Last Visit To Stroudsburg

January–February, 1995

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

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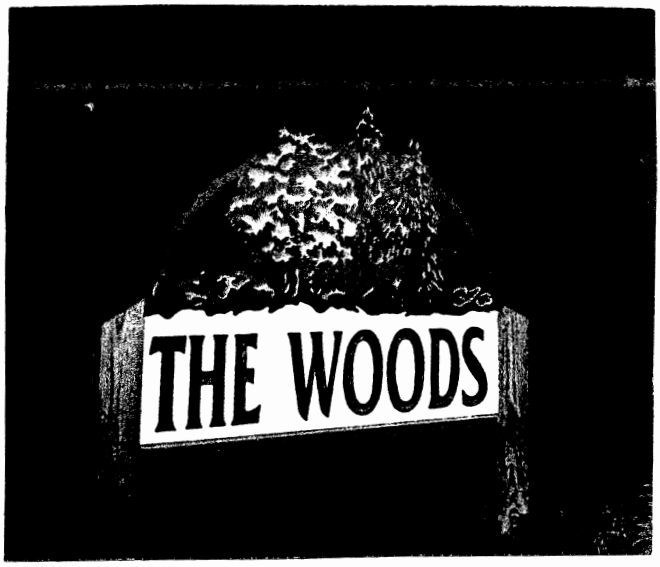


January 27

I'm out on my first morning walk in The Woods in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, and very happy and grateful to be starting off another mini-retreat, at least thirteen days, and I have so many projects I like to do. But of course, the heart of it is to serve Kṛṣṇa. In the beginning one is attached to the service, and in a later stage one develops love of Kṛṣṇa. I hanker for both those stages. Thirty-two degrees about, not very cold although it tingles the pointing finger that sticks out of the beadbag. Hear the highway, what is it, I-80? Pointy tree tops and the sky light pearl blue just starting to be dawn. What could be nicer walking in your Carhart overalls? Madhu waiting for you at the end of the lane so you can walk back without being a spectacle to the high school kids who are waiting for the school bus. Back into the warm house for an Ekādaśī fruit

breakfast and then on and on, all those wonderful projects you have to do today. As for this speaking, I don't know, maybe just a record to see what we can do with it later.

If you really want to get truthful and personal, talk the things that are on your mind and just keep going to help yourself in that way. Get used to that outpouring method of keeping in touch. One of the new things now is my three sessions with Dr. Edgette, the Ericksonian, where I try to learn more how to put myself into trance or hypnosis for the purpose of managing pain. When you learn a skill, you learn it in different areas at once. I also felt when I was in some kind of trance state in his office that this would also give me facility to be my own man more and not be immediately impressed by the world. You can be within yourself. It's kind of like that, rather than your body having to take all the shocks of the outside world and be there. The body has to take those shocks but you don't have to be there with your mind. So to reserve the self for more Kṛṣṇa conscious thoughts and keeping one's own nature intact was something I learned could possibly be gained by trance.

As for pain management, well, I did get a headache yesterday coming here. It seems like I did get a nice deal out of it and not get such a bad headache. I talked with the body or with the headache in my mind and said, "You know, let's make a deal. I will stop work early today, but I have to get some things done." So I did the various setting up in the room for the beginning of the retreat and then took rest before 6 P.M. and the headache went away very quickly then. So partly you have to concede to the

limits of the body, but then also you request the body not to have an unnecessarily long headache and especially also that you ask your mind not to be unnecessarily fixed on the pain. It's just a sensation that has to come but it doesn't have to be so devastating. These kind of hints and strategies are very important and I'd like to learn how to develop them more. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

For my writing sessions over the next days, I have no timed book with its sense of assignment and responsibility to tell the story but just the pleasure and discipline of writing in different sessions during the day. No time period set on them, it could be fifteen minutes or more and you try to write a divided lines song or poem in each one so that you can do poems too. And I'm looking forward to drawing what comes, so many nice projects by Kṛṣṇa's grace to serve the devotees, to share with the devotees. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

Car Pome, January 27, 1995

Up periscope
morning walk morning
talk. I shouted from
hilltop, "I am a Kṛṣṇa conscious
person!"
Kṛṣṇa shouted (whispered)
back I-80 sounds
and feet walking on asphalt
in The Woods, a home-construction site.

Don't make sense but worship
Hare Kṛṣṇa to the air,
cold air and fingers
rise to spirit soul. Cāṇakya
says you have to die so
sacrifice life for the Supreme.

"Is that your spiritual name?"
Yes.
"What does it mean?"
The inner form of truth,
you know, *Sat*.
Yes, he knows, he's a TM
man 15 years, wrote his Phd
on how 7,000 TM meditators
in Iowa
affected peace in the mid-East crisis.
I'm talking about Dr. Edgette
my hypnotherapist, taught
me skills of trance so I go
inside (if I learn it) and

even walk and talk in deep
trance—not exactly the
samādhi of the *gopīs* or
Uddhava . . . but pain control
and "be your own man."

These jottings in heated van
after walk, before breakfast,
I'll give you 12 days of them
as solace for melancholy and
clown's smile—a clown
with Vaiṣṇava *tilaka* may
not be appropriate
but here he is in his dangling.
Jesus Christ parables on the way,
a year of Issa's poems—
and me own original self.

May Lord Kṛṣṇa give me His
mercy to draw pictures of
His form in *tribaṅga* and
to chant 16 rounds better
and worship Prabhupāda better.

This writer salutes the day
with feeling good
and ascribes that any good
quality comes from Lord Kṛṣṇa.
I here declare the outpost
is a good place
to relax
and sing
melodies of *kīrtana*.
Now let's go back to the house.

January 28, 1995

I'm doing all right, doing my work but I don't have a set schedule for the early morning hours—after I did my hour of Cāṇakya writing from 12–1, then I did an hour and a half of chanting, but after that it was a little spaced out. Reason is I'm very likely to get drowzy then and I can't do very careful reading. I just felt not able to do most anything, I went from one thing to another. I did a little house cleaning and threw out some old manuscripts in the rooms, picked out a few books from my library that I might use and just sat and thought for a few minutes, couldn't think of what to do.

Then I started answering some letters. One letter from Baltimore told about how one man was favorable to devotees and said that he had twice physically intervened to defend devotees, once at the temple and once on a bus. So that reminded me of course of that kind of activity that happens. How I don't like to be there when it happens but it does happen and I'll get my share of it too. Then I read another letter from Nityānanda dāsa in Guyana who said, "I have some sad news to tell"—told about an armed robbery at the temple. He went over to the temple at 3:30 A.M. and armed bandits whom he described as African pulled him into the temple. There Nityānanda dāsa saw that all the devotees were lying on their bellies and tied in ropes. The bandits were saying vulgar things to women and asking everybody questions and the whole temple was ransacked. They'd been there for two hours and then they finally left. That was certainly scary to hear and punctured any illusions I had from being on a retreat that the world just

exists in my ruminations and poems and drawings and the most important thing is my little efforts and arts and so on. But that there are bandets, there are demons and sometimes devotees have to suffer at their hands.

