

ELECTRONIC BOOK

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Every Day, Just Write

Volume 13

Put Yourself Out

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Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

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September 22, 12:34 a.m., Medallago (Villagio Hare Krishna)

The next three weeks are meant for lecturing and being a public figure in ISKCON temples. I'll also be writing.

Someone asked me last night in the packed temple room, after the Sunday lecture, "If thinking of service was as good as doing it, then why not simply attain pure devotion by sitting home thinking of Deity worship or of helping people?" I replied that while mental worship was certainly valid, only rare persons can perform it successfully without engaging their bodies. We need to put our bodies on the line and take risks. Also, only when the body is involved are most of us fully participating in the service. At the same time, we can pray for people's welfare. Use the mind in Krishna's service.

The man in the moon gets less room to live. Cooler nights and mornings. O pasta, O disciples who leave, O gurus who leave, O fortune-teller who predicts our eternal relationship with Krishna "the children stay up as late as possible to play and shout in the darkening Sunday-night sky. I pray not to fall down.

Dreamt we were in a hideout. Now awake, whispering my rounds.

"What does it mean," a gent asked last night, "that Krishna says He's everywhere and yet He is not there?"

I answered something, but what does it actually mean to me (in the Kierkegaardian sense)? It's not much to say I believe that Krishna expands everywhere, yet maintains His eternal personality in Goloka. To believe in it so that I live that truth as the one dominating idea of my life "I wish I had such purity of heart to actually surrender to and think of Krishna.

"This talk is for religious seekers," I said. "Please, people, don't waste your time."

And the bell within my head clanged. I defied everyone in the sense that I didn't care what they thought of my Sunday lecture. I simply did my duty. It was for Prabhupada "the basic lecture, the same examples, and the faith that delivering the goods is good for all. Thank you, Srila Prabhupada, for hearing me and seeing me in that temple room in our private communication.

* * *

This volume is about proving I can do it: I can keep up my nerve and continue the travel and lecture tour without running prematurely back to Ireland because of the pain or any other reason. It's also about proving to myself that I can write no matter where I am and what I have to do. I'll also prove that I can cancel a lecture when I feel it's necessary, that I can refuse to meet others when I just don't have the energy.

One reaches an advanced stage (advanced in age or in spiritual progress) where he doesn't really have to prove anything any more. Srila Haridasa Thakura reduced his chanting when he became ill. He felt bad about it, but Lord Caitanya assured him that he had nothing to prove. His perfection was already established. I haven't reached that stage yet. I have to prove to myself and to ISKCON that I can still get around, can function as an ISKCON guru, an ISKCON *sannyasi* lecturer, and a member of this movement. If they ask me to write a little essay on it, I'll do it.

* * *

#22, September 22
 Chill in chest it's good
 to travel
 in the morning.

* * *

Peat moss in Ireland and
 yellow vineyards in Italy
 this fall. About to travel to another
 temple.

* * *

The Italian-made Prabhupada
murti grows on me.
 I bow down and
 make a show before the
 Vaisnava *cognizetti*,
 this old, relic of a student.

* * *

6:30 a.m., FW

NOD says Lord Krishna "absorbed" Lalita and the other *gopis*. ViSakha, Citra "so many *gopis*."

Srila Prabhupada will teach us all we need to know. I'm on the GBC's side on that one.

Before I leave here, why not write a letter to my Godbrother-in-chief and thank him? Well, maybe I'll *see* him and it won't be necessary. I enjoyed talking with him. And never be condescending to younger Godbrothers. Only Umapati Swami is older than me now. Hayagriva's dead, and Sudama, Upendra "the list grows."

AIDS, Bright's disease, premature old age and death. Write faster, Daddy Long Legs is after you (Lawrence Sterne).

You'll get caught with your literary allusions, conceits and no love of Krishna.

* * *

8:40 a.m.

Heavy traffic. We heard of a devotee who wants to divorce his wife. Someone asked me to tell him not to do it since he is my *disciepolo*. No, I won't.

Heavy traffic, roll and stop. Want to ride in the back? Two extra rounds. I tell people about chanting. One ex-devotee, who now does intensive Zazen as well

as *pratyahara*, wants to talk with me. "I'm getting many realizations," he says. I say he can write to me. I'm interested in Lord Caitanya's approach.

Heavy traffic "white stripes on road. The traffic is being caused by the road construction. Two lanes and no shoulder on the highway for miles. Women are like a "Delhi *laddu*": he who has one laments, and he who doesn't also laments and wants one. Long line of cars. Venezia 149. La Pergola ristorante. Now the traffic breaking up. Madhu storming ahead. What was that dream? I alone wanted to avoid domestication. Hare Krishna.

* * *

We see from the back a pretty woman peddling a bicycle. I look the other way. A few moments later on Via Francesca de Assisi, we see a dumpy old woman coming toward us with her bicycle. M. speeds past. Fifteen minutes from the temple. Italian rhythmic speech in mind. I'll meet today if possible. Bring things up to my room. Welcome. Lunch. Talk. Smile. Get ready for tomorrow's class.

Should a man not be allowed to divorce? Should he be ostracized if he does? Is it simple or complicated? Tell him what to do.

I am a blank kiddo. Tell us again, how did your lecture go last night?

Oh, jes' fine.

* * *

11:20 a.m.

Arrived in Prabhupada-deSa. The book *Memories* finally arrived. We waited so long for it that its arrival is now anti-climatic. But I like the cover.

In the *sannyasi* room, M. and I decided to stay here a total of four full days. Eager to get back on the road. So I wrote a book two summers ago and now it is published. Am I writing a book now? No, I'm just writing. Srila Prabhupada asked John Lennon and Yoko Ono, "What is your philosophy?" She replied, "We don't have any philosophy. We just live."

Some devotees whose guru has left them took another guru, who also left, have approached me for guidance. They are stalwarts of sincerity. We are part of one family, so I help them however I can, not thinking, "Oh, but I may fall down too." How can I become the third? Maybe it's an ill omen.

Arrived to a *kirtana* in the front courtyard. I unloaded my stuff and came up here after going to the temple room. Again, the Italian-made Prabhupada *murti* and again I accept him. His eyes shine with something like tears. And the Gaura-Nitai Deities. I told the temple president, "Gaura-Nitai look friendly and effulgent." He told me something TKG said about the Deities when he was here three years ago. Oh, and will I be able to travel to Padua to speak to students there? No. "Here is the bathroom you can use." I asked for the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* with the verse for tomorrow. My life is simple, not challenging. I want it that way. I spoke with a Godbrother this morning before we left, while walking back and forth on the path. "Yes," I said, "I will try to live up to it."

Pleasantly cool, with sunlight glowing through the gauzy white curtains. The room has Italian wooden shutters. That means I can make it entirely dark even on a sunny day.

Letters from Madhava and Guru-seva at Gita-nagari. Put things in drawers. How to live here as a respectable person? Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

* * *

FW

Squirt move, skirt hoof, the collected poems of A. C. Stevie. Why do you say things so imperfect? I said that the editor used fifty percent of my memories. Where are the rest? Why do you . . .

He moved during the aftermath of WW II. He put his little articles into the drawer during peace time. He ordered another book. I can remember this and it won't hurt: I am protected by Krishna, the dearest person. We have to study *sastra* to understand that. Now, like a construction worker, dig deeper.

Aunt Mary and Uncle Sal "you a kid.

No, don't dig into *that* memory. Give up your shame.

When the fortune-teller stopped me outside the temple yesterday, two Hare Krishna *matajis* took photos of us talking. The fortune-teller was startled, "What is this. I go to speak to a person and they take a picture of us?" I waved to the photographers to please stop, but even by that gesture I acknowledged, "I am famous in this little cult." I don't want that.

Dina looks better this year. He is heading up a preaching center in Padua. Nanda has troubles, but I hear him laughing through the walls in the room with M. I will see him at 3. Trai dasa Prabhu is also here. I expect to meet with him too. He is handsome, quiet, reserved, and has been a fiery book distributor for many years. The halls here are friendly and the season perfect for jellyfish and parched cornfields.

And, I've heard, for falling in love with a girl and the ensuing miseries. M. outlined it for me: when the husband and wife have children, their relationship undergoes a change. She grows less attractive to him physically. He finds out that now he has to work hard for his whole life.

* * *

I put my drawing inks on a lower table. I really like to roll on the luscious colors "red, brown, green, and blue" onto the page with a brush. Krishna will forgive me that I don't draw *murtis*, but I make it up with words and *tilaka*.

Esgic brought me peace last night. I was nervous after the long lecture about having to suffer pain. Although the Esgic lulled me to sleep, the root of the pain stayed in my eye. I forget how intense it is from one headache to another.

Merton wrote in his diary that he wishes he could write less and then vanish completely. He means he wants to stop being interested in fame or even in achievements, and wants only to meditate on the greatness of God and his own absolute tininess. There is no need, he says, to be an author. But he knows he can't easily give it up, maybe not at all in his lifetime. Me too. We have to purify these drives.

The blessed pause when the translator takes my English and turns it into *pepperoni*. I speak again and he changes it into *belladonna*. I reach within and say something sporty

from New York. He changes it to *pastavazul*. And we all have a good time under the eyes of His Divine Grace.

* * *

2:47 p.m.

Meeting at 3 with Nanda. I already know what to expect: a bit of a beard, longer hair, determined on his present course, difficulty finding a job because for the last twenty years he has worked day and night for the Hare Krishna movement, etc. He wants sympathy and for me to hear him out. Okay.

But how supportive can I be? What can I *do* for these people? I have to care for them. Nanda was the first to take reinitiation from me in Italy years ago. Always jolly, always helpful during our visits to Italy. Now he is tired and wants a change. Life is hard.

* * *

5:30 p.m.

The verse for tomorrow is from Gajendra's prayers. He remembered the mantra he had learned in his previous life as Indradyumna from the sages. It was only Krishna's grace that allowed him to remember it now. There are a whole series of verses praising the Supreme Lord and explaining Him in terms of His being completely transcendental, the source of all, expanded by His energies, and so on. He's a unique person, the only one. "My" verse says that He is *Suddha-sattva*, above the modes of goodness, and can be realized only by those practicing *bhakti-yoga*. We know Him by serving Him.

We tend to be simplistic in our definitions of service and assume that anything performed within the temple building is service and anything performed outside it is not. Or we say that the temple commander is as good as God; if we follow him, we can know Krishna's qualities. It's not like that.

Then what *is* devotional service? It is not merely a state of mind. We must do something with mind and senses and deep sincerity. It has to be for Krishna. And keep on chanting.

Now about Gajendra's prayers, they are best offered as Gajendra offered them: by bringing the mind into the heart.

The verse uses the word *naiskarma*. That means action without reaction. *Yogis* try to attain action without reaction by negating everything, but negation doesn't free us from ultimate reaction. We must learn to act motivated by devotion for Krishna. Everyone knows these points already. I am sometimes scared before a lecture because what is there new that I can say? I am even more afraid that the audience will see through my repetition of the philosophy and know that I am speaking without devotion or realization.

It was nice, however, at the Sunday lecture that although I spoke the same things, I felt a desire to repeat my spiritual master's words and to convey them to the people. I need to like or love the audience to want to give them the best thing. I shouldn't worry so much that I am not perfect or even that I fail to fully realize the verse. I can only hope that the potency of the *Sloka* (in which I do have faith) will somehow be conveyed to them. I am meant only to be a humble instrument in the delivery.

Krishna, Krishna. I need to pray while I speak. During that Sunday lecture I was sometimes groping, trying to get myself to relax and not be afraid. Then I forgot that worry when I thought of Prabhupada.

* * *

Spoke with a disciple. I found myself concentrating on things that were really inappropriate for me to consider. He needs to get a job, and I felt like I was going through the want ads with him. I did ask him if he was chanting. He said he would never give up Krishna consciousness. Our philosophy is clear and simple. He has looked up old friends and found that they are into all kinds of philosophies, but nothing as convincing as Krishna consciousness. He is preaching to them. He would like to go to India after he pays off his mortgage. It drained me, and took away the heart of my afternoon.

After he left I felt dazed and unable to read, but I turned somewhat reluctantly toward the inks and paint brushes I had set out invitingly on the lower table. I started to draw to free my energy. I played a tape of Srila Prabhupada singing *bhajan*s. I wasn't looking for beauty, just whatever would come from my honesty of the moment. Something simple, childlike, even a little surreal was born, and eventually and I felt relieved. After that, I read *Bhagavatam*.

* * *

6:45 p.m.

A disciple of a guru who has left his service says she has had recurring nightmares of searching for her guru. She said his leaving is too hard to take. "How could he have left them and created so much resentment and loss?" she asks.

The guru-disciple relationship is not something anyone can abandon. His qualities won them over, and he helped and encouraged them in their Krishna consciousness. All that is true; he really did it. But then . . . he left them completely.

O Krishna, Krishna, You are the Supreme Person. You exist apart from matter. You are the dearest person and so great, so inconceivable, as Gajendra describes in his *aiSvarya* prayers. I pray to You, great as You are, the source of all. I am glad You exist and that I am not alone. You will never leave me because You are *acyuta*. Yet You are alive with Your devotees in the *adi-rasa* in Vraja.

O Krishna, please let me not offend Your devotees, especially the great ones, but even the little ones. I don't want to offend any living entity. Please forgive me for killing living entities. I do not mean to harm any creature. Please allow me to chant Your name in love.

I said we have to transmigrate from life to death, life to death. That is truth and it is profound.

May I do all right tomorrow when I speak about prayer, although I don't know prayer in my own life. When I speak, that is itself a kind of reality. I don't know what I'll say until I begin and I find my heartfelt glorification of Krishna.

September 23, 12:45 a.m.

Krishna is known by the *naiskarma* devotees. We can't demand to see God. Only one who loves Him can see Him. Even a big man in the material world can stay aloof from ordinary persons. We can gain access to him only in ways through which he makes himself available "public appearances, secretaries, or whatever. God is revealed to simple persons in this world, but by His own methods, not by our demands.

O cruiser,

bruiser, take it

easy man. *Memories* has arrived. The diary is gone. I mean, it is here, but . . .

What do you mean?

Would I prefer to write a series of books like Kierkegaard's? No.

These books are little life "the pains and days, who I met, what I ate, date books.

Be gone, O gremlin. I have to chant my rounds now and let the author take a back seat. Remove the pen from his hand and hand him a bead bag and his gratitude. O holy name.

God isn't revealed to fools. That's clear to me. The devotee is *naiskarma*, reaches *nirvana*, by which I don't mean zero.

Devotees shouldn't use the *Bhagavatam* class as a platform to speak something petty or to put down devotees or ex-devotees they don't like. Don't try to turn everyone into a strict temple devotee or say that the temple devotees are the only ones who can attain *naiskarma* and see the Lord. On the other hand, don't descend to mere liberalities or reform propaganda in the name of the *Bhagavatam* lecture "too little standard in the name of love and tolerance.

But a devotee here said once you leave temple service, they don't want anything to do with you anymore. They are too busy to care. They turn people away. Just work, and when you can't, throw him aside. Not many people join. A common phenomenon in ISKCON. Maintaining temples with those who have already joined and reaching out to the not-so-committed congregation.

There are also some good signs, but . . .

Anyway, this author's got to write his letters and tend to his head.

I'll give you a good story before the end of day, and a poem, and I will restrain myself from committing sin "a simple way of making expressions when the sun rises or before. Breakfast will be a delight. Soy milk? Oh, if they only had those berries.

Oh, lovely berries this autumn to stir my memories.

* * *

4:04 a.m.

I ought to be a spiritual elder because they are a valuable resource to ISKCON communities, so don't kill that bug that looks like a scarab crawling along my pillow. Leave him alone.

Now *mangala-arati*. Stand firm. No thanks, I don't want to lead the singing.

What? You *don't*?

No, thanks.

What's on your mind? Richard Hugo's collection of twenty-two poems, each written to a poet friend in the form of a letter. I don't have poet friends, but I have devotee friends.

Are they not poets? What's your problem?

Vietnam, Agent Orange. Desert Storm Disease, right-eye shelter. It's okay, I've just got a mild case. It's not contagious, but it means I can't operate full steam ahead, like a hard-driving business man or *sankirtana brahmacari*. Even Mickey Mantle . . .

Srila Prabhupada speaking to Dr. Arnold Toynbee, and the historian just says, "Yes, yes, yes," punctuating hundreds of sentences. He must have been very old when they spoke. Sometimes they chatted, but then Srila Prabhupada always returned to the topic of the Absolute Truth.

The historian asked Srila Prabhupada's for the Vedic view of Britain, Japan, India, America, in terms of trends in materialism, renunciation, and spiritual life. Syamasundara told him we have two centers in Japan. Toynbee was interested in trends, and we said that ISKCON was the answer to all ills. Srila Prabhupada asked him to become active in the Krishna consciousness movement. Naive? A joke? No, it is the way a preacher works. He solicits the help of everyone he meets. "Yes, yes," Toynbee said, yes, he knew the *Gita* purported to teach all people for all time.

Srila Prabhupada asked if the doctor was related to a Toynbee Srila Prabhupada knew in the Indian civil service. Maybe some connection. reminds me of Srila Prabhupada and Jung, or anyone with whom he talked.

"What do you think of life after death?" Srila Prabhupada asked. He was prepared to talk seriously and to cut through politeness to ask what they actually knew. They usually said something speculative. Although Srila Prabhupada may have seemed pushy or dogmatic, not willing to listen to the other person, or even simple and naive, he could speak ultimate truths clearly and simply and they could not.

* * *

That's the big difference
and why we followed him
aside from his personal
care for us.

* * *

Srila Prabhupada and his Western boys and girls, few of whom were scholars, and even fewer *yogis*. We were just people who followed him sincerely and who agreed to follow the four rules and chant sixteen rounds. I was (am) one of them.

* * *

23
You're getting pretty near the end,
aren't you? You mean the
23rd?

* * *

Yes. That's the problem. It's hard
with so many influences coming in
and me a pudgy, malleable
one. (Soul is not that).

* * *

You say "malleable."
Such words are full of innuendoes,
histories, pride and untruths.
You just want sex "we know
you people. You just want others to
join your movement, you
just want money. It's all
so impersonal and mercenary.

* * *

What else? Get it off your chest.
Well, I'm sick of these religious
temple devotees and non-temple
devotees and non-devotees
and temple-less topless
nightclubs playing jazz, rock,
Reggae, reagan "I'm sick.

* * *

But this is September in Italy and
it's fine. The cornfields stand
dry and yellow. Other crops still
green, and skinny motorbikers
complaining the economy is down.

* * *

I think Hare Krishna.

* * *

6:29 a.m.
That gold pen (expensive!) just conked out and I returned it to Switzerland.

"I'll tell you everything. Our business is based in Zawamby with a bank account in a town called Bremar, Germany. This town has an agreement with Zawamby and Senegal that it won't collect taxes from them until the year 2014.

What am I supposed to do with that secret?"

* * *

Don't tell. Or tell it as a lie
a poem. Don't lie in bed
with anyone. Oh, I won't,
I prefer to be alone.

* * *

I'm a eunuch "an asexual person
who shows up at Vedic festivals
and by dancing and singing Hare Krishna
collects donations. Believe it or not,
Swamiji put this into the
play about Lord Caitanya he
wanted Hayagriva to write.

* * *

In NYC, summer of '66,
hot streets, Swami
was there better'n
Miles and Marion
Brown "a million
times better.

* * *

10:26 a.m.

Spoke with Trai dasa Prabhu immediately after the lecture. It was too much and pain developed. I went to bed, but it hasn't gone away. Neither has it increased. They had no translator giving me pause, but translated simultaneously while the devotees listened on earphones. I indirectly told the temple president I preferred the other system. "No," he said, "this is better because you speak twice as much." He admitted I may have spoken too fast. "Speak a little slower," he said. I can't. I'm from New York City. A translator forces me to slow down, but they don't want that system.

Agreed to do an initiation on Thursday morning. Hare Krishna. No need to do a second program today. Relax. Sunshine filtering through the trees (leaves mainly green, but some yellow) and through the long glass windows and the light gauze curtains. No one is demanding anything. They talk in the next room with Madhu. O Krishna . . .

