krishna as God. Don't forget Him. *rasa* dance. Our mixtures forbid us from reaching such heights. But you know, we will all conclude in purity.

* * *

12:28 p.m.

Lunch will arrive at any moment. Please redeem eating lust by offering to the Lord, the kind Lord. remember Him and be saved.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Small, pale tan spider on my page. I blew him off to wander elsewhere. Paintbrushes lined up. Other bugs, flies, and gnats remain on the windowpane. The sky is solid gray; it's not so cold out. M. phoned and said he'd be home by 9tonight.

"But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form "to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have." (Bg. 9.22) Good, profound statements, and they deserve to be recited again and again. I intend to take my pocket-sized English-verses-only *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* on the plane to New York and the Caribbean, and I plan to center on the meaning of Krishna's words. My mind and intelligence are weak, my piety poor, my interests splayed. A pure devotee is engaged mentally and physically twenty-four hours a day in one or another variety of service to Krishna, "so that his only desire is to achieve the association of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such a devotee undoubtedly approaches the Lord without difficulty." Krishna gives him special help.

We can't expect to receive Krishna's help if we don't go to Him to show our desire to serve Him and our clear detachment from the material world. It's not just words or theory, but where our heart are at.

Even if we have material desires, we should pray to the Supreme Lord to fulfill them (although that is not an expression of pure devotion), rather than go elsewhere to have them fulfilled. By constantly approaching the Lord with who we are, we can one day hope to burn with a pure flame.

If a Godbrother has left his duties, that doesn't mean I am more virtuous to stay. Mediocrity is not virtue.

It's quite dark in here, and I don't have enough light to read or write comfortably. I can get by as long as it doesn't get darker. When death approaches, some artists become depressed. Others turn up the heat of their creativity. The main thing is to get beyond worldly life and to focus on eternal Krishna and our own relationship with Him. Anything else is temporary and therefore not worthy of prolonged contemplation. " . . . simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra one can become perfect in this life and go back to home, back to Godhead."

Bhakti is all we need. It's everything. Pure devotees, pure love. How to get it? *Desire* it. Concentrate on it. We all have read of those who have dedicated themselves to their own art or business. Well, we must do the same thing in God consciousness. The inspiration to do so comes from Krishna.

* * *

Pleading His Offering
& "There is no way except 'The Way'" "
a Shambala catalogue hits

the trash, although it contained books
on the virtues
of the quiet life.

* * *

Dark, dark sky "you're in no city where
they play their own way
each trying to learn the vocabulary of a
collective past then speak it in their own tongue "
that improvising art
of squeaks and belches,
caresses and croons,
the truth of a life lived
heart and soft
from New York pushcarts "
New York City, that city
I have never forgotten
although now I'm alone with no
more adventures.
Nothing hot and twisted.
Krishna is always on my side trying
for the best
for me
in all
circumstances

* * *

and I'm hearing
chanting
Remembering Him.

* * *

I repeat, I'm in the official camp now
but seeking the authentic
title. I live alone
this last of November, a
clever artist musing over what I can't do
and the paintings I have never painted, but
I won't give up "not

this year.
My voice is tired but
I'll still make songs. "

* * *

No Moonlight Drunks
& It is really just okay we
are okay "
they are friendly bears
and say what they have
to say

* * *

I asked if he would
like to be the man in
the moon "
no
Li Po down on earth
drunk in moon
Reflection.

* * *

No, he said, I'm a
Vaisnava wannabe
We don't get drunk
except on *kirtana*
and moon drops "Govinda
in the moonlight
no wine
no Tao
and we'll never go home
again.

* * *

Or if we do then
sadhana "pradhana
to *mahat-tattva*
and clear notes of anguish
bugle calls from the hill
from carrying danger home
on our heads.

* * *

(They went out and sold as many books as they could.)

* * *

4:30 p.m., Outside Shed

There are many clouds low on the ground, fluffed like layers of blankets. Behind them I see a little of the sky's light blue. It's already getting dark, although it's only 4:30. The wind feels unusually warm. Strange, it's almost like a late March masquerading in November. The long unkempt grass out here always seems to be wet.

* * *

6:05 p.m.

If you hear the pastimes of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu with great faith you'll "surely very soon attain the lotus feet of Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." (Cc. *Madhya* 7.152)

Wow, Srila Prabhupada is relentless about how his followers should preach. The verse says to hear the pastimes, but Srila Prabhupada brings it to preaching. ". . . everyone should engage in preaching, following in the footsteps of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu." It's a fact that Lord Caitanya was a preacher. He told everyone He met to chant; He induced them by His own ecstatic dancing and chanting. Almost no one could resist Him. "Actually a devotee of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu must engage in preaching in order to increase the followers of the Lord." So few people in this world have even heard of Lord Caitanya. They don't accept Him as the Supreme Lord. Those who do love Lord Caitanya must therefore spread His glories. Lord Caitanya's teachings are the essence of Vedic knowledge and can benefit everyone.

Now we have come to the holy river, Cc. *Madhya* Chapter Eight, talks between the Lord and Ramananda Raya. These talks were originally recorded by Svarupa Damodara Gosvami. Let's go through the copper and proceed to the touchstone.

* * *

6:32 p.m.

Good first day. One year at this trade. Don't puff yourself up.

Up, up goes the soul "long hippie *Sikha* flying he passes the U.S. space satellite beyond, enters Krishnaloka where

Krishna and radha live.

He does it by chanting his *japa* "all of it " the artist's simplified rendition, 1969. Easy journey

so easy for Bharadvaja

he sang and painted, Jadurani too
and I still flinch to recall it "the
Raw innocence of those days "
Pariksit and Rukmini
and all those
boys and girls, Advaita,
Uddhava, their olive drab uniforms.
So easy, but
not. Still we're joyful, innocent, following Prabhupada, staving off *maya*. Still
confident, still sheltered
in ways of which we could never dream
in those early days.
Who'd have thought I'd suffer so much, get so many headaches? Who imagined I
could live delicious alone like a Vedic sage? And yet I preach
like Prabhupada wanted.
Yes, I know. I read his books.
I know too now
we're no Peter Pan
flying out of this world into outer space
or Narada with *tamboura*
on no outer space missions
not pure
not yet.

November 16, 12:05 a.m.

"Srla Prabhupada, should we remember that Krishna is God?"

"After reading the *Ramayana*, someone asks, 'Whose father is Sita's?' Your question is like that."

"No. I'm asking because you said in a lecture in Mayapur that we should remember that Krishna is God."

"Yes. Then why you have forgotten?" Krishna is God.

When I awoke this morning I remembered that I have to be "on" at 8 a.m. for the slide show, then I thought of my little bodily mechanics "to pass urine, wash my face, put on my warm clothes "I also remembered to give Srla Prabhupada his Dictaphone and to sit down and open *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Here the author says, "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who was known as Gauranga, is the ocean of all conclusive knowledge in devotional service." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.1) See it with your mind.

The temple at Simhacala is mentioned in the purport. I hear the wind outside this house and I think of the temple opening at Bangalore. I wasn't there. The Hare Krishna festival in Ireland last night "I can't attend these things. This hour is quiet. Stay with the book. It's like bathing in the Yamuna. Lord Caitanya, Simhacala, Jiyada-Nrsimha. Lord Caitanya recited prayers and danced and chanted in ecstatic love (*prema-veSe*) before the Deity of Lord Nrsimha.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was always ecstatic. When He walked, it mentions, He moved without knowing if He were walking in the right or wrong direction. I can't imitate that, but I can be constant in returning to Srila Prabhupada's books and lectures and chanting on my beads. My love for writing is the closest I own to "*bhava*." It's a scratching down, you could say, a physical reflex, a vain practice of art, but for better or worse, it's my preaching and I love it wholeheartedly.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu bathed in the Godavari, remembering the river Yamuna. Then He sat and chanted the holy name of Krishna. A few minutes later, ramananda raya and his entourage arrived. "Ramananda Raya, seeing the wonderful *sannyasi* (*apurva sannyasi*) then came to see Him." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.17)

* * *

You Don't Know What Love Is
& It's a sad thing you're not knowing
you don't know unless you know
the meaning of the blues, sleepless
nights, tears,
soulfulness "not
worldly 'cause
the *gopis'* love is something else.
But it's that grief
so many sing of
in reflection perverted.

* * *

Be true to your way "sing it
the sadness
of this world and
ISKCON's failure to fix it
to be
the boat on which all can travel.

* * *

Still there's comfort, O wise man,
foolish man.
Feel it in whatever way you can.

* * *

O Krishna,
please give us
devotional service in a variety of ways
and let me cheerful and grateful
for what
we've been given.
Please excuse me my pious
utterances and actions
I tell them, but we are
a community and
tolerant.
We know the truth don't we?
We walk the earth, part of it
although strangers
oh man/ how good it is
He is/ this
God/ He gives the
Rain/ the pain
Reminds us to get out.
We dally, though, and possess,
work, do something else,
try to pass it on.

* * *

Krishna, love is
tears love
is
separation
from Krishna, beloved
Radha, ViSakha "I know
it not.
Say It (over and over again)
& Some things should be repeated:
I love it "love you

* * *

It's true: I love you, say it
good man
go high and low to tell

* * *

I love You/ I love You
it can be said

* * *

people who don't talk say it's
foolish but
I say it to myself, to the wind the
air
I want to be a devotee
I'm no good one
but want to say something good
something that won't
hurt others the
earth

* * *

say it I love I
write
I Krishna's devotee
want to be

* * *

my saying is weak
doesn't make love thing happen
but it's still truth
to say it

* * *

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare

* * *

over and over on beads
finger wearing down with saying it

* * *

"Distribute books, distribute books"
here comes death
in walked Bud
be careful
mind the preacher
Swami's Boss
Lord is nigh

* * *

say it "I'm afraid
get headaches
repeat and repeat
be quiet
proved by actions, O *Gita*
forgive me
"the same old thing "an
iron rod in the fire.

* * *

Dreamt I was cooking, but no one would eat. They were waiting for evening. The dog jumped up on the table and Baladeva said that it was because they had spoiled him with special treats delivered on the table after *mangala-arati*. When people finally came to eat, they were so offended by the dog and wanted to kill him, but I didn't allow it.

Then I dreamt that I was running to work in St. Paul, Minnesota. I was with a woman and her two children. I suddenly dropped three pennies on the ground and the children rushed to gather them. The woman's son suddenly sat on the ground, holding his stomach. He said he felt hot and cold. Even though I was sure he was pretending to be ill, I indulged him. Finally he asked, "Would you visit our home one more time before Christmas?"

"Sure." The boy recovered instantly and I went off to my job.

In the mood of dream theorists who assess each personality in the dream as part of oneself, perhaps the little boy is a side of me who wants me to promise something before he won't fall sick anymore.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

I'm resting in bed, listening to the wind, so I'll be up for my 8 a.m. meeting. O Hare Krishna mantra, I seem to need to keep an easy pace. It has become one of my mottoes.

Krishna conscious mottoes:

1. Take on headaches.
2. Tax your brain.
3. Work now, *samadhi* later.
4. Don't expect smooth sailing.
5. Fight for Krishna.
6. Don't go to a secluded place to chant Hare Krishna for cheap fame.

I could list other mottoes too, about looking within, chanting Hare Krishna, how our legal formulas won't save us, we must be mad after Krishna, read Prabhupada's books or how will we preach, etc.

When words fail, draw squiggly fill. When the spiritual battery seems to run out of power, turn to crips, licks, tricks, and fill that space.

No *mauna*; talk of Krishna. Lord Caitanya beheld the governor of Madras' pomp and fanfare as Ramananda arrived on a palanquin surrounded by a military contingent of *brahmanas*, workers, servants, and a musical band. Lord Caitanya wasn't fooled; He knew Ramananda raya was a pure devotee and not a sense enjoyer. The Lord's mind ran to join Ramananda Raya, but He sat patiently waiting. The governor came to Him.

I am hearing Srila Prabhupada's lectures on the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*, given in L.A. in 1969. The devotees read aloud from the abridged Macmillan edition and Prabhupada comments. Krishna smiled when Arjuna looked so serious. Krishna became guru. When we accept guru, we don't argue with him as we might with a friend. We have to find a person to whom we can surrender. Do whatever the guru says. Such a relationship is uncommon in the West, even unheard of. People think it's slave mentality to accept someone as absolute in their lives. It's not easy to surrender. Since the bona fide guru represents Krishna, however, he is as good as God. He doesn't give his own opinion but provides a transparent medium to God. The guru is realized in Krishna consciousness, and he controls his mind and senses, absorbing them always in Krishna consciousness.

* * *

11:05 a.m.

Even before the first slide went on the screen, the audience began to laugh. They were in a jolly mood, looking for a good time. There was nothing I could do to alter the tide. Uddhava kept up a steady line of quips. Of course, I had my own jokes to make, but I didn't really want the cross-current. In fact, I felt sober and wanted to make some quieter points. Almost anything I said brought a laugh though, and I couldn't control the situation because the visual images provoked laughter no matter what I said. Each picture as it came on was a challenge to the group to think of something funny to say. As the show rolled along, I felt the exchange remained external.

I felt lucky to get back to my room without having had to mix more with the devotees, but I am sorry I couldn't give them something "soulful." Some of them travelled for hours to get here. There were even devotees here whom I haven't seen in a long time "Bhakta-rupa and Vidura. They came to see their guru, but they didn't receive any heavy spirituality. I accept the blame for that. I should have foreseen that this format was too light, even frivolous.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Am I going to continue to feel sorry about that too-light slide show? Guru is heavy. I should prepare next time, and stick to *sastra*. Forgive me.

Am I going to get into being alone, thinking that no one can understand me? It underlines how important this is "the relationship with disciples.

But if I say, "No pretense," then take this too "you can't win 'em all. I was not heavy. They travelled here, saw the show, giggled, got a cookie, headed back to wherever they came from, and maybe later felt it wasn't deep. If they fault me for it completely, that wouldn't be honest.

Now dig out of this mood. Pray to Krishna that you don't want to fail in this service. The best service for me is the inward. I want to share it, but not like that. A new book is out: *radio Shows*, Volume 2.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Out to the shed. What is good and what is not good? Is there anyone who can help me? Can I think of how to ask Krishna and Srila Prabhupada for help?

In Bg. 9.26 Lord Krishna says He accepts a simple offering of food if it is made with love. We have a method of offering food "put it on a plate before His *murti*, bow down, utter set prayers, ring a bell "but how to discover the method of loving? We follow the pure devotee's direction, but we cannot imitate. We feel only what we feel. At least we can always act on that.

We should always examine our personal faith: do we believe in Krishna? Do we believe that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead? Do we concentrate our thought on Him? Is He too great for us to know?

"I don't know Krishna. I only know my Guru Maharaja."

But he knows Krishna.

Hare Krishna.

If we don't offer our food in sacrifice to the Supreme, then we are eating only sin. Each mouthful entangles us in karma as thieves and/or murderers.

So many lessons. O Krishna.

Krishna-nama, Krishna

truth. Hear from the pure devotee. Most people in this world don't know Krishna despite the many religions. We each pronounce the word "God," but the word means different things to different people. O Krishna.

If all I have is blind faith in Srila Prabhupada coupled with a long-term commitment, then all right, I'll go with it. I pray to you, dear Lord, dear guru, to please help me. Let me be fixed and aware. I have the duty to live in Krishna consciousness and then to give it to others. Please don't let me fail in that.

* * *

Solo Dancer regrets
& On the road
like an army
following
the Leader

* * *

but one wants to go solo
to dance
alone. He
asks his Boss

who wants nothing maudlin "they're
sick of it.

* * *

"You want to leave the pack?
They're arguin' and moanin'?
If you go alone won't
you do the same?"

* * *

"I think I found a Krishnaite to
talk to. When I gave her the beads
and she chanted for her first time
it was great, wonderful."

* * *

Yes, yes, I sit back and read it,
home, I endorsed it
with a simple remedy: don't eat too much
or drink too little
and don't go out or over
with regret.

* * *

2
O Krishna, I don't want to feel empty
when I read Your words in *Gita*
don't want to finger empty beads and
utter *nama* vacantly
solo or not
Please *help* me.

* * *

But I know Krishna's comin'
through the rye
the fog or uplifted dust
and I have only to laugh at
myself to feel His presence.
Never alone.

* * *

4:10 p.m.

Outside the shed. Dusty pink in the clouds. One cloud is jutting out like a long peninsula or a swan flying, heading toward the island "yes, a giant swan. Pink stuff down by the horizon too, along the low hills.

And the watery chill. Last gnats flying. Clumpy abandoned meadow here down by the water.

Well, I'll leave this place behind soon.

On my way out, I met a devotee who says he has lost his faith in me. We both made little Chinese bows, then he made a deeper one. Just as I was passing by, he kneeled on the ground to offer his obeisances. It's unfortunate the way we are entangled in rituals when our faith is gone. It becomes unnatural and awkward. I wish it could be simpler and we could act as we are, act out our truth but without offense.

November 17, 12:11 a.m.

I woke when the alarm went off at midnight. I was dreaming of a big machine that moved forward and cleaned as it went. The machine was cleaning a tall building, and workers had stationed themselves on different parts of the machine. I too moved from place to place on the machine, supervising. Was I trying to impress someone, or was I being effective in my attempt to supervise the entire machine?

Anyway, back to Lord Caitanya and Ramananda Raya. The door is closed on the *lila*. I'm cold and want to enter. remember? Lord Caitanya and Ramananda Raya embraced as master and servant. The *brahmanas* accompanying ramananda raya were outsiders. Ramananda Raya was an intimate associate, what I hope one day to be. I have always wanted to be in the inner circle surrounding Srila Prabhupada too, and by his grace I was permitted. Now people criticize me and other insiders for being inside. In my dream I also wanted to be an insider. I don't want to admit that I'm not. I especially don't want to admit what holds me back.

Ramananda Raya said to Lord Caitanya, "You don't fear the injunction that says do not associate with a *Sudra*?" In his purport Srila Prabhupada writes that a devotee should not associate with a materialist, but in *Adi 7* he writes that a devotee may constantly meet with nondevotees to help raise them to Krishna consciousness. A devotee isn't contaminated if he's actually preaching.

* * *

This world is filled with difficulties and controversy. I try to remove myself from them to some extent, but it really is impossible.

Ramananda Raya praised Lord Caitanya as Patita-pavana; He helps the fallen. His devotees are all sweepers. We sweep our hearts with *hari-nama*. That big, forward-moving machine in my dream could be compared to the Krishna consciousness movement (or process). It's so important to have approval, and it starts within one's self.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

Now hold on, sir, don't fall asleep. Just speak in gentle tones. I know you are worried that people have called you a killer of your own guru and a puffed-up usurper, and you are always concerned about whether you are doing the right thing. I know you'd also like to write an interesting book. But I tell you . . .

Here's the latest news: we published our first issue of "Discovering Our Voices," a literary periodical by devotees and friends of Krishna consciousness. Nice to be a part of that. Wrote letters this morning. M. came in last night after midnight from playing music in a pub in Ballygowen. I thought about Coltrane, his way of urging through his music, and how I once thought I knew something about the message and the person. He was not as light and happy as Gillespie. Ah, but you were wonderfully intense, John as you searched for God and expressed feelings we hardly ever felt.

Now you've got the news, our minister will give a blessing:

I bless this day, November 17, to go on without pain, but if there is pain, please accept it and the diminished writing output. I bless you to feed and rest and read and type and walk and sojourn and pray and pray and pray to Krishna and Prabhupada. May you make this day a bridge to the next. Help others by being assured of Him yourself.

The letters I wrote "were they sincere? When I told that devotee that Krishna would protect her, or when I told that fellow about the holy name, did I speak from experience?"

Srila Prabhupada says ISKCON is not as popular as Lord Caitanya's movement was when He was in charge as a young teenager in Navadvipa, but we shouldn't let that bother us. We have to push on. O Krishna, the needle, the nipple, the cakes of butter and rum, the ice frozen in Lake Walden and carted off to Boston and put into ships and carried to Europe "they used to do that. And me with this opportunity to hear and read about Krishna, yet saying I can't take very much. O Krishna.

O Radha.

Madhu will get up around 5, shower, and make breakfast. Then we will have our business meeting. Hare Krishna. I asked my disciples in Wicklow, some of whom are quarrelling, to please communicate with each other and give peace a chance. Who has to pay for the llamas? Whose children get educated?

I must convey to you, sir, our regret that your magazine subscription has run out. This means that you miss out on the world of fascinating financial advantages. You lose your membership in the most prestigious club of alligators, and the free 1942 pinstripe suit will not be yours. You cannot use the travellers' lounge for elites but must ride with the herd. All this for only twenty-five dollars. Last chance.

Krishna makes offers too: chant Hare Krishna and make a quick connection with Me. You doubt it? Try it for just one week.

A man bought his wife a parrot "because he didn't want children? I don't know. I don't inquire into those things. I chant Hare Krishna instead.

The wrench and grind. You

listen to mundane weather sounds.

No, they're not. What I hear is divine because it reminds me of Krishna. A melody from an introverted machine? I'm working at it. Unless I practice relentlessly, how can I expect to be there to receive the inspiration? Or when my well has dried up, I'll have to practice so that I will be there the moment the moon appears on the lake so I can scoop it up in a pitcher and take it in. O Krishna, Hare Krishna.

Oh heavens. "The yellow and white decor of the temple looked like a Betty Crocker kitchen," said the news reporter, and he noted that we wore Hush Puppy slippers and that our *tilaka* was messed up. He noticed that we talked about money for Spiritual Sky incense and that we said George Harrison chants Hare Krishna. All true.

A strange dream in which a young man stopped me to explain something he had learned from my books. I couldn't understand what he meant, but I thought I should be patient and listen to him because he was a reader. Then I thought, either in the dream or out, about old age. There are many advantages to being old: you become more mellow, understand life better, and begin to be wise. The problem is that you can't take advantage of it because you have lost the enthusiasm and energy of youth. If I had that same enthusiasm, would I really be so much better? Perhaps not. I would misuse it as I already have. It's bewildering.

* * *

8:03 a.m.

Just by seeing His bodily features and the effect of His chanting to the one thousand members of His small party, Ramananda Raya concluded that Lord Caitanya was the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They agreed to meet and speak in the evening *raha-stane*, "in a secluded place." Don't discuss Krishna's pastimes with the *gopis* in public.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Ramananda Raya to "recite a verse from the revealed scriptures concerning the ultimate goal of life." Ramananda Raya replied that perfection is to awaken Krishna consciousness while performing one's prescribed duty according to *varnaSrama*. Do your work and make devotional service the center of your life.

Lord Caitanya said this is external. Ramananda Raya then said, "Give up the results of work to Krishna."

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Black-stained fingers and sheets of rain. I walked in the rain without my glasses and I felt a strange, dislocated pain in the back of my hip. Big and little I seem to be. The world was far away and foggy. I'm Mr. Magoo, or determined to see myself like that "not a hero.

I fear they'll get me one way or another. Imagine such a loyal fellow as me accused of betraying my master in every conceivable way, accused even of killing him? Do other religions have such craziness and failure? Yeah, we're small and genteel compared to the Mafia or Hitler "just little guys "but a brother told me if the ISKCON politicians had the chance, they'd be just as totalitarian.

Why am I saying this? Because I fear the outside world. What, the e-mail dragons?!

P. writes me regarding a quarrel of my disciples in Peace Village, "You better get involved, but if you don't want to touch it, I can understand."

So he says, and the rain comes down. Lunch ahead, but first, Prabhupada *puja*. Then I'll have a chance to be just with him "him and me as we actually are "for those few minutes.

* * *

11:58 a.m.

The wind blows different pitches and ebbs and flows. It drives hard and high, wide and low. It can shape matter, and just as a flute player blows into a hole and stops another hole, the wind travels and echoes and sounds through valleys and against mountains. I have heard the wind move along the telephone wires and beat up against this stone house like a surf on land.

Did you know that Srila Prabhupada said the babies attending his lecture (in 1969) had "immense duration" of life ahead of them and therefore hope, whereas someone like him, what hope could he have? He wouldn't be living more than another five or ten years.

I'm still hoping.

Maybe a change in my mentality? Something radical, but I'm no mystic.

What *is* a mystic, anyway? In the West it refers to a person who is aware of God, although usually that awareness is tinged with impersonalism. He or she is aware of the inconceivable. In Krishna consciousness we say a pure devotee may see Krishna; Krishna may talk to him. Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura has described how the devotee becomes mad when he sees Krishna, then loses sight of Him. That happened to Narada and Dhruva both. *That's* mysticism, to see God face to face. "I regret that you will not see Me again in this lifetime. Unless one is free of material dirt he cannot expect to see Me."

I'm not eligible for any of that, so I'm no mystic. But still I hope.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

The wind has driven rain through the shed's closed windows and soaked the outer cover of my *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. I hesitated to come out because of the rain (finally decided to put on my blue rain pants) and slightly less than clear head (decided to ignore it), but here I am. M. went to Dublin for about twenty-four hours ""My usual passionate nature," he said. My usual keeping to myself and getting something done in a day, I thought. "Thus it is the duty of everyone to mold his life in such a way that he will not forget Krishna in any circumstance." (Bg. 9.27, purport)

Steer to Krishna. Use the compass point to head for the North. What does it mean, North? It's an abstract concept, especially ultimate north, the North Pole. For the hiker, however, North is an immediate and practical direction, distinguishable from northeast and north-north-east. For a devotee too: we point ourselves to pure Krishna consciousness, to Krishna in Goloka Vrndavana.

Because our path swings to the left and right as we try to focus our compass needle on the correct direction, Krishna gives us some directions in *Bhagavad-gita*. He starts with verses like *yat karosi* "do what you are already doing as duty or inclination and offer it to Him. He works up from there.