I drew a few pictures with pastels—one of the armed robbery and then a kind of symbolic one I called "The fear in the heart," showing a little frightened black and red figure with his stick hands and stick arms sticking out and mouth open. Then I drew a picture of goddess Kālī who I hope will deal with demons swiftly. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

But I didn't do free-writing. That's unfortunate. Don't shy away from it, Prabhu. Did you think it couldn't help you? It always can help you. Maybe you thought, "I've got so much that I've written already that I can't even read how can I add more to it." That's part of it, but I don't know, that's just not the right attitude. You'll get time or not to read what you've written, but you got to keep writing for the practice of it. Okay, okay man, I will, I will.

And little thing here, this walk? Well, the walk is to tell that the walk is asphalt and I'm in The Woods. And after, it must have been five years since they started this development. They finally sold one plot and looks like a house is built. It's nestled in off the road. I don't want to go in there, maybe I'll be trespassing although I don't think people have moved in or that it's completed yet. But it goes so slowly I guess real estate development isn't so lively or this particular project didn't catch up. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa,

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. But it's got this asphalt road and it's good for me so I'm trundling around here.

Beautiful morning, beautiful trees, beautiful sky despite the world of robberies and malice. Then if you are put in that position as those devotees, you have to turn within to Kṛṣṇa. You're sorry that Kṛṣṇa's money is taken away. The robbers took the jewelry from the women. They didn't commit any atrocities on their bodies fortunately and he didn't mention anything about the beautiful Deities of Gaura-Nitāi, so I suppose they didn't do anything there. But still you're very much afraid for the body and for just the sense of desecration and violation. It even can threaten your faith in Kṛṣṇa. Why isn't Kṛṣṇa in the form of Lord Nṛsiṁha coming to deal with these demons immediately? But they get their little space by free-will before they're punished. It's a test for you to accept this humiliation and pray . It happens to *karmīs* and it happens to devotees. It's not that we're singled out, but we get our doses so you have to turn to Kṛṣṇa then and really pray Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

One day already gone, now there's only twelve days left, eleven days, down it goes, down it goes. Okay, I'm producing, I'm producing. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. It's a challenge. It's good news that I have to write more and that I'm asking myself to do my writing session. Just do a little something, please, Prabhu, and keep going, keep going, keep going.

Car Pome, January 28, 1995

Home-made poem in
dark back seat of car.
I was thinking yesterday of
Freddie Redd, "Shadows,"
Jackie McLean alto sax,
like old friends together I
can't explain it, sadness of
love and camaraderie blues he
made, heard in my
old Staten Island isolation.
But one minute wasted
cannot be regained even for
millions of dollars.
You are meant to
concentrate on Kṛṣṇa
and it's not vague,
and not Freddie Redd blues?

Oh, but it helps me to
hear the blues, he said.

Car pome adjustments—
move the seat forward,
give me more light. I
read of armed robbery to
the temple of ISKCON in
Guyana and a man defended
devotees on a bus in Baltimore.
More please . . . more pudding,
more porridge, said Oliver Twist,
more porridge.

More suffering if you try
make vivid
the tree-top against
dawn sky. See Kṛṣṇa
there, your Lord.

Your critics may call it
nagging that I will say
"Read his books," but I
say it's good guidance of
conscience and makes the writing
practical and worthwhile.

What are you doing
hanging around?
You better wise up, get a
little rest and rebound to hover
your head above *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,
16 or 18 inches away, hold the book
and read write.

Car pome radiator,
heat warmers in my palms,
Arctic stuff, overalls,
Face mask 20 degrees
and Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa in the blood
until you die. Then
you get carried to next life.

Car lights on dashboard read
"7:05 SAT 28."
Sat means Saturday or
eternal truth? Note it,
Sats, note it. What the

robber was wearing:
"African with cruel faces,"
notice Hare Kṛṣṇa mantras streaming
out in fear from all devotees
and their solidarity as they lay
together on bellies tied in robes
pleading with robbers not
to harm them. Could you
snicker at a time like that?
Fight back. You'd lie there,
guru, in a trance of fear
and chant and wait
for doomsday or end of ordeal
and hope not to disgrace
yourself.

There I said it,
what is on my mind.
Now tell our driver to go back
to the warm house, hot
oat cereal while it lasts,
into guts and stomach while
they last before *canda-vega*
and Yamarāja attacks or Kṛṣṇa tells
you end is nigh,
now.
"Let's go back."

I beseech the beach ain't
jazz but *bhajanas* of Hare
Kṛṣṇa is okay.
I am happy.
Don't harm me
please
I want to sing

painless ink
possible. Cure
is true Kṛṣṇa
chant who don't forget.

Car pomes
signal
Haile Selassie claims
he's God you Rasta
men. I say Kṛṣṇa's
Gītā. Got to go to
Port of Spain
(spot of pain) before
too long

sing "endless"
until I die.

Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Rādhā-
Gopīnātha of Trinidad
Parameśvarī dāsī selling
books at Denver airport says
hordes of people rush by looking
ugly and she's a pip-squeak to try
and stop them with a smile or out-
stretched hand but sometimes one
smiles or stops and even takes a
book. She's rewarded. But her
spine aches. She's a soldier.

January 29

Out on the walk. Face mask on, wet wool around the mouth from chanting through the mask. Hello, hello. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

My early morning hours from 12–6:30, I didn't sleep. After four I was on a kind of mad painting jag. Painting 'em with the crayons on the poster board—temporal, pastels, rubbing, drawing, smearing, lettering. I did the series of 1966 posters to advertise to the Lower East Side that they should come to our Love Feast. That they should come hear the Swami lecture and read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I'm going to do more of them. They're just childish crude bright colors, but it's fun, it's fun, and it's celebrating that joyous, simple time. I was surprised how naive and how simple, happy the picture came out. Simple, happy, because I stood back and said, "Wait a minute, are you putting on? How can you draw such a simple happiness? Life is more complicated than that, why don't you put something arty into it? Don't draw a simple moonface like that, that looks like the face of a Jagannātha or 'have a nice day' man." But that's what I drew. However, I've got to loosen up more and not pause so long thinking out some idea of what I want to give, but just go. That urge is very nice—to say this is what I want to do and to do it boldly in bright color. Read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, chant, Swami's cooking. *Haribol*. It is simple and it's also not simple. I'll try to come up to level. But I'm just a amateur baby in the visual arts so what can you expect? Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare

Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

Now I'm out walking and some of the devotees are cleaning the room that I'm using. I can imagine them looking at the posters that I did kind of surprised that their sober teacher is splashing the colors like that. The eleven-year-old Dāmodara dāsa might think, "Hey, I can do better than that." I don't know what the others may be thinking. But Baladeva is assiduously, enthusiastically supplying me with all the materials that I can do this. And so the days go by celebrating the past, celebrating the moment and now walking up the asphalt hill breathing out your cold air heading for the car where you can do some writing of Car Pomes. Some hunger in the belly, some fire, some little *agni* there so you can eat. Serve happy while you can. Life's drops. Precious, precious life going by. Celebrate Kṛṣṇa. Tell the truth and do your homework. Yeah, I got to get back to work. Got to edit the Radio Shows and more like that. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

Let me do some free-association on this walk. Apple butter. Gravel on the path. All past retreats, editing coming out. Fax exchanged. Excitement of publishing another book. How's it coming out? Can you discover some prose among what I'm saying? Humble. Be-humble. Humble pie. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita. Don't associate with nondevotees. Always associate with saintly persons. Spend your days and nights in pious activities and always remember the temporality of this world. Tell us Cāṇakya, go ahead, give us another. Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa reside in

that home where there is no quarrel between husband and wife, where they keep grains and where they don't worship fools (*murkhas*) which means by opposite they *do* worship saintly persons.

So Cāṇakya's yapping. Cāṇakya's blowing his tune and we're telling ours too. Hours, hours.

Look over the tree tops I see a hill. I see the glass windows of some far away house and the first light of dawn is shining there. Stubble of trees on hill like stubble of beard on man's face.

Men all must die, plowed back under earth. American native knew the earth was bones and mother and father. Spoke like that. Kṛṣṇa consciousness most advanced form of God consciousness. Kṛṣṇa for everyone. Mistaken idea that He's just for Hindus.

Praying to Prabhupāda that I can be a real person for him and do something nice. That includes not just yourself pushing yourself to achievements of artistic genius har-har, but appreciating everybody else as good as you. Appreciating them as better than you and yet you go on doing your thing. That's the combination.

Now the car is in sight. The rear lights on this car on Sunday morning are so bright like brilliant jewels, and smoke is coming out the front of the car. It looks like it because the breeze is probably blowing the exhaust there but it looks like the car is smoking the pipe or something like that, or there is a fire beside the car. Those bright, bright lights and I'm walking toward it to get inside.

Cold although I've got hand-warmers on. Hand-warmers produced in the 1991 All Women's Arctic expedition. Now I'm getting close and I can almost

see the license plate numbers, then I'll get in there and get that pen and write something. Be worthy of a Boy Scout, Club Scout awarder of rebellious of mommy and daddy, Katherine and Steve. Gone now. Gone with the wind and I am still here for a little longer following my Swami up until the end. Please forgive me, please don't take offense, I say unto great souls like Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and little souls like Tamal Krishna and Pṛthu and the GBC and the ISKCON schisms and the dog in the street and spittle on the leaf and the poor trees and all the poor creatures we killed unwittingly.

Car Pome, January, 29, 1995

Frozen dead bird
spirit I never was I
prayed dear God bestow
on me apple crumb pie
offered to You.
That's a sad blasphemy-
joke. Dear God a little
longer while I live. You
know what's best.

The pastimes of You and Rādhā
and You and Yaśodā and
You and all *gopas*
You and all *jīvas*
these pastimes *should*
be reflected in my heart.

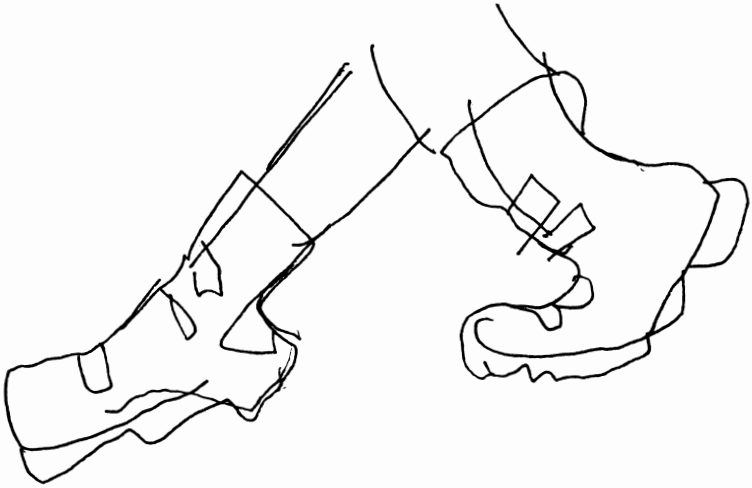
Cereal and honey a little
belly full and lie down
afterwards. As long as it
lasts. Each poet writes
the death of his mother and
father. No body looks so
nice at the end. But
our spiritual father . . .

Spirit too aches but is
in service. I mean the
spirit doesn't ache but
the devotee may ache
in compassion for his own

soul, that he did not
love Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as he
wished.

Dashboard reads 7:00
SUN 29

No sun yet perceivable, exhaust fumes go by us as we sit here. I walked to get here.



In a boot just suited for me six year old Kangaroo boots, oh they're older than that as I recall Gaurahari dāsa saying I had style as I put on these boots leaving the temple room, *gurukula* kids packed together looking at me guided (forced) by their elders to behold the farm-zonal guru leaving temple for his morning walk.

Kangaroos.

Aussies

The posse of wrath.

Write poems do pictures. Tell like it is.

Can he get some vintage pictures? I've got plenty of literary plans.

Here is "an original drawing" of Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Nectar of Instruction*. Who drew it? Some artist allowed to come close to the humble brilliant poet Sanskrit scholar who in *samādhi* saw his soul as Rūpa-mañjarī serving Rādhikā. Someone drew his form sitting crouching and writing, wearing only a loin cloth, thin arms because *gosvāmīs* of Vṛndāvana don't eat much, drawing reminds us of Picasso's best acrobats or "blue period," but this is a pure devotee the likes of whom no Western writer . . .

Prabhupāda too,
oh, got to catch a ride
back to Mississippi,
got to tell my banjo truth
that I want Kṛṣṇa
but have not a penny to
my name.

Madhu nods forward like
heavy sunflower head on
bending forward stem.
Fully asleep at 7:09
SUN 29 and I'm full of
juice alert just a little
longer. Put beads or a
Bhāgavatam in my hands and I'd
nod out too. It's this inner mental life
keeps me peppy and
Kṛṣṇa awards me

literary ideas. I just
hope I don't cheat
myself.

Okay, go back now, imagination
car heater,
white gloves and hand warmers,
car magazine pouch stuffed
but I don't look at mundane
reading nowadays.
I write in my own prose-pose
and say
it, "Let's go back."
Not knowing when I'll die
but 7:13 SUN 29
seems late enough.
And breakfast is waiting.
Plus painting and writing this
Sunday.