In the class I spoke of my own feelings about *hari-katha*. Krishna is inconceivable, and so many things are hard to understand. Yesterday I tried to read, but I was too distracted. It requires intellectual study and a special receptivity. If we don't lead a life conducive to Krishna consciousness, we won't be able to assimilate this information. One man was looking at me so intensely that I became embarrassed. He seemed to be expecting something great. We need to listen with devotion.

* * *

11:30 a.m.

On closer examination, I see many leaves are yellow. Classic church bells with heavy chimes. I'm not free. I mean, in this body. The big windows don't close, the fax machine doesn't work, in Madhu's room the car traffic passes right under the window and sends fumes into his room. I could go on and on: no hot water in the shower (I like hot-cold therapy for pain).

O right eye, you set the pace of my days. I have told myself that I don't have to run for the pain pills because pain is a natural condition.

No, I can't always agree with that. I feel too much that unease, the loss of my time. I could be reading about the Supreme Lord and preparing for tomorrow's class.

Do you think these bells are pleasant? They remind me too much of the Inquisition, Catholic cruelties, old bishops.

Trai dasa said that when he tells Italians he's from California, they almost touch his feet, as if he is from a holy land. They all want to go there. He's from San Francisco, and he says he must go to India every year in order to off set the West's modes. I told him I'm not going this year. We spoke of controversies that go on in Vrndavana. Some say Mayapur is more free of them, but the big institutional mood is still there. He wants to know the relationship between Caitanya-lila and entering Radha-Krishna *lila*. He said the six Gosvamis always talked of Radha-Krishna *lila*. An ISKCON *sannyasi* will be taking his disciples out on *parikrama* in Navadvipa, so he will go and hear the explanations.

* * *

When I was very young, an uncle at the dinner table imitated Donald Duck and I laughed uncontrollably. This morning I also laughed uncontrollably when Madhu was playing the harmonium but it made a squeaking sound with each pump. Some of the devotees saw me laughing and smiled. I tried to control it. I imagined that the squeak was the sound of the rabbit we hit in Spain and then I was able to stop. Then that thought brought pain. I tried to turn that squeak into a non-humorous, impersonal sound in my mind, then to forget about it altogether by riding to the top of "*Jaya radha-Madhava*." Just as I was finishing the last line of the chorus, a *brahmacari* came in with a new harmonium.

* * *

3:30 p.m.

In the purport to tomorrow's verse, Srila Prabhupada writes regarding *vasudevah sarvam iti* that a devotee's knowledge becomes "extremely intense and deep." In the past, I thought a writer should always be intense, and I liked intense music, but usually people are afraid they will become sick (burst a gut, get a headache) if they are too intense. They are afraid of their own depths. Yet there it is in our philosophy, such intensity as the *gopis* and *Vrajavasis* suffering separation, and Lord Caitanya's mood. That's our teaching. "There is no one but Krishna as my Lord; I am seeing the whole world as void without Govinda." How much more intense can you get?

Still nursing my wound, but it's milder now. I dreamt that Srila Prabhupada said of me that I fell asleep during some situation just as I used to when he would lecture. He said it, yet I felt he wasn't condemning me; he didn't mean it in the worst way. Dream of guru.

M. is in the next room. I asked him to send some faxes, but their machine is broken. I'm sorry I couldn't do more today. I come here and all I do is give a class in the morning. I don't even lead the singing. When he comes in I'll ask him for the *Caitanya-caritamrta* so I can recite the six symptoms of surrender. I owe to SK an angle on "subjectivity is truth," which I will use in tomorrow's lecture. That is, when Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita*, "Vasudeva is everything," this becomes intense and deep and true only when we can feelingly say "Vasudeva is everything to me!" Our world has to circle Him, our service to Him, in the *man mana bhava mad-bhakta* mood.

Can spiritual intensity be advocated? No one can force another. We can encourage openness. Toward the end of the lecture I hear myself sigh. I'm usually tired. *Govinda-virahena me*.

Days getting shorter; there are precious few left. I don't really understand that, I know. I keep ordering more legal pads. Italy has interesting varieties. Intense and deep I cannot be. I opt for sentences from the unconscious. A poet in *Best American Poetry of 1997* says of a poem and the images in it, "The ending surprised me. I never expected the highway, the dark, least of all that angel."

* * *

5:03 p.m.

Autumn auburn curls. Looking out the window, I see a *mataji* in a *sari*, her head uncovered. I turn away. Don't want to catch myself looking out a second-story woman at a window. I mean the opposite. People wouldn't understand the resolve it takes to be a devotee and why we do it. Again that phrase, "Extremely intense and deep." I spoke with M. about it and asked how an average practicing ISKCON devotee can relate to it. He said being deep could be simple, like the *brahmana* in South India who knew Krishna in essence. I also thought that "deep" could mean that our faith is never shaken. We could be simple, and depend on Krishna even in rough times. As for intensity, it doesn't have to be expressed through outward frenetics. Intensity can be quiet. Devotees tend to be

intense, and that's why they joined the Hare Krishna movement, which is so demanding. We are looking for peak intensity even in this context.

* * *

Cars go by, days go by, I read things on can labels, in poems, and I throw things out. I have my own poems. Then there are the newspapers, the highway signs, the medical directions, the maps, and amid it all, the *sastra*. I want to save my brain so I can read *sastra* and give it a sacred place in my life.

I couldn't do anything else today after 9 a.m. Hold on easy. At least it didn't get worse. I'm ready to give the class tomorrow morning. Then I'll have to prepare for the disciple's meeting tomorrow afternoon, and the next morning there is an initiation lecture. It's almost my total participation in the temple to give these lectures. Do I think of myself only as a visiting lecturer? I don't treat it as an art. I simply speak.

But I'm aware that there is an art to speaking. This morning I sensed that maybe I was talking down to the devotees, perhaps trying to amuse them. I told my Prabhupada stories (which occurred to me spontaneously) a bit too casually, too much for the intended effect of perking their interest. I was trying to find what they wanted to hear.

I told a story of a photo I saw years ago of George Harrison wearing a red shirt and posing with a fellow rock musician (black guy, famous, but I forget his name). They were standing with Gerald Ford when he was the U.S. President. How did they get to be alone with him? Because Ford's son had seen the musicians at a ski resort in Colorado and had invited them to meet his dad at the Whitehouse. I gave this as a crude example that although it's hard to see the President, if you become dear to his son, you can cut through the bureaucracy and be with him. Prabhupada brought us to Krishna. Krishna has perhaps never had to accept such unusual devotees, but when they Prabhupada recommended them, He received them too.

I also told the story of the Bowery bum who brought the toilet rolls into the storefront. Prabhupada said, "Just see. He was not in order, but he wanted to do service." Prabhupada accepted the service of those who were low-born, which means us.

No, I wasn't really trying to amuse them. I was just trying to add spice to my points. I wanted my lecture to be interesting and I want to relieve their tedium. Each audience carries a potential to become completely bored. One man was asleep even with the earphones on. I asked, "How do you say, 'Wake up' in Italian?" I embarrassed that devotee by my remark, and later in the day I dreamt that Srila Prabhupada said I was sleeping during *his* lectures.

* * *

Lord Brockway was in his eighties when he spoke to Srila Prabhupada. Listen to him speak vaguely about spiritual life. Srila Prabhupada comes up with the goods.

Tomorrow after my lecture, M. will go off with Nanda to a music store. He may be able to find the melodeon that he wants. Italy is a good place to make such purchases. Bless him and his music. Bless me and my prose. Get rid of pretension. Find a way naturally to be at least somewhat intense and not superficial. Be the genuine article.

Bonwit Teller, Marcus Neiman "no more distributing BTGs on Dallas streets for me, but I'm glad I did it. Whatever I did will never be lost.

* * *

6.50 p.m.

O pen, O stalwart skipping gold pen presented to me by Rupa-Raghunatha dasa, you don't work with cartridges, so I'm trying the ink bottle and plunger method. Goodnight, Irene of folksong fame. I don't want to see you in my dreams because my dreams get . . .

And so my pen, please write Krishna odes. Praise our spiritual master (skip, skip) heartbeat skips.

Just as I praised him in a lecture and through the questions and answers session, let me fall into sleep and praise him there.

Pen, I am willing to accommodate you, but you've got to work . . .

It's almost 7 p.m., and here I am in the *sannyasi* guest room at Prabhupada-deSa. Hey guys, I'm on a bona fide tour. Still proving I can do it. O Lord, please protect me.

Sing the song of Krishna consciousness intense and deep, then drift away and serve another day. It's all under control of the Unseen One who propels us forward, who makes everything happen (here the mighty pen ran out, so I'm finishing up with a cheaper, quieter model) "Adhoksaja.

I'll see You in my dreams
because you are everything.

Vasudevah sarvam iti "

but to me?

* * *

Someday
pray for it at any
cost.
Such a *mahatma*
is very rare.

September 24, 12:35 a.m.

The night is deep, but for me, sleep is over. Dreamt politicians in a wild place like Guyana were one after the other standing to make a spiel. We suspect they're all phonies and so dangerous. Stambha dasa becomes the young sheriff of the place, risks his life, wears two guns on his belt like in the Western movies, and I and others are less heroic. Someone gives us small, clay Krishna flutes to play, and we make astonishing sounds but no real music. Now awake.

Thinking of the holy *dhama*. I certainly have a date to go there in the future. A Vaisnava likes to go on *parikrama*. I suspect, however. I mean, for me to announce that I'll be somewhere means plenty of disciples will gather to be with me, the center of their attention. I prefer to write humble, artistic books instead. I teach not what Caitanya-lila went on here and there, which I get from books outside of Srila Prabhupada's, but other

things. I might even quote Western authors. Does that make me more Westernized? I try to keep my Krishna consciousness simple and pure by maintaining my ultimate faith in Srila Prabhupada. Some think I'm trying to supplement Srila Prabhupada with such Western quotes, but I'm not. I'm preaching, seeing insights, using them to serve. I am no independent branch of Vaisnava research into Western culture.

I have my *Bhagavatam* notes ready for today's class. Srila Prabhupada quotes the verse *bahunam janmanam ante* and I have something to say about that. *Bhakti* is the highest form of *knowledge*, you see? You give up dry *jnana* for *bhakti*, but *bhakti* is *itself* knowledge if it is *Krishna tattvata*, spoken in truth. rare is he who knows Krishna in truth.

Pick out *bhakti* verses of *Bhagavad-gita*, then read 'em and weep.

Pray in faith. Faith in a pen that works. I'm retiring the gold one again, it skips when I have so much to say. I am intense (not extremely) and deep, and the pen fails me before my words do.

* * *

Oh, I'll have an art show
of the turnips and intestine-
shaped things brown and green
by SDG because I am better
than others, I use the right and the privilege.
"They are trying to get the gurus,"
said the GBC sheriff,
warning us. They say we poisoned
Srila Prabhupada and we can disprove that, but
who can put off the doubts
in himself, in all gurus, in all
GBC, in all ISKCON?

* * *

It's a dangerous time and I am a prime target. They come after you, and *maya* also tests. This old horse . . . May she leave me alone.

I'll have to die for my honor. Am I willing? Like JFK and Robert Kennedy and Buber and Luther and Gandhi "

Oh, them. I am for thee, Swami. I wouldn't want to die for the right to be worshiped by people who demand the wrong things from me, but I may have to die like that anyway, right?

Shot by a bullet or
a malaria bug, despite the preventative medicine.

Anywhere, any time.

So write your song, don't mislead others, keep a low profile,
and pray in your van. Speak enough to leak through the day,
a common man.

* * *

Srimad-Bhagavatam is the source
 not of our woes but of truth.
 A profile and an animal
 a circle, a Miro and
 star, crosses, loops
 and Here she is, Miss
 America and Italy growing old
 and I save the day
 with Vaisnava *tilaka*
 on the forehead of the hero
 who is morrow,
 Edward Murrow
 and Saty stealing home!

* * *

4:15 a.m.

Prove you can do it.

Prove you can resist material desire.

Prove you can lead the *mangala-arati* singing and not forget the words.

Prove you don't have anything to prove to yourself. You already are what you are.

Prove to me that you can endure a headache, come out on top, or at least come out humble.

Prove you are the Swami's student.

When the going gets rough, prove you are tolerant.

Although you have given hundreds of *Bhagavatam* classes, prove you can do it again, today.

Prove you can fight and make peace.

Prove you can swallow your critical nature.

There is nothing else to prove. Prove you can preach and face these tests.

* * *

9:17 a.m.

Another lecture done. Crowded lobby afterwards. Gray-haired Madhvacarya from France tells me there is hope everywhere in the world for Krishna consciousness "including France. He faces the troubles, but sees the good. He says he favors the conservative view of ISKCON, GBC, preaching "that there is no other way. It's refreshing to hear him express his hopefulness. He drove two or three days to get here (got lost in the Alps), and may leave soon to attend an ISKCON meeting in Germany where they will discuss France. He said the devotees are afraid to preach in France because they think people don't like them. It's not true, he says. Someone else and someone else "all these voices. I talked while holding my *danda*. Said, "Srila Prabhupada was extremely intense and deep in Krishna consciousness."

"What hope is there for me to be like that?" asked Jaya Govinda.

I laughed. Another man from Greece asked, "Do we love God and automatically love devotees? Or by loving devotees do we love God?"

I replied as best I could.

Prabhupada, GBC, Narayana Maharaja. "They want to break up ISKCON," someone said.

Oh, boy. Now I am alone, but the voices vibrate from the class and from the floor below. There are many devotees here. Madhvacarya said they have a good preaching spirit in Italy.

"Yes, I just came from Spain, and it is good there too, not like France." But my words are just chatter. Spain to me means "*la casa del arroyo*," the house by the stream, the giant cypress, the full moon, the room upstairs . . . What do I know of the preaching there?

This afternoon I will speak to disciples. I want to express my condolences to those who have recently lost their spiritual master. Honor his memory and my own honesty. I was at Isola d'Abarella when it happened.

Say music hath charms. Say the swans on either side of Srila Prabhupada's *vyasasana* "the sailing *vyasasana* in the temple room. Prabhupada and Gaura-Nitai. Calm down and maybe paint, rest, repair "you're okay.

Where is your poem?

* * *

10.15 a.m.

Don't want to make a rah-rah loyalty speech. I'm tired of the rhetoric required to beat the drum. I want to speak no more words, give no more counsel, take no position "I've had enough. But I can't tell them that. Then prove you can do it, another initiation lecture with yourself as the center. Act humbly. Don't play up that you are the guru link.

Then what?

Prabhupada.

Two ladies want initiation. I'm the father. reach out, compassionate one, to answer their questions. You say you're tired of playing the part and want to be left alone, want a day to yourself without having to lecture, finding again the theme of your life. Intense and deep with Srila Prabhupada to always speak about Krishna and to press the point: look for deepest dedication. O Krishna.

Yawn, sigh, lie back. Not possible now. I have to tell them first what to do.

Then be like a cockswain in the prow of a racing hull calling through the megaphone, "Pull! row! Come on! Let's Go! Don't give up. Keep the time. Pull harder! Never mind the pain and the objections of the mind. For the honor of the team, pull hard on your oar!"

Yes, I'll regroup.

* * *

24

Beauty *donna* in the sun,

dappled cars go by the long
windows. I'm a Hare Krishna
prisoner in the *sannyasi*
guest room.

* * *

I complained that I ran out
of steam temporarily. You
nondevotees (poets
especially) don't know us.
You know the men with the
shaved heads? Well, I just
shaved up clean "do it
every two weeks before
EkadaSi.

* * *

Now I'll get back to my
inspiration, back to my
second and third breaths
needed to speak to *disciplos*
to initiates and Godbrothers
and to . . .
God, God the
Witness Indwelling.

* * *

Prabhupada, the guru
on the swan-carrier
vyasasana, wearing a
locket with photo
of Bhaktisiddhanta
Sarasvati Maharaja.

* * *

Prabhupada, head of GBC,
member (chief) of ISKCON,
our well-wisher.
Cliche?
No, it's real to be
submissive and intelligent and
to glean the truth.

They nod their heads
 assenting or asleep whenever
 I make the familiar point.

* * *

12:31 p.m.

Hello, folks. This is the gold pen. I'm okay. You've heard bad things about me. They call me "yellow stool," "wasted money," etc. A guru's trip. But I scratch loud and appeal to the ear.

Surgery. Pen tips. Lunch at any moment. Head can't turn around three hundred and sixty degrees to see.

* * *

From France and Villa Vrndavana devotees
 come to North Vicenza while
 Sats was there, he hasn't
 dropped out yet vows to
 last until death in his
 seventieth-eightieth year, and wants
 only to hear a little old-
 time memory as recompense and
 not have it held against him
 at end of life when he
 wants to go to Krishna
 (back home, back to Godhead).

* * *

The pen tells the truth
 or says *something*.
 Sridama is gone,
 his ex-wife back.
 Another wants a divorce.
 The devotees turn
 cold when we deviate.
 "What else is new?"

* * *

3:05 p.m.

Disciples' meeting soon. A tall man with long hair tied back in a ponytail has traveled to see me. I'll repeat some of the things I said to a smaller group in Medalago: offer condolences to those who have survived the latest tragedy; raise the question, "What can I offer you in a relationship?" In Medalago I started with what I couldn't do. I can't give

personal meetings, can't make day-to-day decisions for their lives. I can give my writings. I can keep myself fit for them (so I don't become a casualty). I can also encourage them to remain fit. They shouldn't be casualties either. Then answer a few questions, such as to discuss the role of the *Siksa-guru* in ISKCON.

I don't have all the answers in a neat, pretty package. Such packages are not always even available. M. and I plugging away. I drew a picture of a runner with a big beast in pursuit close behind and labeled it, "Pursued by the obligation of giving the next lecture." When I do get back to my home base, I should face the aloneness and not think I need to go anywhere. I am meant to staying in one place.

I feel uncomfortable to be the center for these people, to open myself up to worship, guruship. They have depended on gurus in the past who have let them down. Now I say, "You can depend on me. Revive your spirit of worship because you need it." It is an undue pressure on me. I prefer to be out of the spotlight. Let them internalize it. That is real and better. The inevitable pomp and falseness of looking up to someone. I'll have to endure that tomorrow at the fire *yajna* where all eyes will be on me. But maybe my words can guide their eyes to Prabhupada.

I was thinking, "You can't talk about loyalty to Prabhupada. That's just another tired theme. It has become something *every* ISKCON lecturer says. Speaking it again can even have an opposite effect when it is spoken without inspiration or with impure motives. Perhaps I can speak the truth that we all face more: we are completely dependent on him. Let me feel it myself.

* * *

6:23 p.m.

A man gave a talk in a darkened room to disciples. It was the same sort of thing. They didn't have many questions. They talked about how they could read his writings. He said he has a permanent obligation to visit Southern Europe. He said something about idioms and language, but it didn't go over well. He thought of saying, "My writing also has a literary dimension. I am a literary artist, you see, and I write literature. It would be good if you could appreciate that. Don't think of the books merely as a way of instructing you in the doctrine." But he didn't say it. He kept it in the mood of a guru with his disciples. He said that Prabhupada told him at the time of his own initiation that whatever he had learned he was now obliged to share with others. This person, Satsvarupa, feels his field is to preach to Srila Prabhupada's followers.

He was matter-of-fact about this. It is his duty. Please write to me, he said. I can't read minds. I need to hear from you or I'll think you have lost interest in a relationship with me. What can I offer you? I am not a great soul, don't know Krishna intimately. Someone asked, "What does it mean that we should chant like a child crying for the mother?" He answered that and also explained the nature of the *Siksa-guru*: he shouldn't teach differently than the *diksa-guru*.

So what next? What will you prove next?

I'll prove that I can do an initiation lecture tomorrow. I've got a good talk lined up. I'll speak on Cc. *Adi* 7.72, where Lord Caitanya said His guru called Him a fool. He obeyed His guru and always chanted the Hare Krishna mantra. We should follow in His

footsteps. Then I'll read the glories of the holy name, and how the guru wants the disciples to chant and dance and to go out and preach. Then I'll read the ten offenses from the list in the purport to *Adi* 7.73. There, inattention is mentioned as the seventh offense.