It's barely protected out here from the slashing rain, but it's not so cold. I can take about an hour and a half out in the shed, and then I've had it. I feel like I'm seated in a

cockpit facing the weather as it rolls over the strait. The sheets of water are moving horizontally, and no rowboats cross except in an emergency. Devotees know it's better to stay where they are for the time being. I can't call the wind and rain music exactly, but I see the pattern.

Krishna is clever in giving us a method for easy and active transference back to His lotus feet. We are already in motion, us *karmis* and mixed devotees, so don't slow down. Do what you are doing and offer it. Here's how: if we are inclined toward meditation (which is fashionable nowadays), chant the Hare Krishna mantra.

We all want to know Krishna, especially the devotees. Someone wrote a poem to make this point. She asked how she could give Krishna her life if she didn't know Him in truth. She was trying to understand the Deity, the holy names, but she wanted the process to be tangible and realized. As I read her poem it occurred to me that we cannot demand realization. She knows that, I'm sure, but we become impetuous. If only we could follow up our impetuosity a hundred percent. If only we could mean it when we say that we must say His names and hear of Him, that we can't live without Him, even if we can't know him directly right now. Prabhupada told us to be patient. Know that ". . . the devotee who has always lived his lifetime here under the direction of the Supreme Lord, as stated, has evolved to the point where he can, after quitting this body, go back to Godhead and engage directly in the association of the Supreme Lord." (Bg. 9.28, purport)

* * *

No Lark
& A slow meditation a
killer pace

* * *

chords showing what we know "
no lark, sad as can be,
the stark
no lark
a piano cortege "rain sweeps
in here seeps
in. Savage thrusting
wind and
a lonely ache.

* * *

When you have Krishna it's
not so bad but
where is your Krishna?
Better not . . . yes,
preach what's in me

even a little.

* * *

Face a stark-dark day the
light in your breast a hope
always

* * *

would like to give it to others but
I sometimes fear they may take
it from me "those savage
demon atheists attacking
my *bhakti* creeper.

* * *

Mood Indigo
& You can just feel
okay
it's "blue" You Irishmen
don't know blue?

* * *

You Bengalis?
You pure spirit
it's when rain sprinkles
in through shut windows

* * *

and you think of no home
you can't reach "the transcendental "

* * *

you can't reach up
there to care enough

* * *

the *aSrama* is cold "so are
hearts it seems

* * *

a virtuoso stands by a
professional blue
a passing mood
be *nistha*

* * *

I wanted to see a *sadhu* but
nothing seemed to go right
and I left wondering
why Krishna left me
in material straits

* * *

2
now as for transcendental blue
it's totally different "what
I heard they
are fixed in spiritual meditation
on a blue boy
the indigo mood means
Syama on the mind pure
bliss for
pure souls

* * *

no intoxic left of this world
I hope my friend won't die
but we all will and
grief goes black

* * *

but blue blue
that world reaching up "
we know we'll make
it somehow

* * *

when we love to chant
and won't give up.

* * *

5:38 p.m.

Lord Caitanya pronounced *varnaSrama* external. "Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu belongs to the spiritual world and His methods for propagating the *sankirtana* movement are also imported from the spiritual world." Ramananda Raya listed three activities:

(1) *varnaSrama*; (2) the offering of the results of work; (3) renunciation. Lord Caitanya rejected all three as activities on the material platform. Then Ramananda Raya offered his fourth suggestion, *jnana-miSra-bhakti*, devotional service mixed with empiric (non-Vedic, speculative) knowledge. Lord Caitanya rejected that proposal also.

Please never think that your spiritual master is less intelligent than you. Don't kill your devotion in that way. Bow down. Ask him to give you faith. Pray to Lord Balarama, the original spiritual master. Go before your spiritual master as Lord Caitanya went before ISvara Puri. Consider that you don't know anything about the science of Krishna. You need to be instructed and enlightened. It's not ordinary knowledge but *divya-jnana*. The spiritual master is not an ordinary person. *Arcye visnau Sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir . . . and acaryam mam vijaniyan . . . sarva-deva-mayo guruh*. Don't think of the guru in material terms, as if he is merely a philosopher or a teacher. He is a teacher, but in *parampara*, carrying Krishna's message "he doesn't invent his own. If we criticize him, we criticize Krishna (*saksad-hari*), because the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the origin of the *parampara*. Srila Prabhupada established Krishna consciousness all over the world simply by his faithful teaching and chanting. He established worship of radha-Krishna and book distribution. He translated and gave Bhaktivedanta purports for the most essential Vaisnava books, which can now function as law books for the next ten thousand years. And during Prabhupada's lifetime he worked tirelessly to manage the Hare Krishna movement with its more than one hundred centers and many, many problems.

* * *

6:15 p.m.

Soak your foot

ease your head "you never had
this fog. It's not like you.

You were a lover?

You . . . I don't remember. You

were a lost soul. You wanted to become a famous writer, get enough money, maybe marry a beautiful woman who understood you . . . and listen to Eric Dolphy on the phonograph and in night clubs. But Eric died young. There are always other musicians, and some of them live until older. I could have surrounded myself with such people for as long as I lived, and they would have accompanied me through life. But they would have cheated me, too, in a way. The bona fide spiritual master will not do that.

November 18, 12:05 a.m.

Ramananda Raya quoted the Tenth Canto verse, *jnane-prayasam*, and Lord Caitanya replied, "*Eho haya* "that is all right, but you can speak more on the subject."

To read in the *smṛti* of the ascension of states through karma and *jñāna* to pure *bhakti* is assuring intellectually, but simply to hear it again and again doesn't bring us to pure devotion. It becomes "study." We pride ourselves that we belong to the best religion, and that's fine, but such pride could become a source of complacency. To be always thinking of Krishna, to be moved to render Him constant service, and to tell others about Him is the desired state. I don't mean to say reading of the ascension of states is unimportant. I'm confessing, however, that this study isn't moving me right now. I will look up this conversation with Ramananda Raya in Srila Prabhupada's other two books, *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* and *Search For The Ultimate Goal*. Perhaps that will help.

I have been so long without tasting *prema-bhakti* that I'm quite aware my kind of reading doesn't change me. I read of a distant subject, like reading of the stars and galaxies. I read that I too can go there, live there, but I don't go. I read that if I die in an incomplete state of spiritual progress, I'll have to be reborn in the material world. That strikes me as true, but I can't seem to "do the needful" to go back to Godhead after this life. Ramananda Raya composed a verse addressing my predicament: "As long as there is hunger and thirst within the stomach, varieties of food and drink make one feel very hungry." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.69)

I lack this intense hunger and thirst. Physically my power of digestion has reduced; I can't eat as much as I did when I was a young man. I've tried Ayurvedic medicines and naturopathic treatments to increase my digestion, but nothing has worked. Now I take aids such as Lavan Bhaskar, Trifilla, and Hajmola every day. Spiritually, I also don't have strong digestion for *Krishna-katha*. I say I can read only one hour a day and chant only sixteen or nineteen rounds at most. I also hear only one taped lecture a day. Then there is my writing, to whatever degree that helps me become Krishna consciousness.

Perhaps all my activities are connected to Krishna. Lord, You see all. I desire to increase but lack strength, it seems. I lack the love that makes hearing and serving so relishable that one can't have enough of it. "Similarly, when the Lord is worshiped with pure love, the various activities performed in the course of that worship awaken transcendental bliss in the heart of the devotee."

Ramananda Raya stated further, "*Krishna-bhakti-rasa-bhavita matih*: Pure devotional service in Krishna consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price "that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.70)

* * *

Put Your Little Foot
& I'm here for you, Lord Krishna
twenty-four hours a day trying to become Your
devotee

* * *

self-conscious though I am.

* * *

Ramananda Raya says you need love and
devotees write of their shortcomings.

* * *

Put your little foot right in
put your little foot "
well
I tried, he says so sour-
sounding

* * *

I want to be Your devotee, that's
a sweet state I know
young men dancing in *kirtana*
men and women going out on marathons
of devotional energy.

* * *

I don't put down my life
here or in the shed "
the wet quay is fine with me and
I like to chant the holy name

* * *

Lord, You are kind to me
give me what I asked "
peace in this place
with rain down

* * *

Lord, in here I can seek
You always while
in my heart the
familiar I go over

* * *

afraid to ask more if
I have to wrench, take

out things I'm so attached to
although I can't even see them

* * *

afraid
to give up what?

* * *

I need love
and don't complain
except to rouse myself

* * *

desirable: alone
beads,
true friends,
work I can do
ease of body and mind
"but more
the confirmation
of inner flame
and You the great one
dear one.

* * *

"Mystics" in Krishna consciousness are not vague
abyss-falling
They are with You face to face
forgetting even Greatness
for love
Put your little foot in
that ocean
prema-bhakti-sindhu
or stay on the edge sorrowful
you can't drown
or swim stronger.

* * *

5:04 a.m.

Cleaned the bathroom. Many clots of dirt on the floor, hair and gray stuff. Blackened the sponge again and again, then rinsed it out "filthy water down the drain. It's a pleasure

to see a place become clean. In a dream did a Christian Santa Claus curse me? Was that connected to the infamy I called down upon myself later? The Hare Krishna mantra will save me. I am like the sorcerer's apprentice who doesn't know how to handle the magic.

I'll have to chant Hare Krishna with better quality if I want to be saved. And don't rush through *gayatris*. Will it take a cyclone of infamy to bring me to my senses? What I thought I had is torn away and I am left with . . .

Cling to the Hare Krishna mantras and stay alive. Float on a log in the wreck. Survive.

* * *

Lord Caitanya is the ocean of all conclusions. He rained down on the hill of Ramananda Raya, or "how does it go? Ramananda got some of that rain and poured it on Lord Caitanya, meaning it went back into the ocean.

Creation by the Visnus. What is my little creation of paintings or word sketches compared to *that*? I am such a tiny, inconsequential creator. What creative force can flow through me? How many volts?

Not so many. I shiver and blister easily.

I can't take stress or
else I have to
lie down.

Similarly I can't take on spiritual rigors. I'm peaceful
nowadays and

maybe that's Krishna's response to the service I offered Srila Prabhupada.

Don't live on laurels, please.

It's a fact I don't ask for rigors. I can't handle more pressure.

Then you are not ready to face the purification necessary to become a pure devotee? It requires *total* surrender. Want cheap redemption?

Krishna-bhavita . . . how much am I willing to pay? How much *laulyam* do I have?

I think I will go put paint on a Bristol board. Think of making it an offering. I do it as devotional immersion, not to produce anything particularly valuable. Krishna is *bhava-grahi janardana*, He can accept the good in *any* offering, fortunately. At least I can stamp it with "Krishna" and add *tilaka*.

The truth is in Fort Knox in the gold. I will not take my gold pen west but keep it safe here for when I return.

Then I'll have to write with this Sheaffer recessed pen. It deposits ink on my forefinger and could poison me.

Well then . . . I could die before my allotted time, poisoned by ink.

No, that won't happen "or
it could.

Hare Krishna. This is ridiculous, I know.

The truth is in the minister's snuff box.

No imagination please, and no heroics. The fat man ate ten full loaves and said to the waitress (in the Carver story), "We don't usually eat this much. This is delicious. Thank you."

That night the waitress, who usually had to bear the weight of her so-called lover, whom she didn't love and who was not tender "the waitress imagined that she was making love to the fat man. That's a story of a forbidden sort. We want to meet the Supreme Spirit who will love us and save us from having sex with unloving persons.

Form and essence, pretense and design. He went to college and learned a few things. He wanted to find good in his mother culture and offer it to Krishna, so he told stories and wrote poems. I remember Jean Shepherd and Alfred Hitchcock. No, I am actually completely Vedic. I forget the past and remember only my purpose.

* * *

8:05 a.m.

Windy and cloudy dark at 8 a.m. It's hard to whip myself to read this morning because I feel the need for ease. Will I take a walk later? Whitecaps. Sounds in the house. White BBT van parked down by the boathouse. Don't let the mind get carried away.

"Please quote some scriptures about the ultimate goal of life," Lord Caitanya asked Ramananda at the beginning of their discussion. A faithful preacher is enthusiastic to discuss Krishna consciousness even though he's heard and spoken on the same topics many times. Similarly, I am not tired of seeing the sky and water at Inis rath. If I can touch that freshness, aliveness, and not fall into a rut.

Repetition is for emphasizing an important point or to assure that the student retains the information. Or it occurs emotionally to someone experiencing ecstasy. All life is cycling, repeating, but changing, changing.

* * *

Out for a walk. It's windy but not cold. It seems like days since we've seen a clear sky. I'm like the Irish weather in that I have frequent cloudy days. As I have become used to the Irish weather, I wonder if a day will come when I won't mind the clouds of a headache. Could I even welcome one? Bill Evans played a tune, "Here's That rainy Day Again." His mood was not sad but reflective, poetic. It might be perverse to enjoy a headache, but I could resign myself more to the experience without becoming glum or upset.

The problem for me is the strong desire I have to be productive each day. To be satisfied on a headache day I have to see the stepping back from my activities as a path to more intense Krishna consciousness. That would be all right, but the headache so much robs me of energy that I don't have the vigor to focus. When I learn how to intensify my Krishna consciousness despite pain, that will be the success of living with this chronic disease.

* * *

We're Ahead

(1)

& The theme is blues "more
Repetition, big sound
dwelling on
stars, mind, the same old thing

* * *

of Krishna in the heart
in mine, *is* mine
and the reverence
and love
I feel "that same old thing
and can someone
teach me to pray?

* * *

I limp along "same old
thing "
To feel to
feel
the need
to make art
to express
that thing
in a way
that is not the same old
thing.

* * *

That takes practice.

* * *

(2)

O Krishna. I
walk down the same old
spattered-leaved path
wet mud but
me alone
a little dry
while the door bangs closed
behind me and I think it's someone
the raven quoting

nevermore?

* * *

nevermore "no more youth
I laugh
no more young ISKCON
hear the bugle?
We're lost but found
and have something to say.

* * *

(3)

We each
take a turn
speak from soul
as close as we can to a
self of selves
we know
so much more but
can't get it out "no
jnana.
We go to India to feel it

* * *

and make pit stops for marriage
and other endeavors "
all for Krishna "rowing boats
cooking lunch
and eating.

* * *

"Govinda comes naturally
to me,"
she said, "You, Govinda, can fool
Mother Yashoda, but not me! I've been on Vraja-
mandala *parikrama* and
heard all the secrets."

* * *

I prefer a simpler act

liking putting Him to bed "
nothing to imagine in *that* realm.

* * *

(4)

Lord, here's another with strong
hands, doesn't want to use them to hurt,
but to make music,
to help, to work
and mine grips the Pilot.

* * *

Lord, You are in all things
we know nothing more no
science
but work
and to read and chant and
preach.

* * *

This is the confidential
circle of my world, what
Krishna says. "

* * *

2:32 p.m.

I took a pill at noon so I could be active. I pay for it. I can't always be pain-free and active because the price is sometimes too high and I can only take so many of those pills. Anyway, since I paid for this afternoon with an afternoon later in the week, I should use it well.

Other voices, drop by drop. Someone went by in a car. Another works in a glass studio. She says she'll return to Belfast to live with her parents "there's no heat in the *aSrama* and people don't take care of her. The comings and goings of other people. He wrote a book and sold it. Whose got it now?

I love to woodshed. I come out to the shed and blow out scales and melodies and chords of prose and poems. I look into my face like a fortuneteller gazes into a crystal ball.

I don't want to accept a superficial, merely official Krishna consciousness. I must have real experience. But I don't want to drift away from Srila Prabhupada's teachings. It was comforting today hearing him speak in a fatherly kind way to devotees in L.A.

1969. Inviting them to control the tongue, "Syama dasi will make you nice *prasadam*." Fill up with those lectures and nearness to Srila Prabhupada.

It's astounding how ninety-nine percent of people in the world are ignorant about the soul, the Personality of Godhead, and the laws of transmigration. They live for only this life.

Carl Sagan has another best-seller answering questions on life and death, and speculation on the next life. He's a first-class atheist. People will hear from him but not from a devotee of Krishna, whom they think is dogmatic.

The Supreme Lord feels special consideration for His devotees, although He is generally impartial to all. He's wonderful. He has given us sufficient access to Him.

"I live by your inspiration," a devotee wrote me. I feel like tempering that and reminding him of discipline and patience. What is his daily *sadhana*? Why not more of it? Pure devotees don't demand of Krishna. It seems hard to imagine. We excuse ourselves, justify ourselves, balk at the idea of surrendering private interests. How can we be so empty and selfless and just do what He wants, we wonder. Yet that is the point. Those in the spiritual world have attained it. Here, we practice compassion toward others and also ourselves. We hope Krishna will save us quickly.

* * *

Twelve-tone Song For My Father

1

& He composed a twelve-tone song for his father.

I can't remember mine "my father spawned me and spermed me "so physical a small yellowish emerging from my mother flesh and spots and moldings and a strange funny head to boot.

* * *

But a soul. Somehow. My father now my spiritual master. I've been adopted.

I entered the storefront on an off-day from work

my strange head full of the new jazz and the daily marijuana high.

I was heading downhill but had enough sense to stop and listen.

Srila Prabhupada signed me up to serve Lord Caitanya for lifetimes but even then, I had to

Re-enlist
daily
and now again
amid the institutional doldrums and
personal insanities.

* * *

No, I know no twelve-tone scales
have no horn, although I like them "
their crazy sad sorry music about
people squirming here and squirming
there and
coming together in some
important, internal way.

* * *

My head hurts. He says
his father hit him. Imagine
an average, square father
hearing his son's twelve-tone song,
knowing he was always crazy,
because he didn't train for business
or make money
or at least give him grandchildren.

* * *

"No Story" Paintings
& I write in a shed
poorly recording those days
when we knew how
to play dirty

* * *

I mean how harsh and quick we
were we
knew
not what we
did.

* * *

Now my church pink

and red
a *cakra* on top
no story
other than this one.

* * *

Paint heads "one blue
one Radha's
(why not?)
added squiggles, someone
eating a banana
shrinking, no
leaning, back

* * *

then a woman a quickly
entered holy word
signature of
Krishna's feet.

* * *

Painted a monster and
a yellow horse
came, more words: "I love You,
Krishna" "something like that.
I dared
to add Krishna everywhere
like legato-staccato
conspirators and me
no shake-down melancholy baby. "

* * *

4:15 p.m.

Outside the shed. Dusty pink again in the lower sky where the clouds are. Overhead (lo and behold), see the first pale blue in days. While I was in the shed two bands of rainbows appeared suddenly after the rain shower. At the time I was so busy writing I barely noticed. Handsome island from here, home of Radha-Govinda's secret. Those who work there know it.

I feel satisfied. I paid for the afternoon by taking the pill, but it was worth it "a good way to spend a Tuesday. See those birds flying as if their wings were stone? I can't comment on them. The grass is too wet.

* * *

"When dormant Krishna consciousness is awakened, it spontaneously flows to the lotus feet of Krishna without impediment." (Cc. *Madhya* 8.70, purport) Whatever Ramananda Raya says now based on spontaneous love will be agreeable to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and He'll ask him to say more and more.

The Lord is my Master. I want to serve Krishna. That's part of *mamata*.

Srila Prabhupada chose my name. There were no Sanskrit secretaries in those days. He called me Satysvarupa, Satsvarupa, and sometimes Steve. Go back to Srila Prabhupada, to that time, and recall. I cherish the link. read his books.

* * *

6:30 p.m.

We will review the steps from *dasya* to *madhurya* and on. There is nothing like this in other religions, although others also try for authenticity, faith, and experience. I don't judge *myself* better than other religionists just because I read of *madhurya-rasa*, but I do believe we have more. All of us, regardless of our religion, must work for sincerity and faith. It's available through prayer and pure following.

Faith: do we believe? Accept authority? We have been trained to do so for many years now. "If you want to know your father, you ask your mother."

"But that's for children," the reporter sankirtanananda.

"Spiritually, you are a child."

We presume.

I accept authority; I don't disrespect it. I'm not a devotee "still aspiring. Vaisnava humility helps. If I had love of God, how could I live in separation from Him? I'm lower than a worm in stool. One who actually has love of God is symptomized by feeling that he has no love of God. These are comforting sayings, because they show that our *sampradaya* is not arrogant. We don't claim we are better or even that we have been saved just because we joined or we belong. Hare Krishna.

November 19, 3:10 a.m.

Woke wondering if I should (or want to) take time off from EJW to do more directed free-writing on a topic. Where am I going anyway? What am I doing for ISKCON? I seem to be boxed in. I appear to have no genuine interest in the nitty-gritties of social development in the Inis rath-Geaglum community, the question of education, the problems of temple maintenance, etc. I want to leave those topics behind, or at least aside for the time being. I have a different service. I have faith in that. And then there's the disease, which is a full-time occupation in itself.

Maybe there is nothing I urgently need to know about myself that I don't know already. I am compromised. So what? I'm doing what I can in a less than perfect body. So what? ISKCON doesn't inspire me. So what? I'm almost sixty. Where else can I go? For my disciples' sake I need to maintain a live connection to ISKCON, yet I negotiate the nature of that connection. No more jockeying for position in this lifetime for me.

* * *

8:32 a.m.

I'm not going to feel obliged to read *Soul-making*. rather, I'm going to take it easy, because of my headaches, you know. I'll write down what I feel and hang loose (hang tough). Thus I'll remain simple with no rigorous reading program forcing me to ask myself too many difficult questions: am I suffering interiorly enough? Am I "looking, weeping, and living joyfully" according to the motto of Desert Spirituality? I like what he says, but I just don't want to come under that man's spiritual funk or angst or program for heart work. Maybe later. Give me these last two weeks in Ireland to read *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*. Keep everything else simple. Hare Krishna, because actually, I live in the shade of both followers and enemies, and that creates too much mental anxiety.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

In the shed with a head (can't be headless). Happy is the man who prays to the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. rare is the soul who knows and believes "and is attracted to "the name, form, and pastimes of the Lord.

Questions people ask nowadays: Do I need another mentor from another camp? Can I teach myself? Can the Lord teach me?

Of course, Krishna can teach anyone He finds eligible. When we give Him our affection, He reciprocates by giving us more of Himself. O Krishna.

In the meantime and as part of my attempt to become eligible, I look out the wonderful wide TV screen of a shed window at the moving picture of Nature herself. The wind blows across the lake and roughs the surface. Nature is only a fragment of the transcendental.

Should we believe it because we are supposed to? Because the authority (*Sastra*) says we should? Or because of its innate truth, because it moves us? What do we *know* of the ideas and opinions of those who sought the Absolute Truth? "O Krishna, O Lord," he said, aware of mockery and self-mockery and disbelief, of emptiness and death.

Clinging hope. Please let a little of the faith-giving potency stick to *me* from guru's words, from *sastra's* power. Since my mind is prone to be overcome by the modes, and since it's also the nature to serve, please let my mind serve Krishna and my spiritual master.

Look at the verse, read the familiar purport. Consider it. Even if a devotee of Krishna accidentally falls down, he is still a devotee. Don't deride him. He will quickly attain lasting peace. Chanting Hare Krishna mantras "should be continued without stoppage. This will protect a devotee from all accidental falldowns." We should praise the holy name's power and sweetness. Why don't I write another book about chanting?

Because I'm too poor, I have no good experience to report.

Better I continue writing "Hare Krishna" on my drawings and in my writing.

Tell us what that feels like.

Well, I feel an urge to canonize my whimsical writings and drawings, so I add the holy name.

I count those moments as chanting, but otherwise, I chant my sixteen rounds in one stretch from 1:15 - 3:15 a.m.

And what is your experience at *that* time?

I gloss. I utter. I stay awake. I get the mantras out.

* * *

Memories of You
& We are alone
improvising is
not like playing at home
by yourself
a tough-guy provocateur "
no, but giving the heart
making a tune
of aloneness
or company
and memories
of you.

* * *

O Prabhupada, you reminded me how bad
I wanted Krishna, how much
I needed Him
how happy I could be.
Krishna, the most
Relishable of all forms of
Godhead. Yes, you said,
approving.

* * *

Prabhupada, you knew God in
a special way, and you gave us His
loveliness and His power His
eternal reality

* * *

and we lived in faith
no one else could teach us
faith abounded with
capatis and *dal* "as real
as that.
O immediate friend, mentor

I accept your rule "my master
I want to live with you.

* * *

I recall the rough times when my mind
couldn't surrender "I wanted
my space and needed it
and got it
and I thank you

* * *

but please enter this space
because I can't live without you "
foreign voices invade and I
begin to forget.

* * *

O Prabhupada,
will you come to me at death?
Death will simplify me, I know,
and I will be reduced only
to the hopes I have placed
in you. "

* * *

Revival
& Shout blues blind "
faith, I grab for you and
Srila Prabhupada:
I will get it from my God/ in
his pants
the little boy dances
tap
(he didn't, but I do)

* * *

and incline myself
to the *sastras*

* * *

to prayer and
obeisances "keeping away evils
staying in tune
with the good a man can
do/ although no one seems to like
it much.
"I don't understand."

* * *

3:50 p.m.

Outside the shed. Again I opted for my little life. It may not be so dramatic, but it's not static either. Different things happen. right now birds are flying over the island. I never saw that before, at least not in the present. They say there is no past or future; the present moment is all we have. We Krishna conscious people hope for much more than that, for eternal life beyond the moment. We preach it too.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

The Fuehrer fumed. I said, "Wait, I was in Eastern Germany before the wall came down. We stopped our car-van to West Germany from Berlin in an area where you're not supposed to stop. We couldn't read the German sign. The green-uniformed East German policeman came and told us to move. I'm glad he didn't arrest us."

Sir, I'm a naturalized citizen. I used to live in the spiritual world, or so the *sastras* tell me. You can't expect me to . . .