January 30

What I like about this time of the year among others things is that the mornings are getting lighter. Yes, even by January or perhaps even by the very end of December the mornings start to get lighter earlier. I know that Cāṇakya says that life is temporary and we should always think of that, but I can't help but get enlivened. It's like having some wealth. It's being alive, the feel of being alive. To be alive at this time of the season when the mornings, the dawn starts earlier and I can go out earlier on a morning walk. Because the earlier you can go out there is more chance that people will be asleep and you can have a nice walk alone. That's one point to make.

Another point is that this morning there's blue, there's clouds. I wouldn't call it blue yet but it's going to be blue with clouds, and the trees are stand-

ing tall and stark and naked and walking on the asphalt in The Woods.

Now I have to tell you that this may be the very last time in my life that I'll be here in Stroudsburg at Śamīka Ṛṣi's house. He's trying to sell it and move away. I wanted to take pictures of this woods and somehow hold on to it as a past so that it doesn't get completely obliterated. At least not so soon.

Of course, I am aware that life is temporary, but that moves me to try to do as much as I can in these days at Śamīka Ṛṣi's. We're in a creative flow. I'm painting and drawing and have at least three different literary projects going and added another to it, and another to it. Yesterday I worked so vigorously it was probably the cause of my headache that hit by 11 A.M. I had to stop and couldn't do any more. Had to think about whether I could make a deal with my body, my headache, and ask it not to not get so bad.

The deal was that I would stop anymore work. I would take rest by 6 P.M. but that the headache would go away overnight. And it did work out that way by Kṛṣṇa's grace. Anyway, it's a fact that I am limited in what I can do and that limit will increase. It's like the ocean encroaching on the land bit by bit and the land becoming smaller in some place. As old age comes I'll be able to do less and I'll have to find out ways to be a minimist to get the most of a little bit. This morning I did seven splashy quick drawings on a poster board using different medium like tempera, paints, pastels, crayons, oil based crayons, magic markers, and other kinds of sticks. Maybe in the future I'll be lucky if I

can do one in that time. But maybe I'll say more in that one than in the seven and the same goes for the writing. But for now as long as I can I'm producing as much as I can. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare. Change, change, change.

Every since I came out this morning only about fifteen minutes have passed, but this is a fast changing time of day. Do you ever think about it? Later in the day changes much slower. This is the only time perhaps when it's so dramatically quick changing except from twilight also. Now what I guessed to be a sky that would become blue with clouds is turning out to be like that. When you look at it there is probably fifty-fifty clouds plus sky, or at least in the path I'm looking at it's more like sixty-five percent clouds. But everywhere is sort of porous and broken up and you can see blue coming through them. And those clouds themselves have all kinds of shades of color in them—a little gray, a little almost purple like a blue and now some lightening with a hint-hint of pink to come and behind them baby blue, soft robin's egg blue sky of January. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

White straight trunks of trees going right up. They look white, maybe they are, but as I get closer maybe something else. Evergreens in The Woods.

I'm glad I'm not buying a house in The Woods and I'm moving on. Going to be some real quick moves taxing on this body coming up. Expose yourself to the hazards of the material world and keep writing. Now in this week you want to hold on to this temporary precious drops of days all to yourself trying to use them as much as you can so that you

don't get a headache. A little passionate perhaps but it's so nice to write and read and paint.

Read you say, you haven't been reading, man. Okay, I'll try to read. Maybe this week is not so much a reading week, but I will be reading. If you don't read, how will you be able to give those three lectures in Baltimore coming up? Yeah, that's true.

Here I am now approaching car with its bright jewels like the jewels on the head of the serpent Kāliya. Bright red stop lights pointing at me and I'm heading to get in there and write my car pomes. Ten or fifteen minutes of it and a little drawings to go with it. That's another thing to link on. And these walk-talks too.

Boots on asphalt—clunk, clunk, clunk. Getting closer. He's swinging his left hand. He's swinging his arms. He's walking. It's a fiction man. It's a true world but it's got to end. The heart is beating. The soul is eternal. I don't know it, but I believe it. It says so in *śāstra*. You may not be able to know exactly where you're going next life but you're going somewhere, and if you're lucky, if you're really lucky, you'll continue your devotional service and go back to Godhead one of these lives.

Car Pome, January 30, 1995

Different car today, got a
light in the back seat but
no day of week on the digital.
It's MON. I know, day of
the moon after the sun.
Caesar's calendar, taken
by Prabhupāda to make proof
that sun is closer to the
earth than moon.

Lord Caitanya tamed the wild
animals in Jhārikhaṇḍa forest.
He tamed them and they went
wild chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.
You can hear an elephant screech,
"Hare Kṛṣṇa!" through his
trumpet nose? Imagine it and
the ferocious "Hare Kṛṣṇa!" of
the lion. We could use some
human *bhaktas* so fierce they
could chase away the demons.

Here I am and you in this car.
Poems. It's 20 degrees or
less. Dawn earlier.
Blue in clouds.
Heavens to Betsy we
got to make time quick
because I'm only here in
Stroudsburg (for the last time
in my life) a total of 13 days

of which 3 are all gone
like a plate of *halavā* eaten
into or my saffron cottons
kept here in a bag eaten
by mice. Ten more days
of drawing and painting
of rhyming and inventing
and got to proofread my 400
pound MS, titled *Radio Shows,*
and avoid headaches
avoid juvenile excess.

I caught you, baby,
signing your initials in lower
right of each drawing and the date
as if you are Van Gogh,
copies signed by artist to
fetch big prices in the future.
I caught myself and said,
"Did Kṛṣṇa do this painting or
you? You want to take credit?"
I went ahead anyway and signed.
I couldn't sign "Kṛṣṇa."
I claimed it, but I know
yat korṣi yat ajñasi
I'm doing it for Him.

I draw Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and
was afraid it might be
blasphemy or like those
Godless impersonal
versions in Delhi Airport
where Viṣṇu forms have
no face. "Modern art" bluff.
Spare me.

But I want to draw
the Supreme Form
in affection like a
tiny son draws his Dad
not so good
but he loves him
and can't resist drawing Him.
Best is a viewer's gut reaction
is he smiles, knows you
felt love but couldn't
execute it for lack of expertise.
But don't make Him look
like an ordinary man.

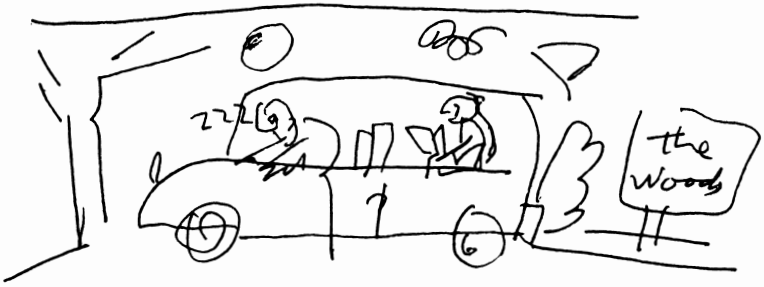
Remember Rādhā in 26
Second Avenue. Rumor was
Prabhupāda said he made
Her look like a washer woman
the joke in on the artist.
But don't make people laugh
at Her.
Draw best you can.