Looks like three to be initiated tomorrow. I'm afraid. I don't want to fall down. It could happen to me. I'm not above it. I pray to be protected. When I was asked about how chanting is like the cry of a child for its mother, I said we should call out, "Help!" Mother Hara will help the child and unite him with Krishna. O energy of the Lord, O Lord, please engage me in Your service. He's the mother. He's the father.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, the cry of the child. I call out for help. Please don't let me fall down. I sometimes go alone to practice *sadhana*, I said, and if you are following me, you should do that too.

"But what if," a woman asked, "your service makes you neglect your *sadhana*?"

Be in control of your own life. Don't let that happen. What kind of service is it that can make you neglect your most important service?

"What if we need to get in touch with you urgently?"

Don't try. I'm not on e-mail and don't want to be. Become trained by the spiritual master and learn how to obey him from the heart. If you need help, consult guru, *sastra*, and *sadhu* and you'll know what to do.

I want to know, I

want to know.

Sigh,

sigh.

He is sighing

for Killarney and

Lake Erne,

Lough Derg,

Lough Erne and lower Lough Erne

his seat at his desk

looking out at the lake. There

he'll read books and worship Srila Prabhupada

and walk to the shed and write.

September 25, 12:36 a.m.

Can you mail something safely from here? Can you stop harassing people with the pressure of deadlines? Can you be free of karma in this lifetime? The *sastras* say that one can realize love of Krishna by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra. If that is not happening, it's due to inattentive chanting. We know these things. We reread them to help our mind focus on the point and to enter real Krishna consciousness. Often when we read the Krishna conscious doctrine conveyed in my own books, it seems dogmatic. I seem to be establishing policy. Looking for less than objective.

Gold pen skipping. I refilled it with ink, although it was already full. I tell you, if it continues to skip I simply won't use it. You readers may have liked this pen's character,

but I'm sorry. If someone doesn't work in this movement, we have no use for them. We simply throw them aside. There, it happened again. I'm going to have to drop this fellow.

I was saying Krishna consciousness up here is dogmatic. I'd like it to flow more from my life, even though that means admitting doubts or failures.

Anandini "a name of Radha. I'll give that one out today. Won't emphasize the guru but the disciple. We are all disciples of His Divine Grace. Therefore . . .

But I can't disappear entirely. I have to do my service. When I dance, I can't keep the veil.

This damned pen "there, rejected.

Even at this hour, sounds of the world passing.

"Simply by chanting the holy name of Krishna one can obtain freedom from material existence. Indeed, simply by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra one will be able to see the lotus feet of the Lord." (Cc. *Adi* 7.73)

But in Chapter 8 I think, "Where the glories of Panca-tattva mantra are described, we are told that when you chant Hare Krishna it may not bring ecstasy. That is due to offenses."

"Lord Caitanya's spiritual master instructed Him, therefore, that one must read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* regularly with scrutiny to gradually become attracted to the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra." (*Adi* 7.73, purport).

"The essence of all revealed scripture and all knowledge is present when one addresses the Lord and His energy by the Hare Krishna mantra."

We have to realize that the name is nondifferent from Krishna. We understand this only by His mercy. We can't wrest the understanding from the name by force. We have to beg for it, be attentive to it, stop our offenses, and pray, "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare." Fancy footwork won't help you.

All right now, send this report to headquarters. I'm sorry I harassed co-workers. I'm guilty of that "creating pressure in people's life.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

I am sitting here looking at the typewriter and thinking I don't want to write. What would I rather do instead? Cuddle a pud?

You old-timer, you rough-rider, I know you. If you get started writing you'll find your way.

Just wrote a letter to a twenty-year-old fellow, Bhakta Valerio, who was once a writer but who now finds it difficult to write. He hasn't found his voice as a devotee. It's like starting all over again. He thinks his previous writings were all based on false ego. I thought like that too and destroyed them all. Now I can write for Krishna. Give him advice.

This is an auspicious hour. It seems I should use it for chanting or reading. Decided not to go to the temple this morning for *mangala-arati*, but to preserve my strength for the big show later. Meetings later in the day too. Sailing through the Med.

Pilots, pens, sky pilots, poverty and war. Lord Brockway said such things have to be combated and it's not simply a lack of God consciousness that causes them.

"No." Srila Prabhupada was adamant. "It is *only* due to God consciousness."

Prabhupada gave the example that people speak such high concepts of brotherhood, yet they slaughter animals. They kill them because they lack God consciousness. I agree.

That was in the old days and we surrendered willingly then. These are new days and we love him, it seems, in a different way, not with the same youthful passion but with the passage of years, over the long-term. SK speaks of contending with God. Abraham had such a hard order to follow to sacrifice his son, so he had to contend with God, had to surrender to His will, which seemed to him absurd. But he was willing and bore God no grudge. God was testing him. A great devotee passes the tests cheerfully, as Prahlada Maharaja and Bali Maharaja both did. I lag. Valerio wants to be a poet if possible, but how to go about it? I told him and I still have so much to learn.

Pull and push, shove and dig. I am up at this hour to work. *Prakrti* means my head and its veins and blood, those trigger mechanisms in the mind, nerves, and environment that set the headaches into motion. Good Madhu. I said, "I don't want to harass my editor with deadline demands." Then met with Annalisa, to whom I will give the name Anandini. Talk with Namamrta, because I will give her *gayatri*. Both husbands approve.

The governor of Massachusetts doesn't know we are here, nor Clinton, but perhaps some FBI or CIA or World Search Service has me electronically pegged. They must know I'm not dangerous enough to be watched. Eyes on the Krishna temple in Vicenza. Krishna knows we are here. He is ever-vigilant and has countless agents to take care of surveillance. The CIA and men like that don't know that they too are under surveillance by God's agents, the sun and moon, the air and Yamaraja's men. We are all being watched and also cared for.

Prabhupada lecturing in Calcutta in 1973 on NOD. Madhavananda dasa reading. I hear the crows in the background, and the Indian cars, buses honking on Albert Street. Srila Prabhupada says the tendency to practice Krishna consciousness is natural; it simply requires to be a little organized so it can come out.

Somebody asked, "Do you get a headache the day you perform initiation because you take the karma?"

Not necessarily. I might get it on another day. You never know.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

He fell in love. really, the *brahmacari*, twenty-four years old, wrote me an eloquent letter saying how he is in love with a *brahmacarini* and wants to marry her. It's not an ordinary love, he said. He said that marriages break up because men are not sufficiently in love with their wives, and vice versa. He's so happy to be in love and that he feels no lust for anyone. Bliss. He admits that if his proposal to marry this woman is denied, he would feel distressed.

What could I do but give him permission to ask for her hand in marriage? I also told him not to get emotionally carried away. Otherwise, when the infatuation wears off, he might suffer some disruption. (What if she refuses him? What if she turns out to be not so ideal?) Perfect love is only with Krishna in the spiritual world.

I too would like to fall in love, but with the holy name. I miss my Prabhupada *murti*, whom I left behind.

I may not feel like writing sometimes, but that's another love.

All right, Krishna,

Krishna, the
 Beats are dying out like flies
 now. Baby boomers still going strong but
 many of them dropping
 too. What to speak of the WW II veterans. Are there any WW I veterans left? The last
 Civil War widow is dead. No question of survivors of the American revolution or
 contemporaries of Beethoven. The bop musicians of the '40s, '50s, and '60s are mostly
 dead or too old to blow their horns. Old gray-haired guys can't hack it anymore. A new
 wave-generation and
 always eternal consciousness
samsara next
 lives.

We have a certain life duration, but it can be cut short suddenly in Kali-yuga, the
 world is so hazardous. Merton got electrocuted. It behooves me to write as fast as
 possible

and chant and pray
 and love

the name. No room for clever replies. "Do you have any children?" I don't really
 know myself what it means to cry like a baby, helpless.

I don't even *want* to cry like that, a baby who wets his pants and is afraid of dogs and
 is bitten by mosquitoes or pricked by diaper pins or worse. *I don't want that*. I want old-
 man civility, sitting back in a rocker, don't-bother-me peace.

And that's *my* problem. How can I expect to know what it means to cry, "Lord, please
 reveal Yourself. Give me attention to Your holy names. Give me a drop of Your nectar."
 I am just too clever and theoretical, and sooner or later it will catch up with me. We all
 know when that will be.

Face yourself and
 keep dipping into the holy scripture.

* * *

25

Initiation day. Not for me "I just
 give them out. I already
 became disciple of the great
acarya 31 years ago. Now
 I'm his castor-tree disciple
 turned guru.

* * *

They say I poisoned Prabhupada,
 minimized him,
 treated him wrong, lied
 to his face, disgraced him,
 tried to replace him,

I'm corrupt at the core, deserve to
be pictured in *Monkey On A Stick*.

* * *

I say "Prabhupada"
when I'm sick or idle
or embarrassed, recalling.
"Prabhupada," I utter,
my prayer spontaneous
when sitting on the bed,
suddenly "Prabhupada."

* * *

9:52 a.m.

Prove you can start a fire on your first attempt (with camphor and dry twigs). Prove you can chant aloud the *mangala-acarana* verses by reading them from the book. "I am not a guru, but a servant." Prove you can feel it. Then give out names. The women, some young-faced, some I thought younger but see now they are fading and like men in that respect. We are all imperfect. I laugh at myself as I feed the fire with pieces of wood and chant "*Svaha!*" Oblations by my imperfect self.

Prove you can do it: dance-walk around the fire when it's over. You can pick out burning embers and crush them, soak them in ghee, then hand them over to be smudged on everyone's forehead.

Prove you can write not only of yourself but of others, although sometimes in a roundabout way. The main target is myself because I need so much to improve. Hit yourself with jokes and knowledge and service.

Help Jaya Govinda become firm in his decision. Encourage, help, inquire. Wounded ISKCON Italy is carrying on. It's not as bad as France, Kalavati observes. Save France.

Not me. I'll be bypassing this time.

Burn the bananas, burn the wood, toss in the grains. Make a tape of the lecture. Somebody please remember the wonderful references to Lord Caitanya's ideal behavior as the disciple who thought Himself a fool before His spiritual master, who never abandoned His guru's order to chant Hare Krishna and to preach.

They carried the Prabhupada *murti* from the temple room to the big hall where we conducted the *yajna*. Then he was carried back by two *brahmanas*, and as I followed him, it was like a dream, "Prabhupada is back, "They are carrying him, see?" I did have a dream like that once of Srila Prabhupada appearing after his disappearance. We have his association and don't need another's.

"Sentimental devotees," he said, "go outside of ISKCON."

* * *

12:12 p.m.

Then what happened? After the fire *yajna* I met with Anandini and her husband. I asked her if she liked her new name. She said, "I will learn the glories of my name bit by bit." (She said this through the translator). During our talk, I began to feel a right-eye twinge and had to excuse myself.

Then?

M. applied Swedish bitters to my head and wrapped it in cotton. It was a tenderness on his part. I drifted off to sleep, hoping to ease the pain. I woke up feeling better and took a hot-cold shower from a bucket.

Scientific farming going on in the field we can see from the window. Tractor cuts down the grain one day, separates it into wheat and chaff the next day, then burns the chaff, then spreads manure. We will be gone before we see it all.

I told Anandini and her husband, "Life is short. We should endure inconvenience and follow our vows so that at end of life, at least we can please Krishna in that way."

* * *

Preparing for my last lecture in Italy:

The subject of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse (8.3.13) discusses the nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When Srila Prabhupada lectures he often says, "Try to understand." We have to make the effort. Don't argue or be unsubmitive. If we have questions, inquire. Perhaps some can't accept his authority, but the *sastra* orders us to give up our challenging attitude. That requires accepting the fact that we are tiny and our knowledge and experience defective.

Accept *brahma Sabda*, "hearing from authority," Srila Prabhupada says. We have to keep hearing. "Do what is favorable for your Krishna consciousness." Don't hear from nondevotees. "Try to understand." Listen patiently to his examples, and accept them even if you cannot fully comprehend all their implications.

I'll examine words from the verse, such as *ksetra-jnaya* (the proprietor of the body), *sarva-adhyaksaya* (the superintending managing one), *atma-mulaya* (the original source of everything). Then the word that is perhaps the most important, *namah*, "I offer my respectful obeisances." We study in order to surrender to Krishna, *vasudevah sarvam iti*. I could go further and philosophically define God, but I think I'll switch subjects, find a tape excerpt of Prabhupada speaking on the preaching mission. I want to hear Prabhupada speak boldly, clearly, and simply. He was speaking in Calcutta in 1973 and saying that the activities in the house next to the temple are similar in many ways to those in the temple. In both houses there is cooking, eating, cleaning, and organizing going on "but in one house everything is done for Krishna and in the other Krishna is forgotten. Prabhupada then offers that everybody can be Krishna conscious in their own home, and that the ISKCON temple is just an example. When I say this, maybe a few devotees will be surprised that I have switched the topic from the original *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse. I think most of them will just go with it.

* * *

5:45 p.m.

You are simply fallen. Fallen. Fool distracted trying to get away with murder. Will be remembered for good acts, meaning the Swami accepted your service, but you can't say you achieved great things on your own. Now I'm thinking how to explain the word *namah*. It's the most important word, perhaps, in the verse. The other words describe God as the source of all. The souls also come from Him "spirit and matter "and He's also the witness. Try to understand.

Because of His wonderful qualities, we offer Him our obeisances. We can't understand Him, so our surrender isn't really an intellectual one. We think of Krishna as *aiSvarya*, worshiped. By bowing to, worshiping, and acknowledging His greatness, we don't have to lose sight of His sweetness. Our position is to offer Him homage and at the same time to know the secrets of Vrndavana. It's an inconceivable combination and Srila Prabhupada has given us exactly the right mixture to achieve it. Let's take it verse by verse in all its variety.

I wear two pairs of socks while others go barefoot. I get headaches while others are pain-free. I drew a picture of the statue of Liberty holding a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and a liberty pass from the Navy ship that visits my dreams.

Namah, I offer by obeisances. I worship Him, the sanctum, the greatest, the one who caused Dhruva to become speechless. It was He by whom the *gopis* are overwhelmed. His beauty, the sound of His flute "they pray to the flute and sometimes insult it, accuse it of stealing what was meant for them.

Namah. Obeisances means love. I love the place where Krishna plays pastimes. When will He return? We worship Him. My meditation on the word *namah* leads me into a kind of duality between the *aiSvarya* and His sweetness. I can only resolve it by saying that the resolution is beyond me. Therefore, I can only take what Srila Prabhupada has given.

O Krishna, time is running out on this day and on every other. I performed the initiation for Namamrta and Anandini. Let them return to their temple. Let me and Madhu drive north. Let him buy his melodeon tomorrow.

Swedish bitters on the head and put him to bed. *Namah*, obeisances to Krishna.

The religion professor in Atlanta said something, then Srila Prabhupada said, "Yes, that is our duty to worship God." Prabhupada brings us to understand that we should offer obeisance to the one who creates the universes. He's the greatest and also the smallest. Surely He deserves our worship. Hare Krishna.

Sweet voice on the phone "heart-shaped brown ink, make it plain, please, plain vanilla soda with ice cream. Then offer it to guru and Krishna. Make it goodness, pure goodness, please. *Namah om*.

I don't want to degrade or trivialize anything. I want pure poems or mixed. *Namah*: offer Him obeisances with all eight parts touching the sand of Vrndavana or the temple floor. Thank you for this day and I'll look forward to the next.

September 26, 12:45 a.m.

Bow down actually. Are you looking for something on the floor? Embarrassing in public, in mud, mud puddle. Bow down, Mister. He said, "Why should I bow down?" It enters into the heart of the *sadhu* when a person bows to him.

"I won't bow down to any man" "but he bows to death.

Do it a thousand times like Raghunatha Gosvami. But you do it merely mechanically or even resentfully. "Why do I have to bow down to this man?"

Fast all day if you don't.

Bow down to Swamiji even if you don't feel it.

It's an outer gesture. Inner . . . like

a rod falling at His feet,

ask for mercy, to be spared "

Brahma's golden rod

Dhruva, boy,

Raghunatha in fear

tears coming,

You are

so great I can't see You or

touch You. You are so

effulgently bright, You're words so deep, I

can't understand Your gravity or purpose.

The *darSana*. We bow down even without feeling something overpowering "it's good for us.

Hear and bow, submit your mind, you rascal. Surrender, you tough atheist, give in, you bastard. MacDuff. Stop fighting and love the Lord.

Break down and cry.

And even good service mild

mind "no drama necessary. Bow

to the greater when you do His will.

Find happiness in His shelter.

At His lotus feet, the oceans shrinks to the size of a pit made by a calf's hoof.

I didn't sleep well. Stupid dreams of aged Dr. Alexander who'd been smoking pot for only the last two weeks and was trying to offer it to me. No thanks!

Couldn't sleep due to prolix of the moon,

phone call,

all of which bodes ill, or

not, but does not encourage

Rest.

SK praises the sleeplessness of those in anxiety. Will God give me His favor? But I want to rest sound and be healthy to chant and lecture. Sleep, *lethe*, dreams, care for body. I'll catch rest later.

Go now, bow down by submitting to holy names rule "hear this and not something else.

Sound of chanting, dry, quiet sounds. Know Krishna's name, sweet even when chanted by my own voice.

This September wind sounds like a cat mewling around the house. I forgot where I was for a moment, and woke to find myself in Italy, Vrndavana.

* * *

Madhu gave a free translation of *Canakya Pandita*: "If you are not sure whether to eat, then don't, but if you must eat, eat in December." To this he added, "If you must eat pizza, do it in Italy."

I've had excellent pizzas (with olives) three times so far here in Italy. I know it's not good for my digestion, but this is the place for it.

The good thing about leading the singing at *mangala-arati* is that I must enter the ocean of friendliness if I don't want to forget the words. I can't be cynical, and I can't let my mind indulge in many, many thoughts about nonsense memories. Here, I remembered how Gaura-Nitai are friendly. Lord Caitanya is my Lord. Their devotees are my friends. If I don't see it that way, how can I survive? I keep praying to Krishna, knowing that He gives me memory and can also take it away. In a Zen-like way I try not to concentrate too much, but to sail along, trembling, pretending that everything's all right. I know that even the Hare Krishna mantra is not something I can take for granted. I can sing it only if the Lord allows me. If worse comes to worst and I break down and can't utter a word, I can fall on the floor among the devotees. This is the best place for failure, this place where the devotees are kind.

* * *

#26

Madhu's away three hours drive to a town in Italy that makes accordions. What he wants is a melodeon. He's an expert musician and Prabhupada says talent can be used to please Krishna.

* * *

In M.'s absence Jaya Govinda is guarding the door. I'll go in and tell him he can do as he likes in Krishna consciousness. He's old enough, a man, and has done good *sankirtana* service. Why should he have to do only what others tell him since they themselves do what they want?

* * *

I may not say that so bluntly.
 I don't want to
 get caught. I
 just dreamt that
 two black and white skunks entered
 our house and woke with a start.
 Something's stinking, about to enter,
 and I'm afraid?

* * *

Pleasant weather this September 26
 in lovely-climed Italy.
 We'll heading north tomorrow
 toward October and Belgium.

* * *

11:32 a.m.

I've packed up my artwork and other things. Waiting for Madhu to return and put it all in the van. I am looking forward to getting on the road. I spend a certain amount of time in the temple, then move on before I become entangled in the local problems. Hearing this morning about the initiations Puri Maharaja gave and how those disciples may be covertly allowed to remain in the Italian temples. That was the beginning of entanglement for me. Time to move on.

Words free. Iceberg narrators. Don't let the words bounce off just anywhere and everything, but be strict. Jaya Govinda, I couldn't tell him that I couldn't use the jazz imagery in my writing pad. How would he understand? He has stressed his seriousness and his attempt to become actually attracted to Krishna. He's sober, a preacher.

Scheduled to go by 4 a.m. Good-bye, good-bye. We're on our way north and back to Godhead. Old men.

Krishna is the Supreme Person. I said we should bow down to Him. Even aborigines bow to the mountain. Only atheists refuse to bow down in the presence of the sacred. Bow and ask for service to the Almighty and the sweet . . .