Srila Prabhupada says to put faith in his books. Be humble. The *acaryas* accepted the *sastras*. I should too. It's a method. Give up mental speculation on topics beyond my purview. My puny brain can't figure God out. That's our method. The book Bhurijana Prabhu recommended has a somewhat different view. Kierkegaard seems to have faith in *sastra*, but he says faith is rarely attained. Alan Jones is thoroughly aware of psychoanalysis.

We avoided much of Western education when we came to Krishna consciousness. We don't consider it essential. We read only *sastra* and the Sastric viewpoint. That makes us oddballs in our home cultures. We are accepted more in India, I suppose, but we don't really belong in either world.

Sunday is coming around again. I'm thinking to not prepare so much for my talk. They are famous verses "of Lord Caitanya speaking to the Kurma Brahmana. I can probably improvise, and I should trust my training more.

Putting the pen down for the night. See you at midnight, if I'm lucky.

November 20, 2:15 a.m.

"Generally, a devotee who is engaged in the nine kinds of devotional activities is engaged in the process of cleansing all material contamination from the heart." (Bg. 9.31, purport) A devotee places the Supreme Personality of Godhead in his heart, and

thus sinful contamination is washed away. Therefore Krishna says, "He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace." That doesn't mean he continues sinning. We're not talking about unredeemed persons. One has to become sinless to become a pure devotee "or an active devotee becomes sinless. regular, constant chanting of Hare Krishna mantra will protect us from accidental falldowns.

Dear self, please take heart in this *Bhagavad-gita* message. It's addressed to me. Continue the journey. I'm on the best path in this dangerous material world.

The world is not a happy place for anyone. "It is clearly stated here, *anityam asukham lokam*: this world is temporary and full of miseries, not habitable for any sane gentleman." (Bg. 9.33, purport) There is another world, eternal and blissful.

"Everyone should attach himself to the bosom of the Supreme Personality of Godhead so that he can be eternally happy."

* * *

4:12 a.m.

I heard Srila Prabhupada say we can't stay here. We may tell Death, "I can't go. I have permanent residency in America. I have too much left to do there."

"Damn your business! Come on!"

I played the tape excerpt for Madhu, and we enjoyed Srila Prabhupada's powerful speech. To some degree the message sunk in. Then I thought that we as devotees have our devotional business. We're not ready to die either.

I have sent messages ahead to America to be sure my compact CD player and new CDs are waiting for me during our stopover in New York City, along with a fresh supply of Esgic. Yes, we will continue sailing, despite the obstacles and despite the dangers. Material life, Srila Prabhupada said, means for every advantage there is an increased danger. The point of it is to see that this world is undesirable and transfer our thinking to Krishna in the spiritual world. We can go to Him and not return for repeated material suffering.

When Prabhupada was seventy-three, he said he couldn't live much more than another, say, five years. He said it calmly, philosophically, providing himself as a living example. We were young "in our late twenties and early thirties "when we heard it. We thought we would live a long time and see the Krishna consciousness movement grow strong and more joyful. At least we are mostly still around, still operating new temples in Gujarat and Bangalore, and another just now coming in New Delhi. Yes, this was a wonderfully expanding movement.

* * *

While drinking his mint tea, the reporter wrote up his report to send to headquarters. This was no *Photo Preaching*, just mint tea and thoughts to while away the time.

You know, I used to sit on the floor and type for the Swami at my First Street apartment. I had a manual typewriter and made carbon copies. I used an eraser for mistakes. It was real labor "no one likes to work like that nowadays. I learned to type in the Navy. Later I move to Allston, but I continued to type with the machine on the floor.

How much longer would I be able to do it without eyeglasses, without giving into my senses?

Looking back at those days: Would we be able to withstand *maya*? Would we remain faithful in the Krishna consciousness movement? Would the movement itself remain? Would we progress? Would we be able to keep faith in that narrow way, looking neither to the left nor the right? Or would the world's various influences gradually filter in, especially after the spiritual master leaves the planet?

Oh, he never left, I know.

They are waiting still for Radha and Krishna to appear. They still don't drink tea (except mint) or coffee, and quell their hunger at breakfast. A routine life.

The moon is shrinking, and the waters are choppy. Arjuna dasa is becoming stouter as he looks at the lake and rows mightily back and forth with his passengers. I told him he's not like Charon of Greek mythology, carrying people across the river Styx. rather, he is carrying them to eternal life, to the *darSana* of Radha-Govinda. He liked to hear that. O Krishna. At the beginning of a Shakespeare play, you're supposed to try to understand what's going on through the thick, ornate poetry. A lot of it starts with "O."

* * *

5:40 a.m., Post-painting impressions

I spent quite a bit of time on two paintings and now I'm exhausted. I am not so pleased with the results. Did I waste my time? I don't want to have a blind faith in the creative process, but still, I seem to need to feel creative energy and to link it in a tangible way to my attempts to attain pure Krishna consciousness.

Guy standing beside a horse, redeemed by the presence of the holy names. The other painting consists of four figures in various postures. Ask me what it means "what they are doing "and I can only imagine. The man on the far right is on his knees, naked, in a mood of supplication, his hands upraised. The Hare Krishna mantra appears over his head. Next to him is a womanly shape, posturing like a department store mannequin. I drew her hips down as a heart shape, then gave her Vaisnava *tilaka*. Next to her is the biggest of the four figures, with a Humpty Dumpty head and a sad look. He has violet arms and a brown torso, again like a store dummy. To his left stands the vaguest figure, an orange man with his hand uplifted and the word "Rama" written over him.

* * *

9 a.m., Morning Walk

I felt a twinge of pain, but decided on taking my walk. Just before going out, Madhu and I discussed how young musicians tend to be naive. It takes time for them to realize the commitment it takes to become skilled with their instrument. We related it to devotional service, and said that unless we work under a master and take one step at a time, we will not attain success. There is no cheap way to achieve perfection.

I am still young, even naive, in devotional service. I'm like a naive musician trying to learn how to copy the master, but I know now that first I will have to pay my dues.

On the trail of this small patch of land leading into the woods, just me and the leaves and the closeting of the little forest: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

November 21, 1 a.m.

"Pain is hideous," said the materialistic doctor to the abbottess of Lisieux. She replied, "Not here." Here pain is glorious because we suffer for Christ, who suffered for us. The nuns believed that if one of them was in pain, it was God's will for that soul. It should be used for devotional service.

I agree, but it's hard to accept pain at the price of my ability to read, write, and chant with vigor. Actually, I don't want to suffer. But if I knew the pain was my ordained devotional service, shouldn't I be willing to experience it as love? Shouldn't I be able to see pain as purification, or at least as something which I could do meekly rather than miserably?

Anyway, I took the second Esgic of the week around 6 p.m. last night. The pain gradually subsided. The noise from M.'s room also began to subside. Today I face lunch with a Godbrother without the cushion of a pain pill. If headache comes, I'll have to cancel. I won't have the solace that he will understand or even believe my plight.

* * *

4:28 a.m.

"To him [Arjuna] also the Lord says, 'Take to My devotional service and come quickly back to Godhead, back home.' No one should remain in this temporary world, full as it is with miseries." (Bg. 9.33 purport)

Then the Lord tells us how to go back to Godhead: "Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me." (Bg. 9.34)

* * *

Love Song

(Love is a romantic story, especially when a guy loves his girl, because he can see her inner beauty, even despite his own less than handsome features "when they find the heart. It's an allegory for Krishna consciousness, in a way "how we transpose it, feel the sadness of lost love, or our wanting to be loved despite our lack of personal beauty, our hope to please the most beautiful God of love. But this, a love song . . .)

* * *

& Love knows itself immediately
and keeps a quiet tone.
as quiet and breathless as a hushed choir.
Life's sad but
he's together with his love

the sweetness and the light
the touch of tears of yearning
well earned "no

* * *

old-guy cynic living ironic
left alone and
dry.

* * *

Love is earned through suffering
by becoming the sacrifice
by growing old with the love.
"My mind boggles at the
Relationship between Krishna and Arjuna "
it's so dramatic!"

* * *

2
Realization "a funny Valentine
offered to Krishna, constructed from
a Brijbasi print
an awkward *murti's* eyes "awkward
dress "he holds it to his heart.

* * *

O Krishna, my
words are false but
I love You
and I try to be kind to others
for You.

* * *

My days run down
and Death (as Emily described it)
will come
in it's impersonal way. I mean,
it will take me no matter
how much we want to stay.

* * *

O Krishna, may I live the truth
going to a temple in the dark,
mangala-arati, hearing
the scripture once again
in earnest.

* * *

O Krishna, I
love You in this private
song.

* * *

Dreamt I saw the full moon rising. I was walking on an island, similar to Inis rath. Suddenly I heard someone sobbing. It felt like something magical, as if the moon itself were crying. I was afraid it was a curse upon me to have heard that sound. When I pronounced something to protect myself, the moon eclipsed.

* * *

9:05 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada says that it is easy to know Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, if we follow the process: hearing about Krishna in the association of devotees. We repeat this statement with faith, and apply ourselves to the process. As the decades pass and we find we still don't know Krishna, we must take it humbly, patiently, that we are not yet qualified. We simply go on practicing.

Or, we may pretend (fake) we know Krishna more than we do. Prabhupada said, "I don't know Krishna, I only know my Guru Maharaja."

We might choose to blame our lack of advancement on the Krishna conscious process itself. Or some may find it easier to pursue a tangent, since the goal seems so hard to attain.

Or, seeing some defect in ourselves, we might resort to self-work "depth psychology or other forms of therapy" thinking our inability to receive Krishna's full mercy is some blockage within ourselves of which we are yet unaware.

There are other alternatives too, such as giving more emphasis to active service than to internal development, or giving more emphasis to *japa* than preaching, thus possibly avoiding the surrender set us by the spiritual master, or traveling around the movement and especially to the holy *dhamas*, spending endless time with friends rather than within our own hearts, etc.

But you know, it's up to Krishna to reveal Himself to us or not, as He likes.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

What will I say to my Godbrother, who will visit in a few hours? I will, of course, be kind to him as I expect him to be toward me. We are not better than others, so we should always offer respect. It's usually our own insecurity that causes us to become defensive or to criticize others.

Why don't I ask him what he's reading in Prabhupada's books? I'm concentrating on isolated "prayer" verses in *Bhagavad-gita* right now.

* * *

3:10 p.m.

The meeting with my Godbrother went all right. He was gentle, and I was able to speak too. He's not to blame for anything.

I read the purport to Bg. 10.2 describing how Krishna is inconceivable even to the demigods, yet He does exist. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead: "We can actually understand Krishna, who is eternal, full of bliss and knowledge, simply by studying His words in *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*." He is far away even as I say this. While talking with my Godbrother, I thought this wasn't a likely topic to discuss. I couldn't say, "You know, we talk of Krishna and assume we are Krishna consciousness, but I feel He's so distant it's alarming. I function in our movement because I have been here for so many years but not because of my direct experience of Krishna's *darSana*." Of course, I *could* have said it, but I didn't think it would help me attain the intense state of *Krishna-smaranam* that I desire. Can someone speak to me who knows what I'm talking about and who is able to touch me?

Ah, Henry,

Hermes . . .

and other words.

I don't think I will paint today. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and He can't be known by my endeavors. Devotees are going to India. Would that help? I told my Godbrother I would be going to the Caribbean soon. Will that help? What *is* it I need to do?

You say read more, and that sounds right, but I have already read quite a bit.

He told me how devotees leave ISKCON because they don't feel loved. He's doing his bit by serving as a counselor. I didn't presume to have the answers, so I said . . . O Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.

B. Leo looked at me as if expecting something. He prostrated himself before me, as is the custom. What does it mean?

* * *

3:50 p.m.

When he said that he's too busy helping devotees to write, I thought, "Writing doesn't help the devotees?" He said, "I haven't eaten sweets in four months." I greedily devoured two pieces of delicious apple pie. I said my headaches have triggers "the arteries are spastic. He listened. He said in counseling you are taught to lean slightly forward while the person talks and occasionally say, "Uh huh," to show that you are listening. It's called empathic listening, he said.

Oh. You do it from life experience; they solve their own problems.

Shed is getting cold, but I won't turn on the heat. I'll go back soon and try Alan Jones.

Satsfer is a mysterious entity. I couldn't see his face, only his reflection.

His *tilaka* was clean in the middle. Needs a haircut and a shave and to be fed at regular times.

Don't.

Don't.

They had a meeting and said, "Hare Krishna's have to be more relevant, not always claiming to be absolute."

The sun is going down. Fires on an island.

Premi. Sleep and rise.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

No more being disloyal to Srila Prabhupada, thinking I need another *Siksa-guru* and all that. Prabhupada can teach me how to grow up. Alan Jones speaks of how many people can act as angels in our lives, even when only briefly met, when they give us a revelation of ourselves and of our falsities.

Look, be attentive and be patient. Admit what you lack. We simply don't love enough, and we prefer to deceive ourselves about that. How to go forward? It doesn't seem "enough" to read the scripture a little, chant a little, and keep together or apart from others.

November 22, 12:10 a.m.

Getting back into scripture. How will we know Krishna unless we read His word?

Woken at midnight by the alarm. Didn't know whether it was night or day at first because the earplugs were in tightly. I was deep in a dream that I was with another devotee, a swami, who was telling me that it might be necessankirtana.

Incomprehensible fragments. Everything was so dark and the meanings so unclear. I never dream of Krishna or the spiritual world or something to convince me deeply, but I have learned not to complain.

My Godbrother asked about my headaches. He said it's been great for me to have headaches because it has allowed me to avoid ISKCON management.

"Yes, perhaps I am unconsciously willing the headaches upon myself for that reason, but why should I *have* to do that to myself?"

He sankirtana, his wig always hurt. He thought it was because he was not enthusiastic. rather, it was simply because his wig was too small.

"Why did you tell me that?"

"Because it wasn't that I was actually unenthusiastic or to blame for my discomfort. Similarly, your headaches don't indicate your lack of . . . whatever. It's your suffering, that's all."

I didn't always have the pain, but yes, I like the life I have now. I have also made a major personal discovery because of the headaches: I like my freedom from ISKCON

management. Some people are forced to accept a life not to their liking, and they become depressed, unable to see how Krishna is blessing them.

* * *

I Want To Talk About You (Accept, Alone)
& I want to talk of You, Krishna.
I know it's possible.
I must start alone "no one should
hear. Prayer
is never public, well
Rehearsed
but heart to heart.

* * *

Krishna, I want to be with those persons
who can induce me
to hear Your voice.
I surrender to You, Bhagavan,
Lord of all, as I hear You speak to Arjuna.
Junior ones remind me, the one
bowing down, the
one who loves *Bhagavad-gita*,
the one praying to be number two
in the all-England book distribution
party.

* * *

I want to pray to You alone
in my desert my
Room. I want my prayer
to become an oasis
of plenty
a flowing of faith and
Realization.

* * *

O Krishna, I want to talk *about* You
in Trinidad.
I'm not the center of the universe I know,
but it is not selfish to have faith to
admit I'm part and parcel.

* * *

O Krishna, I want to find You
in the lines and between them.

* * *

O Krishna, when I go alone to talk to You,
I won't feel pain, but
if I do, I'll accept it
if You give me the strength.

* * *

Only alone can I know You
and not be a mere small
suffering deceived person "

* * *

4:11 a.m.

The persona is a nice guy who doesn't particularly like mint tea, but that's what he has been given, so he sips away. Too much tea fills up his belly and steals his appetite for breakfast. He has time to work on his appetite; he doesn't have to rush off to work like a *karmi*. Neither is he a *jnani* meditating with the material mind. Ah, he is above those two, a *bhakta* in transcendence, serving and loving Lord Krishna, daring and active, living in Him. Or perhaps he is something less than that.

I have written notes to Bhurijana Prabhu on my reading of the book he recommended. When I finish the book, I'll arrange my notes and write him a letter "how it affected me. No big changes expected. By practicing spirituality, we come to the *bhakti-marga* and the specifics Srila Prabhupada gave us: chanting Hare Krishna, reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. A book never seems to make a profound change in our actual, routine lives. It may be interesting to read, and in rare cases it touches on profound subjects. We may admit it has exposed us as deceivers. Then what practical result comes from reading? We return to our way. We are not about to go off and follow someone else.

Come back to ISKCON, devotees. So you experienced Scott Peck's therapy group "tasted what you have not tasted since your first *kirtana*. Or you learned about reiki, or some other process. We tell the devotees to return to ISKCON; it's vastly different than those earlier days. We acknowledge more the interior way, we have good times, less big shots manipulating, and we won't send you out to collect money. Neither will we demean you if you are incapable.

He said they complain that the leaders don't mix with the juniors and . . .

Yes, yes, but it's all different now, we all stay together as one happy family and love the morning program. Come back and enjoy the evening milk and *Krishna* book reading.

And Swamiji has never left. He is sitting in a cabin in the mountains. At least one devotee dreamt that. He said that the GBC had been hiding Srila Prabhupada all these

years. He was angry at the GBC for doing this, but surprised and relieved to see that Prabhupada was actually there in a room in the house. Hare Krishna.

* * *

Live with death. Clear day yesterday. Who knows what to expect today?

* * *

The *Bhagavad-gita*, Srila Prabhupada says, is only the ABCs; it's preliminary knowledge. No one understands it even so.

* * *

Madhu stayed up last night looking at his chord book and memorizing new chords. I don't understand the process because I can't read music. I was asleep, deep in a dream filled with obscure, disturbed nonentities. repetitious "I use my last days here in one way and my nights seeing dreams. It was cold as the night wore on. Finally had to get up and put on a sweater.

"Please see that the cat doesn't kill the pheasant," I said. I saw them both yesterday. The cat was looking at the pheasant from a distance. When the cat saw me, however, it ran away. It ran so fast I thought it was a fox. Then I realized that the cat wasn't running from me, but from the collie, who was coming up from behind me. Confrontations. I'm a powerful human being, right? I could kick off all attacks because I'm a tall caveman. What a waste we make of our time. O Krishna, may I use this caveman body not to feel my power but to think of You.

* * *

5:24 a.m.

If we know some of Krishna's opulences, our faith in Krishna will increase because we will better understand how He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "I am the source of all spiritual and material worlds." Later the question is answered how Krishna can make such a claim. Arjuna's acceptance is cited, along with the acceptance of the Vedic sages, such as Vyasa and Narada.

A contemporary Westerner can remain unconvinced. He can say that the Universal Form is simply a myth, and that there were either no real Vedic sages or that they were ancient, sectarian persons who might not have known everything there was to know about the nature of God, especially as He manifested Himself in various world cultures.

We have our standard answers to these.

* * *

Maha-mantra dasi will be back Monday or Tuesday from India, hopefully carrying a *murti* of Radharani for me. Krishna is the source of all. "The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts." (Bg. 10.8)

* * *

Had a dream of being away from my disciples. It occurs to me now as I read *Soul-making* that we need a "stop the world" experience. That means getting a shock when a person is forced to abandon his or her provincial views. (I thought of how we used to think of LSD, but that was just another hallucination, wasn't it?) Such experiences come in times of catastrophe. My dream showed me that I may have to live without my usual support system. A devotee wrote a similar fear in her letter: "Life at my temple is peaceful and meditative. I feel I've been through a subtle change. I'm more at peace inside. The children are really happy here, and I have been appreciating Krishna through His beautiful, ever-changing works of nature . . . I feel this is right for me at the moment. I do pray to Krishna to be gentle with me when it comes to purification. When I see the hardship other devotees go through, I think, 'O my God, what lies ahead for *me*?' for it seems the more difficulty one is in, the more Krishna conscious one becomes. I'm afraid of these difficult times."

Religionists often talk about "dying to the self," but I tend to resist that phrase. It sounds too much like ultimate voidism. Still, we say we must abandon false ego. I seem to resist that too. I'm afraid my writing will be taken away "and my Esgic, my bed, my servant, my disciples, the money coming in, the gentle people who live with me in this insular world of devotees. Leaving all this "is it akin to dying to the self?"

Srila Prabhupada never told us to renounce everything. rather, he wanted us to use whatever we had and to risk our lives to bring other people to Krishna consciousness. He told us to remain simple, and to live devotional lives with other devotees. He told us to prepare ourselves for going back to Godhead. He told us that we would be changed by the happy, easy practice of chanting and hearing about Krishna.

But did we? ISKCON seems burdened with worldly or ecclesiastical preoccupations, schisms, and heresies.

There's no need to weaken our faith.

* * *

8 a.m., Morning walk

The tallest tree on "Geaglum road," which leads off the property, is leaning at a sharp angle. It seems to be dead, although green vines have wrapped around the trunk and all the way to the top. If someone pushed against it, it might come crashing to earth.

On the inner woods' path I noticed that two trees had been chopped down. Andy probably cut them for firewood. I'm not involved in the management of this project, but they should agree not to chop down their own forest.

While walking, I thought of the Jones book and the discussion on how we should become awake to reality in order to understand that we are not the center of the universe. This happens when our self-centered world is torn apart by calamity.

In *Soul-Making*, Jones discusses how mystics live with death as a friend. St. Francis referred to death as "Sister Death." In that way, they don't meet Death only at the end, when they are terrified, but befriend it during their lifetimes. As a friend, Death can help shape our activities.

* * *

A disciple wrote saying how she feels she's been talking too much to her Godsisters and house visitors. She said her tendency is to share with them her innermost secrets and aspirations for spiritual life, and she suspects she does it so she'll be seen as a good devotee. When she talks out her secrets, however, she feels empty. She describes how she felt after spending an afternoon with a friend, talking too much, and then returned to her more usual solitude: "The loss I expressed in my poem about this is real "real enough to cause tears in my eyes and a tightness in my chest as I turn to my dear friends on my desk, *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, *A Poor Man reads The Bhagavatam*, *Japa Walks*, *Japa Talks* "my daily companions seemed somehow closed to me this evening "like I had been unfaithful to them. Please let me enter again into their real yet incredibly subtle spiritual reality . . . "

* * *

10:17 a.m.

I can't be clear of pain every day. I had no pain yesterday, yet today I live with it. Lordy lord, if I can't read and write, I can sit on a chair or lie down on a bed (and I don't mean like a vegetable) and manage to see calmly, without unnecessary guilt or disappointment, that Krishna is in control. I can chant a few mantras in my mind and wait. I have so many gifts in this life, including the letters I receive and the ones I must write in return.

For example, I just wrote a letter to a devotee who recently changed from sankirtana leader told him that he was no longer welcome on their team. I wrote a letter to encourage him, ending with, "Be humble, be friendly, and feed your preaching spirit." To be able to write a few lines like that and to hope to give another devotee encouragement is a gift. I quoted *kiba vipra*, *kiba nyasito* prove he could still preach. I also quoted *asat-sanga-tyaga*, *"ei vaisnava-acara* to show that he should always be careful about associating with material sense enjoyers and nondevotees.

We each look out from our world and try to see into the heart where we can focus on Krishna's names and presence: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna "it is often a tepid, piddling, leaking *bhajana*, but at least we keep it going "Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare. This tired donkey with the eye twinge wants to chant and wishes his *japa* weren't offensive. Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. I'm sorry, Lord, that I misjudged, underestimated, and remained ignorant of the power and sweetness of Your name. Thank You for maintaining me while I make my attempt to improve myself. I don't want to be governed merely by Your material energy; I wish to serve You in spiritual life, beginning with hearing and chanting: *Srnavatam sva-kathah Krishnah*. May I touch the lotus feet of submissive hearing, as I did today for a moment.

* * *

All Of You
& I want the soft lotus feet of You
the east, west and north of You the

unlimited One
the glories of You
as I have heard them in *Bhagavad-gita*.

* * *

I want to hear You
softly in my reverberating
heart and mind
and heart and
I've heard

* * *

I will be with
You
even when my head is
cracking with pain

* * *

living smooth and sublime
in what You have said but

* * *

I want *all* of You
and I want all
of me
to surrender to You "
my talent (given by You)
my ability
my fun
my anger and fear
given
to You.

* * *

Looking out at Your changing
nature, lake and sky and island trees
glory I say it too "
got a right "
the soft and smooth and fluent
time I spent hearing sounds I liked.

* * *

The feeling of disappointment I tasted
when worldly
stuff
faded
like melting ice cubes
in high balls in
glasses with
lipstick stains

* * *

the false
maya cured by Your
sadhu who told me
there was beauty only in You
and the fields of Vraja. "

* * *

12:15 p.m.

Is it my last time in Geaglum? You never know. "Life," he said, "our world, is paper thin, like the walls of Japanese house. They can be poked and ripped. Then we will be left with maybe a kernel of self, if we're lucky."

We know we would retain the self, because that's the Krishna conscious understanding. Krishna conscious people withstand disasters because Krishna often spares them even externally, but even when He allows them to suffer for their own purification, He doesn't make the suffering so severe that they cannot handle it. "I carry what they have and provide what they lack," Krishna says. That's only for His pure devotee? What are we? Feeling hollowness and lack. That's a symptom of a pure devotee, or someone wishing they were. round and round.

* * *

3:30 p.m.

Despite head pressure, I went on an afternoon walk with M. We met no one else. Damp and cool "end of autumn weather. I felt as if I were saying good-bye to the woods. I showed Madhu where someone chopped down the forest trees and talked about yesterday's meeting with my Godbrother. Hare Krishna. It was good to get out of the room where I was starting to monitor my aches.

Hare Krishna. *The Desert Way* suggests we practice what is difficult in order to find true spiritual life and get beyond ego. Srila Prabhupada taught that Krishna consciousness is *susukham*, joyfully performed, although he has also spoken (in NOD) of the tears that are the price of spiritual perfection. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati said we should "soak our couch with tears." Piteously implore Krishna for His mercy. repent our

failures. To realize we are blundering is good for our advancement. Underlying that, however, we have to feel a basic trust and well being, a satisfaction of self (*yenatma suprasidati*).

I can't expect *The Desert Way* or any other kind of psychoanalysis to line up with Krishna consciousness exactly.

Tick-tock. Try to read more this afternoon, if possible. It is possible as long as the ache doesn't move into the right eye.