Now our car is heated but
at 7:12 I can't take time to
remove my hats. Cats I didn't see
not even the orange and black
one that lives at Gītā-nāgarī. He
was there years ago when I
visited, still alive hunting mice.
Life is like that.

Quick, draw your series of posters
inviting people in 1966 to 26

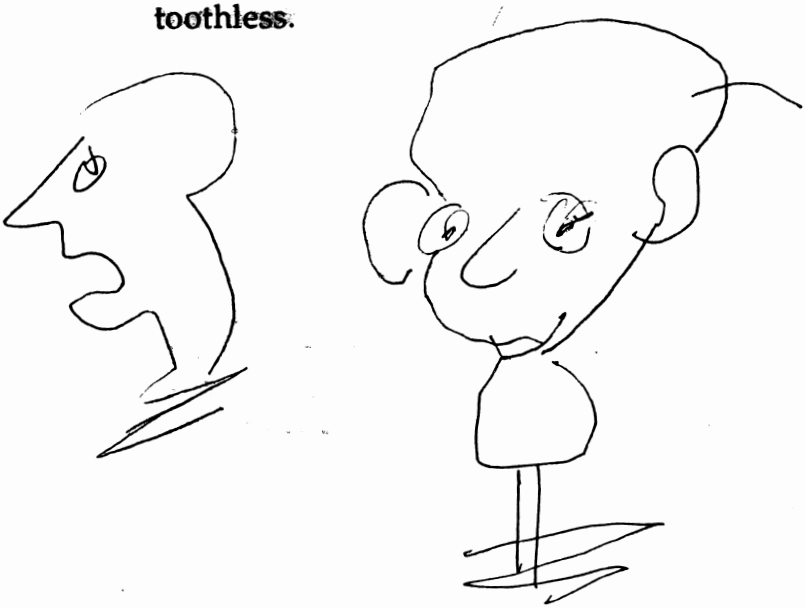
Second Avenue. Quick while the
quick pulse is in you
in short life
do something to make your
life immortal
as Cāṇakya says.

Out there it's suffering.
But Prabhupāda says people
don't starve in India any-
more than in America and when
they do it's karma.
It's karma.



Now goodbye 'til
tomorrow evergreens
I'll check you out
slow down mentality
why slow?
We only use 3 percent of brain.
Let me rev up and serve
but don't rush past *japa*
or think to get it out of
the way. Best truths are
in chanting and hearing

so let me find you there,
toothless.



Kṛṣṇa
let me find You. 7:17

January 31

Morning walk rap. Out the door turn right head towards The Woods. Two days in a row that truck comes towards me. First you see the light beams from a distance and you tense up and then it comes. First day it was just blinding because it had a row of around six or eight lights across the cab and then headlights too. Like a hurtling demon coming towards you. You stay over on the far right and he goes by into the blackness right by you like being the matador to the Toro. Then you see some lights flashing ahead. You think there's another car coming but they're far away on the highway and so you make it to The Woods with no other meetings. Then you're own, your own, with dark asphalt with the tress and gravel and the holy name, of course.

I'm chanting, but my mind is on the art work back in Śamīka Ṛṣi's house studio where I was painting Jagannātha this morning and thinking what I'm going to do next. I'm going to do Swamijī with the oval Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa over his head. This new world of painting coming to me now. Don't let it "get to your head," but do it and do it in your own way not just copying things. Try to express devotion and don't get puffed-up. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

Be careful you don't indulge in bad mental habits of inattention while *japa*. It's bad enough that you don't have attention, but don't deliberately go bad, thinking I can't wait to get this *japa* done and then I'm going to paint a nice picture. Oh, if I can just hurry up and get this round done, I've so many things I've got to tend to.

Here I am in The Woods with bottles of beer strewn around and an empty carton of Heineken thrown to the side. The kids and others use this woods and it's not used for anything else—for drinking parties. You can just come here and park on the asphalt and do your thing. Junk lying around here—so-called woods. Human beings come and spoil everything. Grumpidy-grump.

Happy, happy to be here. We're also thinking of travel. This is a short retreat. It's already gone to eight days more so we hardly got into it and we're starting to move out of it. But I'm still grabbing each day as best I can filling it up to the brim and over, but trying not to get headaches. Just so happy to be able to do service.

Prabhupāda writes in the beginning one is attached to the service and later develops love of Kṛṣṇa. Of course, they're not exclusively separate. The immaturity of the first stage may be that you're more just happy to exert your energies and got some pride and you may go even so bad as to not be aware that whatever you do is borrowed plumes—it's coming from Kṛṣṇa. You may be doing *karma-yoga* rather than pure *bhakti*. This is for me and this is for Kṛṣṇa. Or it's just rubber stamped for Kṛṣṇa but actually you're exulting in the passion of creation. Those dangers may be there but they can be purified by repeated actions and careful thoughts offering everything to Kṛṣṇa. You want to glorify Kṛṣṇa. Somebody asks, "Is it all right to be great?" Well, Prabhupāda once wrote that it's all right if you think that by being a great devotee people will become favorable to you and Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

But actually a devotee has no such aspiration to be great.

This morning's sky is completely clear—no clouds at all and it's already blue like a Crayola pencil. But if you look real closely into this light blue I think of words like slate. But then it's not slate, it's air and space and you look into it in a penetrating way. Maybe it's due to some trick of vision which is on your retina rather than in the sky. But you see little, tiny, fuzzy units linked to each other like atoms and a beautiful clear sky with the silhouettes of the tree tops. The evergreens are silhouetted and the other trees you know, no leaves, all branches, and very distinctly you can see the sky. No clouds but no sun yet visible yet either, and all around I hear the highway roaring. It's like an illusion to be surrounded by trees because if you looked overhead from a helicopter you'd see highways, highways and a little strip of suburban woods and down there a little guy walking and talking into a red lighted dictaphone. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa hunched over chanting at least Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

It's not a bad thing to draw Kṛṣṇa's form because you want to be with Him.You want to serve Him and so you do it in this way. Allowing for the fact that you're not a very talented or developed draftsman **[possible blank here]** pens or brushes but you have a sentiment to pour out pictures of Kṛṣṇa and see the color flash. It's a kind of sensual thing for sure. All the more reason why you make the topics Kṛṣṇa-centered so it doesn't just become a matter of smelling paint and being dazzled by reds and blues

and yellows. A kind of intoxication of the colorist. I used to do that before I was devotee with marijuana and big brown pieces of paper. I would get wrapping sheets somewhere and just start in and not know where I was going. It might come out to be a boy and a girl or once I drew something and I put it on the wall and a friend came and said it looked like a vernal locomotive. I used to do something that had a kind of brave thrust to it almost like a rooster with a cockcomb on top—something rushing forward. I don't know what that was. My brave attempt to do something in the world—misguided locomotive. Ah, by Prabhupāda's grace now I can draw devotees. So draw them in your funny way, lavish your own praise on it and do it nicely. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Now we're up to the car—the Honda. We're about to jump in and do some other writing.