I played the tape where Srila Prabhupada says the house next door can be converted to Krishna consciousness if the people would just offer their food to Krishna and chant His name. So, go out and preach to them. There are millions of people in Italy, and any one of them can come to Krishna consciousness. None of them even have to move into the temple. Whoever does choose to live in the temple, however, is choosing an advanced, surrendered route. No one had any questions or comments about that. Krishna is the way and the light. We are on the right path.

* * *

2:57 p.m.

Quiet and sunny. Devotees leaving for India. Only their words linger. Waiting for those who traveled here to see me to leave. Waiting to leave myself. Hoping to reach nightfall without pain.

* * *

Fear and Trembling is becoming tedious. I can't relate even to its basic premises: that Abraham, by his faith in the absurd, as ordered by God, was prepared to sacrifice his only son. By his surrender, he gained both infinite and finite. It seems important to SK that Abraham's son was returned alive. Arjuna was ordered to kill his relatives. Is that absurd? Does it require a leap of faith? He didn't see them rejuvenated in their own bodies. Their bodies were actually killed, and with faith that the soul is eternal, he made his offering.

There is such a huge gap between SK's passionate exegesis on the Old Testament hero and our *Bhagavad-gita* with commentary by the Vaisnava *acaryas*. Maybe I should stop trying to get something from *Fear and Trembling*. Be free of it and turn to prayerful reading of the *Bhagavad-gita*. That is what they want of me, simply that I be faithful to Srila Prabhupada, that I go deeper into him and follow his motto, "Just try to understand."

* * *

Sat and looked concerned, smiled, paid attention to what was said. Praised the devotees' good works. Didn't want to sound shallow, but to give my time. Someone said that I offer myself personally. That's what they want. I can't just put my *dhoti* and *kurta* out in a chair with a tape recorder of my voice. I have to be there, eyes twinkling behind the magnification of my glasses. "You don't look so old yet," someone said, but I'm faded yellow like the leaves. This sounds a bit acerbic (like Alice James' journal), but I'm getting it out so that I'll be with them mellow and tasty like the raspberries I asked for but never received. *Bon giorno!*

* * *

4:10 p.m.

M. back, didn't get melodeon, flurry of action as he and men start to load van. I spin wheels and get disturbed trying to tell him to do something he doesn't want to do. Pain beginning. He's had a long day. Let me back off, be mellow. Just be peaceful and don't try to control. I can't anyway.

Hare Krishna, I forgot to chant.

September 27, 12:43 a.m.

Tell us, sir, did the root (*mula*) of the right-eye pain stay all night? People don't understand and you don't want to tell them the whole story of your attempt to take only one Esgic per week and how you feel a sense of injustice: "It's unfair of you to come so late in the day and expect to meet me." But when I entered the room, I saw them looking even more tired, older, more ill, and I could see that I wasn't the only one who suffers in private.

Anyway, here I am, last morning in this room. Hope I can chant nicely. This is my "dear diary" to the world that never wrote to me, the simple news of Nature's tender majesty. Consider that I'm writing of Krishna conscious nature, dear countrymen. Consider that this is the story (subjective) of one struggling aspirant devotee (no, I didn't say aspirin), and that it has value as a quiet resource for your crisis management work. Judge me tenderly.

And you know, I like to free-write.
 He'll conspire by the fire (place)
 I'm honest as hell
 porkpie hat monk, black man's
 goatee is not a religious monk but
 plays music of God's grace that's
 a fact and I can see it,
 so maybe . . .

We'll give you a ride and view of the honest rounds. It's up to you (me) if I believe it. It's a secret what I mean. I am caressing the divine details in this Krishna conscious malted milkshake free of Berryman poems. A *Dreamsongs* equivalent.

* * *

12:57

Time to chant. Today will be travel notes, how the unconscious and conscious meet on the compass point.

* * *

Report in:

ETD 4:15 a.m. At around 1 a.m. I heard M.'s heavy footfalls and his *japa* in the hallway. I opened the door and asked him why he was up. He said he was being eaten alive by mosquitoes in Dina's room. He tried to put gloves on his hands and to cover his head, but then he was too hot. There's nowhere else to sleep. He says we can still leave on time, but he'll have to stop a couple of times to rest.

I tried reading some verses prayerfully from *Bhagavad-gita*. Fortunately, I found an old list I had which contained all the verses in the *Gita* which I felt were Krishna addressing us and were good for such reading. Worked on those.

* * *

6:10 a.m., Gas Station

On our way. Thinking ahead to pleasant Radha-deSa, where we expect to receive mail and other work, and to lecture more from the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. Glad for that.

On my way out of the temple Nanda told me that there was an earthquake in Assisi. "Sixty percent of the town was destroyed. Some monks were killed when the basilica roof fell in."

"Oh, my God!"

"Yeah."

Q8. Dame holds up a plate with a "*stereo portatile*" you can win. She wears a Q8 cap, and a guy with a similar cap holds up a plate with a big piece of luggage you can win. *Autogrill*. Pit stop and we are underway. We'll stop at 7 for breakfast, but Madhu told me that Jaya Govinda didn't come out of the temple on time with our meal. We'll eat whatever we have. Approaching the border. M. drinking hot tea. I'll ride in front now to finish my last three rounds. Earthquake in Assisi, but we're okay for now. That's how we live and die.

* * *

Autostrata sounds Italian
until we zoom loud
to start
on!

* * *

Sal uncle, Italian memory
Torino, to border
Rare you get stamped passport
always wondering
do they know we are devotees?
Always chanting distraction but
praying somehow, somehow.

* * *

Van stuffed with gear. Automarket. Ivrea. Fog on road. Albiono. Dina is old "left side crippled, he shuffles with limp, looks thinner "is he all there? I hope so. Burning inner flame. He's living in a preaching center in Pavona. Where? ramono? Pa "oh, forget it. Where Antony comes from. Pisa.

Aosta. Gandolfo. Padua "Padova. That's it.

Monte Bianco ahead. Underpass. We go under. Italy. Last views for the year. Good spirits, heart pumps, blood flows, car runs. M. seems okay. The world? I don't know. God's everywhere, even in this pen. Hare Krishna mantra means He's with you.

I go to show them a *sannyasi* guru who hasn't fallen. They get encouragement. Pray, and take nothing for granted.

M. saying *gayatri* with thread in right hand, steering wheel in left. No comment. roar on to Torino.

* * *

8:29 a.m.

Mont Blanc's razor-sharp, snow-covered peaks ahead. remember the tunnels? They're so dark you can't write in them. I used to pray through them in the old days. red, white, and blue French flag, green on Italian flag, picture of skier on back of trailer truck in front of us as we wind slowly up the snake-like turns on the mountain. No passing. Houses with railed porches, four stories tall, perched at the mountain's foot. Gorges. Pines. Sheer rock falls.

Policewoman at border looking at cars on queue as we cruise slowly through an empty lane, unstopped. Lights appear to flicker on and off in tunnel through Mount Blanc. We have driven it many times before. Halfway through this tour. Prove you can do it.

I wipe off *tilaka* in case French customs agents do that sudden stop and search again.

SOS. This is a long tunnel. On one truck I saw "Devil Transport" in big letters. Another said "SAT."

We're in Les Houches. Blue sky and French Alps. Aqueduct. Dried-out river trickling over gray rocks. Snake turns. Seven percent downgrade and an escape lane. "Use brake." Aire de la Fontaine. Keep going until noon.

* * *

#27

Hi fans. Hi literary hero.

Hi God. Hi Dad. Hi

Sats. Hi Prabhupada

Hello you others. Why don't
you leave ISKCON alone?

* * *

I'm in the back of the van, straining
at 95 mph. Madhu would go faster but
they built it to cut out
at higher speeds. All those BMWs
passing us.

* * *

A girl died at 33. She
hugged her Godsister and said,
"I'm afraid to die." The
Godsister learned something.
I read it in a letter from
the survivor, which I answered
by shouting into a Dictaphone

as we roared through France.

* * *

This is Sept. 27, tonight the clocks
fall back. Good "I can sleep at 7 p.m. without
sunlight. God, God "when I die like that
woman I hope at least
I have finished more writing.
The dying girl found comfort
but added, "You don't know
what it's like."

* * *

They said she entered
"deep peace," hearing *kirtana*,
Prabhupada.

* * *

Elf stop, 10:30 a.m.
M. says we'll stop soon. We both feel the strain. Making good time, though.

* * *

1:20 p.m.

Two kinds of EkadaSi pizza for lunch. Both crusts were extremely hard. The other
prep was an Italian one, a mixture of potato flour pasta and cheese. Glad to eat anything
offered to Krishna. *Gayatri*s slide by while traveling. Last night in bed with headache. I
let it go eventually.

* * *

We're going to travel more soon.
Swamiji, I'm trying to know you
where I can feel your deep presence
and identity "including the outer
meaning "but know you're
inconceivable.
More of that and plain allegiance by reading and staying in your movement.

* * *

2:40 p.m.

Go, Buster. Bored. Tired of riding and writing and lecturing. Tired of speaking things I don't realize or love, or that are best kept quiet while they grow. Nothing new.

And here I am, on my way to another temple where I'll be expected to yap wisely and inspire the others, even though they've heard people speaking all summer. Yegads. And I don't even like fiction.

Would rather explore. O Krishna. I am trying to face myself honestly, and the same *maha-mantra* whispered at a P-stop.

Look, he's got to drive so we can get there.

Persona: guru.

Persona: non-guru?

Persona fluu "fluu. The Vrndavana (and New Vrindaban) gardener who loves Krishna and Mert. He says no repetition for me, but maybe. If he could hear the truth, maybe.

He's just tired. Don't mind him.

Prove you can do it "why?"

* * *

3:40 p.m.

M. mentioned the good service I did in Italy bringing relief to disciples in their personal lives. He said on tour I have to put myself out physically (he means taking more medication), and I have to perform, but then after one such six-week tour, I can count on staying in one place.

I told him how I'm pushing myself to preach. I'm trying to be as sincere as possible when I give the *Bhagavatam* class, and sometimes I say things I prefer to keep quiet, that I want to nurture, such as about how I love Srila Prabhupada. If a preacher goes around saying, "I love Radharani!" it could soon degrade into a performance of something he actually once felt.

I need to find my second wind for Radha-deSa. Being able to write honestly as possible a few times a day helps. Push that further.

"Put yourself out," seems more to the point than "prove you can do it." Krishna will give me the strength.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

We stopped for the night south of Metz. It's a rather small P-stop part of an Elf gas station. As soon as we stopped, Madhu and I got out our calendars and revised the rest of our tour. We're shaving five days off it, yet keeping all of our obligations. We'll do three days at Radha-deSa, three days in London, and one day in Newcastle "if Krishna desires.

* * *

6.12 p.m.

Parked beside other cars and trucks for protection, but it's noisy. The highway is nearby, and the quick-shop store will be open all night probably. We will hear the

slamming of car doors, cars pulling in and out, but it will be peaceful. We don't expect a break-in, a shooting, or even a loud party in this transient situation. We're all travellers.

Read Merton's 1960 journal from Kentucky. He was finally allowed to live in a hermitage. He resented his abbot. Hare Krishna. Thomas Merton, a prisoner in his own monastery.

Read EJW 10 from last June when I had extended time alone. I was often doubtful whether it was the right thing to do. Now here I am on tour, eager to cut it short and to get back to the quiet life with no daily lecture obligations.

Glad I led *mangala-arati* twice at Prabhupada-deSa. The second day Gaura-Nitai wore orange and gold morning outfits "beautiful and friendly."

Merton read books like Plato's *Phaedo*. He said he didn't agree with all of it, but he must read it and love it. Studies. I don't study. I get tired of it all.

Parody.

Hare Krishna. Don't get on that free-write ride unnecessarily. Why not *think*? Merton never "free-writes." Always thinking, he couldn't seem to play with words. But he did abstract paintings and calligraphies.

M. phoned Guru-daksina in London with our new schedule. Called for a disciples' meeting on Friday afternoon. Maybe I can review the places we have visited "Spain, Italy, the lectures and the feeling that I did some good. Letters exchanged at each place. Even tell some of the problems.

But maybe not. If I improvise the meeting, I'll think of things I'll have to censor. Where is Purnamasi? Radha-Madhava dasa?

* * *

Night notes, 6.45 p.m.

M. can't go outside to chant *japa* because it's a human circus. Women in shorts. He said he wouldn't mind if they were good-looking. How about that? I retire. I prefer the sounds of trucks to human voices, which somehow always wake me up. Krishna, Krishna.

September 28, 1:36 a.m.

I slept longer and better than I often do in a building. I was too cold to get up anyway. Now I don't have the time I wanted to use to read *Bhagavad-gita*. That's the big gain of living alone without a temple or social obligations: time and the mind for reading Srila Prabhupada's books. I'll be returning to that for a six-week period in Ireland. I only glanced at *janma karma ca me divyam* (4.9) and thought, "Yes, I know this terrain." I have been here many times. By entering it we assume the reality and the context which ordinarily we wouldn't think of: where the soul goes after this life "upon leaving the body," and how knowledge of the person Krishna brings us "to My eternal abode." The more we read, the more this "fantastic" context becomes reality, at least during the serious reading periods. Such faith returns at other times too.

Lecturing can do some of the same. In a public forum, we are forced to witness for the Absolute Truth without hesitation. I feel reluctant sometimes to assume more faith and

realization than I actually have, but it's a game or role, and if I play it sometimes, it won't hurt me. It's like reading or writing but public and without so much personal admittance. I concentrate, remember the philosophy, expand on it, and seek an honest voice with which to convey it to others. It's a challenge because they have also read or heard the material many times. They also have doubts, none of which really gets addressed. I just have to speak intelligently and conclusively, and to be faithful to Srila Prabhupada's purports in a personal way. It's a duty whatever else it may be.

I think I'll wear my coat while I chant. Let Madhu rest.

Hari-katha. They said of Emily Dickinson that she was personal and confessional in her poems, but without the autobiographical element of pettiness or self-pity. This makes a poet exalted. I don't even *try* to remove that dross. "O wild west wind," O cold French September. The very last days, like last wine in a glass, of summer warmth "keep out the petty disclosures. As if there aren't any? There's no let-up.

* * *

4:00 a.m.

It won't be a total revolution when I return to Geaglum. I'll have to walk past Prahlada and Ananda's trailer, and their pigs and goats and their daughters to get to my shack. In my shack I may start a new series of radio shows, but I'll still face the old familiar blocks. The flowers will probably be gone. Maybe a few berries left.

The thing is prayer and
consternation, joy, and no more
motorboats by October.

But death "death should be in the forefront.

Don't do something now you wouldn't want to be doing at the end of your life. Yet we can't withdraw from everything as if we were renounced *yogis*. Srila Prabhupada said we have to die on the battlefield, and that probably means we will die while living in this world. M. has to play his music; I say I need to write and even take a walk. Do I want to die in my sweat pants and wellies? Maybe it doesn't matter so much.

Vrndavana is best, yet consciousness is what counts. May Krishna forgive me my follies. May He force His presence into my mind at the end and always.

I'm writing this by battery-run lamp. It's cold. M. is still silent, asleep, I guess. We are due to leave in fifty-five minutes. It's a pleasure. I have chanted thirteen rounds so far. We'll drive only an hour, then stop for breakfast "the second EkadaSi breakfast in a row "this one yogurt and French apples. That'll be in Luxembourg. Then we will push on to Radha-deSa "familiar territory.

* * *

10:55 a.m.

Arrived at Radha-deSa. The temple president is at a meeting in Germany. A few devotees greeted us and gave me letters. I heard there's trouble. The anti-sect movement has hit hard, causing a significant loss in tourism to the temple. That was their main source of income. Many *grhasthas* who were maintained by the preaching here now

have to find jobs, but there are few jobs available and some are leaving to go to other countries.

More troubles: an ex-devotee says he wants to destroy ISKCON, starting with ISKCON Belgium. He has been going around to the Immigration and police. Hrdaya Caitanya, the temple president, is now doing communications work, learning to preach to influential people to assure them that we're not crazy, although we are a minority religion. We want our rights.

More trouble: there is no one to manage the temple in his absence. His wife says he comes home late at night and he's tired and irritable. Their son wants his father to take them on a bicycle ride. Hrdaya Caitanya has little time to read Prabhupada's books.

What can I do? Where do you fit in? I write to ask myself. A letter arrived saying they consulted an astrologer, who said that wherever I go during the next few years, I'll find trouble. The astrologer made sweeping statements that all devotees fall or rise according to whether they are influenced by good or malefic stars. He said that when they examined cases of devotees who have fallen down, they find that no matter how much they prayed or how many rounds they chanted, when the stars were against them, down they went. Karma rules *bhakti*? The holy name is out-classed by evil influences? Doesn't sound right to me.

The weather here is cold and foggy and there's no heat in the house. It used to be heaven on earth here, remember? So many marigolds growing in the geometric garden, so many buses arriving with conservative old people coming to see the temple, going to the restaurant, paying money. That scene is passing. What is an ISKCON temple? How can it survive? How can people practice Krishna consciousness? In their homes. Yes, I am relevant if I can help them practice no matter what.

* * *

11.25 a.m.

The verse for tomorrow's *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class is the start of "The Killing of the Demon Aghasura." As I read the pre-chapter summary, I think of the troubles the devotees face here. Krishna also faced demons. Agha took the form of a giant python and lay in His path. The boys wanted to enter its mouth. "The gigantic python became a subject for their sporting pleasure, and they began to laugh, confident that even if this figure were dangerous, Krishna was there to protect them." Ask the devotees to regard the opposition that way. We can't be as carefree as the cowherd boys, perhaps, but that's only because we don't feel the same intimacy with Krishna. Still . . .

The chapter begins by describing how Krishna left His house in the morning with hundreds and thousands of cowherd boys and an unlimited number of calves. He's Brahman, unlimited. Surely He can defeat a few limited demons. This is not mythology. We can't study Krishna with limited knowledge.

* * *

5:12 p.m.

Back in the groove of preparing for classes. Don't worry, I have my Post-its. I will speak how our qualities, talents, and duty should be used to glorify the Supreme Lord. *Idam hi pumsas "nirupitah . . . uttama Sloka . . . samsiddhir hari-tosanam.*

Anticipating possible objections:

Shouldn't we give up what we want to do and to only what Krishna wants?

I don't have all the answers, but I'm flowing with the conclusion that Srila Prabhupada provides in his purports.

After Krishna killed Aghasura, the Apsaras, Gandharvas, and drummers all did their duty by glorifying the Supreme Lord. Srila Prabhupada writes, "If you are a singer, always glorify the Supreme Lord by singing very nicely. If you are a musician glorify the Supreme Lord by playing musical instruments. The perfection of life is to satisfy the Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.10.12.34*, purport)

Hard times. Breakup of the paradisaical situation of Radha-deSa. For a householder, it is not easy when you have had material facilities arranged for you and your family, then have to shift and struggle. The temple can no longer provide for them.

There are forces working against devotees and their desire to peacefully practice Krishna consciousness, but let's not become paranoiac about it. Krishna was victorious over Aghasura. Sometimes He finishes a demon quickly, and sometimes He takes longer and the devotees have to tolerate.

Now I'll take time to answer four letters here about these hard times. Tomorrow may be clearer. Did you see the new *Back to Godhead*? The temple in Amhedabad has the biggest *darSana-mandap* in India. Four thousand people can see the Deities at once.

* * *

6 p.m.

The astrologer said we can't avoid the malefic stars. They make devotees fall down even if they chant Hare Krishna. Therefore, we should hire an astrologer?

Today during the last hours of the trip, I was too tired to write or chant or even to think. I allowed myself to simply rest in the mind. It wasn't time to make decisions or to think deeply. We will be here for three days, then another full day of travel, then a few days in England, then back to Ireland. But you never know . . . The *sastra* says . . . Just chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

Photo of Srila Prabhupada holding a *danda* much taller than him. I remember the moment. It was a morning walk in a Chicago summer. We were all with him, his men from the various parties, especially the Radha-Damodara men and their buses. He wore orange canvas shoes. It was right after he had been interviewed on television and radio about the position of women. Couldn't make his words any easier. Don't water him down. Have faith. There is nothing more precious.