"I hear you're spending a lot of time in Ireland."

"Yes, here I am able to be a semi-invalid but still live with devotees." (They don't demand of me.)

"The Irish seem to be simple people."

"Yes, no big controversies."

No big rodeos either, and no roundups or Thanksgiving days, but plenty of sinful karma from all this animal slaughter.

"I'd like to get rid of Tin Pan Alley in my music," he said. "We Americans . . ." They performed a play for Srila Prabhupada's disappearance day at the Manor. One young man played Tamal Krishna Maharaja "he even had the mole on his forehead "and spoke with an American twang."

Chestnuts don't go moldy. I'll leave them behind in jars. Go off and lecture by repeating what the *sastras* say, according to your realization. You cannot contradict it. Whoever hears you with sincerity, eagerness, and submission will benefit. I shouldn't go a day without *Krishna-katha*, and we shouldn't hear merely out of duty but with an anxiety to hear. This is the prescribed path. I'm aware that I stay with my reading out of choice, but that choice is made from the heart and desperately (I'll discover that more in hours of crisis). I beg not to be kicked away. When I say I choose Krishna consciousness, I know I'm not doing *bhakti* a favor, but just that I am not practicing it casually.

It's true I tend to take my everyday routine for granted. Still, I do appreciate the peace my life affords me. The sun rises over the same lake and sets. There are a few differences between the seasons. Neither the weather nor my life makes severe demands upon me. I hope not to abuse my time.

And waves of creativity come. The harsh, tragic, suffering ahead we all fear. I pray to be strong enough to face it. We stopped on our walk, and M. patted Prahlada's friendly cow, whose bells tinkled.

* * *

5:18 p.m.

Not much left in me for this day. "Are you doing any better?" Madhu asked. Not really, and no, I'm not up to memorizing verses just now.

O Krishna, Krishna. read again *Bhagavad-gita's catur-Sloki*. In 10.8 Krishna says that He is the source of all the worlds. How could a person be the source of everything? He has inconceivable power. If people struggle with this concept, I think it's just as unlikely to believe that there is an impersonal force behind everything, or no intelligent force at all.

But why does He make us suffer?

He doesn't. We create our own suffering. Now that we are in this difficult situation, we can become free by practicing Krishna consciousness. Our present suffering could be our last. Accept authority.

Doubts, doubts: "Prabhupada could be confident of the *acaryas* and *sastras* because he was from India."

Even if we accept that argument, we can also be "from India." India is the source of religion and great, ancient traditions. The *Upanisads*, *Vedas*, the *yogis*, the epics, *Bhagavad-gita* and Krishna "all come from there. Lord Caitanya too. I have been brought into it even though I wasn't raised in it. We Westerners must struggle to adjust to it all "the culture that goes along with the faith "and learn to dovetail who we are with who we would like to become. No one asked us to become Hindus over it.

How does pain figure in God consciousness?

You already know that answer, although official answers aren't always "the answer." Answers must be realized.

So, my friend, be nice to others and I'll see you tomorrow.

November 23, 12:16 a.m.

Most of my dreams seem to have the simple message that material life is entanglement and delay, and that we are always stuck in some universal bureaucracy. reminds me of Kafka's two big novels. In one dream, the NYC subway tokens I was issued were defective. I was told to turn them in so that I could receive dining privileges. But that turned out not to be free either. I went into the cafeteria with the defective tokens, but didn't have enough money to pay for my meal. I was also helping an old woman in need of care. What to speak of not moving speedily to our destination, we were twice delayed, once by the tokens and once in the cafeteria. Hopeless.

I woke from the dream thinking that this is the sort of delay we experience every day. At present, our lives may seem relatively free of confusion and the sense of displacement, and perhaps no one is mistreating us. Perhaps we are not even being abused by the system. Still, such dreams warn me about the true nature of material life, and if I don't appear to be experiencing such discomfort and confusion now, I will experience it in the future. I *must*, because that's the nature of this world.

Does this information impel you to feel intense contrition for having come into this material world in the first place? That's the first step in developing the desire to get out. Usually, we are so attached to body and mind that we can't feel such things deeply. We have already expended too much of our energy in serving the senses. The only thing that can save us is to hear intensively about Krishna. We're usually lucky if we can maintain any kind of reading schedule, without letting it diminish. We can also chant with love and petition. But we don't. We simply refuse. Alan Jones writes, "When do tears come for the attentive believer? They begin to flow at the moment when we see the contradiction between what we hope for and what we actually are; when we see the deep gulf between the Love that calls us and our response to it." (*Soul-making*, p. 9)

* * *

I read again of Krishna's opulence as He briefly describes Himself in the opening verses of the tenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gita*. Srila Prabhupada states, "If one knows factually how God is great, then naturally he becomes a surrendered soul and engages himself in the devotional service of the Lord. When one factually knows the opulences of the Supreme, there is no alternative but to surrender to Him." (Bg. 10.7, purport)

Although I read, I'm not moved. I can barely pay attention to what is being said. My mind wanders. I did appreciate the exercise, which I continued through June and July, of reading *Bhagavatam* throughout the day and writing down notes. At least I was trying to concentrate more when I did that. It seemed more important than my other literary endeavors.

It's a fact that I'm not anxious to hear *Krishna-katha*. At least my intelligence is alert enough to know the folly of this, so I turn to *sastra* again and again.

Especially since I'm not able to do other services "or as a *sankirtanam*. I can achieve much by reading the scripture. "This factual knowledge can be known from the descriptions in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita* and similar literatures." I still need to practice self-examination, or else my reading of scripture becomes superficial or reduced, like poor chanting. When I see such poor performances from myself, I need to ask where my love is. Only then will I face it.

* * *

4:15 a.m.

Thinking of calling this volume *Parting from Peaceful Geaglum*. That means something. It is peaceful here, and I know I cannot always have such peace in this world. The scenery, the solitude, the going to the shed, the doing as I like, the freedom from having to lecture more than once a week "it is certainly a place of peace for me. I am leaving because we are going to the Caribbean via New York City to preach. *Parting from Peaceful Geaglum* would be a fitting title, unless I can find something more central and deep.

Geaglum is a mundane, Northern Irish name, probably named after some rich farmer or politician. I pun on the name and refer to it as "gay-glum," so that we don't forget the dualities that exist even here. The place is actually called Geaglum Quay, pronounced "key," or as in the Sanskrit "*ki*." Geaglum is meant for spiritual life.

Life in the mode of goodness here is quiet but not dull. There are probably many semi-hermits in Ireland "old people who stay mostly indoors, as I do. Staying indoors doesn't make their lives spiritual, but many of them do live spiritual existences, eating simply, abstaining from sex and alcohol, reading scripture, and praying. Ireland is conducive to that kind of a life. I find that to be true for myself.

I'm typing, and Srila Prabhupada is looking over my shoulder. Radha and Krishna are here! They are dressed nicely in pink and maroon. Srimati Radharani is the daughter of Vrsabhanu Maharaja. Follow the path of the Gaudiya Vaisnava saints in your worship. They aspire to one day receive a spiritual body and serve the Divine Couple beside their spiritual masters in *their* spiritual bodies. I won't find even a hint of that in Alan Jones, although what he says may be a valid prerequisite for cleansing the heart and freeing ourselves from material religion.

I want to make art, not just live in religion, theology, and philosophy. What do I mean by art? I want to find and express the compelling emotions that allow us to love God. I draw on memories and desires in an intuitive way, to move us. Art is not so easily defined. Hare Krishna. It comes up when we act sincerely and the words have an eloquence free from affectation. I can't describe it more than that.

Now folks, let's drink our bitter lemon drink while it's still hot. Let's dance the silence of a pious monk. We will rest too, so that this fellow can fulfill his duty and give the lecture at 8 a.m. I will read from *Caitanya-caritamrta*, not exactly improvising my lecture, but I haven't overly planned. The section I chose starts with praise of pilgrimage, and the purports tell us which railroads to take to get to particular spots. After that, we will speak about Lord Caitanya's contemporaries and how we can still see Him today if our eyes are tinged with devotion. Then there's the verse where the Kurma Brahmana states that he wants to get out of the miseries of birth and death. He begs to renounce his family and travel with Lord Caitanya. Here I may comment on how a pleasurable life can be disrupted by tragedy. Peace is not really the source of pleasure, and neither is family life, so Vedic society makes renunciation compulsory. In any case, we cannot be happy. Having come to the temporary miserable world, we should engage in Krishna's devotional service. Hare Krishna. To be in the temple room is a gift. The experience will be up and then down, but I'll be able to return and re-enter this private world.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Various scriptures prove that Narayana is the source of all. Lord Caitanya teaches that Lord Krishna is the source of Narayana. Who am I to resist or doubt Lord Caitanya? I just heard Srila Prabhupada explaining (in a 1969 lecture) how *brahma Sabda* is, as evidence, superior to direct sense perception (*pratyaksa*) or hypothesis (*anumana*). He convinced me. The previous sages researched and received knowledge, and so it has already been presented. We can save ourselves trouble and confusion by simply accepting it. To the degree that *pratyaksa* and *anumana* are useful, the compilers of *sastra* used them to convince us, but ultimately, a simply hearing of *sastra* is enough. We must trust guru and *sastra* as a child trusts his father when the father offers him food, or as we trust a licensed restaurant not to poison us. In spiritual matters there is no other way to receive transcendental knowledge except as it descends. I like that image of men in a tree carefully handing down the ripened mangoes. Are we there to receive it?

* * *

Noon

Maha-mantra dasi returned from Vrndavana carrying a package for me. I picked it up at the temple room when I went to give the *Caitanya-caritamrta* lecture. Then I went into my room alone and opened it. It contained both Radha and Krishna! They are beautiful, brilliant, effulgent, with fine features. I am wondering who in Vrndavana I should thank for this wonderful gift?

I have packed up the "training" Radha and Krishna for return to America. Now my own Radha and Krishna are kindly standing together on the altar, beautifully dressed in

one of the eight sets of clothes I've been given. At first I was thinking to hold an *abhiSeka* as a gesture "installation," but I think I will just ease into Their worship more simply and humbly. Soon They will receive Their first meal here in Geaglum, Their new home. Maybe I will call Them Sri Sri Radha-Govinda after the presiding Deities here.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Thank you, Radha-Govinda, for coming to me here in North Ireland. It's not Vrndavana. It must be exciting in Vrndavana, hearing the sounds so close to the original Vraja, to experience the *bhava* and the *rasa*. O Govardhana, you have given me mercy. You know when I come to You, I become a target for so many people and controversies. I stay here, remembering You, Your mercy upon me, and living alone. I am not on the eve of the Christmas marathon nor in Vrndavana with its lanes, cows, peacocks, holy places, *bhajan*s to Radha and Krishna pouring out from the loud speakers, Vraja-Krishna's closeness under the veneer. No, I live in solitude at Inis rath, and not even at Inis rath, but on a piece of mainland facing the lake island.

But I'll soon be leaving here. I won't even have two weeks with my new Radha-Krishna Deities. I'll just be getting to know Them when I have to leave. I know They'll call me back. O radha, O golden-complexioned one, O dark Krishna . . .

* * *

Krishna is the source of all. Those who know it worship Him with all their hearts. They enliven one another discussing His qualities and pastimes. Here's how He reciprocates with them:

"To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me." (Bg. 10.10)

People read *Bhagavad-gita* without Krishna. Srila Prabhupada insists that Krishna is to be known by *Bhagavad-gita*. Take His words "He speaks them directly. *Buddhi-yoga*: He grants us the intelligence to serve Him with devotion.

I can't expect to remember all this from one life to another, so what is the best way for me to meet this approaching death? I want to discuss it and *pray*. I wish I could wish I could pray.

* * *

Luglu
Today I received radha and Krishna from
Vrndavana with
dust and
maha sweet balls "
what are they called?
Gulabs? No,
Luglus!

* * *

Luglus too sweet for
me "harsh Indian sugar
and now you see
I can't see
the inner Vraja.

* * *

"Yeah 'cause you gave up your
connection with ""
No, no
I'm Prabhupada's *cela*
I'm one of the far-out
Swami's
boys who prayed for him to recover
and whose sons' and daughters' prayers
saved him, he said, our love.
He loved our love and I love to hear it
even now, thirty years later.
In NYC we loved him, and
shaved and dressed in *dhotis/ saris*
it
didn't
take us long.

* * *

The Ganges takes a long time
to purify, but not the pure devotee.
He got us right away, moaning for Krishna,
that crazy guy in SF on Frederick Street:
"I am God!"

* * *

Hayagriva spun in circles
cymbals on his fingers
and I gave it all up "my LPs, my
stray hall cats, the Swami
crashing through our lives our
love
Reeling us in
feeding us *luglus*. "

* * *

3:15 p.m.

No headache all day. I spoke with drama in class. One devotee, tanned, had just returned from Vrndavana.

Krishna is effulgent. I glance at Him, amazed.

Rain on roof. Wind.

* * *

I've got it easy in
easy time
with rain and relish
of being alone.

Departing from peace to enter the stress of the preacher. Glad, too, that I'm going.

They like to listen in Trinidad, and that's their good qualification, even if they can't take action.

Don't tell them that "it's not really my opinion anyway. I heard it from another.

Samosas for lunch today. I heard my brother on tape as I ate. He was speaking of the importance of what the sages taught at Naimisaranya. Who, caught in the meshes (not black mesh stockings of cabaret dancers, but the iron meshes of karma) will not hear the pastimes of the all-good personality of Godhead?

* * *

Swami asked his Godnephew in India to pack up his books and mail them, with *mrdangas*, *karatalas*, beads, radha-Krishna *murtis* "and hurry up! We need weapons on the American front. He was demanding. When his correspondent wrote back, "I regret," Swamiji replied, "Yes, I regret too." He wanted action. Still does.

"Mercy," he begged.

"You and I can disagree. We are like father and son, and there is no offense."

That's the testimony. They were close and I should not step in like a fool and say otherwise. But if I choose to stay in the ranks of ISKCON's boys and girls who need only one guru ("If I sent someone else and he said even one thing different . . ."), then that's not wrong.

* * *

My romance (What Does It Mean?)

& I want to be a devotee. That

is my romance, but

* * *

I once romanced

in a taxi on

the ferry
and now I must dream of it "

* * *

the return to Staten Island
the Navy
and I can't get out
or be happy
and no one helps.
It means I am a devotee
who can't get to perfection
or even to first base

* * *

that I am skinny
fasting and praying because
I wish I could be more transparent
and give you the best
guru's
true wisdom

* * *

tear away the veil of all
questions and comments. But
this old romance
forces me
to be myself. "

* * *

4 p.m.

I was caught in the rain on my way back from the shed. That's a pleasure too. The wild grass is trampled from my once-a-day walks out here. The place where I walk has yellowed. Otherwise everything is green. Except the sky, which is very dark, and the trees gnarly branches like crooked fingers against the sky. Clouds torn and drifting. Heading back to a warm room in a protected house. Krishna's mercy.

November 24, 12:12 a.m.

A Krishna conscious person should go forward with firmness and determination. Avoid all unauthorized commentaries on *Bhagavad-gita*. Just by the evidence he gives, go forward. "There is no supreme controller other than Krishna." (Bg. 10.8, purport)
"Is this the one Supreme God? Is this the same God the Christians worship?"

Yes, it is. Other questions?

"Why am I shrivelling up? Is that symptomatic of something?"

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna.

I heard that. Your *japa* was accidentally recorded. It sounds like you are skipping over syllables. But it may be said that Srila Prabhupada also sounds like he's skipping. I don't worry about that too much as long as I think I'm saying the thirty-two syllables as they pass in rhythm through my mind's attention.

We accept, we consent, we are silent and don't vocalize objections when Srila Prabhupada writes that Krishna is God. Of course, that is not enough to make us Krishna consciousness.

SK said he was afraid to be alone with the word of God, but he tried anyway. He was humble and honest, and at least he didn't claim that being a scholar interpreting scriptures is something great. I read in *Fear and Trembling* of the demands that God makes on us. Don't glibly think we devotees already live up to them.

We have our own list of Krishna's demands. "The wise who perfectly know this engage in My devotional service and worship Me with all their hearts. The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (Bg. 10.8 - 10)

My mind wanders even while I write this down. Then let me write about the wandering. Face the doubts and tepidness. read more. Pray now. Please let me be more open to Your holy name. I see my shortcomings. I am tiny and cowardly, exhausted and wishing I could do more. Dependent on the Lord to revive me.

We read of heroic devotees but can't become one. Manu asked in effect, "Is it enough that I be honest?"

"Yes," as if (I assume) that's what I'm doing.

Underachievers, most of us. Still, it's a great achievement to have come to Krishna consciousness. We need to share our struggle and in that way help ourselves.

In his purport to Bg. 10.10, Srila Prabhupada writes that Krishna will help the devotee from within. To receive that help, "He should perform some sort of work for Krishna, and that work should be with love."

* * *

4.28 a.m.

It takes longer to dress Radha-Govinda now that I have so many ornaments and dresses. I have a hard time fitting Srimati Radharani's crown. It tends to I hope Their clothes are fitting with the Vraja mood; they're so opulent. The main ornament of Vraja is *prema* in its various manifestations, and Srimati radharani is a simple cowherd girl. Still, we hear of Her wearing gorgeous ornaments, and I hope She will not mind that Her crown is so large. I also hope I can receive a drop of the nectar of serving Them in Vrndavana through this Deity worship. They are my king and queen, the Lords of the kingdom of love. The ornaments I have, in fact, do not enhance Their glorious natures.

Srila Prabhupada sits beside Them. He's the spiritual master sitting on the *vyasasana*, and it is he who has allowed me to serve Them. He guides me as in

the "*Gurvastakam*" verse 3, *Sri vighara* . . . and also the fifth, beginning "*Sri radhika*." He wears a bright saffron wool cap today. That too came from Vrndavana.

I know I cannot carry these radha-Krishna Deities when I travel. They belong in one place. I would like to come back to Them soon, so I'll carry Their photo with me. Hare Krishna.

What else? What else is there? Simply the holy name. I don't need to say this. You already know. I write for my purification.

One devotee asked Prabhupada how he could become a servant of one who serves the *gopis*. Srila Prabhupada replied that the *gopis* are on the liberated platform. We have to first become liberated before we can serve them. Still, to serve the *gopis* is a good idea, Prabhupada said, even if we can't do it immediately, and certainly not by imitation. Do the routine work, including serving the Deity, chanting, and hearing, and the time will come when everything will be revealed. Automatically.

Answered letters. read books. What else is there to do but hear about Krishna and then tell others what you heard? And if there are difficulties, turn to Krishna more. Don't let all your energy go into simply coping. Use it to help yourself and others by remembering Krishna. That is Krishna consciousness.

Radhanatha's father and his father's second wife are here visiting. M. played music for them last night. They want to see me for at least a few minutes, a handshake or something. I will satisfy Radhanatha in that way. But no extended meetings.

Today, Monday, Radha-Govinda wear light green trimmed in gold. Each day I offer a different color scheme "seven days, seven outfits "and at night a bluish dress. Mercy upon me.

Parting from peaceful Geaglum, parting my hair, parting of the ways "I play the part of a laborer or sweatshop boss or writer with delicate hands and a low brow. Part of me wants to go to Goloka. I am part and parcel of Krishna. I part from Inis rath and go to preach. All temporary partings, or most of them. Therefore I have not used words such as "farewell" or "good-bye." Just a two-month separation from here. O Krishna.

* * *

5:58 a.m.

Like to spend time discussing *Soul-making* with Bhurijana Prabhu, but I can't spare the time and neither can he. He's in Australia with his family preparing for his three *Srimad-Bhagavatam* overview lectures per week. I'm here in Ireland (or traveling soon). When I'm in Ireland I'm alone most of the time and can find time to read a book like *Soul-making*, but I say my health and lack of sociability (they go together) make it difficult for me to endure much company. I like some of the points in *Soul-making*, which include the concept that we should preserve "pity, grief, and joy" within ourselves and honestly face God as we read our *sastra*. We have to name our fear, our shortcomings, our cowardice, and also our love.

* * *

8.45 a.m.

Still running on clear time. I walked out the door and realized I'd forgotten my Dictaphone. I ran back in and Madhu already had his melodeon strapped on and was playing away, absorbed. I said, "I forgot my "accordion."

Madhu asked if I had named my Radha-Krishna Deities yet. I said I hadn't decided, but was thinking of Radha-Govinda. He said he also thought of that name. My reasoning is that I don't dare "it would seem presumptuous "to choose a name. Who am I to say I was inspired that the Deity should be named Radha-Ramana or Radha-Madhava or Radha-Syamasundara? In the absence of such God-given inspiration, Radha-Govinda seems right because we are living in Their *dhama*. I have already been worshiping a picture of Inis rath's Radha-Govinda on my altar, so why not? The name provides perfect shelter. I am also reminded of Radha-Govinda in New York, whom I never worshipped on Their altar, Radha-Govinda in Calcutta, whom I would never dare to approach because of the India factor, and Radha-Govinda of Denver, so tall and stately. Why not Radha-Govinda of Satsvarupa dasa? And instead of calling this volume *Parting from Peaceful Geaglum*, I'll call it *Radha-Govinda, We Hardly Knew Ya*.

As I was walking back from the property's edge, I saw Anandamaya's red car leave her house. She must be on her way to work. I raised my hand as her car approached, and she slowed down and made *pranamas* with her hands. I could see she was wearing what looked like a starched white collar. It reminded me of the collars worn by choir singers or church people. Inis rath and your people, I hardly knew ya.

* * *

10:15 a.m.

Krishna helps the devotee from within his heart if the devotee is sincere. Do I say, "Well, I'm not sincere, so Krishna doesn't help me?" Do I think He doesn't destroy my ignorance or give me the understanding by which I can come to Him? Or do I accept the Sastric statement simply: "Yes, it's true. God informs me from within the heart. I do not feel His absence."

I don't always know which is right. What *is* my position? Am I God conscious, or is it mere intelligence, piety, and obedience that encourage me to chant my rounds and try to read the scriptures? Maybe I'm only beginning Krishna consciousness. When I'm on the *vyasasana*, if someone asks such questions, I answer positively. Maybe I should take a sabbatical from lecturing until I know something for sure. But I have duty. I'm just a mouthpiece anyway. What I repeat proves that I experience at least a shadow of true *Sraddha*.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Woke from nap thinking about the issue of racism. Why should such a thought affect me now? It felt like a distraction from Krishna consciousness to think about all the repercussions and the anger, especially, that is expressed, by the dominated race. Such

distractions tend to bring with them emptiness and even depression. If we indulge in following such thoughts, the result is acid indigestion of the spirit. Why can't we conquer racism with broad-hearted Krishna consciousness? If that's not possible, we still need to incorporate everything to spearhead the Krishna consciousness of our own thoughts and acts.

Walking out to the shed, this day cold and gray. A few flies struggling against the windowpanes. No interest lately in drawing or painting. Okay, then don't force it.

Krishna is alive, real, and all-powerful God. We can't see Him unless we are qualified. That's just the way it is.

Had a small, friendly talk today with Radhanatha's father, and I felt it brought me afterwards to a more attentive Krishna consciousness. Of course, I didn't try to preach in such a situation "just showed him that we are human, can joke and relax, etc. He was open-minded. I told him that Madhu's autobiographical essay was called "From Punk to Monk."

Srila Prabhupada in Seattle, 1969, telling them, "We are all servants; serve God or dog. Better to serve God and go back to Godhead. It is only by devotional service to Krishna that one can understand his position and get rid of this material body." (Bg. 10.13, purport) Arjuna was not flattering Krishna when he addressed Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He cited authorities who also accepted Krishna as the Supreme.

A cow is lowing and sounds miserable or at least beastly, bovine, lamenting. For food, I suppose. rain tinkling, then silence. I turned on the heater, but the windows fogged up, so I turned it off again. It's not so easy-going or pleasant out here in the afternoon at this time of year. One and a half hours is all.

* * *

Trying To Make It Clear (Fast)

(1)

& I have limited time but
after all, I am the Lord's boy
and I can catch these notes
fast.

* * *

There is no way there is
no way
I said hey I
want to be a man
too
and accept *all* the folks in my
house. The police,
those bigots, say No

you are in trouble if you do.

* * *

Stay alone, he said
Then back to the house for
me
and I am dedicated
I said
and
Let my people go
we Hare Krishnas
already persecute ourselves
through our schisms
and need no extra help.

* * *

Philly
New York
D.C.
everywhere we go

* * *

we have farms and cows
do no harm have
little steam it seems but

* * *

plenty of complaints against our leaders,
against those
who stick to themselves and eat apart.
We want everyone *together*
he said

* * *

He said no one cares
if they offend pure devotees "
who? We need bucks, education
we need *you*.

* * *

I love the sound
up and down how they traded
by fours the
chanting

* * *

and you know, I can't get any clearer
than this:
we boys and girls
in clover

* * *

souls eternal
trapped
can only get out
through devotion

* * *

and if we can't quite believe
(not yet) please help us
give us knowledge and soup and
fun and sorrow and tell us to
wait without grief.

* * *

(2)

Look at my navel?
Not me I've got
Radha-Krishna to glance at
after lunch "now They can
see where They agreed to
come "this voracious bear cub
wolves it down before Their eyes
but to the side.

* * *

O Krishna and Radha, that's
who I am and still I beg
be close to me, be mine. "

* * *

"I Can't Get Started"

(1)

& I can't get started
and I'm sorrowful about that
trying to do what they are doing

* * *

I complain in blues and can't
get started but when the master plays . . .
I played in Prabhupada's presence
when he said "Lecture."
He'd cut us off. I said
Krishna stole butter and Prabhupada smiled.
Now my sons speak in front of him all
in separation
as we die off/ like the flies
in the shed.

* * *

Lecturing I said
Krishna consciousness is a good thing
told a story and quoted *sastra*.
What else do I know?
But in '66 I came
to him in NYC
and it was good
and still is. He
let us play drums and flutes and I still
remember.