Car Pome, January 31, 1995

Poetry book in back seat,
wings on dancers, everything's
becoming visual for me—
see Swamijī as a head to draw
and it don't come out like
"flattering" likeness or even
what you'd call respectful.
Eyes and clumsy drawn hands—
it's not him that is
clumsy handed, his fingers
are delicate, his eyes soul-
ful. And even I could
draw better if I slowly
painfully tried or took lessons.

But this is something else.
Free-paint, mix medias do
what you can merged in a
certain *rasa*
of color in *bhakti* topics.
Best I tell myself to stay
away from too much copying
of prints. Better go on your
own, Texas, replay,
start out as in writing with any words,
so on poster board a
red splotch a green
quick line spurts out of my hand
and spray guns—spoosh!

Guerrilla warfare of
graffiti guys under bridges
spelling names of their gang
chunk letters "Larn Dragon"
Beemer, Heart-aches,
76th Street Dragons and so on
and Chunky, Chunkier and
more ballooned out letters like
fullest donuts sparkling
with imitation star-light
from spray cans. How do they
find a time when no one is
looking? Don't even spare churches,
grave stones, banks, Hare Kṛṣṇa temples.

I'm indoors
playing with paint to escape
lethargy and oversleep.
My idiotic baby stages in art.

Here Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā again and
again since I started drawing
Them I'm more aware
of how He and She
stand and Their limbs. That's good.

His pinkie on flute is extended up, other three fingers press the holes of flute, pointy finger is up-

raised and thumb holds it. Arms accordingly. I never get it quite right, *tribaṅga,* O Rādhā. I make a scrawly mess of Their feet, but tenderly.

Notice His hips and the
sash tied there. The
way His feet stand.
I'm starting to notice.
And how Rādhā fits
in beside Him.
I'm starting to care to
see Their forms like

eternal emblem logo.
Ultimate doodle.
If you're going to do little
drawings why not do
the topmost forms?
And give us Lord Caitanya
too, with Pañca-tattva
and dancers . . .

Haloes, I love them,
reminds me of Giotto. Sure
it's an artists' convention, the
yellow aura around the
Supreme Lord and top liberated
souls. Jadurāṇī used to ask
"Does so-and-so have an aura?"
An effulgence? Does Nārada?
It depends.

Hey, this is car pomes
7:14. You know what that means.
Heaven . . . on a shovel.
Black glove right hand, white
glove left. I will dedicate
this day to one after another
devotional acts in arts.
The truth . . . is that I'm
a punk on a spree
pee in pot like all *jīvas*
and eat a lot if I can but
we are servants to give generously
the holy only thing that
can help sufferers. So please
tune into your Swami and keep

the flame bright, trim the wick, protect it, practice and go forth.

February 1, 1995

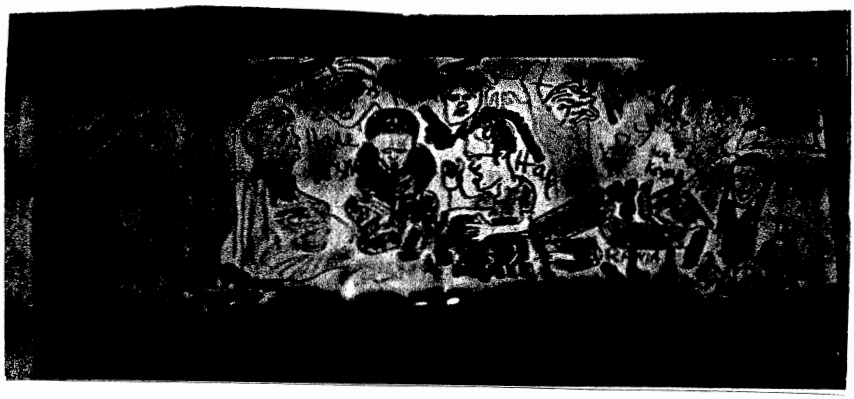
Mild winter continues. This thirteen-day retreat is turning more into a drawing-painting time. It's even edging out my other writing and what to speak of reading and so on. It's a special time and I won't get another time like this I don't know when. Especially our ingredients are having plenty of room to work on the art and Baladeva being here supplying me with art materials and encouraging me, even driving me on to produce and produce. I'm using poster boards and doing paintings four panels long. Did one this morning of Swamijī in the temple with devotees and another one with Swamijī doing Bells before Pañca-tattva. I did a pictures of myself, Steve or Satsvarūpa dāsa back there with him. It's a kind of nice way to go back and live. The mood is sweet. The faces are smiling. It's all simple and life isn't

like that exactly now but I'm going to keep drawing these as long as I can. It's not saccharine sweet but it is just a time that I can recall like that now and make happy pictures. The next two I'm planning out are one of Swamijī eating lunch with the boys and girls and Swamijī in that formal portrait by the birdbath. In the actual portrait he's by himself but I'm going to add figures of devotees. This is what I'm doing and thinking of even while I chant *japa* and even while I walk on the asphalt road in The Woods.

Not only are the paintings happy but they're Kṛṣṇa-centered—Prabhupāda-centered. It's such a happy breakthrough for me to be able to paint their forms without being intimidated by the fact that I don't have skill. After all, these are endearing forms, worshipful forms. I worship them in other ways although I'm not qualified as an expert devotee. So now I'm worshiping by drawing pictures of these beloved forms. And I'll get better at it although I'll never get so great that it'll be a likeness. And who can draw a likeness of Kṛṣṇa anyway? He's so beautiful. He's inconceivably beautiful. It might be said that the crude attempt is even more suggestive of the form of the Lord because it leaves everything to the imagination of the viewer. It makes Him think of Kṛṣṇa rather than find faults in the painting because the faults are super obvious. Then to do Swamijī again and again—just so that it looks like him so that someone will look and say, "Oh, that looks likes the Swami." They may chuckle the way I attempted to draw him. It doesn't really look like him so much but it's not an insulting portrait. He doesn't really look ugly, it's

just my crudeness. And so I do him again and again in saffron and light tan and pink colors—meaning his skin, his turtleneck jersey stretched at the neck, and the *kadhi cādars* and so on.