He posed a moment at the request of a photographer and held the *danda*. I like the look on his face. He's old but dignified, fighting for Krishna in his peaceful way. All glories to our spiritual master. He moved in this world the way the moon appears to move through blowing clouds. We can't really understand him by anything we have heard and seen. We can understand more as we worship him with love, but never everything.

I read that Srila Prabhupada didn't stay in Vrndavana, but inspired brave souls who went out in the Cambridge, MA blizzard of 1970. A woman saw them and began her spiritual life. Now she's a serious devotee. We have to put ourselves out.

September 29, 3:31 a.m.

I wrote this note to myself last night: "How about 'writing while reading'? Start with the *Bhag.* 10.12.11 and its purport." Although I awoke five minutes after midnight, I decided it was better to rest rather than get up so I wouldn't risk getting a headache before I had to give the *Bhagavatam* lecture. The lecture takes precedence. Got up around 12:45 and chanted my rounds.

The lecture hall was packed with maggots, the gold was enervating the chambers "imagination spoiled the simple effort. A fellow was asked to sing the *mangala-arati* prayers and he was ready, after years of practice. Everyone was friendly and he functioned as a *sannyasi* from Australasia. Him and his walking cane. Why does he bring a dog into the temple? Is it for protection? And his white beard? He is forty people at once. Thomas Wolfe said he had to turn over half the population of a town to find one character for his book.

These are all lies.

So he packed the guilt with gold, but it refused to work. There was still a glaring reflection on the page. He wrote with a quill and blue ink flowed. Nice penmanship. His editor, Jagajaga, is trusty, penmanship aside. The devotee-turned-demon ex-spy went to the country's offices and told the secrets of the Hare Krishna movement, including all their innuendoes. This caused great trouble. The police thought that the fellow was out for vengeance, but still, he was blowing the whistle on a few juicy things, so they acted promptly and stopped the roadshow. They said it wasn't safe. They said the devotees were criminals, and who knows? They might want *you* to commit mass suicide too. You never know. We heard they castrate their bulls and tell their children to prepare for death. Their scriptures say that women are less intelligent and that gods with millions of heads rule the universe. They say the scientists are demons and only they know the truth.

Meanwhile, back in America (I mean Australasia), they think that Hare Krishna is a mild form of madness, or at least of Hinduism, and anyway, it's a democracy.

Krishna,
Krishna.

We have to walk five minutes through the dark outdoors to reach the temple. I was here a year ago last July. Less people now, and there's no festival going on. Charles Dickens exposed social evils, but who can tell the earnest life of a cult member? This is a *good* sect, it is not like, you know, those terrible ones. We are representing the Hindus. See our BTG magazine where there is a picture of the President of India in May after

delivering a speech at the opening of our temple in Bangalore, and what about the huge temple opening in Gujarat?

But I stay out of it. I want to see the grace and force of essays, and not only the philosophy represented just as it is, but in an author's own words, presented. That's my contribution.

Is it true that by living the way you do, you are able to come out with gems of insight others can't see, or have you just gone rusty on the important things?

The duties and talents must be used in the Lord's service. Dance and play drums and other musical instruments; sing of Krishna's victory. He is *uttama-Sloka*, and someone ought to put that into poetry.

I'm prepared to hear someone say, "We don't want singers. They should give up that culture and do what we really need, sort out the accounts, dig a hole in the backyard, spread the cement, go to the Parliament and lobby for our rights. We don't poison our guests. Tell them we're real people."

Then the politicians will be forced to concur: "Okay, I see you people have faces and hands and therefore you must have rights too. Still, you don't represent much voting power. Why should we protect you?"

And it won't look good if the journalists think you are brainwashed and put that in their papers.

We have to leave in about half an hour, so do the needful: keep cool until then. Did you hear about Paul Winchell? He went to the Los Angeles temple without his dummy, Jerry Mahony. He gave a talk on the reopening of the FATE project. He said, "This is the most spiritual religion." Do the needful: get anyone you can to say something favorable. We could use that for sure.

Serious blues. religious musicians. Nelson Mandela dancing on stage with African children, a publicity event put on by the Hare Krishna Food-for-Life people. Saw a *danda* in a corner of the stage.

Got any other good ideas?

Sure. What about working with the ecologists? Or speaking at the Annual Congress of Cybernetics and the New Age. The millennium change must be understood from the Vedic viewpoint. Let them know.

And those at the International Galactic Conference on Outer Space, although they're more liberal than the cybernetics types.

Or, cook for the Mayor of Auburn and tell him your memories of ghee and puppets. We supplied the *sandeSa* and put roses in an elevator operator's hands. The poets didn't know it was the Hare Krishnas doing that until they saw the *tilaka* and kicked us out with a hasty verse.

Hasty pudding was banned. He said, "No more rhymes in our stew."

"I object," said Natalie, and the rhymer went home, sulking. We later found him in his backyard on a swing (not hanging himself, just sitting there sadly), so we told him we loved him and invited him to rejoin us. Dickie wrote a poem on the death of John Berryman, but there was nothing in it about the soul or God, just hitting the water with his appreciation. After all, a poem isn't supposed to carry a message unless it is written in a way acceptable to the group. The International Poet Society will never give you a prize unless you do it right.

Chanting Hare Krishna the whole way to the temple. Entered, felt the light, saw the old and new men, old and new *matajis*, bowing down, and me too, then standing on the marble floor, casually, feeling the friendliness of all those noses and wrinkles and creased cheeks. He lifted his *danda* high and said, "This is the diary of a wallpaper walrus. I mean, we've got everything planned for just one lecture at a time. This is the one thing in the world I know how to do as public service: give a lecture. Don't worry about that lecture, because it won't even be unique. Us walruses are a dime a dozen, and we're easily replaced."

* * *

Temple room, 4:25 a.m.

Pray for protection of Krishna's temples against governments and cult fears. If things get worse, devotees can only turn to Krishna.

The worst danger we face is superficial institutionalism. If such attacks break it up and make us more human and loving, that would be good. But it's best not to look for ISKCON reform but for reform of yourself. Even if ISKCON were perfect, we'd be faultfinding because of our own impurities. In your heart, be glad Srila Prabhupada gave you a chance, and don't be afraid "you've only got a few more years left."

* * *

10:40 a.m.

Prepared for tomorrow's *Bhagavatam* class. The purport addresses the two kinds of liberation. Krishna and His *parisads* are eternally liberated. He also liberates the demons He kills. First, I'll quote *ye yatha mam prapdyante*. Then I'll read from the verse about how it's rare to become a cowherd boy. How can we become as fortunate as the residents of Vrndavana? Srila Prabhupada says, "read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Bhagavad-gita*." Then I'll turn to an earlier chapter on Mother Yashoda. In the purport Srila Prabhupada recommends following the residents of Vrndavana in the way they loved Krishna. I can elaborate on each of these points.

Then turn to another concept of liberation: a devotee doesn't think of his own salvation, but wholeheartedly serves his spiritual master and attains the essence of liberation "absorption in Krishna" even if he has to take birth again or even while living in this world. *Iha yasya* verse states this. Got a translation? And then there's Lord Caitanya's *na dhanam na janam na sundarim*.

* * *

11:38 a.m.

Eyes, eyes keep lasting although I know it's not forever. rest? Or keep going? Your art? Your life? Your study? Only a little bit at a time can flow through the pipe.

Quibbling over little disagreements in ISKCON is nothing compared to WW II, but we waste our time on it. Artists, writers endure even through the wars. Serve the compassionate one, Srila Prabhupada. We say that.

* * *

12:08 p.m.

ISKCON leaders at an emergency meeting in Germany right now, trying to decide what to do about the governments' activities against cults. Those who work for ISKCON want to transcend, but the atmosphere is surcharged with opposition. People quarrel and criticize, even in a religious movement, what to speak of from the outside "the police and the threat of reneged freedoms and laws. We say we have dropped out of all this to live in Krishna consciousness, which is transcendental, but the problem is we are not completely transcendental We may still be affected by the modes of nature. When the opposition seems strong, turn to Krishna, and don't resent what you have freely given. Then you are transcending.

Many young faces from East Europe dressed as *brahmacaris*. What do they know? How long will they last? The *pujari* at *mangala-arati* was clean-looking, even his feet, and he had just the right physique for a *pujari*, wrapped as he was in his rough silk *cadar*. What does he know? He blew the conch elegantly three times.

* * *

4:02 p.m.

Head too foggy to read. Looked at the map of England, Plymouth, London, Newcastle, Stranraer, ferry instead. Allowed things to pass through the mind. "Abhay" serial. Abhay has typhoid "his mother's tears, father bringing the child before the Radha-Krishna Deities. Nice. You, Lord, decide if You will save him. They place a *tulasi* leaf at Krishna's lotus feet, then placed it on Abhay's forehead. They also gave him a spoonful of *caranamrta* to drink. By night-time he was cured.

No engagements today.

Liberation is to think of Krishna's service and nothing else. It has nothing to do, actually, with becoming free from the cycle of birth and death. Any questions?

* * *

M. is in the van playing his melodeon. He doesn't want to lose touch with it. Wants to practice. It's too warm here. I think I'll go outside for a few moments. Not ashamed of your life? No. It may not be material for a weekly soap opera, but it's as real as I can make it.

Oh, did you know the anti-sect movement is growing in Europe? There are discussions among politicians in the Brussels parliament after a cult committed mass suicide. Then I think of the good-natured Hare Krishnas I know in Belgium living in their marigold paradise. A low-flying jet "I look up, but can't see it through the mist. Liberation: what does it mean? The band of fog across my forehead stops me from thinking about it.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

If you can't read scripture, you can at least remember it from the past. Kalavati's baby is crying in the front yard while M. talks with her about getting us ferry tickets. The van weighs how many tons? He wants a fast ferry, tells her to check two different companies "Stena and something else. Can't hear properly. Shut the window. See what I mean?"

When the "Abhay" film was showing, I thought of Radha-Krishna Deities. Vaisnavas live with these presences. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was protected "a strong blue aura surrounded him "by reading the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. If we don't worship Radha-Krishna and care for *tulasi*, or something similar to that, and if we don't regularly live in the *Bhagavatam*, how do we expect to be Krishna conscious?

September 30, 12:30 a.m.

Karttika will be here in a couple of weeks. Perhaps I could read *Bhagavad-gita* verses and purports, the selected ones where Krishna speaks to us. I'll resume the Seventh Canto reading when I get back to Ireland too.

For the disciples' meeting today I'll speak on how a devotee is steady in happiness or distress.

I want to try to give the devotees a little solace, but also courage. I may not be facing their difficulty, but we have all been through stuff. We should take shelter of scripture. I can even refer to the "Abhay" TV series and how Bhaktivinoda Thakura took shelter in the *Bhagavatam* when the demon attacked him. Srila Prabhupada: "There is always some upheaval in the material world which may be good or evil. One who is not agitated by such material upheavals, who is unaffected by good or evil, is understood to be fixed in Krishna consciousness." (Bg. 2.57, purport)

Thank you, Lord, who dwells in my heart, for leading me to this topic for the disciples' meeting. The clarity I feel is the direct fruit of rising at midnight.

"Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact." (Bg. 6.23) "He is callous toward incidental occurrences "such as accidents . . . scarcity and even the death of a most dear relative "but he always alert to execute his duties in Krishna consciousness."

* * *

3:31 a.m.

Heard Srila Prabhupada lecturing from a 1973 *sannyasa* initiation in Calcutta this morning. He said, "*Sannyasa* is for preaching." A *sannyasi* shouldn't mind whether he is in heaven or hell. When he went to America, he said, "I sometimes had to live in a kind of hell." He talked about *prasadam*, how the temple must distribute it, and how the preachers shouldn't eat at homes where they don't offer food to Narayana. I could imagine the young men receiving *sannyasa* that day from Srila Prabhupada, and I heard Syamasundara dasa saying something about two mantras. Prabhupada recited *etam sa asthaya paratma-nistham*, quoting from *Caitanya-caritamrta* when Lord Caitanya took *sannyasa*.

Prabhupada is here on the desk with that long *danda* from Chicago, a wire fence behind him, walking with his disciples. Warrior preacher. He said in the Calcutta *sannyasa* talk that Arjuna was a *sannyasi* because he gave up his desire and fought for Krishna. Whatever loss or gain, that is Krishna's, and a *sannyasi* acts only on the Lord's behalf. Fighting is *sannyasa* also.

We can't avoid the words of our spiritual master. Neither should we relativize them. We have to honestly admit that we can't always live up to them. He asked a lot of us. Some came forward and said, "Yes, we will live in hell. We will preach for you and not care for our lives or needs." After some years, some continued, some stepped back, and some quit altogether. Some acted as if they were not giving up the order, but they became ruthless in other ways, building empires and other tactics to find personal satisfaction in the name of surrender. Our collective ISKCON life has been sad in many ways.

* * *

Walked this morning to the temple again. The leaders will be back from their meetings today.

Hare Krishna. A dove falls. The pigeons moan in their sleep and drop their droppings, *slap*, on our windshield as we speed by. The day after tomorrow we will drive that ring around London. We'll have to catch the ferry first. All times in which I can write. No one will order me to do that, so I will have to order myself.

Praying to Krishna to please accept this offering, the only one I know and love. In the film, "Abhay," rajani said, "I am begging you, please save my son. If he must have the chicken soup the doctor recommends, don't stand rigid on your Vaisnava principles." Gour Mohan was willing, but then decided against it when he saw his son's reaction. "Good boy. Don't pollute my son." Instead, he took him before Radha-Govinda and surrendered his life to Krishna. That kind of simplicity. Whatever joys or emptiness we experience in this life, that's all we have. We can only surrender our lives to Him whether they're dry or joyful. "I know no one but Krishna as my Lord and He shall remain so even if . . .

This is the action-packed drama of our lives. The clouds are moving across the sliver of a moon. By the time it's full again, it will be Karttika. I'm looking forward to looking out at Lough Erne, just as I used to look forward to seeing the Tuscarora. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna. I was just a baby in those days.

Think of . . .

Krishna,

Krishna, Krishna.

Chant into the "microphone" of the *japa* beads and listen carefully.

O Prabhupada, you

demanded, pulled

and pushed at us and said,

"Preach, sacrifice, love Krishna, make members."

* * *

Temple, 4:28 a.m.

Hare. A fire *yajna* set up. For who? Talking with Bhadranga as we walked here. He may move to Italy and look for a job. I felt helpful, or wanted to be. Then to clear my life of distractions. returned to *Simplicity in Irish Spring*. Make it simplicity in Karttika. I want, Srila Prabhupada, to enter your books in a prayerful way. You'll be kind, although demanding.

Conch blowing.

* * *

6:15 a.m.

In a dream I couldn't find my shoes. I had several pairs, but lost all of them. I was humbled.

* * *

9:25 a.m.

Back after class. Each place I visit as lecturer has something about it that makes me want to flee. The troubles, the pressure. People want to see me, I get introduced to the local entanglements. I think at Manu's it will be different because I'm there on different terms.

A devotee discussed the wrongs of a fallen Godbrother. I thought some of his points could also be made about me. He said that this Godbrother concentrated too much on encouraging people to work internally and discover what they really wanted to do for Krishna. Better we tell people to surrender completely to what Krishna wants. This devotee is a leader, and he enforces this among the devotees he leads. What I wanted to know was whether the leaders can always claim that they are simply doing the needful, whether they have no desire to lead and control others. Can we call that surrender? I felt uneasy talking about it. Something was missing in the formula. Yes, my fallen Godbrother made mistakes, and I do too. But was this other devotee right, even half right? Is there an absolute answer?

He said doing what we want for Krishna is simply offering love in the mode of goodness. It's not good enough because it can't fully meet the test of Krishna consciousness. Not only do we have to hear what people want to do, we have to give strong instructions regarding surrender, then enforce them. At the end of our talk he said, "The material world is a heavy place, and only the presence of devotees lightens it."

That "crazy" devotee (with beard, *kanthi-mala*, and vividly colored T-shirt) was in the audience when I gave class. He asked whether I thought Prabhupada ever contradicted himself. He's the one threatening to go to the police, Immigration, and tax bureaus. Yes, I'd like to move on. Talk of liberation.

* * *

11:47 a.m.

He said he warned his Godbrother, who has now fallen away, but his brother said, "I'm not afraid." Maybe this meant he wasn't afraid to follow his own truth even if it meant abandoning his duty and causing pain to disciples. There are things of which we should be afraid. He said we (meaning we conditioned souls and cheating devotees) decide what we want to do, then look to the scriptures for the small print to find confirmation. When he said that, I thought about the things I do. Why not say that when he was speaking, it was Prabhupada speaking through him? Why not use his words as an impetus to reform?

Because I don't take it that way. We all have to serve according to our qualities; that's what Krishna says. I gave a class the other day on exactly that topic.

All right, then here's the skinny (as we used to say in the Navy): you have to live, but stay within the four rules. Do everything in service to Krishna, even if you're dovetailing. Taste love through freedom, but always be careful to stay in line with guru and *sastra*. Go deep and face yourself.

The day is gray. Hrdaya is back from the meetings. I painted while M. went to the temple to make phone calls. It was a relief. I wrote both the strict stuff and the permissive stuff. I drew even freer. The colors themselves are permissive. They don't seem wrong, although some devotees may not understand it.

But just because they are stern doesn't make their viewpoint right. They could be wrong. Each of us has to be careful to maintain our own creeper. The freedom feels good, and it can be used in Krishna conscious art. I'm a prominent devotee in this movement, and conservative in my own way, yet I have a right-brain side that needs expression. Life is a tightrope-balancing act. There is no real safety in living such a life other than to take shelter at Prabhupada's lotus feet. We all agree, no matter how conservative or liberal we are.

Some say the only safe way is to follow your Godbrothers and the GBC. They define such following as surrender and always living to the needful fulfillment. I don't agree.

We can recite Biblical codes, *Vedas*, Manu's laws, and GBC resolutions day and night, but it's no substitute for living the truth of your own understanding of Krishna consciousness. Whatever time you have, whatever talents you have, use them in Krishna's service. Take that risk.

I lived brave and brash despite my fears, my heart with the Swami. I perform the *yajna* for this age. I uphold the Hare Krishna banner. Yet I'm listening to my master and to my own heart. I can't free myself from the cycle of birth and death so easily. It may take lifetimes. If I just serve the devotees, I'll be satisfied. This is my service.

* * *

28

A crazy man at the temple,
wants to speak with me.

I'm too weak.

Let Jack or Jill or Leader

X take it on.

* * *

I know he'll get angry if
 I cross him "
 warns he'll go to the police the
 newspapers. On top of
 that, he says he's going to die soon.

* * *

Angry? Me too, the
 Ravana and wren and
 lion and crossed emperor,
 and angry telephone lines.

* * *

And what about feeling foolish,
 wanting to be rid of material
 desires? What about the lack of
 love, inattention in chanting,
 or the plain scientific fact:
 death is upon us?

* * *

Talk to me. No. But let me defuse you.
 How can I show you I care? I can't,
 you see . . . Or I won't. I walk a
 Restricted line.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

Talking with M. about serving with love and the heavy chill we get when ISKCON leaders project no love, but define surrender as following the order completely (although it's so difficult and even they cannot always do it). I flip again to my own way of expressing my love for Krishna, although impure, and feel joy.

* * *

5:39 p.m.

I spoke to disciples on how to face reverses: be callous toward accidents, disease, and even the death of a near relative. Go on with your duties.

But what if your duty is taken away?

Someone asked, "How can this be real? The emotion of loss or anger or fear at the upheaval makes us unable to take a philosophical view."

We are allowed to cry, be angry or afraid, but we shouldn't lose control to such a degree that we give up our Krishna consciousness. I told them that I have been through many changes in ISKCON, and I have discovered that there are some things I can always count on that won't change. These are things no one can take away from me: I am a disciple of Srila Prabhupada, and I can chant Hare Krishna. Everything depends on faith.

After the talk, I went to Visnumurti Prabhu's bookstore and bought the oversized book about Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura and two new books about Srila Prabhupada in South Africa and Malaysia. I also got the nine CDs of Srila Prabhupada *bhajan*s.