* * *

In his stretched turtlenecks
what did we know about him?
We thought of Tompkins Square Park
and giving up and
Rules
and *brahmana* spaghetti
but we didn't know his mind
how he could think

of Vrndavana sweetness and wishing
to wear a torn quilt, bathing in the Yamuna
yet live with us.
I just can't get started
but by his grace. "

* * *

3:55 p.m., Shed

Completely overcast. Dark as if at dusk. Nobody knows . . . that I wrote a poem. Krishna gave me the energy to do it and I simply accept His gift and keep going, hoping to make at least a small contribution to His mission according to the capacity He gives me. I compensate for my failings and try to find a way to serve despite them.

Wet leaves, wet grass "who says Krishna is absent? Who says we can't find any sign of Him? Prabhupada says that this nice thing we feel, this direction we get, is a form of Krishna. He assures us, so why should I deny it? Following my Swami is also a method of realizing God.

Most religions give little emphasis to the role of the guru. There are so many gurus who inspire our spirituality "the fat lady, the man we met on the subway, the impoverished, an animal, a stranger who knocks at the door. Yes, they're gurus, and the *Bhagavatam* even refers to bumblebee and python gurus. A pure devotee sees Krishna everywhere.

But in the Vaisnava *sampradaya* we prefer to speak about that heavy person who comes in disciplic succession and to whom we must surrender our whimsy "that person before whom we always remain the fool. When we submit, he teaches us the Vedic understanding. He has faith in experience of what he has heard from his own spiritual master, and he can give that to a willing and loving disciple. This is quite a bit further along than most people in this world consider guru, and although I have respect for their attempts in spiritual life, and in fact some of them make me feel infantile and aware of my glib confidence, I must say that without the blessings of the genuine spiritual master in *parampara*, they can only go so far along the path.

* * *

5.27 p.m.

Choosing what day we will actually leave. M. has an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Dublin on the 3rd, so we'll leave either the afternoon of the 2nd or the morning of the 3rd. I hardly got to know ya here, Inis rath. Well, I have to leave at *some* time.

We'll stay for a few days at Bhadra and Sile's in Dublin, away from the quiet peace of Geaglum, but I plan to carry the peace inside me. I'll go on reading and writing while I'm there.

O Radha-Govinda, I will miss You. I'll have to wait to see You until I can return in two months. In the meantime, I pray to live with You and never leave You. Vrndavana has come to me. Radha-Govinda, You are the charming Supreme Personality of Godhead in Your original form, and You have made Yourself accessible to me in Your *arca-vigraha* form. Please accept my service.

November 25, 12:05 a.m.

The reality of our leaving here is beginning to dawn on both M. and I. We have started packing mentally, and I have even started to physically gather some of my things for the trip. Our remaining days here will be charged with such thoughts of what to bring and how to get there.

Arjuna proclaims that Lord Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The *Vedas* also proclaim it. People foolishly think they are independent of the Supreme Lord. Devotional service removes our ignorance. For me, I need a lively conviction in the absolute nature of Vedic evidence. Krishna is God because the *Vedas* say so. The *Vedas* also teach the nature of matter and spirit. Follow their direction. Put aside the relative thoughts, "I am born and brought up in Western culture, so why should I accept Hindu teachings?" or, "Hare Krishna is just a cult."

Soon I'll be regularly lecturing, citing Vedic evidence and making the arguments and analogies we all know so well. We have been hearing about Krishna for decades. My disciples too. As I speak, I hope to bypass doubts and increase my conviction and the conviction of my audience. Our reward will be freedom from doubt and the feeling that we are rightly situated. I feel like a train revving up and preparing to clack down the rail.

sarvam etad rtam manye

yan mam vadasi keSava

"O Krishna, I totally accept as truth all that You have told me. Neither the demigods nor the demons, O Lord, can understand Your personality." (Bg. 10.14)

"Mental speculation that leads one away from the Supreme Lord is a serious sin . . . " (Bg. 10.15 purport)

Arjuna asks Krishna to explain some of His opulence so that a common person can learn to think of Him constantly. "In what various forms are You to be remembered, O Supreme Personality of Godhead?" (Bg. 10.17) Those who don't love Krishna cannot always think of Him in His internal energy. If we can learn to remember Krishna even in this world, we will eventually be able to remember Him in His pastimes in the spiritual world.

Can I fit a copy of *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* into my carry-on luggage? Yes, I will make room for it. That one book will be my main reading as I travel and will satisfy all my needs. Hare Krishna. I want to read it carefully and with prayerful intent.

* * *

Keep Moving Out Of The False And Fog

(You want to express your worship, personally, for others).

& You walk into a place where artists are performing. You hear dissonance and wonder who to trust.

* * *

"Mental speculation leading away from God is a serious sin," and one who doesn't know Krishna . . .

You stand up on the train bench and lecture, but no one wants to hear. They think you're a crazy fanatic.

You sit down.

* * *

After all, you're a passenger too, and you suffer the passenger's plight. Got your ticket? What if your companion dies of heart failure or simply disappears into the city without you? How will you live without him?

Who will take you where you need to go?

Addicted to safety and security, we passengers.

* * *

Well, *that's* a pretty tune "as if each of you are alone. Is that the sad truth? I mean, do we all simply meander and peter away?

* * *

The cowherd boys assured one another that Aghasura was only pretending to be a demon "he was really a statue

with a fishy smell. No matter. Krishna will save us

Krishna will save us all. Why can't I be so merry

as I walk into the snake's belly?

* * *

Violins and beggars, Rilke and empty pockets. Charlie Chaplin and muggings. Police and entanglements. Find safety somewhere (in Stroudsburg?) and eat and sleep in peace? Safety?

Get yourself convinced. Keep moving out of the false and fog. "

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Today, Tuesday, Radha-Govinda are dressed in soft yellow dresses and matching crowns. I don't have the artistic touch of a *sakhi* or *gopain* the way I dress, and have almost no realization of what it is I am doing, but still it is nice, and Radha-Govinda reciprocate. What a sublime life. No *jnana*, no karma, no trace of Western psychology or

religion or speculation "just place the ornaments as beautifully as possible with clumsy fingers trying to make it right.

M. came in with my hot lemon drink and didn't bow down to Them. I wrote him a note about it. I want him to enter Their room consciously. Hare Krishna.

Prabhupada wants us to train ourselves to serve Radha-Krishna in the spiritual world. Deity worship makes it feel more real because This worshipable couple is so accommodating and regal, dressed with ornaments straight from Vrndavana. If only I can touch Them in the right way, and offer my fruit, leaf, and water with devotion. Prabhupada says we should not offer directly to Krishna, but to Srimati Radharani, who will offer to Krishna. Of course, I offer everything through my spiritual master. He is dressed in a gray knit *cadar* today, protected from the cool air.

The altar is a place of meditation and centering. Alan Jones says one should pray without images, but our altar is filled with the spiritual images for which the soul yearns. Otherwise, we tend toward impersonalism in our prayers.

* * *

Mr. Writer went to town riding on a pony; dressed the Lords and then said here, "I am not a phony." Yankee doodle dandy come in

handy with your
prose and carping
and adventures of a mild sort
sustained by the economies of great Western countries,
with visas and passports and
all that and
my money donated.
Ride on, hour by hour, remembering
what's it like to remember Krishna although
I cannot.

Someone wrote me a note: "I am in downtown Vrndavana. I met devotees going to America. I am giving them this for you." The note was to tell me that I ought to consider their guru and not only Srila Prabhupada, but that phrase, "Writing this from downtown Vrndavana," made me think of the excitement devotees feel when they are there and how they think they are getting inside nectar, preparing themselves for the eternal abode, Goloka Vrndavana.

Why do I insist on living on some lump of wet earth in North Ireland?

Because I can be introspective here, and recollect with Radha and Krishna better than in Vrndavana with all its stimulus (much of it not Vraja-centered) and controversies.

Hear the whipping of the wind and rain. Thinking of Krishna out in the rain "the time He went to collect wood for His spiritual master. Also, how Vasudeva carried his newborn child across the raging Yamuna. O Krishna. The river was flooding the night Bilvamangala Thakura went to see the prostitute. And one night, while the secretary of the Moslem ruler "the secretary who later became Rupa Gosvami . . . Even bad weather reminds me of ,Krishna who is our protector against the destructive elements that threaten His devotees.

O Krishna. You say, "The devotees are in My heart and I am in the hearts of the devotees." We don't think of anything else but each other. We are not whistling in the dark.

* * *

I was in a *brahmacari-aSrama* in my dream. I was cleaning, and Visnujana was with me. I asked him, "Where are you now?" I was aware that he had passed away and that he had suddenly returned. He said he was going to be tested before he could be released. He said the Board tests people. When he has satisfied them, they will release him.

Then Visnujana told me there would *harinama* in the afternoon, and he asked me to join him afterwards in his evening duties. He said that because we were so busy all day, we had little time for chanting. I suddenly caught a glance of myself in the mirror and saw how old I had become.

* * *

10:16 a.m.

"Please tell me in detail of Your divine opulences by which You prevail all these worlds." (Bg. 10.16) We can help the common people by telling of Krishna's opulence and accessible nature. We can think of Him constantly (*kirtaniyah sada harih*) and help others to do so too.

Arjuna: "I am never satiated in hearing about You, for the more I hear the more I want to taste the nectar of Your words." (Bg. 10.18)

Trust in guru and *sastra* is a rare quality in the West, and it not found at all in Western educational culture. We have heard only about "idols with feet of clay." Yes, Krishna is all-opulent, and even He will not bother to recount it all: "For My opulence is limitless."

* * *

8:55 a.m., Morning Walk.

It's raining and I thought to wear my blue rain pants, but the devotees will see me and may criticize that I'm not in a *dhoti*. Madhu said it wasn't raining *that* hard, so I decided to go out anyway. It was quiet and peaceful and the rain was soft.

Arjuna says he never tires of hearing Krishna's ambrosial words. I should also never tire of writing them down. It's not that I am another Krishna who speaks nectar, but to steer to Krishna with His own words, and to allow His words to flow through me is a wonderful service. I should never give it up.

Rain drops filling puddles with their expanding circles. Yes, these are our last days here. Geaglum offered security, which included, I suppose, a sort of forgetfulness of time and death "or at least a gentler way of relating to them. Time to let go.

* * *

2:35 p.m.

Running on an Esgic today (artificial pain relief). M. says I'll have to catch it later. Used my freedom to edit, read something aloud, record, work, and then come out to the shed. I was actually as busy as other people, but I'm not sure what it adds up to.

Krishna says, "I am the Supersoul, O Arjuna, seated in the hearts of all living entities." (Bg. 10.20)

Cold start? Turn on the heater? Live with the last flies? Krishna is Supersoul. I know. He's in the heart as well as in His own abode. I can pray to Him to live openly in my heart. Krishna calls Arjuna GudakeSa, "one who has conquered ignorance or sleep." I have to also conquer ignorance in order to hear Krishna submissively.

Dead spider lying on its back, dead, legs curled up. Pens in blue jar. They too are dead matter, but the Supersoul lives in them somehow. Back to the *bhakti*-filled verses of the eleventh chapter.

O KeSava, it's right that even the best demigods worship You. Somehow I'm going to carry this *Bhagavad-gita* with its zippered cover in my carry-on luggage so I can continue to turn to it to overcome my feelings of the foreign and unreal. I have so much to ease past.

* * *

The Touch Of God and God's Pure Devotee

(Tired of him, tired of me? These parenthetical remarks haven't been lasting lately. They get knocked down like flies. What lasts? The process, the blue infinite Krishna).

(1)

& Wail a fat sound he said
I'm going to try to
Read *Bhagavad-gita*

* * *

Krishna is God and associated with
wide rooms
pianos
Bengalis especially
Lord Caitanya

* * *

and perfect ISKCON prefects
Hare Krishnas in
North India
but eternally only known

to the very perfect

* * *

you want something new he
said but I thought
Don't put down artists
and revere the old masters

* * *

the devotees like new
but old

* * *

no Phalgu Babas "the guy
who tricked with his yogic feats
and perhaps seduced women told
Bhaktivinoda Thakura (on film)
"I get great pleasure doing
this when
people bow to me."

* * *

He got smashed by true
Srimad-Bhagavatam reading with no
demonic thrills

* * *

(2)

I touch and you become touched.
I too need the touch
of a pure devotee.

* * *

then I can claim
to rescue these magic shows
arts and fairs
into the pure light of Krishna consciousness

* * *

by earnest prayer. "

* * *

3:15 p.m.

Sitting as if praying, my feet are cold. It's too dark to read comfortably. Drawing? No. That's off, although I could stoke it up like a fire if I made an effort. The teacher in *Life, Paint, and Passion* pushed so hard on the point of process that I finally burned out. It had the opposite effect on me. I drew something as if I was "supposed" to let anything come, then stopped. The author of that book might call that resistance and encourage me to push on, but I saw it as a waste of my dwindling time.

* * *

As if praying. I go back inside after about an hour total. I know M. could use more time playing his bazouki and melodeon (he can only do that when I leave for the shed), but it's too dark and cold out there.

* * *

A rainy Day (Again)
& I'm alone it's/ a cold gray day
and I'm the one
who has to leave.

* * *

I like a lonelier
sound a
pretty melodic ballad
where no words fail

* * *

but where someone tried/ died a little
wanted Krishna
Krishna

* * *

and found another rainy day.
When I look out I see
barbed wire formed
into a simple fence

for cows a green field,
a scene I've witnessed every day for
weeks "most of the year.

* * *

I love it "
attached (we say)

* * *

but I will leave to
sing my ballad
of rainy days
and a sometimes rough lake.
Here the rain was light the
sky overcast/ and visitors came, someone's
father advising his son
Don't rush into marriage.

* * *

Here's Krishna's *cadar*
Krishna's
Rain
which didn't stop me
from being faithful.

* * *

O sweet music may you
please God and
play with
introspect
in *bhakti*. "

* * *

3:35 p.m., Outside the shed.

I lasted only an hour today, but it was delicious. My eyes bathed in the sight of rain-bedecked grass. The plants that used to be puffed balls are now dead. The year is mostly gone. What do I have to show for it? A lot.

Carrying the 18"x24" Bristol board pads back to the house. Notice the jagged thorns? Madhu's music is merry, in the mode of goodness, and brightens a dark day, and so does he.

What is life? I see a little kid like Jayananda walking ahead of me "what does he know? Maybe in his bones he knows Krishna. We're on loan here, and can only lift something out, a story, a life, get to know the people in it. In the meantime, we're stuck with our big places, our big land, our big sky, and our wild senses and mind. We're obsessed with our illusions and addictions, so we really can't see what's happening. The *sastras* spell it out. That's why I took to Krishna consciousness. Why am I lacking appreciation for it?

But as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says, the creation is strange. A big fat crow landed on a bare branch and reminded me of Basho, the great artist. Artists . . . and those who defy God. There are so many people and events conspiring to make us nondevotees, but the sages see clearly. Pure devotees see the best of all. *Srnavatam sva-kathah Krishnah*. Keep chanting and hearing from the source.

* * *

6:45 p.m.

Mail arrived. I stutter mentally, say things of which I'm unsure. One disciple writes me that she feels distant from me; I used to chant *japa* with them and meet with them individually.

"Don't you know it's my headaches?" I say you regard me as a problem-solver, but why don't you see me more as a person?

Another argues with me continuously about the origin of the *jiva*. This time I gave him Srila Prabhupada's example of the crow and *tal* fruit. Where we came from is not as important as how to free ourselves from *maya*. I made those replies.

Radha-Govinda, goodnight. Prabhupada, goodnight. I'll see you at midnight. My heart beats "mightily," but I know we all must die. Tomorrow I'll see how much rope *prakrti* gives me.

November 26, 12:10 a.m.

The traveling and preaching will be good for me. Lecturing will enable me to enter *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam* with greater focus.

Arjuna prays to the universal form. remember that eerie choir in the FATE museum, with their diorama of ViSvarupa? The lights flashed in the dark room, and we watched the visual effects while listening to Bharadvaja's dramatic voice. It was effective, but I don't think *that* was the universal form! We walked out from seeing the display into the sunshine on Watseka Avenue, and for a few moments we had to adjust to that other reality. The universal form was a complete knockout, and even a great warrior like Arjuna was afraid.

The philosopher Carlyle allegedly overheard a woman in conversation saying, "I accept the universe." He replied, "Gad, she had better!" Who are we to be condescending toward the all-powerful Supreme Personality of Godhead and say, "We have decided to accept Krishna as God, at least theoretically"? Gad, we had better!

Use whatever you can in His service. If pettiness arises, if fear comes . . . Arjuna asked forgiveness for his familiarity with Krishna ""informal gestures which arise out of

friendship." Despite His opulence, Krishna played with Arjuna as a friend. That relationship is eternally fixed. I wish to revive my own eternal relationship, whatever it is. Srila Prabhupada said such revival is for the liberated. We may wait for it, but we can yearn for it in the meantime.

"No one is greater than You," Arjuna says. The words float before me, and yet it's hard to control my mind. Still thinking of letters and my replies. At least I'm taking *Bhagavad-gita* with me as my companion on the preaching tour. Arjuna worships Krishna as the father of the cosmos and the supreme spiritual master. Any bona fide spiritual master must be a descendent of the disciplic succession. Instead of becoming embroiled in ISKCON quarrels about the spiritual master's qualification and whether or not Srila Prabhupada appointed certain people to act in that capacity, we can meditate on what it actually means to be a representative of Krishna in *parampara*. For better or for worse, we have each accepted the position to represent Prabhupada, and at the same time, we each seem to want to be ourselves. We are eternal servants of Krishna, and have still to discover the depths of what that means. That we don't yet know does not stop us from representing Srila Prabhupada's teachings as purely as possible. "As a father tolerates the impudence of his son, or a friend tolerates the impertinence of a friend, or a wife tolerates the familiarity of her partner, please tolerate the wrongs I may have done You." (Bg. 11.44)

* * *

Medley for Krishna
& Listen, sympathetic, to tender
perfect bell tones/ accept this sound because
someone wrote this song in Tin
Pan Alley style, thinking

* * *

he was a master sentimentalist a
master musician to handle it "that sound
for all us grassroots populists who
look for songs of love
as we go about our daily execution.

* * *

Arjuna remembered that he and Krishna
were once friends, sat on
the same bed, joked, but now,
Arjuna thinks, I'm afraid I abused our
friendship because I didn't know
You were so great.

* * *

(remember we attended Penny's wedding and a few year's later in the same church her funeral?

* * *

(remember too the basketball game where you stole a guy's white silk scarf and later gave it back?)

* * *

O Krishna, how could I have known that You were always with me, Supersoul "even when my pen ran out of ink and even on the Navy ship? You are my sweetest best friend. "

* * *

4:28 a.m.

On Wednesdays Govinda and Radha wear purple. Madhu just came in, took off his slippers, and made *dandavats* on the floor, staying there awhile to pray. The Deities are not brass dolls. I struggle a bit trying to get everything to fit. There is that aspect too to Deity worship. Not that automatically They float before you all lovely. You have to decorate Them, do the work. By Their grace it comes out all right. As I decorate Them I listen to Narottama dasa Thakura's prayers where he asks, "When will the day come when I can serve the Divine Couple, when my spiritual master, in his form as a *gopi*, beside me, will give water to the Divine Couple, etc." He wants to serve Rupa-manjari. After, I sing "*Gurvastakam*" while I dress Prabhupada in his warm *cadar* and hat.

Still have a few more letters to answer. After all that, I'll sink into the chair.

"May I come and be with you?" someone asked. Someone else said, "Please accept me as a disciple." I don't even know him. I didn't tell him to come from California for the four days of meetings in Baltimore. That would be too much to ask. Instead, I put him off, indicating that I probably won't initiate him. Is that right? Do I expect him to be clever enough to figure out how he could get initiated? A disciple could tell him the ropes, how to get around my refusals. I can't tell him.

Prabhupada lecturing in Seattle. He asks a young woman disciple to come forward, sit down, and read from the *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*. He had just received an advanced copy from the printer. They start on page 29, where Sanatana Gosvami approaches Lord Caitanya and says, "Who am I?"

"When will I be able to serve the Divine Couple?" the Vaisnava *kavi* sings. Some of his songs describe his fallen nature. It is the tradition to express these things, but he actually feels them.

News in typed form arrives once a month. News of police brutality. Leader of China comes to Washington D.C., but doesn't get along well, shows how much distance there is between China and the U.S. The stock market crashes way down and then comes up again. What does it all mean? Debts, investigations, African borders not safe. One nation doesn't respect another. In Bosnia new conflicts shaping up. President's wife coming on strong again. The President being questioned about how he raised funds for his campaign. In Russia, Communism is dead. Communism is still alive in Cuba, though. Whatever is reported in the news today could change by tomorrow. Many Democrats feel the republicans now have an upper hand in the debate about abortion because the republicans are focusing on late-pregnancy abortions. They passed the bill against it, but the President vetoed it once and will probably veto their second bill. He comes off looking murderous: it's all right to kill.

I write a daily newspaper too, but not exactly the same one Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati spoke of where we could draw news every moment from the unlimited spiritual world. I draw mine from within myself as a spider pulls threads to weave a web. I could call it a "Personals Column for Members of the Hare Krishna Movement." I try to focus it on inner life for those who have had enough outer news.

In the end, the Hare Krishna movement's news is the same old chanting on the same old beads. Winter is coming on, did you know?

* * *

8:50 a.m.

Out walking. Letters spinning through my head "what they said to me and what I said back. I want to be a giver, not just a taker. Sometimes my correspondents are bitter about how ISKCON has mistreated them. I say what I can, but mostly I try to listen. I am not really a problem-solver. I find I give the most to those who give to me. It's with them that I find occasions to share deeper Krishna conscious thoughts. Those who give can create giving in others.

The infinite analogy of that extends to Krishna. Krishna gives to everyone in a general, impartial way, but to those who give to Him and His devotees, He gives Himself.

* * *

If I get a headache today, there'll be no allopathic cushion; I'll have to use the bed cushions. The fact is, however, I have set up a daily expectation for myself. If I don't get what I consider a good quota of pages written, or enough reading in, then I feel I have not seized the day. Why be so product-oriented? Where is the time to just be, to harvest silent moments and turn them into prayer? Does everything have to be focused on getting something done? I tend to measure my days by how much gets dictated and how many pages get written or read. I work to whittle down the pile of incoming letters until none are left.

* * *

9:28 a.m.

It's difficult to see the universal form of Krishna, but it's even more difficult to see Him in His original two-handed form. We can look at Brijbasi prints or calendars and there He is, Gopinatha, standing by the Yamuna with His flute in His hand. But we cannot *see* Him there unless our eyes are anointed with devotion.

Krishna, His two-handed form. Not "Krishna Iron Works" or "Krishna Bengali Sweets" or Krishnamurti, the impersonal philosopher-mystic. The Supreme Lord Krishna is known to the *acaryas*, especially since Lord Caitanya and His Gosvami disciples have introduced Him. We are in that line, but we are not automatic recipients of something we have not learned to want with all our heart. That wanting takes time. "My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service (*bhaktya tv ananyaya*) can I be understood as I am standing before you, and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can you enter into the mysteries of My understanding." (Bg. 11.54)

* * *

2:41 p.m.

Did you forget something? No, got my key, my recorder, and my shed bag. Didn't forget Krishna either. Bhakta M. wrote that he's praying hard. I thought, "That's something he'll learn "that it's *impossible* to pray." Then I thought, "Just because *I* can't pray doesn't mean a young man can't pray."

Finished *Soul-making*. It got too Christian at the end, discussing the Trinity. But I'll carry it with me and use it when I attempt to write to my Godbrother about it.

I liked his point about the three conversions, and I thought of it in terms of our experience in ISKCON. After the first happy discovery of Krishna consciousness, we enter a kind of dark night. We usually go through an experience of feeling betrayed. We may have thought this was a wonderful movement. We thought, with Srila Prabhupada at the helm, we would sweep the world with our all-attractive Absolute Truth. Then Prabhupada left and we collapsed. Now we serve in separation and have had to find Prabhupada in a more internal way, looking more realistically at our ideals. *Soul-making* pushed me when it said we can't make it alone; God must be found in association with others. True enough.

* * *

To know Krishna we have to follow the process of devotional service under the spiritual master's direction. Just chased a loud bee out the window, pushing it gently with a gloved hand. Then I saw that the sky had become completely gray for the first time in several days. *Yasya deve para bhaktir*. We must have faith to receive revelation of Krishna. Temple worship helps. I left Govinda and radha without *cadars* in the room. Heat was pouring from the electrical heater.

The four-handed form of God and His two-handed form are completely different from the temporary universal forms Arjuna saw. One should worship the personal form of Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the source of all the other forms (which are the source of the universes and all life). *Govindam adi-purusam tam aham*

bhajami. God's original form. Write it down. Stop complaining, "I'm dry, I'm no good, no drop of devotion."

So he sighed and wanted to give up ego, but he didn't know how, didn't have the courage or inspiration to make such a change. He was afraid of cataclysmic changes. A semi-invalid wants peace, even as he prepares to travel.

A devotee introduced me to her understanding of Active Imagination. I may be too down-to-earth to sustain a character or to write in trance, but I became interested to think about it.

* * *

3:28 p.m.

It doesn't matter what you do?

Yes, it matters very much. Every activity and endeavor should be centered on Krishna. Hare Krishna. If you don't have work, then chant Hare Krishna, Srila Prabhupada used to say. He expected us to work hard to spread Krishna consciousness worldwide (they say globally now instead of worldwide). Must be relevant.

What am *I* contributing? Stock answers.

Hurt that they attack me "enemies of ISKCON criticize me as the demonic author of SPL who blasphemes Srila Prabhupada and maybe poisoned him, who became a false guru without authorization.