Oh, is that what it was like when the Swami was there? You wore those red beads around your neck all the time, huh? And you used to stand by him and hang around in the temple with him? He teach you how to chant? He'd sit like that on the dais and you'd stand around him? You actually sat with him up in his room and shared *prasādam*? That must have been nice. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. Did they really dance that wildly in the park? Was there a dog there? Were the girls like that? Was there a black guy playing a wooden recorder, or did you make that up? Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.



Last of the evergreens standing in the suburban woods. Some deer live here too.

It's happening in 1995 just like it was in 1966. Swami's laundry hanging on a line in his worship room. Gladiolas bought for the occasion of the filming by the CBS T.V. crew who ordered our spiritual master, "Pray now, Swami, bow down." Prabhupāda submitted because he wanted to show them on T.V. a slice of Kṛṣṇa conscious life at the Second Avenue *āśrāma* where he *did* bow down for Pañca-tattva. And so he wasn't bowing down on the order of the CBS T.V. crewman but just doing what he usually did on the order of his guru because of love in heart. He took the cue from the crewman because that crewman was also, at least for that moment, serving Kṛṣṇa and trying to make a nice presentation. So it was like a service that a disciple might render the way Arjuna asked Kṛṣṇa, "Please drive my chariot." It was something like that. The Swami bowed down and rang those bells. Those chimey bells that they have in Catholic churches—genuflect Catholic Mass. You hit your chest softly with your fist and say, "I'm guilty. I'm profoundly guilty."

But when Swamiji bowed down and we bowed down with him, we said, "Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. O Lord Caitanya, please let us chant Hare Kṛṣṇa on our beads." We didn't know what was ahead. We didn't know things like falldown or death or Swami leaving us. Infights of the institution—schisms, GBC meetings. But did you think that you were going to be something special? Are you something special? I don't think so.

Walking along, sweating even today on this mild February 1st. Of course, it could change into a cold snap, but while you can, you walk and you go back to the house and your heart is still beating for now. You worry how long your paintings will last, if the oil based crayon is going to smudge. Such foolishness. Nothing's going to last, so just paint and draw for the devotional act and make it as nice as possible. Some of them will last for a little while, at least, and people can look at them and think of the Swami and those days. That's what you're trying to do, isn't it? You're not trying to make yourself look great, I hope.

Now here we are again, walking up behind the Honda—its friendly red lights parked all alone. And all around humming like bees is the humming sound of the wheels whirring-whirring on the I-80 highway. It sounds like they're on the right and they're in front of us—all around us like an enemy. Or is it a friendly sound? I don't know. I just know I'm getting closer to the Honda and a chance to write some more. Eight days left now. Count them off and celebrate. For your information, the license plate is WFC530. I used to fantasize being beat up by bandits and catching their license plate as they drove off and writing it down on a little piece of paper to show to the cops. But of course, nobody ever follows those things up. Also on the rear-end of this car it says, "1995 honorary member of the Pennsylvania Sheriff's Association." Good try, Śamīka Ṛṛsi Prabhu, to be accepted. But you'll never be accepted around here, there's some kind of envy around. He's also a member of the AAA. *Haribol.*

Car Pome, February 1, 1995

All that poets can tell is the grief
and the joy of externals and internal,
this life, cruel he tells of his
uncle who had his esophagus
removed. I can do better.
Tell the *Mahābhārata*?
That too.
And struggle of little devotees.
The form and name and pastimes
of Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa
and His pure devotee,
Prabhupāda.

I'm drawing in blue and yellow
and saffron and flesh tone and
tan, red for the
round beads . . . wood
beads.
Hayagrīva's beard,
it all comes back or some
of it, the existentialist's
quick sketch of an arm—
I note mentally how beautiful
the crook of an arm can be,
Swami in his sweater, his
pinkie extended.
You notice when you draw that
the birdbath in the courtyard
at 26 Second Avenue was
shaped like a lotus.
Notice how he stood and looked,
that's good for you.

This car is running, it's 7:01.
Madhu is out taking photos
but it, "may be too dark for
this camera."
Did a spray paint of Lord
Caitanya, yellow, just a
blob you might say. But
I liked it. Keep away from
art-pose, even primitive art
pose. Do something as *bhajana,*
making it as nice as you
can but quick and with my
limits, of course.
You can surrender to it—
make eyes like raisins
on a gingerbread man but
don't eat them, it's a painting
for people to look at.

Okay, 7:05, people going to
work, I don't complain, it's
touch and go whether I get a
headache around 10 A.M., if not,
I'll be inhaling paint fumes and
crayons crumbling in my fingers,
it's a *samādhi* to execute
another colorful poster
panel art of the Swami,
live back then, choose your
colors and don't fake it
but make it nice.

Days and time run out and
you better answer letters, proofread and

what about writing?—
hey, man, are you turning into a
mad colorist?—good, good,
it's Swami-focused.
Baladeva took one down
to NYC to show to the
devotees at 26 Second Avenue.
Maybe they'll hang some of them,
show people what an old
man does recalling the days
they live for even now.
Imagining and adding touches
to what it was like,
free-form,
in Śamīka Ṛṣi's house,
a little longer.

Pañca-tattva *kī jaya*
Life to live *kī jaya*
Naive art forever,
keep on the ball and don't
break rules of *vaidhī-bhakti*
you can serve to your heart's
content.

February 2, 1995

Before I go out on the walk, I want to put into the records quotes from Picasso which Guru-sevā dāsī sent me. They speak for themselves.

"Art is not the application of a canon of beauty but what the instinct and the brain can conceive beyond any canon."

He says there's nothing wrong with trying to imitate another painter. He said in fact that you should try to do it, "But the thing is, you can't! You would like to. You try. But it turns out to be a botch . . . And it's at the very moment you make a botch of it that you are yourself."

"Paintings are but research and experiment. I never do a painting as a work of art. All of them are researchers. I search incessantly and there is a logical sequence in all this research. That is why I number them. It's an experiment in time. I number them and date them.

"That which counts is the spirit of the continuity of ideas. And when the spirit exists, as in the worst marriages, everything ends well."