And so, another day ending. "Make the world *sankirtana* friendly," is the motto of the Communications Department. He says it's the most important service in ISKCON today. I was willing to agree that it's important. Who will argue that poems are important? We each have our own service.

* * *

6:29 p.m.

Concentrate. Counting cows bellowing in the neighbor's yard. M. studying maps for our upcoming journey. They sell a Krishna conscious game with questions and answers in the bookstore. I passed it up. New things advertised. Visnumurti's a good salesman, and M. tried to negotiate with him to bring down the price. Joking but serious. All right, give the guy his profit. "It goes to the Communications Department. I do the best I can." "Visnumurti gives us a great discount."

Srila Prabhupada said that it's not wonderful for Krishna to display His opulence and to appear as Nanda's son or to deliver Aghasura. Krishna's most wonderful quality is His love for His devotees, which He displays in a variety of ways. With Sudama, He gave him a palace; He took everything from Bali Maharaja. With the *gopis* He sometimes dances and sometimes leaves them to feel His separation. He favors them the most. Always, He is acting to draw His devotees nearer to Him.

In Srila Prabhupada's life, he was drawn to Krishna by the diminishing of his business. Prabhupada said that he himself was drawing us toward him. Lord Nityananda lifted up Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. Although Sri Nityananda Rama controls the universes, He raised up this soul. Prabhupada also did this, and it is very wonderful. Anything is possible for Krishna. And although Prabhupada says it's not wonderful, actually, it is.

Sunlight fading now. Next weekend the clocks go back. I'm sorry I don't have something more wonderful to say. After the meeting, all the children came in to take cookies and a sweet from me. They were so joyful and saintly looking. They seemed enthusiastic to do such a simple thing as take a sweet from me. That's a nice thing to recall. Life doesn't have to be earth-shaking. There are enough upheavals in the world. Don't look for duality. Turn to *Bhagavad-gita* in difficult times. Turn to Krishna and Srila Prabhupada, to duty. Never be shaken. And if we are shaken, we can express our grief but hold tight to our *japa*. What else is there?

October 1, 3:32 a.m.

Be Krishna conscious in a sober way. I didn't sleep well last night. Dreams. In my waking state, I am a servant of Krishna beyond all designations, but not in my dreams, it seems. I can't understand why such visions come, and why they grip me with their tale of a worried, harried self. Are they clues to something? I seek a deep decisiveness. Awakening from dreams I become fearful that some daytime behavior of mine is wrong. Sometimes I think I am over-scrupulous, or at least on waking I seem to have focused too much on a small thing during the night and feared it as a distraction. One or another of Madhu's tunes floats through my humming center when I awake and try to get back to sleep. Try to insert mantras. To drift and not to have to make an effort. I gradually fell back asleep a few times, but was too tired to rise at midnight.

This cow is hurrying to return to the barn. We are geared up to get back to Ireland and our routine by October 7th. Intensified demands until then. I may take some extra Esgic, above my self-prescribed quota, to get through it all. Do the needful, we say.

I feel crippled by the chronic pain. My real problem, Srila Prabhupada says, is not that I am embarrassed during this life with so much cope, but that I face repeated birth and death. Sacrifice to free yourself.

I thought of a few extra points to make at the *Bhagavatam* class. It's an interesting phrase Prabhupada uses when he says that it is not at all wonderful for Krishna to do amazing things. He means that Krishna does it without effort, and we shouldn't be amazed to the point of thinking His activities fantastic or incredible. We should believe that He is capable of them. By comparison, an ordinary man is tiny. No matter how great he may be in comparison to other men, He is nothing in comparison to Krishna. If a man were to lift one ton, we would all be amazed. That would be wonderful. It is in this sense that we understand Prabhupada's praise of Krishna lifting Govardhana. For us, Krishna's deed is certainly wonderful. However, it's not only that we are amazed at His feat. There is something more that stirs our appreciation. What Mother Yashoda sees as wonderful in her child is not the same as what an ordinary religionist sees as wonderful in Krishna. What then is the most wonderful quality that God possesses? It's the love He feels and expresses toward His devotees, His quality of *bhakta-vatsala*.

This is a good topic because it focuses on the Lord and His nature and qualities, and also on how the devotees appreciate Him. I won't be giving the devotees in the audience tips on how to organize their lives. I'll mostly be speaking of Krishna and His most special nature. The compassion the Lord must have felt to have created the cosmos and given us yet another chance to return to Him "that quality. I hope I'll be well enough to deliver the lecture.

Other things on my mind this morning: the Guadal Canal, Iwo Jima, horrible sufferings, thousands killed like ants. Could I personally live through such suffering? Could I remember Krishna under *those* circumstances, or would I think only to beg Him for my own survival? The pure devotee doesn't pray for personal safety, but prays only to remember Krishna in any condition. That's our goal. A devotee also wants the opportunity to share Krishna consciousness with others. He sets an example of pure devotion.

* * *

Last day here. I'll meet later with Hrdaya. If I'm lucky, I'll get a shot at the art table and maybe watch the "Abhay" film, although I doubt I'll have time for that. And, of course, being prepared for all these plans to be erased in a moment. I mean, preparing to accept what comes and to chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

6:13 a.m.

Fog. Hope to recover so I can give class.

* * *

11 a.m.

Canceled *Srimad-Bhagavatam* lecture. Pain behind right eye. Took an Esgic at 9:30. No relief yet.

October 2, 3:21 a.m.

Pain until 10 p.m. last night. I took an Esgic (the second of the day) and it gradually went down. Dreams show that I still have the roots of gross material desire. Whining of mosquito in my ear "bites my hands.

Here we are, about to launch the van again. Not always sure what is best to do. Thought during night of the brief talk I had with a brother. I can't hold him responsible for presenting a coherent thesis, but whatever he said I absorbed. He criticized another brother for his method of encouraging disciples to do inner work and to find what they most want to do for Krishna. The disciples were touched by his concern and love for them, but he didn't specifically reprimand them for unsundered attitudes or assign them tasks.

Now, if my brother was criticizing this devotee specifically for speaking alone with women, that would be a different thing. Or if he was making a more general statement: "It's not enough to encourage disciples. You also have to teach them to surrender and then enforce it," I might have been able to accept it. But something he said about it being good to be under a person whom you find bitter and who enforces complete surrender "I didn't like it.

Let me put aside his words for now and just think of the issues themselves, not in relation to my fallen brother, but in relation to myself. I really don't feel it is selfish to encourage people to think deeply about their own offering to Krishna. And the question arises: if the teacher is himself not able to surrender his utmost, how can he enforce others to do it? We simply have to help people from where we all are.

In my own preaching to disciples, I don't counsel them by assigning them tasks. Maybe I don't think it matters so much, or is it that I don't honor that they are so deep in their intentions and abilities? I can't say for sure. I have been let down and betrayed by disciples many, many times, so perhaps I do suffer from a pessimistic attitude. I can't accept that they are capable of fulfilling all promises, regardless of the sincerity with

which they made them. I just don't enter into that arena. rather, I teach what we all need to hear: that it is essential to chant and to read Srila Prabhupada's books. And I myself do it. Yes, in recent years I have been exemplifying someone who is happy doing what he wants to do for Krishna according to his personal propensity. Previously, I exemplified duty to ISKCON (GBC), and before that, duty to Srila Prabhupada's personal order as he gave it to me in face-to-face encounters or by mail.

So I'm more on the opposite side of the fence from this brother. Let me then acknowledge and honor both approaches: "Surrender, you rascal!" and, "Don't kill desires, purify them."

Good to talk it out here. I love my fallen brother, and wish he would come back despite the pain he has caused. How will I fare until the end of *my* life? I don't know. I can only chant Hare Krishna, and be serious, be light.

* * *

7:15, Calais

We went over the border into France by stopping at a red light by a booth. Two men looked us over without getting out of their booth, then switched on a green light. Sailing fast on empty, predawn highway, me dozing in a sleeping bag in back. Now on line for the ferry. Lively spirits because things seem to be going well. Now shall I use the spirits in a Krishna conscious way or splurge them foolishly?

My next scheduled lecture is a talk to disciples tomorrow afternoon. I'll use the outline I prepared for the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class I canceled: comment on Tenth Canto verse and purport where Srila Prabhupada says it is not wonderful for Krishna to have rescued the demon Agha. I am pretty much set up for that.

* * *

Doodads. Yeah, I know what you mean by that. Sober up and turn your face to spit at the thought of sex, like Yamunacarya.

Good-bye in the dark outside the house this morning. Two men and about five women. Sorry I couldn't speak to you yesterday. Strapped in and off we went.

* * *

On the Stena ferry. Pop blues singer with monotonous drumbeats. Just dawning. Traveling upbeat, pay and take a full English breakfast if you like. A little self-conscious about my devotee dress, but not really. We approached a crew member and asked him to point us to the stairs. He gestured vaguely and said, "Just use them stairs, mate." He wore an earring, and the next two men I saw also wore gold earrings. Now I'm looking for men without earrings. "I don't want" "the singer is pouting. Srila Prabhupada said, "Let's quit the cycle of birth and death. That is the real problem and the solution of life."

Don't become enamored and don't get upset. There are upheavals in this world. We can't avoid them. I would like to look at some *Gita* verses, but it will be hard with that drumbeat and the blues woman singing. Certainly not like that *bhajana* lady broadcasting her "radhe radhe radhe Govinda" in Vrndavana.

* * *

Smooth crossing. I breezed through *Srila Prabhupada in Malaysia*, which tells of the places Srila Prabhupada preached there and the hard work the devotees have done on his behalf. The author says he left an indelible impression on the crowds who came to hear him. Srila Prabhupada certainly went everywhere he could expect people to receive Krishna consciousness. He usually attempted to get land and start a temple. Then he would leave his men behind to conduct the temple's affairs.

* * *

"Excuse me, but can I have your duty-free ticket if you're not using it?"

Today's menu . . .

"If you have further purchases to make, please do so now to avoid disappointment."

Oh, I won't be disappointed. Put me in an upper room. I'll come down when I'm ready.

* * *

8:30 a.m., English Time

Dim light inside this metal ferry. Waiting for a front wall to open. We saw the white cliffs of Dover (while the reggae played over the sound system). Driver and writer have our papers and passports. No pain today. It's warm for October. "World series weather."

"Objects in mirror appear closer than they are." Chains. Boat motor rumbling, rumbling. Still the blue metal wall, watertight. It's like the wall separating me from pure Krishna consciousness. Who can lift it? Not me.

On the ferry I played a tape of an Irish Catholic priest and scholar lecturing on Celtic spirituality that someone gave me. I liked his drift, but he lacked science. He said about the soul, "I've always thought," and, "It seems to me." He slowed down his speech to make it sound *mysterioso*. The soul has a shape, the soul can't be known "in the neon light of psychology, but in the candlelight which is a neighbor to shadow." "I've always felt . . ." I prefer the clear Vedic knowledge.

O Krishna, I was not so patient last night in my pain. I rated its intensity five on a scale from one to ten. Then it went up to six. I kept waiting, giving it my attention. Sat up for a while, then layed down looking for sleep. Couldn't sleep. Sat up some more. Finally, it was another day. *Matra sparsas*. Is something wrong or is this how it should be?

* * *

Immigration sticky in Dover, England. They wouldn't let us through the EEC channel with our van because of my passport. We had to back up, go around, and come back through the non-EEC channel. Then a woman asked questions, as they do on international entries. She told Madhu to turn off the engine. "How long will we stay in Ireland?" she asked me. I said until next year, then showed her my residency booklet.

"You can stay there without working?"

"Yes."

"That's odd," she said. Madhu said that we were Hare Krishna monks. We don't work. That seemed to make sense to her. "You live in a Hare Krishna community?"

"Yes."

I had to fill out a landing card, address in England, Bhaktivedanta Manor. Then she let us through, and I'm not sure whether she stamped my passport. Bureaucrats!

* * *

3 p.m., Guru-daksina's attic room, London

No headache, but too tired to answer letters. I'd rather be alone. I am alone physically, but I mean alone without duties. Just for awhile. I need to be in a certain mindset to reply with sincerity. I can't do it right now, and that's an interesting phenomenon in itself.

Yes, I agree, dear husband and wife, with your need to move out of the temple and to earn your own living.

No, sir, I don't want to debate. I'm sorry for my mistakes.

This pen, this hen, this performance of mine.

The unconscious, we discover when we read our master's books, is something we picked up when the soul became tainted with the material world.

"Please don't write to me about this any more."

Where's my energy gone? I could start a letter by putting Jerry Mahoney on my lap and without moving my lips, have Jerry say, "Hi! Dear Dee, I got your letter. Sorry you didn't get my reply yet. I sent it. It must be in the mail. Don't expect me to carry you on my back. Find yourself. Find your link."

* * *

4 p.m.

"Stop the music! Stop the music!" Jimmy Durante used to shout that at the blaring band. Then he'd say, "Lemme hear those trombones!" They'd play. "*That's* not a trombone!" They'd play again, louder and better. "*That's* a trombone!"

So? So don't stop the course of Krishna consciousness.

The gods, Brahma, and Siva you mean. They're laughing. The one God is not potluck. It's God, Krishna. I'll speak tomorrow whether I feel like it or not.

"I opened a restaurant in Post Paomos Beach for the *rtviks*."

Wait a minute, here. Stop the music! Stop the carping. I want serious faces in this room, and everyone had better have a mission statement.

Henry, Henry, don't

torpedo your marriage.

"You just stay out of it."

O devotees, don't dispatch me too quickly. I want to be a half-sized hero (not a sandwich). And no Coco-cola on the side, at least while I'm not looking. Fizzy water is okay.

Excuse me, is this the room for the seminar on "The Art Of Prayer," taught by Timothy Ware?

One devotee wrote that she just read St. Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*. She Teresa must be a devotee of God in Dvaraka because she calls Him "Your Majesty." "I think I am in what she called the third inner room of her castle." Yikes. Stop the music! Let me hear those trumpets. *That's* not a trumpet.

Flip Fillips, red Fox, Dour Wimples . . . I came all the way from down under just to bring you this present of flip switches and six-foot tall candles.

Oh, you didn't hear? I don't burn them any more. I decided they were poisonous. Give them to someone less enlightened. I want to preserve the remaining purity of the air I breathe.

Sir, please chant Hare Krishna while you can. Don't waste the human form of life. And so the thing played out and I forgot.

October 3, Midnight

This morning I'm thinking of Bhakta Kevin and MandaleSvara Prabhu and others as I read. Note it and then turn back to the *Bhagavatam* for more. Prahlada Maharaja is being praised (*Bhag.7.4*). He treated everyone according to their needs and their position. He created no enemies. But when HiranyakaSipu would become Prahlada Maharaja's enemy, that would be the end of HiranyakaSipu.

* * *

Had a dream about facing mistakes and living too much in the past. When I awoke I wondered how much of a legend I try to create about myself. I don't like to think of myself as no longer relevant to my disciples, who may have outgrown me, and I realized that whatever I am afraid to face now, I may have to come back in the next life to learn those lessons.

* * *

4:07 a.m.

Teenagers in South Boston are committing suicide at an alarming rate. "Despair, not hope," the article stated. A devotee wrote that mercy killing wouldn't happen if people were Krishna conscious. That's good. We don't see many Hare Krishna people committing suicide. Are they too attached to their bodies? One disciple writes that he saw a lady drown herself at radha-kunda. An observer said, "We should try to save her," but the others knew that she wanted to die. No one got upset.

Last night we celebrated Madhu's birthday even though it isn't until October 16th. The devotee here wanted to do it. They gave him a cake and he sang a few songs with his bouzouki. It was sweet.

Turiya told me how many jars and cans he has put up for the winter "beans, carrots, berries, and so on. He said people talk about simple living, but no one is actually practicing it. He's lonely, but grows his patch of land beside a little house he built for himself in the woods. I reminded him, "Don't forget that the reason for simple living is 'to save time and chant Hare Krishna.'"

Terrain softened, the native trod his way up the hill, chanting the holy name. He forgot the mundane poets, and finally only memories of Vyasadeva remained. When he became tired he lay down and took a nap. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I told the devotees here that we'll have a reading together this morning at 9 a.m. I'll read from the Aghasura story because that will be the background of my talk this afternoon. Krishna is very kind to His friends.

This is your date book to the world that never dated you, the simple news of nature's majesty "think tenderly of me. Take time to recite one of ED's poems just to hear the music, then try to write your own straight from Krishnaloka.

Sir, do you have a book on Vaisnava saints?

For that you'll have to go to the Hare Krishna people or to one of the branches that broke away from it. They have those books.

I see. Are there Vaisnava saints today?

There's Coleman Hawkins. I don't know if you consider him . . . And what about Satsver? He has a Western mind that expresses Eastern ideas. There was a table of his books at a Hare Krishna festival in Toronto.

"Please come visit us in the Okeefenoki Swamp," said Pogo, "and we will make vegetarian surprises for you and offer them to Walt Kelly."

No, thanks. We don't like the alligator trade.

Krishna appears in the form in which the devotee most wants to see Him, but He doesn't come whimsically on the invitation of a so-called devotee. He appears in an already existing, eternal form. He manifests a new aspect of that form when a devotee offers service in a particular mood. The word "see" as in "see God," can be taken to mean seeing with the eye, but that's not all it means. It also means "hear," or "taste" through the other senses. The tongue is the first one mentioned.

* * *

10:30 a.m.

Think I should spend time answering letters. The pile is going down. Enter warm bath, lay back, swim away. My life "the controversies I hear, and the chips, bits, dirt, scum, turds, even dead bodies of animals and men floating in the water offshore. It's my Ganges, holy water blessed in Krishna consciousness.

We read *Krishna* Book together and I surprised myself. Just see how fun it is to improvise. We used the old method of each devotee taking a turn to say what he or she felt about the passage read aloud.

Sraddhavan, Damodara-rati, Guru-daksina, and Nikunja-devi were all quite willing and able to play the game. We went around about three times. Nice.

Anyway, the mail still has to be answered. A pound of flesh for each one "my limited energy. How many things can I do in a day? 4 p.m. disciples' meeting, and tomorrow, two big public performances.

Haribol, Henry Higgins, we're in London and Krishna plays the buffalo horn.

Madhu out seeing friends.

I wrote to an old friend and told him why I can't meet as frequently as we did ten years ago.

* * *

Smoke and fire
 Emily's bed, her hand
 her white heat poems "
 a few I learned to approach,
 the coach with Death
 and Immortality in it, the
 fly buzzed but we want
 Krishna when we die "
 Lord, let us behold Your
 face and lotus feet and form,
 even by hearing it's enough.

* * *

2:56 p.m.

Going back and forth regarding what to speak on at 4 p.m. today. I think I'll stick with Krishna, for whom it is not very wonderful that he saved Aghasura, but especially that He becomes subordinate to His devotees. It's a good topic; just worried I'm over-rehearsed and it won't come out spontaneous. Who am I to talk of God as if I know Him? Straight *Krishna-katha*. I'll do it with maybe a little intro stating my trepidation. Pray to the Lord that the talk won't be dry, with me cranking out examples I don't feel.

What *do* I feel? If I can feel at home telling them why they should read my books or write me letters, why not feel enough to speak straight of God from *sastra* and Srila Prabhupada? I do appreciate the point Prabhupada made. Anything is possible for God, including the ability to reveal Himself to us and to be our friend, although He is always the master and has the last word. Unreserved surrender to the independent, eternal master.

Big fancy lunch, but I survived.

Oh, you'll survive and survive until the end. No one survives in the body, but all souls are eternal. Shuttle from one body to another.

Thank you for sending me mementos of the event (twenty-fifth anniversary of the installation of Radha-Kalachandji), and thank you for the knock on the head, the heart in the ribs. You have a way of always reminding me of such embarrassing things that have happened to me in this world.

May Krishna preserve the good reputation of our movement. She said they share the global vision of their service. No small-timers, but they see how it benefits all. As for me, I'm proud to impart a vision from the slits in the attic window. Just a few more days and I can go home.

* * *

6:12 p.m.