* * *

Praying In the Shed
& Namby
Pamby
went to town
in a rig that spilled
jewels. Krishna baby took
them in His hands and gave
a barrelful to the fruit
vendor, who liked Him.

* * *

O infallible Krishna with radha
please let me . . .
What?
I can't even say.

* * *

Simply let me be satisfied.
When the tide carries me along
let me remember You and with

certainty cling to the *maha-*
mantra. Let me report for the final
Roll call
with those already gone
and answered. "

* * *

Praying in the Shed
& I want/ he wants
this way to the skipping rope
the chalk
Krishna is the
center of my Life.

* * *

I read and it was too fast
to absolve
problems
because I had to go as fast as possible.

* * *

Charles was the first one
to pray like this.

* * *

4 p.m., Outside The Shed

Lean shoulder and head against the little shed. A prominence of golden sunlight behind one cloud. Otherwise there are gray-blue smoke clouds, and behind all the clouds, clear blue. Believe it or not. The water is as flat as a plate, and the island is small and contained with a golden reed edge. In winter I can sometimes see the chimney of the boathouse from over here because the trees are so thin. I think I broke through some of my dryness. Now back to that wet path "so wet it makes my wellies shine. O Krishna, Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Yes, sirs, the rain has stopped. Krishna science startles London. Bhavna Patel has three options: live at home, live in the temple, or live in a flat. I didn't choose one, but told her to be a devotee wherever she lives.

Life bubbles through the frothing blood. We keep the our blood inside these slimy bags. Did you know that someone actually signed a letter to me, "Slimy Bag"?

Krishna science startles London. I already said that. M. is going to England. I'll be here counting my duties on my fingers. I plan to keep it simple "that's why I came here in the first place.

Only details left now before we travel, and I don't want to burden this book with details. Devotional service means "One should transfer his energy entirely to Krishna conscious activities."

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorties:

An Active Imagination Story

Installment #1

Bonny went to put Radha-Govinda to bed. He-she was in a hurry, so didn't have time to write of the inner world.

Anyway, he-she is at least three people and all of them are dizzy.

Dizzy?

You know, off balance.

So that's the first installment. It does not have a pure narrative thread.

November 27, 12:05 a.m.

The *Bhagavad-gita* teaches that the art of going back to Godhead is a serious proposal. Srila Prabhupada states that 11.55 is the essence of it. If we admit or agree that we are eternal and meant for life in the spiritual world, then we will have to act accordingly. We can work for it according to the rules of *Krishna-karma*, working for Krishna. For example, we may write a poem. However, we may first have to research how poets write poetry. The point is, that our work should be performed only for Krishna's cause, for Krishna's pleasure. "One should not be attached to the result of his work, but the result should be offered to Krishna, and one should accept as *prasadam* the remnants of offerings to Krishna." (Bg. 11.55, purport)

Or, we can simply consider Krishna the goal of our lives (*mat-paramah*). Such a person is attracted only to being transferred to the spiritual sky, and within the spiritual sky "he wants to enter the highest spiritual planet, namely Krishnaloka, Goloka Vrndavana." Of course, to do this one has to become "*mad-bhakta*," a real devotee of Krishna, by fully engaging in devotional service in all or at least one of the nine processes.

In Bg. 11.55 Krishna also recommends *sanga-varjitah*, "disassociation from persons who are against Krishna."

I hear a few noises and am reminded how precious is peace. To be able to read *Bhagavad-gita* with a relatively clear mind is a gift. It is *punya-Sravana-kirtana*, pious activity. Twenty years after Srila Prabhupada's disappearance, we are still reading his books, still learning the ABCs.

The pure devotee is neither a *karmi* nor a *jnani*. He doesn't think of Krishna unfavorably, as Kamsa did. Kamsa attained salvation, however, despite his negative approach, because he thought incessantly of Krishna. "The pure devotee does not even

want salvation. He does not want to be transferred even to the highest planet, Goloka Vrndavana. His only objective is to serve Krishna wherever he may be."

Another item taught in this verse is that a devotee is friendly to everyone. Srila Prabhupada defines this as a devotee being prepared to risk his life to spread God consciousness. "The favorite example is Lord Jesus Christ." This purport then glows with praise for the preacher: "Why such risk?" Krishna is more merciful to those who risk their lives for His sake than we can ever imagine. "Therefore it is certain that such persons must reach the supreme planet after leaving the body."

* * *

4:20 a.m.

On Thursdays Radha-Govinda wear light tan with gold trim. Their crowns are gold with red and green trim, and their necklaces are the same. Krishna has a long golden flute with a peacock on the end and a dangling white pearl. They are beautiful, both of Them, and gracious to allow me to dress Them. My stubby fingers. My chaste restraint. Radharani's hand, my eye upon Prabhupada for approval, his granting it. Prabhupada is wearing an old tan *cadar* with a smaller pink one on top. He also wears a pink-saffron knit hat.

Narottama dasa Thakura describes the names and pastimes of the Lord and His devotees. Whoever has *nistha*, his faith in Lord Nityananda which he says is required if we want to love Radha and Krishna "and whoever chants Gaura's name is a devotee. Narottama dasa seeks such a person's association. He asks for the mercy of Gaura-Nitai and says his claim is first as he is the most fallen. "Fie upon Narottama," he sings. He wants to be a devotee, happy in the shelter of Gaura-Nitai. Then he can attain the service of radha and Krishna.

Yesterday I met Prahlada feeding his cow bales of hay. She was eating peacefully. I asked, "Is the cow in heat?"

"You heard her bellowing?" He said she's out of heat now, and he missed his chance to have her inseminated. He plans to try again in three weeks. He said unless a cow is giving milk for the Deities and devotees, he feels dissatisfied taking care of her. She has no purpose "just eats, he said, unless there is milk. I asked him about his *japa*. He has had a personal quota increase of one round per year for many years now. He's now up to forty. He said it takes him a long time to chant, and admitted that it's still difficult to control his mind.

"With forty rounds you have more chance that a few of them will be attentive," I said, and then we parted. Irish and American *sadhus*. But who is the *sadhu*?

"My mind doesn't let me chant," someone wrote me. I always advise such people not to despair and to keep trying.

Srila Prabhupada said that no bona fide spiritual teacher says, "Stay here and form a United Nations and you'll be peaceful in this world." No, they all speak of that other world where we will go. They may call it *nirvana* or Brahman or the kingdom of God or Goloka, but every bona fide teacher states that this world is filled with birth, death, disease, and old age and that we shouldn't remain here.

In the bathroom I heard another lecture by Prabhupada, but the sound was too distant, a formal lecture in a hall, to nondevotees in San Francisco. Very basic. I chose another one instead.

Hare Krishna. The collie with his long snout and thin eyes looks a bit scabby. He stays out in all weathers. The cow has a shed to which she retires. The goats too. Cows need protection. So do people.

Radha and Krishna kindly stand for me. Radha's hand is extended to Krishna. She's holding a betel nut. We have no *tulasis* here, or I would put a *tulasi* leaf in Her hand or at His feet. Hare Krishna. Someone please give this garland to Srimati Radharani. Now let us talk of Krishna playing His flute. I don't know what pious activities this flute performed in the past so that it now receives all the nectar from Krishna's lips "nectar which is meant for the *gopis*. The Christians don't know the answer and neither do I, but I keep listening and attempt to stay in *Krishna-bhavanamrta*.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorties, Installment #2

The main character only had a few minutes. He-she is a devotee, we know, because he-she was busy in the last episode putting Radha-Govinda to bed. Now a woman invites him-her into her own imaginative story, but he is afraid of getting caught in another's trip.

In *her* story, our hero appears wearing saffron robes and he is a he. He asks, "How do these imaginative stories work?"

That other author has an alter ego (or whatever) who lives in a *kutir*. She says, "We go into a trance at unexpected times and talk to one another. That's all there is to it."

He disappears from her story.

He's on his own now, following the Alone Idea. He sends his men out to investigate the area, and "while you are there, see if you can get me Ascension."

The story begins to fade and he struggles to re-enter it. He dreams but judges the dreams unworthy. In Active Imagination he hears that he can allow the conscious mind to play with and accept the unconscious stuff. It's all very symbolic, you know.

Black face, white hands of
clock "he doesn't actually want to be in
anyone's dreams but he has no power
to stop it. He tells the people
to dream
on.

* * *

9 a.m.

On my way out the door for a morning walk I told Madhu what I'd been reading to prepare for Sunday's *Caitanya-caritamrta* class: Lord Caitanya instructing the Kurma Brahmana. The emphasis is strong that one may stay at home as a *grhastha* and still become a first-class devotee and preacher. Some *sahajiyas* take advantage of this instruction, however, and criticize renounced preachers who write books. It's all right to

become renounced and leave home if it is done properly and with the correct motive. I mentioned this to Madhu because he's feeling regrets about having left his own family years ago in a way that caused his family members to resent him and Krishna consciousness. I said that it seems like we are always making mistakes. He made the mistake of becoming a materialistic householder, then when he discovered Krishna consciousness, he made the mistake of leaving his home life abruptly. We can only ask Krishna to forgive us for our constant mistakes.

Madhu laughed and said, "That's one way to look at life "we're always making mistakes!"

I can't say that it was a mistake for me to take on responsibility in ISKCON. Prabhupada wanted it, and one was quickly recognized by him for doing it. He told us to go somewhere and open a temple. Later I left home, became a *sannyasi*, was placed on the GBC by Prabhupada, and entered the perfect set-up to become one of the "Eleven Appointed Gurus."

And so I reigned. Now I'm infamous. But one thing after another followed from my having initially agreed to accept responsibility. I would have had to have been much more humble and discriminative than I actually was "and am "to avoid the pitfalls. I would have had to say, "I've taken this much responsibility for Prabhupada and I've received honor for it, but now I will not accept any further recognition." We easily get carried away and run under one banner, "Become a preacher!" and we forget other things, trample on people's rights, learn to manipulate others to carry on the mission, and become bewildered by wealth and women. Then after we are thoroughly messed up we ask, "What happened? I was just trying to be a preacher."

The path of devotional service is like a razor's edge. It would be another mistake to now recoil from preaching or participation in the *sankirtana* movement, or think I could become "holier than thou" by seclusion.

* * *

10:23 a.m.

Rain smeared and dripping down the windowpanes. M. will leave around 2 p.m. for Dublin and England. I'll be alone, as I like it, to do the usual. I still plan to give the Sunday morning lecture on the *Caitanya-caritamrta*.

Received a batch of "Improvisations" to edit. I like them "each one a trip through emotion and pulling at my own Krishna conscious attempt to live my life in poetry, music, and art.

Time for Prabhupada's *puja*. The room too chilly.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorties, Installment #3

Two men get into a white rowboat. They'll go from Inis rath to Geaglum "just a few minutes' worth of rowing is all it takes.

One asks, "Where have you been?"

The reply . . . "Ha, a million gags, a whole joke book I could make in reply."

Remember the time you and Murray got high and took turns writing on the typewriter? I wrote a cynical line, "Who is your tailor?" "sticking to externals. On Murray's turn he indicated the bedroom. He was trying to be daring. I didn't want that and neither did he so we moved on to something else. Then he said he had learned that there could be love without sex. I was his friend; I offered him love. At the end of the day when we returned to Manhattan he quipped, "Life is cheap." By that he demeaned the day's experience of a simple friendship.

"Too many old stories," says the man in the boat. "I want to hear an up-to-date account of your transcendental life. Did you pray today?"

"I sat in a chair and tried."

Both men in the rowboat want God, but they still don't know who they are. They live with a portrait in pieces.

Did the Swami take away my life?

I gave him my youth. He told Kirt, "You have nothing to renounce. Everything already belongs to God." And he took it all, as Krishna's representative. In return he gave us *dal* and vegetables and *capatis* and loving service to Krishna, *kirtana*, Lord Caitanya, and employment in his service, which was to execute his spiritual master's mission. I have no regrets, although I acknowledge what I gave. In return I received status, privilege in a little world, and an airtight, watertight, philosophy. I got to follow the Swami.

The two men in the boat "what happened to them? Did they fall out and swim? Die peacefully? Give more advice? (It had better be in *parampara*.)

No, the two men reached the shore while I was telling you that part about what I gave to Prabhupada. One of them was Baladeva, a kind friend, and the other was Madhu, a minstrel with an aging Irish face. The other was me, his grace disgrace, although I didn't mention my presence earlier.

We parted like a tree branch and the land held us up. O Krishna, You are everywhere, even in a friendly talk in a land wet from constant rain.

"Is this Active Imagination?"

Not yet.

O Krishna, please help us all "we depend on You.

* * *

2:20 p.m.

As Madhu was leaving, his head freshly shaved, I said, "When you return we will get into high gear."

"I'm already in high gear!" he said.

"Well, I'm not." Sitting in the easy chair with three quiet days ahead of me. It will change soon enough.

Land of green, matted, long, wet grass. I see a man starting across Lough Erne in a rowboat, his strokes strong. O Krishna, let me turn to *Bhagavad-gita*. Krishna recommends we think of Him constantly. I glanced at some verses after lunch and thought at first that Krishna was demanding so much. I'm already over that. He gives us so many ways to approach Him more gradually, but He never waffles. If we want to be

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

Krishna gives us the choice to serve Him or to serve *maya*. A devotee's life mission is to please Krishna, "and he can sacrifice everything for Krishna's satisfaction . . ." The simple process of continuing our occupation while dedicating our activities to Krishna and chanting the holy names will gain us entrance to the spiritual world. We don't have to be expert mystic *yogis*, because Krishna will take care of us. That old ISKCON illustration shows the devotee swimming alone in the ocean. Lord Krishna comes on Garuda (like a helicopter on a dangerous mission) to pick the devotee up by the hand (not the *Sikha*, as is commonly thought).

* * *

Something Sweet, Something Tender
& There was a time when I knew I had to go to
Krishna in the book O/ Krishna, You are difficult
to know. You reveal Yourself to Your pure devotee but
I guess I'm just not one of them. A comic instead and
this weather keeps raining on and off.

* * *

For me the sweet and tender is no wife or kids or
people in my class and me a college prof.
It's how I feel when I approach God.

* * *

My words are hackneyed and unreal and
I can't even tell you it all. I want
a love relationship with Krishna but don't know how to attain it. The bittersweet truth.
He says
think of Him always.
Is that too much of Him to ask?
No, I reasoned it out.

* * *

Where is my feeling that
different thing? I try to express it in different ways. I explore and
talk to myself, squeak sounds out like what never comes out
of a normal person "tears (a gift) but
not that either.

I'm flying too low.
Krishna says think of Him and Prabhupada clarifies: it can't be done
in any other way except through devotional service.
If you choose otherwise, go to hell.
A black horse, a brown cow, a gray-hooded
crow and insects dying in shed. I have heard
there are rats in the temple "each a soul
and me wishing
I was a *nistha-bhakta*
Ready
to help others
sweet and tender.

* * *

Lover
& I want to love, we *all* do
but love only Krishna.
Loving God is the work of a
lifetime because
He's the Supreme Lover
and all art
is meant for His praise.

* * *

Raspy-voice it or angelic
lilt it if you're
a harpist
but you have the right
to say what's true
and to know
He's the
taster of *rasa*.

* * *

He's a lover even of demons
He kills
in play
and when He leaves His
dear-most in separation "
those who want only
to please Him

* * *

His music sound was heard and
no one knew what
to say
because other music is a string of
zeros unless *He*
accepts it and it's
for Him
offered with love

* * *

to the Lover
Supreme. "

* * *

3:55 p.m., Outside the shed

There is a tractor or other machine in the woods nearby. I tried to ignore it as I walked past. This was the first time in about four days that I have drawn and painted. It felt good, this living in process, living with the constant prayer that Krishna will accept my meaning.

November 28, 12:05 a.m.

Regarding the "swift deliverer" verses, (Bg. 12.6 - 7), I like the repeated use of "Me" ""worship Me," "devoted to Me," "meditating upon Me," "fixed their minds upon Me." Krishna is Insistent, expecting and encouraging total dependence on Him. I am always sorry I don't do what He asks, but I like the concept of doing it. Devotees should be careful not to become depressed by their failure to follow an instruction, especially to the point where they actually come to think following the instruction is impossible. We are, after all, only *aspiring* devotees. That we are aspiring is the source of our hope.

Many of us are attracted to good, early morning *japa*. "Such transcendental chanting attracts the devotee to the Personality of Godhead." That also gives me hope. Srila Prabhupada writes, "Simply by chanting the holy name of Krishna "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare "a devotee of the Lord can approach the supreme destination easily and happily, but this destination cannot be approached by any other process of religion."

Srila Prabhupada's presentation is enough for me. What is missing? I don't require even other Gaudiya Vaisnava commentaries. Prabhupada already studied them and distilled them for us.

* * *

Preaching To My Mind And To Others After A Dream Of Being Lost In The
Subways

& I was lost in the subways/ but even
then I didn't think of Krishna "
lost

distracted that
outer demand Oh
chant, chant, chant,
a constant prayer
the only thing practical.

* * *

I'm telling you but you can't do that either. Need a quiet place where you can do your
needful work at a pace. Don't dwell-indulge in
that despair
stay out lost in subways

* * *

pray in a peaceful grotto
of the mind
Please tell me why do you
want to gut it?

* * *

We want to be men
not divided against ourselves "I'm
preaching to my mind but not
as Raghunatha Gosvami did.
I'm asking what I want and why
I'm lost in that underground stretch
the man who never returns
to Staten Island the man who wishes
he could keep going, telling people about Krishna.
But I can't because I
am a beggar, homeless in dreams
Robbed and killed underground
lost.

* * *

2

O Mind, I can't give you the peace you want. In the 1960s we went berserk. Now
peace "a fence around my mind around
my growing creeper. Then it was too much suffering.

* * *

O Mind, I am a complicated fellow, polluted, can't wear

the brown robes of a Franciscan or the ochre robes of Gaudiya "
too smudged with dirt.

* * *

O Prabhupada, you see me lost in the subways
of my mind, and when a Godbrother joined me in my dream,
we both got lost.

* * *

Am I such a blind uncle going home?
I'm chanting Hare Krishna
and trust I can be saved. "

* * *

4:43 a.m.

On Fridays, Radha-Govinda wear white dresses trimmed in gold, pink, yellow, and light green. They have *very* tall crowns. One might say these outfits are too *aiSvarya*, but I suppose there are some regal settings even in Vrndavana. They know how to make jewellery and crowns in Vraja, and how to worship Radha and Krishna as the king and queen of transcendental, amorous pastimes. Still, I prefer something more simple for Them to wear, a *sari* and *dhoti*, something that shows His feet.

It takes a lot of blu-tack to keep Their crowns from falling off, they're so heavy. I feel it's important to play the tape of Narottama dasa Thakura's prayers as I serve Them. It reminds me of the essence of what I am doing. Eventually his prayers may take hold in my heart and my desire may become the same as his. I don't want to forget Radha-Govinda while I travel, although They will remain here. I am asking the devotees to take pictures of Them every day so I can have seven pictures in seven different outfits to worship on the road.

God, the source of all, does not lack form. That is absolute truth. I once met a student at Boston College in 1968 who said it appeared that the Swami had "buffalooed" me. Then who had buffalooed him so that he was now attending Boston College trying to be a something or other? We are *all* bowled over by material nature and influenced by the many different forces and ideals that appear in our lives. I accepted the Swami, who gave me truth. I gave myself to him voluntarily. I now want to be buffalooed by Krishna. I want Him to spread His trance of *yogamaya* over me so I can understand Krishna consciousness. I don't care whether that makes me a better person; just let me become a better devotee.

Radha-Govinda, You look first-class. My words cannot possibly describe Your beauty or Your kindness for appearing in this form. When I was waiting for You to arrive, I expected only Radha to match my little Krishna. I didn't know You would both come to steal my heart. You both have come and fulfilled a deeper desire. I didn't want to reject the first Krishna who came, but this Krishna is similar to the first, and since the other wasn't really mine anyway, I am able to return Him without insult at His feet.

O Radha-Govinda, Your crowns are pink, yellow, and green, and I hope they are not too heavy. They were purchased in Vrndavana, although they seem larger than how the Divine Couple, in Their *madhurya* pastimes, would wear them. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna "to me They are *prasadam* from the holy *dhama*.

O Govinda, You move us like a chess player moves pieces on a board. We are Your instruments. Please let me serve as one. You are the Lord of my life.

* * *

8:27 a.m.

Read about the internal signs of a devotee (end of twelfth chapter) "how he accepts suffering, how he is not disturbed, how he's fixed in devotion. No letters to answer. A day for my own doings.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorties, Installment #4

Out of the midst comes a dragon spitting balls of fire "just a puff dragon cloud, really, and harmlessly white. How serious?

A voice asks, "Why do you bow down in sleep when you read?"

"Don't fault me."

The voice: "Don't you want to know the truth? Are you afraid to suffer?"

"Suffering comes as a token reaction from past bad karma. I tolerate it and continue my devotional service unabated and unconfused. No mystique here. I am interested in devotion, not suffering. There is a Krishna conscious understanding of this, and we should not adopt the Christian theology on suffering."

"You are trying to save yourself?" Now the dragon speaks.

"I want to be, and I'm tired of writing so many quotation marks."

So the mist pilfers and flutters away, dragon and all. The spirit in me is in my heart and I have no time to spare. Life is immediate "a simple, physical exercise, with perhaps a few thoughts to move us along. Don't expect more than that. Just worship Krishna.

* * *

9 a.m.

Thinking over travel details. One minute I decide to bring Kierkegaard, and the next I decide against it. I favor using my limited luggage weight for *Bhagavad-gita*. Stay with that. Even if I can only take in a little at a time, siphoning the nectar through a narrow straw, I want to keep sipping at it. Same for prayer.

I value clear thinking, and I want to work on finding clarity while traveling. I mean, clear thinking about spiritual truths.

While reading this morning, between bouts of drowsiness, my mind passed over the tenets of what I have learned from Srila Prabhupada about suffering. I felt a desire to live by them and to keep them unsullied.

I also thought about how Prabhupada boils issues down to the immense value of simple, direct devotional service. Everything else is roundabout and basically a waste of

time. Everything else is either karma or *jnana*. Prabhupada's sincere disciples follow his straight and narrow path. Sometimes we are embarrassed at our lack of knowledge in other fields, or our actual dryness due to our lack of contact with spiritual reality. We are poor. But we have Prabhupada and his direction on the process, so we cannot lose.

* * *

1:09 p.m.

Saw Natalie Goldberg's book on her life as painter. She now takes it seriously, and as she ends her book, says she's ready to enter abstract art. No mention of God.

So? What do I want to be? A poet? A painter? A devotee.

Bhurijana Prabhu, lecturing on *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, draws out "seriously inquisitive" and "single-pointed attention" from the *Slokas*. Purity of heart is to will one thing, Krishna. But I can't only chant or only read. The other expressions can also be part of my whole life in Krishna consciousness. Art too. We each have to be sure, however, that our activities do not become ends in themselves, and that our minds do not become splayed in the name of learning to be more creative or whatever. Everything we do should have a direct Krishna conscious purpose.

I took the crowns off Radha and Govinda. They are so tall; they seem to be too much strain to wear.

I'm clear headed, so I'll go to the shed.

Hare Krishna. Filled up on lunch. Spoke to no one so far today. Even if I see someone, I'll speak few words. I have already put all my words into writing.

* * *

2:36 p.m.

I'd like to think my identity as a writer is not separate from my identity of being an aspiring devotee or disciple. If I create a duality, then I'll have to answer for it.

And the unconscious is a false nectar god. Just write and draw freely, use it for prayer. That's all. Look for the heart expression of Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness is not meant to be merely an intellectual or mechanical, dehumanized process.

So many words that I can't reject them *all*. On my way out the door, Syamananda arrived with his camera to photograph Radha-Govinda. Good. I replaced Their crowns for the photos. O Krishna.

Dark and misty. What does Lord Krishna say in His *Bhagavad-gita*? That He's the seed-giving father (*aham bija-pradah pita*). Hear it and heed it. Understand it. Be a student of *sastra*, because *sastra* provides knowledge we could never obtain otherwise. *sastra* says the living entities are injected into various bodies at the time of creation according to their past desires. One should know how the modes of nature work, and when "he knows the Supreme Lord, who is transcendental to all these modes, he attains My spiritual nature." (Bg. 14.19) Krishna is the real spiritual master. He instructs us all through His instructions to Arjuna. A bona fide spiritual master teaches what Krishna says, and we must have faith in that.

I can't explain exactly why I decided to accept Prabhupada and Krishna and the whole line of thought. Certainly I used reason. For example, I had to admit I didn't know everything, that I was tiny, that I was suffering, that I was lost. I also have to admit that the Vedic explanations satisfied my mind and intellect. Perhaps I also had some piety. Even a great sinner or atheist like me could come to understand by guru's grace. As the *Vedas* say, we are each innately spirit soul, so the truth is appealing, especially when it is carried by the spiritually attractive guru. So much of it has to do with spiritual-intellectual satisfaction. Later comes direct experience when we chant. Great hope is awakened, because if the guru is right "if by chanting God's names we can conquer death and rebirth and attain an eternal life of bliss and knowledge "then there's nothing more for which to aspire or to attain. We could never have hoped for anything after we shed our sentimental religions.

I am linked. I pray for my continuance and survival and the growth of my faith, and I hope to "enjoy nectar even in this life." (Bg. 14.20)

* * *

Vedic Scroll

(Windows crowding over with evaporation. I hope to convert my modes to something transcendental. This is my secret message to uncode.)

& Ordinary riffs, I heard
at a cemetery on a hill
they played "Taps" on a bugle "
Monty Cliff in *From Here To
Eternity*.

* * *

Dirty books I read, recommended, talk of
what the guy says and what
he . . .
Yeah, I read it and got
into the literature

* * *

of the ordinary riffs.
I had decided to love no matter
what. Tapped my toe and something went
down my back "more to it than that "
familiar, demystified.