I spoke about God. She said it was a "bull's-eye." Ben Webster, Sonny Stitt "when you really improvise, you allow yourself to make mistakes because you don't always know what's coming.

I said, "Krishna is very near to us."

"Is your Krishna here now?" an old lady asked, and then died.

He's as near to you as your jugular vein. He's both near and far away. We Krishna conscious people know God better than anyone else, didn't you know? We are otherworldly. We see Krishna everywhere. Krishna is wonderful.

When you talk of Krishna, the devotees tend to have less questions. One girl said she talks a lot with Krishna.

"Yeah, well, that's a very high level."

Some reprimand Krishna: "If that's how You treat Your friends, I'd like to see how You treat Your enemies."

Okay, but you can only do that if you have deep appreciation for His qualities. Hey, I was good, was I good?

And now it's over and the next wave too.

Read a piece about a tenor saxophonist that someone gave me because it spoke about improvisation. The author said this musician "doesn't play warm and doesn't take chances." His music is just aggression from beginning to end. Aggression, not love.

I don't want that. I want to take chances to express Krishna consciousness so that I can give love and present the honest struggle in that sharing. I do take chances.

Yes, we can talk with Krishna, but don't take it cheaply. Don't make deals with Krishna. Know that suffering comes from Krishna too. The God conscious person attains love of Krishna through all his experiences. That's all this world is about. Therefore, a devotee always thinks of Krishna. The *gopis* have the highest expression of such love, and Krishna treats them with the most intimacy. They also feel the most pain when He is away from them.

You did good, man, and no headache. Then you stopped speaking and gave them Jagannatha tongues. Jimmy Thompson was there, and his daughter and grandson. He used to "yeah, I know.

Did you know that when improvisers get too old, they can't play their drums anymore? It takes too much energy. Then they sit around and do what? Get drunk, get high, talk about the old times, listen to old records, feel bitter maybe, then die. Then they move on. O Krishna, let me play Your tunes or just be silent and read Your book. Let me write for You until the end. Writing doesn't require much energy. They said that Sonny Rollins would often play alone on his farm. Writing doesn't even require an audience. We have to play for love of God. Always remember that. Don't say that Krishna is far away from me; He's as near as my own veins and He's present in everything. The paradox is that He's a small child, cowherd boy, and simultaneously the creator of cause and effect. O Lord, listen . . .

Lord Nityananda lifted up Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, and that's the great glory of that chapter of the *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Lord, Lord, the quiet hours when I read accumulate.

In that room this afternoon, I just assumed that I was fortunate to be there with these very special people who wanted to hear. It was a perfect-sized group, about fifteen people. Here's a photo. From left to right, see Elvin Jones and his Japanese wife, then there's Henry Higgins, (him again), and Parsival. What about Mingus the mundane, what about the Goatee, where are some white guys, where are some Hare Krishnas? Do they make music in the uh "the temple, I mean to say? Yeah, I don't hesitate. It's flawing, man. You've got to stop when you die.

I have no more defense. Let's see how much Krishna lets me do tomorrow, wonderful, wonderful Krishna.

* * *

Delicate "an Esgic in my breast pocket. *Kurta* missing a button. Someone gave me a better cream to use when I shave; the foam is not good for you. I wondered if this cream could help me live longer. You know, at my age, you've got to squeeze out what little juice is left in the vine.

M. was out in London. He said, "Seeing the womens' faces and the tough guys . . ." and now he has to adjust to being back in the sacred atmosphere of this house. I never left. I'm sheltered with a gourmet lunch, and what do I give in return? I give the nectar of immortality by reading and sharing it. So goodnight. Don't be a tough guy except in your dreams. I mean, your inner life. Worship Krishna, chant His name. He's near and far away.

October 4, 1.04 a.m.

Is today St. Francis of Assisi's birthday? Today I'll give class reading from *Caitanya-caritamrta* at the Manor, if Krishna allows. It's a privilege and I can't say I've earned it. I also can't say that by my speaking, people's lives will change. Still, it's nectar flowing from the Cc., and perhaps I will be able to influence my own heart.

One main topic is mercy, *krpa* (the spiritual master's *krpa* prods us toward surrender). Does mercy already exist full-blown, flowing fully from Krishna, and all we have to do is receive it? ("Let the sunshine in/ "open up your heart and let the sun shine in"). Or do we have to plead to Krishna and *then*, if He likes, He gives us mercy? I think both are true. In any case, Krishna is independent (*svarat*) and gives His mercy to whomever He likes. *Nayam atma pravacanena labhyo*. We can't get it by any endeavor of our own.

Discuss some of this. I won't over-prepare. Just chant *japa* as nicely as possible and let that be my preparation.

* * *

4:10 a.m.

Before you fall asleep, answer this one question: How do I know the Supreme Lord has shown you mercy? That's really Sarvabhauma's question to Gopinatha Acarya. Gopinatha's reply is a little puzzling to me. It could be taken as circular logic or even as dogma. He says if you know that the Supreme Lord (the *summum bonum*) exists as substance with His energies, then this is evidence that you have His mercy. It's like saying if you believe in God, then you have His mercy. But how does that prove that

Lord Caitanya is God? More will come when Gopinatha gives further evidence. For now, this much.

I accept it, but I'm trying to understand it and present it to a challenger or so-called neutral inquirer. If you've got it, you've got it. The proof that you have God's mercy is that you are learned in the science of God consciousness. Ah. You know God as both substance with energy. A fool doesn't know God and can't explain Him scientifically. If you have *Sraddha* and you can explain *Krishna-tattva*, that's evidence that you have His mercy. He maintains a curtain between Himself and the fools. Not knowing Krishna means not having His mercy.

How can I get His mercy? Surrender to guru and render service. You won't get His mercy by withholding yourself from it.

* * *

5:38 a.m.

Power Blaster CD and tape player "how to operate it. read the prose of the operator's manual and go batty. Get your head on right for the visit to the Manor. Holy land, and I'm a tiny foreigner, although I too belong. Got a pass "my face is my passport. They know me there. I have entry to ISKCON places because I'm on good behavior and am GBC-approved.

Do not insert the cassette or CD if you come in from a cold place to a heated room, and if you soil it, wipe it with a lint-free cloth, not with a circular, but with a back and forth motion. Don't damage your hearing; you can't replace it, frail human.

Be careful what you hear, because it may affect you at the time of death. Groovy sounds could lead to rebirth "no joke. Stay, of course, strictly in the line of *parampara*.

Hip-hop with your fingers to the right place. This is a sort of game but I want to be in Ernest (not Hemingway). Pause to ingest Churna, not karma. If this machine is damaged in a country other than the one in which you purchased it, follow this "be careful or you may be severely electrocuted. Consult our headquarters in Japan. Panasonic, Ltd. has branches . . .)

* * *

I'm as ready as I'll ever be. Prove you've got the mercy; you know, speak of the Supreme Person as the *summum bonum*. Agnostics may or may not become convinced, but touch yourself with *Sabda-brahma*. Srila Prabhupada shows how much mercy he has received by his ability to convince so many of Krishna consciousness and to practice it intensely himself.

* * *

O Sarva, O Gopinatha,
please admit me, one member
of your gang. Let me stand in
back or up front but no
heavy duties, please, and don't

forget to give me the honor to speak as
as veteran.

That's how I pay for my food and
the looks I receive,
intense, from Bhakta
Farlow, who distributes books
in London and wonders if
I can help.
Help?
Yes, I ask for help.

* * *

9:17 a.m.

Appeared amid the Manor's pageantry. The temple room here is quite spread out. Heard the stomping foot of a swami keeping the *kirtana* time while singing a wild romp. I performed the Prabhupada *puja*, then went upstairs to rest until class. Looked up the word "mercy" in the dictionary. Then Sivarama Swami came in to say hello. He didn't stay long, but excused himself. He's leaving for India in a little while. My visit to the Manor was like a dream. The class went all right, I guess. My Godbrothers helped us to understand what Gopinatha Acarya meant when he said knowledge of the *summum bonum* is proof that one has received Krishna's mercy. Just a little mercy (*krpa-lesa*) is all that's required. Unless you get it, you can't practice Krishna consciousness.

"What does grace mean, especially 'His Divine Grace'?"

Questions and answers and then I left. The devotees whisked me away to the parking lot and the car, and now I'm back. Krishna's mercy is His special reciprocation with His devotees to draw them to Him.

* * *

"Should we phone before 4 to see if you are up to coming?"

Yes, do that.

Heard a devotee say, "He told me two things I never forgot: be strict and be humble." Yeah? Well where does *that* fit in? Strictness isn't everything. Where's the heart?

* * *

No, you don't
gotta do anything but serve
your master. They're feeding
you for that. Next,
what will you speak on a
Sunday afternoon? How about
telling what Srila Prabhupada wanted?
He said chant. I
don't know. Tell an old story.

* * *

11:04 a.m.

Holding pattern in the sky of my head and body, hoping I'll be able to give the class at 4 p.m. It's not so important to me or to the world of devotees, but still I want to try for it.

One devotee here wanted to see me "for two minutes." Not true. It seems heartless to turn him down. I'd be willing to talk with him for five minutes, but I feel so fragile right now. Fortunately, he spared me. I can still sit here in my soft pink sweater.

Now the phone is ringing. M. engaged the alarm in our van in case someone tries to break in. My passport pouch is hidden in the pillowcase. Devotees are on their way to India for Karttika. I wanted to tell you. Srila Prabhupada says that "*maya* is very, very strong; a little mistake and she can punish us so that we have to come back again to the material world. And that is great suffering. So the purpose of the Krishna consciousness movement is to stop the cycle of birth and death."

Why did I take that excerpt out from my program today? I thought the devotees might doze through it. I want to keep their attention with catchy excerpts, or controversial ones. But it is so solid hearing him saying that our purpose in Krishna consciousness is to stop the cycle of birth and death. Another excerpt I omitted is where he says that Krishna can talk with us. I love those statements by Prabhupada, but the tape excerpt performance is one where I have to capture the audience. Why? I want them to develop a taste for hearing him themselves.

After I play each excerpt I say something of my own. Then I close my eyes and reach for the next, concentrating if possible, not on the faces in the audience, but on what Prabhupada is saying. After my remark I always ask the audience to respond. We each wave the flag of Prabhupada allegiance and know that we can always hear from Prabhupada directly. I know some can't understand his accent or prefer to listen to their ISKCON guru, but there's something special here.

* * *

12:05 p.m.

Mataji widow everyone respects here makes the Lord's sweets. She stood up and asked me two questions in the temple room. She asked if I still offer two flowers to Lord Jagannatha every day. Then she said Srila Prabhupada wrote to me that if you make mistakes, Krishna will forgive you, but don't make mistakes deliberately. I listened intently and was impressed that she had read Prabhupada's letters to me and that they were meaningful to her. "Yes," I said. "He wrote me that even if you make a big mistake, Krishna will excuse you."

Do you still offer two flowers to Lord Jagannatha and pray to him as Swamiji approved?

"No," I said, "I don't offer the two flowers, but I do worship Srila Prabhupada *murti*. And Lord Jagannatha too. The style of worship has changed, but I'm still worshipping.

* * *

Newcastle-On-Tyne for a Sunday feast lecture. "Many Indians," he said. "It's a new temple and a new scene."

Lecture on holy name, and I already did *dehino 'smin* in Medalago. Both were good. He said to speak from *Bhagavad-gita* or *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I don't want to get too technical or philosophical. How about a story? One Sunday years ago at Medalago, I told the story of Narada going to meditate. We later turned it into a BTG essay.

He went to New York City. What Charlie Parker is to jazz, Srila Prabhupada is to Gaudiya Vaisnavism. Or better, what Peter was to Christianity, Srila Prabhupada is to Gaudiya Vaisnavism. A great saint. And I met him.

Everyone already knows that story, but I could tell it again. I was living in NYC "someone asked me this morning if it's true I thought Krishna consciousness would never leave the Lower East Side.

It's not only true, but we didn't *want* it to leave. We wanted our spiritual father to stay with us. When Krishna said he had to leave Vrndavana for important business in Mathura, the residents of Vrndavana thought, "What important business?" They didn't believe Him, didn't want to lose Him.

* * *

6:28 p.m., Night Notes

Review of performance: how many stars? Give five for Srila Prabhupada and his room at Bhaktivedanta Manor. I sat on a simple pillow and played his tapes. It went well. A small group saw me off in the car. Srutidhara Prabhu asked me to come back. I felt reserved on the way there, but less so on the way back. Now answering a few letters.

Someone mentioned the word "clone." He didn't like cheap imitations, but people who did the real thing. Am I a clone of Prabhupada? No, I'm hardly a disciple. Not only that, but I own my own voice. No one would mistake me for Prabhupada. Obviously I follow his teachings, and I don't say things he wouldn't say, but I'm inevitably myself. That's okay. It's important to note: we have a self, we are not clones of the guru.

Tonight I said, "Let each make a contribution to Krishna consciousness of the future. Even if you can't see it become a tremendous influence in the world, contribute, like planting seeds of trees that will benefit people of the future."

You said *that*? Yes, I was lost in the presentation of gathered tape excerpts, in service to Prabhupada, in the hours I have spent hearing his tapes.

October 5, 12:01 a.m.

Dreamt was able to teach the art of masonry in Vrndavana. We built crude walls, the way they do in Vrndavana, without an architectural plan. Then we organized the devotees to do different tasks. I belonged to one small group too. Nice dream of being humble and working in Vrndavana. Bhurijana Prabhu was also there, encouraging us all. We were all improvising the buildings.

* * *

9:35 a.m.

Arrived in Newcastle. Didn't take any notes enroute, but sat in the front and talked with M. A high-speed breakfast.

Out the window a sign, "What are you waiting for?" with a picture of the four-tiered hamburger at the nearby McDonalds.

What are you waiting for? Do you want more notice?

Mike wanted to know whether it was possible to think of Krishna and to hear Charlie rouse at the same time. Didn't Aristotle say you can't think of two things at exactly the same time? Of course, you can chant Hare Krishna and see Krishna's pastimes in your mind's eye (if you are fortunate), but can you do the two things I just mentioned?

I put all my money down on the devotee's side. Krishna won't let us go astray. Although there's always the story of Markendeya Rsi and how long it took him to come back.

Just a little experiment, Mike said. I want to see if I can cruise and reflect and improvise. "My project is creative improvised music, and I want to know if it can be Krishna conscious."

* * *

This simple building used to be a bank. They keep the *bhoga* in what used to be the vault. One kitchen, one shared bathroom. My room is near the main road. I hope I'll be able to sleep tonight. He said the Lord Mayor came to the grand opening and cut the ribbon. Two hundred guests that day.

Sats, do you have the guts? You do have gentle behavior, the slippers, and the microphone. Why not read from SPL?

I want them to become devotees. I have bought into our policy that all people should become devotees. And deep down inside, I think I really do want them to become devotees.

Above me at the desk is a map of Sri Vraja Mandala. Not all the names are familiar to me, but now the ISKCON devotees are flying there to walk in these places. Varsana, Madhuvana, Gokula, Dauji, Mahavana, Vrndavana, Radha-kunda "they know. I know only my short walk from the room to the shed and the lap in the woods.

Mail arriving, schedule, heartbeat, duration.

* * *

11:09 a.m.

Got my lecture outlined: At very beginning say I'll tell some anecdotes from his life. Then speak on SPL's epilogue "how we can follow Srila Prabhupada now.

* * *

Music hath charms and songs
 sogs
 and sags,
 Sats, I want to know why you are
 yowling like a hurt animal.
 Ain't you the quiet
 fellow trying to hold off a headache?

* * *

Then try this for size "the wail
 of a happy secret, it's
 beauty
 beauty
 here to serve Prabhupada.

* * *

Are my smiling friends in ISKCON puzzled?
 I know this is atonal.

* * *

11:32 a.m.

On the street outside my window, I see Oriental boys in denim and passing buses with such signs as, "Set the juice loose" "they're advertising a fruit candy bar. The guys walking by seem a little close to the derelicts in the mini park adjoining this area. I see a fat guy eating an apple as he strolls. He looks in my direction. I'm sitting indoors on the second- story of a former bank. This building still has the heavy wire grates over the windows. You couldn't break the glass if you threw a stone. Another old guy with a metal cane and wrinkled pants walks in the shadow of the huge triple-tower luxury apartments. The towers have things sticking out on top "lights searching the city for enemies? Only in my own head. Saw the photo of the opening day here. This one and that one attended, and they had a Bharat Natyam dancer. I write and some don't like it; they dance and some don't like.

Writing this while waiting for him to bring me *gamcha* so I can bathe and dry off. The machine gun of the typewriter in the lonely room. The guru junior is here today after giving two lectures yesterday. He's got a good thing lined up for today too. Medicine in pocket if needed.

Krishna "Prahlada Maharaja was in the mood of a child crying when the Lord was present and laughing when He appeared to console him. The vivid example of *Mahabharata*. A devotee sees Krishna everywhere and is dead to material desires. He sees only Krishna. Is He there "and can I see Him "in the fat guy walking by with his

apple? What about in myself behind this grated metal window? Yes, He all there, and Srila Prabhupada is laughing at me.

* * *

11:55 a.m.

City of Newcastle bus-stop shelter. "What are you waiting for?" Woman with red (dyed?) hair, in shorts and high heels, walking by. At first I think she's a tempting beauty, but then I see she's slightly ludicrous, gaudy, a poor thing on legs (like all of us).

The bus waits. The old wrinkled guy with the metal cane has joined three younger men, one with a guitar over his back. Homeless hangouts and street people? Black-clad motorcyclist on black motorcycle. What do the police think about such citizens? And what about the bus driver? Does he eye that woman, who might be a Sikh, in her long coat and leggings and big scarf over her head?

I feel a little better after the shower. Holding out. The *sastra* opens a way to the spiritual world, and the only way to look out and see more than the scruffy city people or my own scared face behind the grating, in the mirror.

* * *

12:25 p.m.

Newspaper in closet, September 17. Headline, "Six-year-old Kid Stabbed To Death by Another Child, called 'Mad Dog.'" The dead child's grave was vandalized overnight, so parents staged an all-night vigil: "Let our child rest in peace."

A priest collected a fund for a memorial to Diana; he has collected £406 so far.

Someone else killed his wife. Film warns children what will happen if they take to a life of crime.

I heard a noise in the hall and put the newspaper back. Looked out the window. In this Hare Krishna world, disciples are cooking for their guru. Maybe that's why I get cynical. I see I'm the object of pampering and I accept it. We live within a bubble (not bulletproof) while the outside world kills, steals, and vandalizes graves, then governs and mourns and entertains and goes on and on. We preach to them. I'm just trying to reach lecture time, 3.30 p.m., and be well enough to speak.

* * *

I was with Prabhupada while Pradyumna was the servant. Pradyumna said he was going to take a vacation. I told him, "Be sure to tell Prabhupada when you come back. I'll handle the duties while you are away." Then we entered Prabhupada's room. He pointed to me and said I had done something wrong with his laundry, committed some kind of offense. He wasn't really angry, so I asked what I had done wrong. Was it that I had put the clean clothes on the floor? It turned out that Prabhupada was using his laundry as an example to explain something that had happened during the last millennium. It had nothing to do with me or the laundry, but I felt the dutifulness increase in my heart.

* * *

5 p.m.

Did the *yajna*. I lectured as a warm-up for Madhu's songs. Some kids went by, twice slamming on temple room's grated windows. As it happened during my lecture I said, "I feel like I'm back at 26 Second Avenue." Yeah. Head pressured.

An Indian man asked, "How did you do it? How did you make the big change on meeting a *mahatma*?" I admit I didn't do it yet.

Another man from the back of the room said, "Please explain how you changed to gradually accept Krishna as the Absolute Truth."

"Swamiji was giving out Krishna and I took it. It was easy, it was free, it was far-out, and it was accessible. We wanted to stay high forever. I have done that, I guess." A personal answer.

Back in my room. A man came and asked to talk to Swamiji. M. had to tell him I couldn't. Sorry. My head can't take it.

October 6, 12 a.m.