* * *

Go to the *Vedas*
where the structure will take us

higher

* * *

higher higher higher and penetrating,
the man goes into
contortions
trying to get the most out of it
O Soul
trying to get it out the words
telling God "I love You"
and leaving nothing behind. "

* * *

I Want To Be With You
& I had to laugh it was
like chickens in the yard
in Trinidad or
India outside the temples

* * *

then a goat ran behind a
black man running after him
with a machete

* * *

I'm sorry "I heard a group
praying to God we thought
they were all nuts

* * *

but wait "there's a way
to sweeten this sonnet
as the other modes are
all used up

* * *

Krishna, I just want to be with
You now in this quiet room
in mantra session

* * *

*I want to be with You
I want to be with You
please let me be with You
the chanting is the way
please give me peace
today
I need Your help
this way*

* * *

The riff. "

* * *

4:15, Outside Shed

It's consistently dark and gray from morning until night, day after day. This is, after all, gloomy Ireland. I don't mind. The overgrown grass reminds me of the passages in *Krishna* book about the autumn season. The grass is untended, and during the rainy season, the *brahmanas* don't move around. I like to think it is similar to not having to shave your face or make other social gestures "this season at Geaglum. Let the grass mat.

* * *

5:15 p.m.

She should bring my clean laundry soon. Light flickers off pen tip or eyeglass lens, reflected. Prabhupada sitting. I can't draw him any more. Where to go next? I could let voices talk through me and do one of those Pukka Shorties, but I only have an hour and a half left today. Then I will dress Radha-Govinda in Their blue nightclothes while Srila Prabhupada sings Them a *bhajana*. I'll take that *bhajana* with me to sleep and hope for something other than those lost, hopeless dreams.

I spoke aloud today while writing an ItM "allowed sounds, grunts, exclamations, and of course, words. I mean, I composed vocally instead of only with the pen.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorties, Installment #5

Prabhupada *murti* can talk if he wants. Do I want to keep him silent, afraid he'll blast me (as a Godbrother said he would in his Vyasa-puja homage a few years ago)?

Perhaps my "as if Prabhupada is speaking" is more comfortable to live with than the real him. What would he say about my ItMs?

Natalie said that when her guru was gone from the world, she had to enter new open spaces alone, so she began to do abstract paintings.

I painted Nrsimhadeva, who roars at demons.

Anyway, I don't want any fiery dialogues this close to bedtime. I'm looking for the blessing of long sleep (five hours) and a good, spiritual dream.

O Dream Source, Dream Producer "no imagination, just Krishna.

Thus saying, I squiggle ink onto the page and find the shapes.

I will go to bed, praying for Krishna's protection: *Krishna Krishna pahi mam, Krishna Krishna raksa mam*. Good night.

November 29, 12:05 a.m.

Chapter 15 begins with the a description of the banyan tree and the point that we must extricate ourselves from its leaves and branches. Few people in this world concern themselves with this important detail. If they at all seek to become detached from passion, it is not with the idea of becoming liberated for a future life or escaping from *samsara*. It doesn't matter. Our duty stands before us.

Knowledge is vital. The search for knowledge must be taken seriously. Imagine what we can do with the knowledge that the tree of material life is entangling and is an illusion; we could seek to free ourselves from it and to enter the real world.

With determination, one must cut down the tree with the weapon of detachment. "Thereafter one must seek that place from which, having gone, one never returns, and there surrender to that Supreme Personality of Godhead from whom everything began and from whom everything has extended since time immemorial." (Bg. 15.4)

* * *

Thoughts this morning:

About Natalie G. becoming an artist and apparently switching her main passion to painting. She says the abstract paintings she admires take a lifetime of dedication to achieve. They seem to her to be The Truth. Seems to think those illuminating paintings can help her detach herself from matter. But can they bring you to a life of devotion to the Personality of Godhead? Can they bring you and others to the eternal spiritual world?

References in the *Bhagavad-gita* to sense attachment make me suspect myself in different ways. I note the questions, but put them aside. I'm not going to be crippled in what I have accepted as my service. *Yukta-vairagya*.

"To gain favor of that Personality of Godhead, one has only to surrender, and this is a result of performing devotional service by hearing, chanting, etc." (Bg. 15.4, purport) When we achieve attachment to Krishna, we automatically become detached from the material extension.

My mind also goes over the probable scenes of next week "Madhu's return and our final packing, the departures to and from Dublin, the flight to New York City. I go as a preacher to the Caribbean. Swamis go regularly to Trinidad, so I won't be saying anything those other swamis haven't already said. It doesn't matter. Just doing my duty.

* * *

The Singer's ruminating Tale Which Ends With Him Preaching To The Guy
& When it's quiet it means you have to listen. There we were in the Brooklyn temple,
reading about the tree of the material world. I planned to lecture on it to a tight group of
committed devotees. Manhattan formed the perfect example of the tree with all its
branches and twigs.

* * *

Oh, we're full of stories, we devotees, and we want to give them
to the whole world. Who can take them? The *Bhagavad-*
gita describes *everyone's* predicament, what's actually happening to all of us, where are
we going, how we are driven, how the senses demand.

And religion "how we use it to get the things we want we
think we
need.

Not just in Manhattan either. The people in Dublin go through it too "how to get
money and then how to spend it on a new car or a new partner or a new education or the
kids. Those early ideals of universal life are gradually lost and we enter the world of
single-minded struggle.

Generalities, I know, but true for each person. And inside? Covered, hurt, scared. The
history of wars tells all.

But we live on to enjoy. We live and recover from living.
Sometimes we sing "can't you? I am a singer too, and I like
to tell this tale
so folks can see
and escape what is temporary for
what is eternal. No jigs or reels or
polkas from me.
Just a sorrowful ballad to
touch us
deep in the heart.

* * *

O people, if you would just chant
God's names "I advocate it
openly
and find this inward practice, this mind absorption this
this love. "

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Today is Saturday and Radha-Govinda are wearing bright red outfits trimmed in gold.
Their tall red crowns each have a touch of blue "a peacock in the center. Touches of
green leaves are embroidered into Their clothes.

I wonder what I will speak on in the Caribbean. Should I plan to cover a certain section of the *Bhagavatam*, or at least choose something rather than having something assigned to me? They will let me do whatever I want.

Oh, Hare Krishna. Dear Krishna, please be kind.

* * *

Calm down. You don't have to measure up to some big Swami or GBC man and fake it. Or worse, you don't have to punch a clock for a low-wage job and eat humble pie day after day. You can stand up for your rights. Swamiji gave you a comfortable berth. Don't look for more appreciation for your service. Some ISKCON men are dedicated to maintaining this movement, and the absolute science of God forbids seeing the material world as apart from Krishna. We see it as His material energy. It works the way a tape recorder works. We hear Swamiji's voice and it's him and not him at the same time.

Heard that the Guyanese devotees are fighting again. A mother called her son-in-law a "good-for-nothing" and refuses to recognize him. Her daughter has a different opinion. Hare Krishna.

"Don't eat venison," he said. No, we sell books and write back-up songs for the troops. "Blow the smoke off your rifle," he said. The other guy was like that, but I don't believe it.

Lie down after this and no doubt conk out even with the lights on. I already know a dream will come rushing in from the void filled with people who want starring roles and who will live vivid lives to achieve their purposes. Who can understand? The days are changing and I am trying to change with them.

Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and the Gosvamis of Vrndavana sing that the spiritual master is the only refuge. Krishna is the original guru. Hare Krishna was always the essence.

* * *

8:04 a.m.

To cut the connection to the material tree, we have to surrender to the Supreme Lord. "The first qualification is that one should not be deluded by pride." (Bg. 15.5, purport) When you're always expecting honor, you cannot surrender. Also, give up controllership. I read it and note it here, but again, it's a theoretical lesson. How will I actually accomplish it? I don't even know whether or not I'm guilty of pride and proprietorship or whether I am willing to give them up. I don't know what it means to surrender. I'm already following my vows as I promised at my initiation in 1966. Is *that* surrender? Does it mean to do things you don't want to do?

As I write, devotees are ringing and ringing the brass bell at the quay. That I watch this show often. Don't they *hear* the bell over there? Or maybe they are simply too busy to be running boats across the lake day and night. To continue ringing the bell takes endurance and patience. It's dark out this morning, and anyone can see the bright lights shining in my room as I sit at the desk facing the window. It's obvious I'm not going to the morning program. If I did I'd phone ahead and wait until someone came to get me in the boat; I'm no bell-ringer.

Back to the discussion about surrender. Ultimately, we say, to admit we don't know what surrender is is as good as admitting that you refuse to do it. Do we want to surrender or not? If we want to surrender to Krishna, then we must actively seek out some ISKCON authority and do what they prescribe. That's how some people see it. I just can't agree with that.

Oh, here comes the boat.

In Bg. 15.5, Krishna mentions the eternal world, which can be attained by the detached and surrendered soul. Don't conceive of this in a simplistic, physical way. Once the surrendered soul attains that supreme planet, he never returns to the material world. "One should be captivated by this information. He should desire to transfer himself to that eternal world and extricate himself from this false reflection of reality." (Bg. 15.6 purport)

The difference between writing for myself and lecturing to devotees: for myself I admit my mood as I write "that I don't know what surrender is, and if you defined it for me, I would probably not agree with your definition. I *could* admit the same thing in a public lecture, but I'd have to give a positive solution to the problem because otherwise I may leave others in doubt. I couldn't just leave the discussion dangling like that. I'd have to add, "So we have to admit our shortcomings, but at the same time we must continue to practice Krishna consciousness with determination. We may have to do certain things we don't like to do. We should also try to find a way that we are *willing* to surrender. Find those persons, that service, to which we can give ourselves. Surrender doesn't have to mean raising our hands at gun point. Surrender has to be voluntary. In the beginning, this may mean giving up personal inclinations to serve the interests of the mission. It also means giving the results of our activities to Krishna. In the meantime, keep hearing about the ideal of surrender, doing everything we can to please Krishna, without selfishness. Lord Caitanya and Srila Prabhupada want us to preach. That's a big item of surrender right there. Yes, definitely we will have to give up our attachments." And so on. And I would give examples, use rhetoric, and speak as honestly as possible but with a lecturer's persona.

The one who writes for himself is quieter, less willing to accept simplistic solutions. He wants to do more than pump himself up with positive aphorisms. Whatever he is, he must learn to surrender. Honesty is part of that, either on the page or in the lecture.

We surrender when we chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare "at least sixteen rounds "and wish to improve by focusing our minds. Some things just aren't possible right now, though, so we bite the bullet and do other things "distribute books, do temple service, get married or don't. Unless we surrender we cannot free ourselves from this material world. Either we surrender to Krishna or we surrender to more misery, right?

* * *

8:55 a.m.

I'm walking on the woods path. I hear a crane or a swan honking as it flies by. The month is almost over. Whatever leaves are going to fall have already fallen. Some of them stay on the trees all winter. Many trees are still wrapped with bright green-leafed

vines that will stay green all winter along with the winter mosses. The outdoors seems quiet this morning. Gita-Nagari is also like this in the morning.

A magpie lifting off the path just startled me! Can I think of Krishna when I feel that wave of shock? Can I remember at least to recite His holy names? At least a few times?

What did Prabhupada say this morning? Something about many controllers and how Krishna is the Supreme Controller. He quoted Brahma-samhita: *iSvarah paramah Krishnah*. I admit I'm a weak-hearted, milksop creature of little faith. Great devotees have great faith. Sometimes when we feel our shortcomings, we can become arrogant about it. rather, we need to place our case humbly and sorrowfully before Krishna. remember that Krishna is kind and wants us to turn to Him. He won't condemn us. "Fie, fie upon Narottama!"

* * *

10:25 a.m.

Flakes of *tilaka*. Surreal. "Surrender unto Me." Last days of November. Having an especially good week physically "possibly six days out of seven without a headache. Arjuna dasa rowing right now to the island.

Read more in Merton's 1961 journal. I liked it and considered carrying it to America, but the book is too large. I'll take two small paperbacks instead. Lying in bed now. Even when I don't have a headache, I rest to prevent one starting rather than remaining active beyond my actual strength. I won't take this loud-scratching pen on tour either "I have travel pens. I expect to return after the tour to find this room just as I left it. It used to be routine for me to travel; now it's a big deal. I want to come back to Ireland, but I'm sure that that won't be possible forever. I also want to do what a *sannyasi* ought to do, lecture, and for me, especially in the Caribbean and the Northeast U.S. where I have small congregations whom I cannot abandon. I feel the personal obligation, and I don't want to disappoint those devotees with whom I already have a relationship.

I asked to see Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's essay where he says people may see him as arrogant for receiving his disciples' worship, but he is following Lord Caitanya's order. He says he cannot fail to follow that order. He almost seems to say that not only outsiders would accuse him of arrogance, but he might have to personally run the risk of actually becoming arrogant. However, he says, Lord Caitanya's order will save him. Besides, his personal consideration is not as important as the need for people to follow a bona fide guru who must be seen by them as good as God.

Remaining questions in my case (and other ISKCON gurus "hey, don't lump me in, but I am) "did we receive that same order, and are we qualified? I can't quote Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura's speech and expect all opposition to fall silent. Every Church has its controversies and splits. How naive we were to think ISKCON would avoid that fate. But we did think we could avoid it, and Srila Prabhupada didn't really make it too easy for us. He simply told us to remain faithful and to cooperate, and then he left.

* * *

Pukka Pad Shorties, Installment #6

"You're always so holy."

"What?"

"Yeah, thinking of Krishna."

"Well, I'm close to sixty years old. I could die at any moment. I should be thinking of Krishna and my soul, right? Even from the viewpoint of self-interest?"

"But you don't."

"No, I don't. Like today. I got a letter from a devotee that disturbed me. I read it twice. He said he had a heavy heart and didn't know if he could continue. I feel heavy-hearted too. Then I read something, an interview with a worldly man, and I forgot my heavy heart, but lost my concentration on Krishna."

"Now I call you a Holy Joe, worrying about a thing like that."

"I just want to be real; I'm no saint."

The two men discuss these things in a backyard. As they speak, a BBT van pulls out, loaded with men on their way out to distribute books.

"Does that make you feel guilty? Envious?"

"No, I admire them. They are doing great work for Prabhupada."

"Do you feel they are better devotees than you?"

"I'm not even a devotee at all. Aren't you from *People* magazine?"

"No, I'm your subpart."

"Sub what?"

The interviewer glances at his watch. It is time for lunch. He decides to wrap it up.

"I suppose in the future people will think of you as a Thomas Merton or an Aaron Burr. Or maybe no one will think of you at all."

"Merton wrote in his diary at a time when many of his books were being published, 'But for me, can all this have any serious meaning? . . . the irony of total destruction hangs over it, to keep me wise.'"

"Well," says the interviewer, "now that you have pegged me as an interviewer, I might as well play the part. What's your next book?"

"It's called *Every Day, Just Snooker*. It's a biography about a desert father who . . ."

Suddenly lunch arrives and Holy Joe turns to more important matters.

* * *

2:37 p.m.

I missed Syamananda "I saw him getting into his boat to come to my room to take Radha-Govinda's photo, but I was already on my way out the door.

We are separated expansions of God, "eternal fragmental parts." We have to accept *sastra* as Truth, spoken by God Himself. Otherwise, it has no value. It's either truth or it's gibberish. Bhurijana Prabhu said in a lecture I heard at lunch today that the reason we don't experience the taste of Krishna consciousness is that (1) we are ignorant of transcendental knowledge; (2) we commit *aparadhas*; and (3) we have other weaknesses of heart, such as the desire to be worshiped, etc. These things build up obstacles to taste. When I heard this, I stopped for half a moment in my wolfish eating and thought it sounded right "that's why I don't have access to the nectar.

What to do about it? He said we must serve great devotees. That sounds right too.

We are struggling in the material world with the six senses including the mind. We shouldn't, however, exaggerate our misery. Actually, by Krishna's grace, we are doing quite well. Still, I tend to fear I'll be stranded. I fear I'm resting on laurels gained by years of vigorous service. Shouldn't we push hard all the way to the end? That's what Srila Prabhupada did, risked death on the battlefield, gave up his retirement even though he wanted it.

I feel as if I have already retired. I just can't jump back into the fray. I seem to have no options because of my health. But my medical pass, that "note from the doctor" "will it prevent me from entering the spiritual world? Will I have to be reborn again because I am not dying on the battlefield? There are no easy answers for our lives and the choices we make either willingly or seemingly by force.

Qualitatively one with God; always individuals. Try to leave this world by dedicating everything to the Supreme Lord. Think of His abode, be captivated by this information, and work for Him. His mission is to bring souls back to Godhead, but we all have free will. He won't take it away from us.

Same old thing "what I write and what the *sastras* say. Don't go crazy for novelty. New lights will come naturally. That feeling of freshness is in Krishna, *nava-yauvana*, *purva-raga*, but we must approach Him with love and surrender to His devotees in order to feel it.

* * *

Goin' Home

(Holding out, no sorrow (well, some), no giving into depression, and don't stay secular. It's a many-faceted world, but you want Krishna "single-minded.)

* * *

& Hurry along, no time to waste
I'm getting sentimental.
I can't tell you how
I'm blipping along in this
happy bubble called
Krishna conscious contemplation
and along comes a presage a
dream

* * *

will I suffer in hell? Why am I
so happy-go-lucky as if
my number won't come up
for mugging-crashes-fires?

* * *

Is *that* how Krishna will protect you or
how He will test you?
Live the moment and preach
to all but yes, we each must find our way.

* * *

Listen folks
we were on the corner of
5th and Avenue B
when I heard a sound coming
out of a window.
It was Charles going fast
getting down with
Monk's "Sentimental."

* * *

And I told you that
Krishna is King the
source of all music legends
the top and bottom
of everything including sound
ethereal or otherwise
and our own
fragmental parts.

* * *

He says
karsati "the soul is fragmental
but He is the healing herb
the relief from pain
and the pain itself?"

* * *

This happy-go-lucky retiree
is losing his strength "He's
taking it away.

* * *

My Lord knows what He's doing
is most powerful
and it's a joke to praise

anyone in comparison to
Him.

* * *

May we meet at liberation
after I give up my crippling fears
and center on Krishna
our worshipable
God the best
lover
and friend.
(Don't listen to *me*, it's Truth.) "

* * *

Remember Together
& We want to remember
a beautiful person who came
here and his followers who
try to make the world a
better place

* * *

it's confusing so
let's keep it simple

* * *

here's a song for the mission and for
the lives we spent and the ones
I heard described in *sastra* "
nothing lost "even a little "for any
of us.

* * *

But we wanted so much *more*
that sometimes it does seem wasted
and we cry we
feel grief
and you know, it shouldn't be checked.

* * *

When that guy's
dog died "the guy who
walked across America,
his brave dog at his side,

* * *

I said the master was
strong. Now we're able to
hear his strong and sorrowful
song
brought to us over roofs
into our hearts
into our temples

* * *

into our corrupt motives
while the demons hit back.
Do you remember the time . . .

* * *

I recall "
we ate sweet rice while
the walls fell down around us,

* * *

something like that.
Then lust called
and greed
and we saw that we were not finished with *maya*
and our ranks were decimated "
What ever happened to . . . ?

* * *

I just want to cry
but also to remember
you and the mission we went
through together.

* * *

it's sad to recall but sweet too

and as time runs down
we wait for the Lord to call
us back.

* * *

They're already laughing
and calling us to account

* * *

for every bit of karma. We
count on our chanting
our little taste of *bhakti*
to cure us.

* * *

May the *kirtana* never stop
even when we can't remember
the Sanskrit drift.

* * *

We are poor souls,
Rescued by
Lord Caitanya's mercy
and Prabhupada's
and we really can
smile. "

* * *

4:05 p.m.

I heard birds squeaking and a distant truck "a *big* truck. Can I hear the water running in the lake? No, it would practically have to be silent outside for that, and even then I would have to sit outside for awhile until my ears became attuned. It's not worth trying for, especially when it is so easy to sit down and immediately hear God's names vibrated by your own tongue. Then you can be with Him from your own closest uttering. But that bird is nice. It reminds me of spring. It's a little lighter than usual, too, this afternoon, perhaps the moon rising behind the clouds. This is moving toward the darkest time of the year.

Lyrical painter dies. Who's that? Some guy I read about.

Saw a book on how to stimulate creativity and to make money from it. They said artists should travel. If they stay in one place, they will fall into a rut. That's not necessarily true. Who wants so much stimulation? *God* is the source of all, not a wider

collection of sensory data. I wouldn't mind staying here and seeing all the seasons. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

Reading Merton's journal. I'm allowed much more freedom than he had. I live in a religious movement but still do what I want. The ISKCON GBC passes resolutions and laws, but few of them touch me directly. I think this is because of (1) my seniority; (2) I don't make trouble; (3) I have a medical reason not to take a too-active part. Also, despite the laws, ISKCON is by nature not an overly controlled organization. Only those who live in the temple come under strict control. Those who live outside can arrange for privacy and live basically on their own. This could change, and I have worried about that in the past, but no one has threatened me or the way that I have had to live. I do follow prescribed *sannyasa-dharma* as far as possible for my health. Anyway, a *brahmana* is supposed to follow this voluntarily, not because he is pressured by the *ksatriyas*.

November 30, 12:08 a.m.

Our lives are tested at the end, whether we can remember Krishna, and not just that last moment, but our entire lives are weighed and measured, the intention behind every action held forward and examined against truth and devotion. Gradually, as each item stands up, like a photograph developing in the lab, our new body is formed and assigned. We would like to go to Krishna, but are unworthy, or feel we are. We cannot connive our way into the spiritual world. Krishna knows our heart better than we know it ourselves. We can *plan* to feel unworthy, knowing that humility catches Krishna's attention, but our success is up to Him and the honesty of our humility is also measured by Him. Still, we shouldn't be anemic about our desire to go back to Godhead. Krishna knows we're no heroes. All He expects of us is an honest and strong desire to be with Him.

We shouldn't be cold to Krishna and the possibility of His love overwhelming our failure to serve better. I mean, we would love to go to the place beyond liberation, beyond heaven, beyond birth and death, to Krishnaloka, but we seem so unable to act for it in this world. Krishna Himself can change that, if we want Him too.

Srila Prabhupada quotes *smṛti*, ". . . when a living entity gives up this material embodiment and enters into the spiritual world, he revives his spiritual body, and in his spiritual body he can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead face to face. He can hear and speak to Him face to face, and he can understand the Supreme Personality as He is." (Bg. 15.7, purport)

Fear of God in awe and reverence, fear He'll punish us for our doubts and sins and failures, fear even that we tried to become too familiar with Him before we deserved it (*prakṛta-sahajīya* in one form or another), fear that we have not pleased our spiritual master, so we'll be denied going back to Godhead "all these hinder out acceptance of Krishna's love.

It is good "essential "to read the *sastra* subjectively and to take it personally. These verses discuss transmigration. What do they mean to *me*? I'm not a Hindu and this is not a Hindu doctrine. I think inwardly about my own faith in this knowledge; I try to be submissive and earnest. I order my intellect, "Please accept it, please listen." I *want* to be convinced, but neither can I take force-feeding. I must constantly expose myself to my spiritual master's words and serve him as best I can.

And to the degree that I understand this knowledge, I should try my best to give it to others. *Everyone* is in the same boat.

* * *

Prayer For Well-Being
& No one else but me under the
desk lamp to see how I
feel
and tell you joyful news
learned
discovered from the world
of sound.

* * *

Joyful I overflow, even though
it hurts to say it.
Hurts? Yes, because my
joy is shot at, challenged, but
I dare to share it anyway.

* * *

Dear friends, hear the earnestness
behind my offering.
Why am I trying to please
You, O Krishna, and to sell You
to others?
I've already told my story; it's the story of
everyone in the material world.
A young man on a December eve asks
for blessings for the Irish book distributors.
Mine? I'll pray for you
and the others (beyond envy and
hatred and cowardice and dreams where
I couldn't fight yet
wanted my way.

* * *

Me, I'll try calling on God
just one alone to
gather drops of His mercy and
give them out as insight
to others.

* * *

I'll pray to my master's sweetness
to hear it in his voice and to give his strength
to others that they may see
the *vibhuti*s of people
and the sunrise, the lake,
feel peace "feel Gurudeva
always present
somehow
in all things.

* * *

Lord Caitanya, You gave
music to uplift us,
each of us walled into the cells
of our bodies
we sing with You together
and apart
studying the gentle agenda
of finding Krishna
in the woods. "

* * *

4:25 a.m.

Radha-Govinda wear pink outfits with transparent white "shells" and peacock feather embroidery. It's trimmed heavily in gold. I am fortunate to be able to dress Them and look upon Their forms while Narottama dasa Thakura prays to worship the Yugala-kiSora. He yearns for *prema-bhakti* and prays to become the *gopis'* maidservant and assist them in their direct service to radha and Krishna. That is what I am doing in the practice mode "placing the bracelets on Their wrists, the crowns upon Their heads, and offering Them fresh cups of water.

Srila Prabhupada says Krishna asks us for service not because He needs our work "He already has everything "but because He wants our love. By serving Him we become liberated from birth and death. To serve Krishna brings self-satisfaction, and as we decorate Him, we feel sanctified. We can also honor palatable foods when we offer them to Radha-Govinda, and receive the blessings to advance on the path of spontaneous love of God.

We want to reach the stage of *sarvatma*: giving everything to Krishna as the *gopis* did. Start your charity to Krishna with whatever you can give. When a housewife said she would give ashes to the *sadhu* begging at her door, he said, "Very well, then just begin your charity!"

Prabhupada is wearing the bristly saffron wool cap we obtained for him in Vrndavana. Krishna is opulent and gorgeous. The Gosvamis wear the simplest dress "no crowns or bracelets, yet they are absorbed in serving the Divine Couple for Their pleasure. Narada Muni could hardly believe when he saw Krishna's opulence in the 16,108 palaces.

It's Sunday and I'm supposed to go over to the temple to give the lecture from *Caitanya-caritamrta*. I'll be reading more on *yare dekhe*. This verse is suitable for the book distributors, who are about to begin their December marathon. They can know that Krishna is most pleased with the preacher. At the same time, we count all devotees as preachers. They are carriers of Visnu.

Hare Krishna, I'm slipping
down.

Did my sixteen rounds and will take some rest so that I'm up for class. A letter under the door overnight, probably from Manu, who just returned from a few days on the road.

No need to keep a list of those disciples who no longer care for me, or of those who have left Krishna consciousness. Just go on yourself: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

* * *

Dreamt I was with Madhu in the city and I was brushing and brushing my hair. I seemed to think it had been neglected. Finally, I went to sit in a back room. Someone approached me and wanted to ask some questions, but he had a dirty little boy with him. The boy latched on to me with a painful grip that felt like he was sucking my flesh. With great effort I pulled him off and asked the man to hold him away from me. The man did not comply. I told him I couldn't talk to him as long as the boy was behaving like that, but still the man continued to ask questions without restraining the child. Finally, I managed to disengage myself from the boy and escape. I wanted to tell Madhu not to let this man and his boy back into my room, but he wasn't there.

* * *

7:48 a.m.

Pulling on my boots. I'm going over. I'm "on." It's so dark out I can barely see, but I see the quay lights are on. I expect Arjuna dasa will be outside, ready to row me across. I have my material prepared: stay home, don't pretend, reform your own life, find true renunciation, etc. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura used the verse *yare dekha* to prove that the guru is under order. I also want to offer congrats to book distributors because they tell everyone they meet about Krishna.

I want to discuss Vasudeva the leper, who was such a great devotee. Nothing unrehearsed in my mind. The expert who wrote the book on creativity said we should experience new things and be daring. He said to read books and learn. One little chapter

at the end says meditation and prayer can help too "as if the purpose of prayer is to get good ideas so we can make money, sell a book, be happy, and so on.

I'm hungry for creative ideas. At least my ideas are quickly channeled toward Krishna. I could filch something from the book on creativity since it all belongs to Krishna anyway. The rascals have stolen everything they have from Him.

Getting lighter bit by bit. Every five minutes I can tell the difference. One lone light provides illumination until the sun takes over.

I wrote a letter to a disciple who had some ideas about how to improve his life. I wish him well. Wrote a letter to another disciple in response to his requesting a prayer for book distributors.

A letter to myself? Okay, fellow, I know you're fragile.

Anyway, going over to speak. When I get back, Gopi-manjari will look at the Deities and see if she can arrange for more Vrndavana-style *dhotis* and *saris* in addition to Their more regal outfits. I also want more peacock-feather *mukuts* and a nice bed. She will polish Them before I leave and place Them in "*samadhi*."

I'm very serious and very afraid, but I have little perks of humor. One wonders where he or she will be at the end. We have to think of Krishna at every step if we wish to remember Him at the end. Why don't I write a book about the deathbed? Why don't I write a book about a monk's bed? Monk's

bread.

Monks fed

up with falsity. Monks afraid

to make the real dive

at Krishna's lotus feet. Why

afraid? Do we think

Krishna will scare us out of our wits because He's so powerful?

Maybe. Maybe we do.

Be ready, O devotees, to face the emptiness, the desert, then the love. Even if Krishna doesn't appear immediately, we all know He's our best friend because the Swami said so.

* * *

10:10 a.m.

Lecture okay. Feeling separation from Govindadvipa already, the wet, cold, bird-singing island. Light coming from the temple building early in the morning. Extra devotees here today. Sharma, the *sankirtana* leader, sat right in front of me. I praised book distributors. Gopi-manjari came back to the house, and she and Manu entered my room. I showed them Radha-Govinda and felt enthused and grateful and somewhat childlike in my appreciation of these Deities. Gopi-manjari gave me a nice bed for Them, and I told her I'd like more Vraja-like clothes "a yellow *dhot* ifor Krishna and a blue *sari* for Radha, and clothes that don't cover His feet.

Letters. One devotee back from Vrndavana. She said she liked Radha's places "Yavat, Varsana, etc., where devotees are uninhibited to chant "Radhe, Radhe." She hopes she's not a *prakrta-sahajiya*.

Busy and more social than usual this morning. Playing the role of guru, seeing disciples, talking with a spiritual daughter about what man she wants to marry. Another tells me he had a "brush" with illicit sex, but the two of them don't really want that. What am I supposed to think? Old *sannyasa-dharma*. O little Radha-Govinda, so effulgent, so kind to me.

* * *

12:18 p.m.

A Godbrother was listening to a lecture by another Godbrother and found it "very powerful." I asked him to give me a copy and now I too am listening. It's about faith and quite gung-ho. right, not wrong. I can't fight it. I respect his enthusiasm. He's a *Sakti* of Prabhupada. I feel his audience squirming.

"Be very faithful to your spiritual master," says this American Godbrother. Should he have said, "Be doubtful toward me because I am not an Indian born and raised guru?"

No, I have no objections. I just want to . . .

O Krishna, may we all find a place in the spiritual world. Fortunately, there are many rooms in Srila Prabhupada's mansion.

Shut up, Gua,
don't write this crap
or we'll pull you on the carpet a
Raving madman.

* * *

2:43 p.m.

Sunshine for a change. Met three different people while walking from the house to the shed. One gave me a letter, one sankirtana marathon. He said something friendly, and then I walked on. I saw other cheerful young faces with him as they loaded up. I thought of turning back and wishing them luck, but I didn't. It would have been hype. I *do* wish them luck, and I appreciate, even envy (or let's say am humbled by) their sacrifice, and I pray for them. That's more real to me than shouting out slogans and encouraging them to come out number one in the competition.

No goats today, I notice. Nothing else on the way here.

Looks like I'll have to clean up the shed before I go.

Bhagavad-gita "thoughts to provoke Krishna consciousness in the conditioned soul: the splendor of the sun, moon, and fire all come from Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That's for beginners like me. When I play the role of the spiritual master lecturing, I'll be confident and do some of my own smashing and laughing at fools, but I won't forget who I am, a very small person. I don't mean I'm really an atheist or a demon (although I suppose I could be if I misused my free will), but I'm more in need than I let on in the lecture. I depend on the first steps in Krishna consciousness to keep me linked to Him. Yes, I'd like to see the sun and moon and feel a personal appreciation of Krishna "something real.

The planets floating in the air are actually held in the fist of the universal form. So poetic. If only I could think in poetry for Krishna's pleasure.

When I walk back will the men and their van be gone? Will my head be clear? I gave out more today than usual, yet it was so little. I am grateful anyway.

Krishna is situated as sound, as air, and as the digestive fire in the belly. He is in all things.

* * *

The Splendor Of The Sun, Moon, And Fire,
And Good Men

(1)

& Jump start
it's a place
where I go and you with me
with me
you are in need
of a fix.

* * *

Jump
you mean there's no
squirrel in here
or wren
but a way

* * *

he used to be "
I saw the men
loading up their van/ such faces
young idealists all
soldiers of the true army

* * *

good-time *brahmacaris*
working for guru. Who
dares touch on their morals?

* * *

I've got the left over
Royal loaf
pineapple and cream

I've got the alone wanna
bees

* * *

I've got the Lord in my
fist
huh
I've got nothin',
Realize that

* * *

Rhythm and blues and
a little shelter
jump blood
this oldster is a laugh

* * *

he longs for friends like
this but they've got a lunch
for you
and air for your belly.

* * *

O splendor of fire and moon
O Brother Sun you
come from God.

* * *

She joined the Hare
Krishnas with arguments
against killing animals "
"no soul" they say

* * *

and he, DDD, became
what I thought he was a
Vaisnava the one
whose hands the
master guided.

* * *

And what about Steve
and John and all those guys
ISKCON Diaspora
no more on LSD
but moanin' perhaps

* * *

Romancing for a spiritual
Dad and Supreme
to
bring us all home.

* * *

(2)

Now here's the walk past
graveyard, run "
you've got your bass man he'll
not fail unless the heart
itself/ fails to keep pace
with the Pacemaker.

* * *

O Krishna in my heart
I always knew and
prayed to You a
simple theme chord
a secret hope.

* * *

(3)

Splendor "fire and moon "the
people may not recognize
the best drummer
and follow others
lots of them "inky oceans
blue-black scars "memories
O God O God
this universe

gives me hope and my poems
break atheists. "

* * *

4 p.m., Outside shed

Yellow rose as the sun sets. Clear blue "would you believe it? Headache coming, but I will push out a last poem. As always, long, unkempt grass carrying plenty of water drops. They turn silvery at this hour. Trees bare "who could draw all their etching fingers?

* * *

5:35 p.m.

Had to take an Esgic. Then suddenly Praghosa arrived at the door. I spoke with him about troubles in Wicklow. It was a crucial meeting "it brought me relief and brought us together. I hope, however, it doesn't offset the pain cushion I sought in the Esgic.

Krishna is here, and Radha. The poems, the great rush of inspiration, come bit by bit. They come from Krishna, these poem stories. I have to calm down now, and probably take rest early.

* * *

December 1, 12:10 a.m.

That speaker I heard yesterday said to his audience, "Don't harbor doubts silently, thinking, 'I have a very good doubt that no one can answer; it is better than anyone else's doubt.' Come out with the doubt and be smashed by a senior devotee. It will be good for you." Fair enough. I'm glad I heard it.

I always have to ask, however, whether the speaker himself airs his doubts and is willing to be smashed by the conclusions (often opinions) of others. And if we continue to live with certain doubts even after we have been smashed.

Some doubts simply cannot be aired. The speaker gave examples of rotten doubts "that the Brahman is ultimately more important than the form of God, or that the whole Vedic presentation may simply be a myth. Sure, if you come out with such doubts, they will be smashed, and actually, they're *easy* to smash. My only objection to what he said, really, is to the concept that doubts must always be aired and must always be smashed. On the one hand, if we are always treated harshly or heavily, with boots instead of kindness, we may find ourselves less inclined to trust. Sometimes it's better to bring out doubts to a close friend rather than to someone who will smash us. Confidential talks between friends can be for that. Friends may be more inclined to admit their own doubts and to share how they deal with them. When we are treated by a supercilious mentor who is above doubt and who pounces on ours like an all-powerful cat chasing a helpless mouse, it scares the mouse, but perhaps not for good. Perhaps it chases the mouse back into our hearts where it hides even deeper. I'm not sure doubt is always eradicated by this method.

I am realizing more and more that if I get pain on a particular day, I'll live with it. Pain has become a natural part of my life. Not only for me, but for everyone, whether we all realize it or not.

In his purports in the *Bhagavad-gita*, Srila Prabhupada informs us that God comes to us in many ways. It's more of what we heard in the seventh and tenth chapters "ways in which He can be perceived even by beginners. He is present in the moon, the sun, fire, gravity, and as digestion, *prana*, and *apana*. Then there is the climactic verse, *sarvasya caham hr̥di sannivisto*: "I am seated in everyone's heart, and from Me come remembrance, knowledge and forgetfulness. By all the *Vedas*, I am to be known. Indeed, I am the compiler of *Vedanta*, and I am the knower of the *Vedas*." (Bg. 15.15) In all these ways. Please meditate on Him now that you have this information. But if you can't, don't worry, I won't smash you. Simply lift up your doubts and put them aside. You don't need them anymore. We have to be willing to do at least that "this is Krishna's advice to Arjuna, "Therefore, the doubts which have arisen in your heart out of ignorance should be slashed by the weapon of knowledge. Armed with yoga . . . stand and fight." (Bg. 4.42) Get rid of them.

Yes, to admit that even the lecturer, the guru, has doubts. I remember one devotee telling me that he never, never had doubts and that I should never, never have them either. I found his words reassuring. But since doubts or lack of taste or even *aparadhas* persist, we can only become more and more dependent on the one who can remove them, the surgeon-guru. O Prabhupada, I trust you.

We can also ask friends to pick them off our hide like a monkey picking lice from a mate. Or we can blast them into the ether through sound "self-expression, not for others' nourishment but as a cry of pain that becomes a dissipated demon.

* * *

Help Yourself "Surrender In Your Way
& What's that about love?
Oh, it's just that we all feel
some sultry stuff, we don't
sometimes know what to do with it.

* * *

You mean on radio you hear a soupy, too-much-complaining saxophone?
No, well,
yes, that too, the
stuff "when the people who are meant to help us don't reach out.
There's no remedy for anything
but pure Krishna conscious sound, I know,
but we want to feel love.

* * *

I sing and do my art
with some intention
and can't be helped by you
or another anyway
I had to go to my one and only
And say please allow me
and allow *Him* to have power over me.

* * *

This process is not an arbitrary one
but He must really command and
we must really trust

* * *

touched by his wisdom and
overcome.

* * *

O Krishna give me faith
and wisdom and tenderness and
toughness

* * *

and the wisdom to ride with the punches
to stand up and teach
in a way I would like to be taught

* * *

a sultry love mood and
grateful
for Your touch, me
a loving integer.
O my Lord
Govinda. "

* * *

4:28 a.m.

Write while you can, while you don't have much pain. Radha and Krishna wear light green again today, this time with gold trim and dark green crowns. Eventually I will gather more outfits and turbans for Them. I also want more flutes, more peacock feathers, more devotion, more thinking of Them. I plan to carry photos of Them when I travel, so I have asked two different devotees to take pictures. I want to get as many good photos as possible. Then I can put different pictures in the frames, and that will become the worshipable Deity to whom I offer the food.

O Lord of the universe, O soul of the universe, kindly cut my attachment to the Vrsnis and the Pandavas, Queen Kunti prayed. I pray that my attachments to the body and mind may be cut and that I'll be free to love the Lord. Let everything else be taken from me.

I write these words, but I know that to some extent, they are poetic ideals and I haven't yet made that request with my whole heart. My prayer is more compromised: "O Lord, may I worship You without too much effort or pain, without being jeered at by nondevotees, without much physical suffering or austerity . . . and may I go back to Godhead after this life?" That's really the way I pray. I have to learn to do better. O Lord of the universe, as the Ganges flows down to the sea unobstructed, so let my love flow to You. Again Queen Kunti.

Hare Krishna.

There is no yogurt this morning. My breakfast will consist of a pear, an apple, and two bananas. I could put a little jam on the plate if I desired. Simple but enough to fill the belly. Hare

Krishna

Hare Krishna.

I was worried I wouldn't be able to chant fully "I thought the pain was coming "but I squeaked through okay. Now I am sailing along relatively free. Madhu will be back today, then tomorrow is our last full day here. Hare Krishna Hare

Krishna. I want to pack my suitcases so that the customs people don't know my inner intent.

Hare Krishna mantra, both ancient and modern. It is the mantra for bringing control and higher ethics and is truly the way to attain love of God "the way and the goal.

"Now I will have to tell your mother that you dribbled your breakfast down your bib and spit out your food. Mother will tell Father when he comes home, and he will beat you." I was afraid of that when I read the baby book my parents gave me when I was a toddler The drawings showed a baby in a high chair spitting out his food "that was his offense "and the words said he would be reported to his father. I don't think the father beat him in the book, but it scared me nonetheless. Hare Krishna. I couldn't figure it out, but I did learn that life was complicated.

Radha and Krishna are going to market. Radha and Krishna are in divine play. Radha and Krishna have nothing to do. If God *has* to do something, then what kind of God can He be? He is Nanda-suta or Nanda-tanuja, the son of Nanda. God has no mother and father, but when He comes to the world He accepts parents.

"Why did you print my letter?"

"I don't go to the temple," she said, "but I chant Hare Krishna anyway."

He said, "I am feeling low. I have to collect all this money. I don't think other devotees are forced to work like I am. Some of them get to go to Vrndavana."

Krishna is the source of the *Vedas* and He is the *Vedas* personified. He is giving us the sun, yet ungrateful men do not thank Him even for a glass of water, although we would thank an ordinary person. Krishna is both close and far away.

* * *

5:15 a.m.

The purpose of the *Vedas* is to understand Krishna.

Faith: It seems an over-simplification to say, "Accept the *Vedas*." You can "accept" them (not be rebellious toward *sastra*) since you have vowed to do that (fourth offense in chanting). Take this statement: "The Supreme Lord is situated as Paramatma in everyone's heart, and it is from Him that all activities are initiated." (Bg. 15.15, purport) Do you believe it?

"Yes," you say, but what does such a "yes" actually mean? Can you explain the essence of the purport?

"Yes," you say, "I can explain it." And you proceed to give an intellectual description of the purport's contents. But have you experienced that essence? Have you proved to yourself that Paramatma is present in the heart and that all activities are initiated from Him?

"Yes," you say, and I'm glad. This is not a doubt session, but an examination of faith.

We can also look at it the other way around. We could ask why I am interrogating you about your faith. Faith cannot always be inspected by reason. Srila Prabhupada states again and again that a devotee simply accepts the authority of the *Vedas*. "regarding those things that are beyond the mind to comprehend, it is useless to argue." Or, *tarko 'pratisthah srutayo vibhinna . . .* Neither the use of logic nor the study of the *Vedas* can give us the Absolute Truth. The Absolute Truth is hidden in the hearts of realized saints and sages. *Mahajano yena gatah sa panthah*: follow them and find it.

The *Vedas* state that all *jivas* in the material world are fallible and undergo six changes. "According to the statement of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna, there are two classes of living entities. The *Vedas* give evidence of this, so there is no doubt about it." Before 1966 I didn't accept the *Vedas*. Most people in the world don't accept them now. It doesn't matter. This is a personal philosophy. I don't really need to play around with intellectual challenges. I would rather look up and see the pink smudges coming through the clouds. The sky is a beautiful light blue behind the layers of thick fleece. The lake water is two shades of green. Why don't I take a walk? Let those other thoughts go up the chimney.

* * *

8:05 a.m.

Colder today. Good for an arm-swinging walk while I chant. I'm glad I have this coat. Know who gave it to me?

Thought of Vancouver. One thought led to another, and not all of them were pleasant. The thoughts become roadblocks to turn me in one direction or another.

Leaves still falling. The collie walked with me for a while, then disappeared. I like his detachment. I gave him a pat on the head.

* * *

12:12

Madhu is back. He had a heavy weekend, meeting with his three daughters and his son. What can it be like, plunging back into that? On the return trip he met a woman from Chile and a man from Mexico and preached to both of them. He also went busking in London Friday night with his fiddler. He said the people he met were mean, the Londoners. Still, he's game for adventure.

* * *

3:05 p.m.

Clean up paint jars, etc., in shed, and take most of them back into the house. Even when we come back at the end of January, we will not spend much time here. We'll move soon to South Ireland. O Krishna, I would like to dip regularly into *Bhagavad-gita* while I'm away. Sunshine glinting in this window a last time.

Srila Prabhupada says Krishna feels the pain of separation from us more than we feel the pain of separation from Him. Krishna *wants* to be with us.

The Supreme Person is above the fallible and infallible souls. His extended Visnu form is Paramatma in the heart. He resides in the spiritual planets. Please go on hearing if you wish to join Him. If you must doubt, then express it and struggle with it honestly. Pray and yearn for the clearing of doubt. Prayers are always answered.

I want to read in faith and let the tears of contrition come "tears because I could not attain pure Krishna consciousness. In the meantime, let me always sacrifice my life to attain the goal. All glories to the Lord of the universe who, in His original form, plays with the cows and *gopis* in Vrndavana.

"Whoever knows Me as the Supreme Personality of Godhead without doubting, is the knower of everything. He therefore engages himself in full devotional service to Me, O son of Bharata." (Bg. 15.19) Speculation and doubt are a waste of time because even after many years, those who indulge in it will fail to understand that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. So states the *smṛti*. Ayi Nanda.

* * *

Now my mind, like Madhu's, has shifted almost entirely to the task of packing and then departing. Within I feel the fear that turns me toward silent chanting. I let go, but not of Krishna. Nothing else counts. I go through the motions of having personal relationships, but my mind is more and more turned toward the spiritual seeking. I want "I *want* "I bypass material desires to find the core: Krishna consciousness according to my own capacity, something I cannot fully express except for in one sincere utterance of the Hare Krishna mantra and a submissive hearing of devotional literature.

* * *

The windows are fogging up, so I had better turn off the heat. It's already getting dark. but I still have time for a poem at least.

What about these half finished drawings? Should I just draw a hasty face out of the colorful chaos? Attach a holy word fragment, a *tilaka* stamp?

Yes, if I must. What else am I *looking* for? Express train to Krishna, express to my heart.

Drew a man with sunglasses, a raven, a blue heron, my skinny neck (do I still think I'm a young man? No delusions, please.)

Now, a poem. To clear away the fog.

* * *

Crying Out Loud
& Overcome the inner noise
The place is my head "a
noisy venue
where we used to do
where I used to be exploited
where I still dream
confused.

* * *

Now I can play a tune on a kazoo
or wooden recorder

* * *

I have a soul, a brand new
bag-a-roo

* * *

silent night/ silent boy "I
was alone all weekend and
can account for it
in pages
written
each one.

* * *

I want to *now*
be a devotee and
a real person to
bow down
put myself out
pull myself free

of sense grat "although
I can't yet claim perfect success.

* * *

My master wants it and
I want to reach
him. Don't hold me back

* * *

with light chatter. I'm on an inner road
and already can't find my way
the subterranean heart/
is sure hard
to find.

* * *

Squeeze, don't hurt, and
go to Krishna. My master said
when he took my money and
my mango, I looked dirty,
crazy
and I was.
But he remembers me,
I know.
O Krishna, Krishna, Krishna,
Lord of the *gopis*
I tried my best in this
my poem.

* * *

4:07 p.m.

This might be the last time I'll be in this shed. My bag is chock full of things I'm carrying back. If I have a clear head I'll come out one more time tomorrow. More songs from me, more music. I just wrote about how at the end I ought to kick off my baggage. I'm worried that I won't be able to renounce the paraphernalia and genres and literary expressions I've been using and accumulating. Think of Bhaktivinoda Thakura shutting the door, donning a *babaji's* white, and spending his last weeks completely internal. I don't have that kind of inner life, and I don't know if I will get the same warning. I know what it's like when the head closes me down. I'm sure Krishna will take me in one way or another. He's much more than a judge; He has already given me so much mercy. So much pain in this body "and then there's the mental pain and the world's pain. But as

Prabhupada says about great souls, they transcend suffering. They're not *of* this world (where all the pain is).

Of this world "green-grass Ireland, gray-blue sky, like Syamasundara. Keep walking and let blood flow and pound for Krishna. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

December 2, 5:45 a.m.

After an exceptionally light week last week "six days pain free "this present week has begun just the opposite. Last night I had sharp pain all night and it's still here.

Dreamt a company reissued a jazz album that had come out in the '60s. There was then a live performance of the sankirtana.

* * *

2:26 p.m.

Long hard day for me. Wanted to do things but couldn't because of the pain. It's like an ice cube behind my eye, or something prodding at a sensitive area. I have been told that blood is squeezing through a too-tight artery, but why should it hurt so much? Because I identify with the body?

The day used up. M. and I are entirely into the upcoming travel. All I can think about are the various details of our move "tomorrow to Dublin and then Friday to New York. Thank you, Lord, for these past two months. You have blessed them, I know. And I know this pain is somehow part of a plan to release me from birth and death.

I know nothing of my actual position, whether I stand a chance of going back to Godhead or have millions of lifetimes. But since the qualification is single-minded devotion to Krishna, how can I claim *that*? I do wish to be brought up to that position. You know how, dear Lord.

* * *

The Semi-Invalid Asks For A Break

(I'm afraid of heavy emotions, you know? What can I say?)

& Music is a trip, of course, and we don't have to be afraid if we have our own souls

are our own gurus "take ourselves to surrender

at Prabhupada's feet. We *don't* have to be afraid

but

this world is scary despite that solace.

* * *

The sunshine is out on this
my last day. I had better find Lord Krishna
in all I do.

* * *

No other way, friend, but these
music notes and
hoping my secret file
will allow
God consciousness to filter through
every inch of what I do.
You have to get into the car "you
don't know if it will make it or not "
then a plane "even more dangerous.

* * *

Lord, that prayer "Hare Krishna in chant "
is all I have within me I
don't know anything
else.

* * *

Scared, the inner man
hides, bluffs from the outside,
plays "guru retired,"
expects care in return
for wisdom lectures.
He behaves, they say, and they hope
he is taking them somewhere
to Prabhupada
at least.
He's respectable enough.

* * *

But I can't do it, wind down, lie
in bed, a pain in that place behind
the eye. I can't do all the things
I want or
have the things
others want. Even my mind
I can't keep under control.

* * *

"Go down, go down, why
don't you go down?" I coax the pain
or blood "whatever it is, the cause "but
it has it's own life
and will leave only until
the medicine chases it.

* * *

I'm half sick with pain "no strength "
but I'll tell you this:
when Krishna says, I will go
down.
So give this semi-invalid
with the jazzy soul
a break. "

* * *

3:25 p.m.

Last time in shed for sure. The door was swollen and hard to push shut. It has gotten quite cold, although this last day is bright with sunshine. Let me get through packing and my remaining aches. O Krishna, where are You? I ask Your forgiveness. You have given me my penance.

We all love the strong faith of a yea-sayer. O Krishna. I am a blues man and don't want to betray what You have given me. Please forgive my complaining, but I seemed to need to get it out. I know love will find its way into my heart by Your grace.

Walking up the green path, I see the collie at the top of the hill. He's sure going nowhere tomorrow, neither to Dublin and certainly not to New York in *this* lifetime. He can't even dream of it. The birds, of course, can fly, but Madhu said there'll come a time when I won't be traveling at all. I'm not sure when that will be.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

So dark. Water and trees, with bony fingers. The earth green.