Wonderful Prahlada Maharaja. He is real and for him, God is real. He's mystical; God is present in his life at all times. Sometimes he cries in anxiety when he feels Krishna's absence, then laughs in jubilation when God tends to him. He's in *vatsalya-rasa*, Srila Prabhupada says, not as a father of Krishna, but as a dependent son. He's "dead" to the material world and fully open to Krishna. There are two ways to think of this: we see the form of Krishna and his Goloka activities in our mind, and wherever we look at the material world and its people, we see a desert and only emptiness.

Another way to think of it is wherever we turn we see Krishna, and we are reminded of Him because we know this world's varieties are His energies. When a mother sees her child's shoe, when a lover sees his beloved's comb, they think of their beloved. Lord Caitanya's verse *Sunyayitam jagat sarvam, govinda-virahena me* is evidence of the feeling of void, and Bg. 6.30's "Theyogi sees me everywhere" is evidence of the other. Also, Cc. *Madhya* 8.24: Lord Caitanya says of ramananda raya, "You are a *maha-bhagavata*. Therefore wherever you look you see Krishna. Therefore, when you see Me, you see Krishna and Radha."

Well, this will be an improvised Karttika and you know what? We'll be headin' for Erin tomorrow.

If the boat will get him there. Stranlaer.

* * *

3:08 a.m.

Have a good afternoon class lined up, if Krishna allows me do it. I'll read selections from *My relationship With Lord Krishna*. I'll begin by reading a letter from Caitanya-Candrodaya dasa inviting me to do this.

Still thinking of improvisation and its meaning in my writing. Then flashed on the image of Thelonius Monk astride the piano, and how he created a lonely sound in Paris,

rain on the streets "and me in Richie's Lower East Side apartment looking out at the tenements, hearing, alone, trickle "

Then the music changed and it was rouse bopping. The loneliness broke. We smiled. It's still sad, and those blues still jump, I'm sure.

I want to improvise my way to Vrndavana, the sand dunes
of Vrndavana
past injustice to Krishna
my head filled with Him
coming out of the mix, right
on the line.

Here's a monk, studying, his closed eyes seeing Lord Jagannatha and Srila Prabhupada.

Then open to write this
to the beat not sentimental
but almost "
love
for Krishna
and His world. I don't condemn
this place to which the Swami came
to rescue us, NYC,
LES, to take us to him.
I'm sentimental, waxing, I know.
But I study, pour over it,
sketch it, find the genius, my hand moving
to a heartbeat.
Then sooner or later, death. O Krishna,
take me then.

* * *

5:10 a.m.

Mangala-arati, I sang. Don't laugh. It's serious. Bhakti-rasa performed the *arati*. Only a small group present "our visiting group and two others. The temple is well decorated in tasteful colors, wallpaper, chandeliers "with whatever money they could gather. No temple in the West has an unlimited budget. Their Deity is an early painting of Panca-tattva. Hare Krishna. Swing and sway slowly, singing to a slow beat. They have only a photo of *tulasi*, not an actual plant. It's a small temple. I am hoping to give class on how a pure devotee sees Krishna in everything moving and non-moving. He doesn't see the form of that thing, but sees "*ista-devata sphurti*," the vision of his Lord, "my God."

Soho Street, Newcastle Street "outside a wild city revolving from Sunday night to Monday morning. Most people get up later and go to work. Some don't work at all, but hang on somehow in the city. Some are bums and criminals, like that "Mad Dog" who killed.

Around the corner, two minutes away, is a Sikh temple. People gather in ethnic and religious groups. Hare Krishna is taken as one of them, but we say we are universal in

our approach. There are really only two groups, *asuras* and *devas*. I don't seem to have anything to say right now.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

After the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class about Prahlada Maharaja's *maha-bhagavata* ecstasies, I opened the curtains and looked out at the bus stop. There's a new billboard on the shelter. No longer does it say, "What are you waiting for?" Now it says, "Jazz up meal times!" and shows an ad for chicken and bacon crispy pancakes. Ugh. The road is stained black.

In the class we spoke about how one can see Krishna everywhere and see everything in Him. I said beginners can practice this meditation by seeing everything through the eyes of scripture. No one can imitate a *maha-bhagavata*.

Oh, what about the saying that Krishna is the sound in ether? Does that mean just anything, any music for example?

I said we can't just go into a liquor store and say, "I'm seeing Krishna here," and do nonsense. That's what I said.

None of the questions the devotees asked were about seeing Krishna everywhere. They were all about how to depend on Krishna. I would have preferred to talk more about the other point.

* * *

10:46 a.m.

Tell him, "Don't mind me. I didn't mean to check up on you." Say, "I may be slow to understand you, but give me time." Don't say, "I'm an old man," or, "I'm lonely and I've only got you to talk to." But do open up and communicate. One wants tenderness, ease. One assumes loving dealings. If you don't get them at home, then take it as just a little drop of what it's like for most folks living in this world.

I know this is hard to follow. That's because this is a rapid tour and I have head pressure.

Keep it together until 3.30 p.m. for these people who have come here to listen to me. I appreciate that they have driven for hours and stayed overnight in a less than comfortable situation. I'll do what I can to stay on course and deliver.

Someone wrote to me to tell me he's on Lithium for his manic depression. He tried getting off, but it didn't work. Horrendous life adventures. I took care not to give advice on drugs, therapies, or other decisions. He watches a lot of TV, he says, and asks me to preach to him not to do it.

The cold is coming, so why not welcome it? Gray, rainy days coming up in Northern Ireland. See Krishna everywhere. George Harrison said that he liked that most about Prabhupada, that he encouraged us to see Krishna everywhere.

No mice in the bathroom. I did meet a white-bodied Englishman wearing only his *gamcha* though. Spoke a few words, then locked myself in the separate closet that houses the toilet and added my amber mite to the bowl. Washed my face and exited. "Are you staying for the disciples' meeting?"

M. said we can't speed tomorrow as we did on the M - 1 in France because it'll be old Scottish roads all the way to Stranlaer. Okay. Maybe I could sit up front. It won't be too dark to answer the mail. With faith.

* * *

12:20

Apple force, parcel force, are you waiting for lunch or the mail? No, the falling off of material desires. Waiting for Krishna consciousness to call me to Vrndavana. A knock at the door recalls me to the present moment. When I said "void, nothing" is the Buddhist perfection, he looked not only tired but disinterested. I may have been reading into his expression though. He might really have been tired. But it's a fact that he's not thrilled by my talks or writings. Still, he's a good friend.

What's her name, Lottie? White-haired lady of Grant City. My father used to mow her lawn. I helped once "did most of it. She was supposed to be cheerful, but she was an old widow. That was when we first moved to Staten Island or maybe even before. Green "trees, grass "wooden boards on train platform "searching memories. His memories are russian, hers Finnish.

* * *

3:05 p.m.

More polishing on the talk for this afternoon. It's on Krishna, it's on my book, on reading poems, on being together. Whatever I can say on the spot. Don't press too hard on the controls, but let it flow.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

I said, "My relationship with God . . ." and they listened. One fell asleep. Two others struggled not to fall asleep. Two babies colored in a "Rama" coloring book. rasta man was quiet. His wife took their kids out. The ladies wore earrings.

October 7, 7:12 a.m.

A question was raised last night by Caitanya-candrodaya about how to expand our service and not find ourselves dwindling. We have to follow our dream to do something wonderful for Krishna even if we can't execute it right away. Live in preparation.

Then Damodara-rati, who seemed almost intimidated (as I went on to say the devotee's dream usually is for some kind of personal contribution to preaching to please Srila Prabhupada), said her dream was to improve her *sadhana*. She asked if that was miserly.

"No it's the foundation for all other dreams."

* * *

7:53 a.m.

Stranraer. We're parked in lane 12 on queue for the ferry, which doesn't leave until 10 a.m. M. is warming up the cab by running the engine while he chants his rounds. Then he will rest, and maybe I will too. I told him of varied tidings I read in letters from Guyana, Dallas, etc. Try to answer mail on the ferry. Our cow is heading for the barn.

Rough swaggering crow on dockside. His beak looks like stone. A more graceful, and quizzical, white gull lands on a rail and turns its head to one side. It's cool weather, but the sky is clear, so we hope for a smooth crossing. That's always the hope.

Just try to please Krishna, they say. Don't worry about your personal needs. reduce distractions. Become like Prahlada Maharaja, in whom all material desires had died. Do you hear? I tell the news from around the world. I answer each letter, then shut the inner door and live apart. I'm still with them in my mind, but live alone to be fit to serve them.

Everything is up to Krishna. I give my answers in classes, but who knows if I'm right? For example, my distinction between the will of providence and Krishna's mercy "is that what Srila Prabhupada would have said?

* * *

9:15 a.m.

Nothing to say right now because I'm on my way home, not preparing for another lecture. I'm in between.

* * *

9:53 a.m.

On Stena line ferry, we sat right under the video. The young guy in the film starting playing loud rock-'n-roll drums. M. found a place where the video wasn't turned on and we moved. Now we're in a large cafeteria setting, facing each other at a table. I hope they don't force us to buy something. If they do, we can each get an apple. "Weather conditions are perfect "In the unlikely case "Safety broadcast "Enjoy your crossing."

I'd power-read my way to the end of *Memories* but when I concentrate I feel the first stage of pain. I think I'll sit back. "Please remain calm at all times and follow instructions from the captain." The crossing should take an hour and fifty minutes. Bell's Whiskey £13.99 a liter.

* * *

10:40 a.m.

Irish music and dance in a spitzzy glamour show "live performance on video. Madhu can't turn away from it because the screen is right above us. This is like karma "you want something and it's forced upon you. You can't avoid it, must enjoy it, yet you'd really rather be free of it. But you're not. It's what you asked for.

The flat ocean, Irish sea stretches ahead and we're making good time, predictably. It'll be a late-lunch arrival. Maybe the collie Tilaka will be there, or Jayananda playing in the front yard. I expect Srila Prabhupada will be sitting on the altar. I'll take a quick shower and then lunch, then unpack. Want to be ready for tomorrow, my first full day back.

White gull flying low in water, same direction as we are traveling. We look at it and want to talk of it "to forget our reality. Distraction is a choice, and it's easy to pretend we are concerned with or even fascinated with the gull. Or the countless ripples leading us toward the low hills on the shoreline. Streaks of white clouds. Where are you going? Where do you belong?

Aim: to set up a schedule again, build up to reading and writing from the Seventh Canto, to have no literary purpose other than life flow. Mixture.

The high-voltage Irish dance troupe still going strong. M. not interested because it's so glitzy.

They just announced the cocktail special available on this voyage. Sounded like "Colorado bulldog." Ingredients include vodka and milk. Factory tower on shore.

"We'll have to slow down when we enter Belfast Harbor."

It was a good tour with plenty of lecture opportunities. Headaches came, but I made it through most of the engagements. I took an average of two pills a week, but more toward the end of the tour.

Too weak (me) and distracted (by the sounds from the Irish show) to do what I thought I might do "answer mail or even pray with *Bhagavad-gita*. I knew I couldn't expect much quiet on the crossing. At least it's almost over.

* * *

Roaring along the last miles. The insulation on the back window is falling off. I can see cows, fences, lowlands, the typical small, one-story houses. We've been living with the white stripe on the highway so long that it looks natural. Now I can look for a new marker of my rhythms.

I wrote on my "To Do" list not to go on any marathons or binges. Even the best thing, reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, can be built up gradually. I don't have to do a marathon to answer mail. ration everything and so gradually enter a routine.

* * *

We really don't have knowledge beyond this spot life. We're fixed in the identity of someone who wasn't a devotee, then who became a devotee one year. *That* life story. Death is something unapproachable, although it's waiting for all of us. Are we too frightened of it to speak about it? I remember the days before I entered the Navy, but when I knew I would have to go, I used to try to put it out of my mind. It was a sword hanging over my head. I got through it somehow are other, and it's over now. Death will be a little bit like that. We can't avoid it because we already signed up for a material body. We can simply prepare for it. That means not indulging in the moment of sense gratification. It's just too temporary a pleasure enjoyed at too great a risk to have any real value.

* * *

Krishna, I love You. I'm just covered over. Please deliver me from this death-bound existence. I obviously don't know what I'm doing, but You know my intentions. You

know my shallow intentions, my foolish intentions, my intentions to cheat. But You also know that there is *some* good in me. After all, I was made in Your image and I am Your eternal part and parcel. I'm Prabhupada's *cela*.

* * *

There may be a few devotees waiting for us when we get back. I won't have much to say to them, just that it was a good tour and I'm glad to be back. And I don't really know "

I try to live up to what they expect of me. I can't bluff it. One disciple said that I may be entitled to thinking of myself humbly, but they are entitled to see me as exalted.

Is this a game?

I was standing on the top of the stairs at the Newcastle temple when no one was around. There were pictures of Prabhupada, nicely framed, all along the stairwell. Bhakti-rasa is a Prabhupada man and likes to glorify him. But what do we really know. Those pictures are sometimes gaudy. What can they actually capture? Of course, they capture a lot. There's Prabhupada with a knit hat pulled down over his ears. There's another where his bamboo walking cane is lying on the ground. It looks like he has climbed the platform of a ratha-yatra cart. Below are hundreds of disciples and followers. He has his hands folded as he stands before the Deity. One of his *sannyasi* disciples is coming up the stairs behind him.

That moment while I was standing on the stairs, I waited, but then "nothing. I just had to keep living. I guess life doesn't have to always be sensational. More, it is filled with duty. We can be satisfied knowing that we are in our place, constitutionally a good soldier, and that the layers are coming off. What can we know in the meantime?

* * *

Cows and more cows, trees, bunchy clouds. It won't be long now before we'll be in sight of that lovely scenery of ISKCON's Inis rath "water, sky, land. It won't be long. Black crows in a green field beside a rushing stream. red car turns off the Glenmore scenic walk. Presbyterian Church. road signs. The white stripe shooting out from the back of the van. The trees are still green because autumn is slow to come here. In America it would be crispy copper by now. Small houses, often with no paint "cement outer walls.

Try to think of serving him, even though you are not fully surrendered. "Breakfast served seven days a week." Farm houses. Tractors. Trucks. I'm going to a place where I'll be able to sleep without earplugs. No city streets either. Of course, I'll still be disrupted by pain, but I expect that.

Seventeen-year-old Bhakta Sam admitted that his is the age for enjoying like anything. He says he checks himself from it by remembering how he will grow old. Smart fellow. At his age I was in complete *maya*. He lives at the Manor and distributes books. Likes to read my books too.

Unique Gifts and Crafts. Madhu winding around the corners. Dublin, Armagh, Ballygowen, Belfast. Don't try to see it all. Let it pass.

Everything is up to Krishna. It was so nice to talk of Him and to Him as the Supreme Person, a real person. I tell them things when I speak that maybe I don't "believe," yet I don't disbelieve them either. I say Krishna is as much a person as your husband, wife, or child, yet He controls everything. Mystics, as they call them, can really feel His presence. Feeling His presence is not always connected to what we can see with our eyes. Krishna advises us in *Bhagavad-gita* to see Him when we drink water. See with your heart. If I am earnestly trying to present this point, then it must mean that I'm convinced of it myself. But it doesn't *necessarily* mean that. It just means I'm a lecturer doing my duty.

So when I'm alone I try to think these things over. I try to go deeper into my own heart, find my personal honesty, feel things more. That's how I prepare for another lecture tour. Look for true realization. Surely people understand what I'm saying? Because I think everybody must be in this condition. Don't we all speak beyond what we *fully* feel? I mean, when we say to someone, "Have a nice day?" even that we don't quite mean with all our hearts. We don't even know who we were at the moment we said it.

But that's life, I guess. If we were so true to ourselves, we'd probably go crazy. Or at least other people would see us that way.

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In the back of the van, the top window vent is down. The big bottles of water, which I won't be using any more, shift back and forth in the tiny toilet room. Fixed to the wall is the picture of Govardhana, the white cows, and the Madana-mohana silhouettes. I'm not there right now. We will celebrate Kartika in Ireland.

Agricultural Society, Ltd., Fertilizers. This is a town where they do the animals in. Creamery. Signs in the other direction for Belfast. Sloopy horse in a field. Irish castle by a lake. Little plot of tombstones, most of them black. Tiny, tiny building labeled "Gospel Mission." The green meadows where the sheep eat and crows cruise by. More slow-moving cows. Some owners own brown ones, some black ones, some black and white ones "all of them doomed. Their owners often wear tattered suit jackets when they go out into the field. They seem to hate their animals, although they have been living off them for generations.

When I get back, I'll get into the Seventh Canto. It's a familiar story, but I'll read it carefully just the same. I want that reality, not just the reality I see out my window or the superficial reality of a life at Inis rath. I go there because it's a place where I can study Prabhupada's books.

* * *

Another town: Trident Inn. Guinness Stout, Ratmore Lounge. So many pubs per street, and then out of town and it's the same stuff again "streams and little stone bridges, plenty of pasturing cows.

Now we are passing what looks like a fortified police station, or maybe it's something connected with the border. Walls to prevent bombing. Surveillance. Cars zipping by in both directions. Nice to be heading home away from such madness.

We're making good time as usual with Madhu at the helm of this Ford Econoline. It took us only three and a half hours to go from Guru-daksina's house all the way to Newcastle. Now it's ten to one. Perhaps we won't be so late after all.

I saw a silo and thought of the one Gita-nagari used to own. Now we are going so fast the trees look blurred. If we had wings we'd take off. Stephen Daedalus.

My feet are cold. I'd go up front for the last few miles, but it's a little nerve-wracking to watch the road when he passes everyone so fast.

It was nice teaming up with Madhu on Sunday, me giving a lecture and him singing. Like an act. I told the audience that I was the warm-up for the singer. Madhu said the Indians didn't seem to relate much to his singing. He noticed it in their faces. Maybe some young ones liked it. I don't know what they thought of my lecture either. I know one Indian came quickly on my heels after I got up to go to my room. I heard him say he wanted to speak with Swamiji. I couldn't do it. Then I heard him say, "Hare Krishna," when Madhu disappointed him.

Passing a football field, the goal posts rising high. King Gregory Playing Fields. royal British Legion. r. M. Smith and Sons. Maxol. Stop for traffic in these towns. Some of these towns used to be dangerous during troubled times. "Give way to traffic from right." Cost-cutter Supermarket. News agency. Balmoral Furniture. royal Mail. Yeah, that's the little red truck that delivers mail for me from America and other countries. Libraries and museums. Carpets and paints. Richard's Home Bakery. Alcorn Chemist. Where's the Pub? Solicitors, Tobacconists. Video Alley. A whole street without a pub, and it's called Main Street too. A guy looks back at me looking out the back window. Cobwebs Antiques. Ballyguran. And there's another Protestant Church, the Wesleyan Hall.

Fivemiletown, high school and community college.

Kids playing in the field kicking a soccer ball. In adjacent field, black bulls and cows and a rotting, old cement building. Now the scenery is beginning to look more familiar, especially the dark clouds and blue sky. District of Dungannon, County Tyrone. We're leaving it. Presbyterian church. Woolly sheep denote the changing season. remember when they were just skins last spring?

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2 p.m.

It's good to be back! We were met at the house by Radhanatha, Manu, ISani, and little Sita. Sita told me that they have been collecting blackberries: "We collected them for you."

I instinctively deflected her remark and inquired where she got them, but she was vague about the details.

Then I said, trying to include her, "We will offer these to Krishna and we can all eat them."

She repeated, "I picked them for you." It was sweet coming from this Goldilocks freckle-faced little colleen.

It's good to be back. The grass is growing high and is still so green! The sky is still and dark, just the way I like it.

Prabhupada has waited here patiently. At this moment he's got boiled potatoes and other preparations sitting before him on his plate. I said the prayers, unconsciously bubbling over with silly things in my mind. It's good to be back. Bright little vase of flowers. Good timing too "a rain shower to greet us.

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6.22 P.M.

Moved in. So much moving of boxes that my back aches. It was raining and now the sun is up with the last bright rays striking the side of the boathouse and onto the water. There is definitely a slight copperish tint to the trees now, and the shore edge weeds have turned brown. I used to think it was hard to trace autumn in Ireland, but now I see it. It's almost like spray paint. But always there is green. I see two boats in the last sunset light on the Inis rath side of the strait. Now time to work ahead, bit by bit.