Hare Kṛṣṇa. I'm out walking. A very light powdery snow is on the ground, so light that it's only on the road. I can't even see it in the forest. It melted and whatever is left is going to melt with dawn because it's above freezing. I'm walking. It's so dark still but this whiteness on the asphalt road of The Woods is like a light by which I can see. It's really nice to see your walking in ahead is like a dipping, I guess, and then a rising and you can see a big path of forest ahead and sky. You know, of course, that out there, bee-hived everywhere is the passionate,

ignorant city life, highway life. You can hear those hubcaps spinning, those axles spinning. Those heavy trucks rolling like in a dream although you can't see them and you've got this little path of space. If I lived in a place like this I would come here often or find a similar place somehow to get away from it all. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

The art work is going on. I've only got less than seven days left. Baladeva is really pushing me, buying supplies and paints and paper and egging me on in a sweet way to do more. I told him this morning that my writer-self is looking on and saying, "Okay, go ahead. It's only for a week. But don't forget where home is." As you have doubts with writing, you have doubts with drawing too. You think, "Oh, what is this? Just making little

trinkets and pictures of persons who are devotees? What is the reality of this? Is it just to be an ornament on somebody's wall? Why do you do it, how it devotional service?" I guess it's the same as writing that it will help somebody to think of Kṛṣṇa or make them feel a little Kṛṣṇa conscious. After all, what does culture do? It draws the participant into the realm of art consciousness, life and so on. So Kṛṣṇa conscious art is windows on the spiritual world. They can see Kṛṣṇa and they can see the vision of a particular artist. So this morning I painted Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva and splotched on the red paint. He does look intense. I did another scene of Prabhupāda when he was at Beth Israel Hospital. I thought, "Well, maybe my inspiration is no longer to do these Swamijī scenes, they're so child-like. Maybe I've done enough. But no, why not have more inspiration to do more? Paint Prabhupāda and the devotees." So I'm pushing up to the point almost of feeling something in right eye, but I'll keep going. I'll keep going, but pace myself.

So somber. So dark. Darker than it's been any morning. All cloudy except for one path I see over the trees. Who can name the colors? Words come to mind to describe the clouds like cumulous. And then I think of a word, strativiarius, but that's the name of a violin. Strata, stratum. Piles of clouds. Just one big gray mountain of sky with a little white shining. It's not white, it's not blue. It's shimmering. There's no sunshine in it, but it's not night. See, I grope?

So it's beautiful and this is most probably our last visit to Stroudsburg because he's going to sell this place. I won't be coming back here. What to make of that? Of course, there are so many places to go. Wherever you go, what you seek is somewhere to walk in the morning where you'll be undisturbed. There are still a number of places like that on the earth. Is that your ultimate goal? No, we say my ultimate goal is Kṛṣṇa consciousness where there are so many lively colors and bubbling excitement of arranging for Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and taking part in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in different *rasa-vicar,* Prabhupāda says. He says *rasa-vicar* can't be approached immediately but gradually. It begins by hearing about Kṛṣṇa. So what's the best way to prepare yourself to go there? I suppose my argument is that it is by coming along in a place like this. Somber skies and alone. I'm at least free of the material filth and stress and interaction and being alone maybe I can think of Kṛṣṇa. It doesn't quite work like that. But one feels so much relief just by having this peace—*oṁ śanti, oṁ śanti, oṁ śanti*—that he just goes and takes. Doesn't see it as sense gratification either and sees it's a good state for letting things just happen

within you that you don't have to name. You don't have to analyze or point the finger. As Prabhupāda says, "When the hungry man eats, he feels satisfaction and reduction of his hunger." No one has to tell you you're Kṛṣṇa conscious. When you come alone like this, it just feels good and you know it's for spiritual life. You know this is an ingredient in spiritual life. Not depending on outer activities, like the *Bhagavad-gītā* describing the sage who lives within, who rejoices within. Maybe this is a time of nurturing and gathering strength for when you go to express yourself in drawing and painting. Or when you need to call on reserves to get you through difficult times, this kind of safety region helps you get through life. You know you can go back to a place like this again so life is worth living.

It's such a time of day that when I look into the little path of woods here the stump of a tree looks like it might be some person standing and watching me. Everything is kind of strange and you can't make it out for what it is in the ordinary light where things are recognizable. But now a big boulder is filled with mystery. All its crevices look so unusual they speak to you. They look full of life as if the rock were alive! As if the tree were alive! And isn't it so?

Around the bend I see first one rear light of the car and then the other through the pine boughs. Now I'm clearing the bend and I see the car waiting for me. Tread, tread, hear your feet walking on that thin powder of white. Moments closing in. Fingers tingling, but not so bad. It's not even freezing. You want to linger outside and yet you want to go inside. Just as you like to take your breakfast and yet it

has to disappear. You have to finish the meal and go on to the next thing. Running out, running out, but glorify Kṛṣṇa while you can. While Brahmā is alive. While the universe is alive, purify yourself, O little creator, O little artist. O sad sac, aspiring devotee, petulant, malcontent, hypochondriac, sufferer, student, skeptic. There's the license plate again. Don't think of yourself, think of Kṛṣṇa in everything. In every atom and in your friend who is waiting in the car, and go back and work for Kṛṣṇa.

Car Pome, February 2, Groundhog day

Go ahead, say it—
you don't know your mother's birthday.
Or whether she's alive.
You want a citizenship in Europe?
Speak Irish, speak . . .

Yes . . . he's witty that poet I
just read. And there's Piscasso:
"When you try to copy others
but botch *that's where you are.*"
Picasso—deformed children,
Guernica, portrait of an infant
learning to walk— I loved it when
I first saw it. So copy Picasso . . .
Copy Śrīla Prabhupāda and
when you botch it . . .

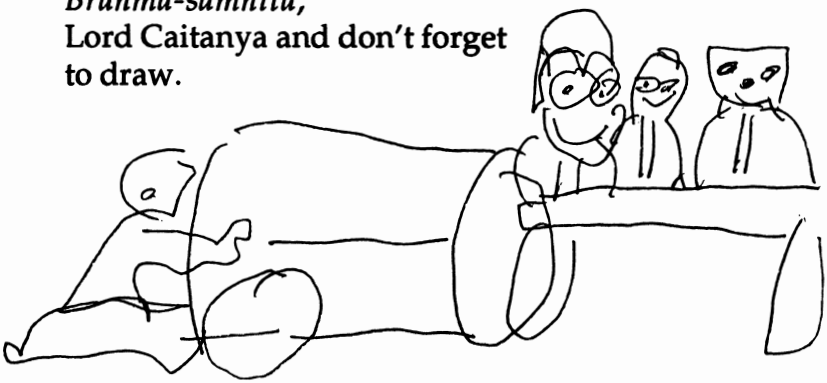
Even if you fail in *bhakti* . . .
Somber skies, I told the
morning walk. Madhu's
clinched the best flight for our
travels. It will be straight
from Guyana to NYC with
Guyana Airlines leaves, Georgetown
7 A.M. Sounds great.
But when you're actually there . . .

Now here 7:03, February 2,
white powder on asphalt,
sing song of creative energy,
bow down.

Your rounds were so bad this
morning, so indulgently neglectful
that you thought, "I better try later
in the year to give time for this,
just as now I'm alive for the
drawings and paint." Look forward
to trimming down to just *japa* and
read and write, somewhere.

Clever poet feeling for life.

Go man, it's 7:06—say
Brahma-saṁhitā,
Lord Caitanya and don't forget
to draw.



Oh I am writing this down

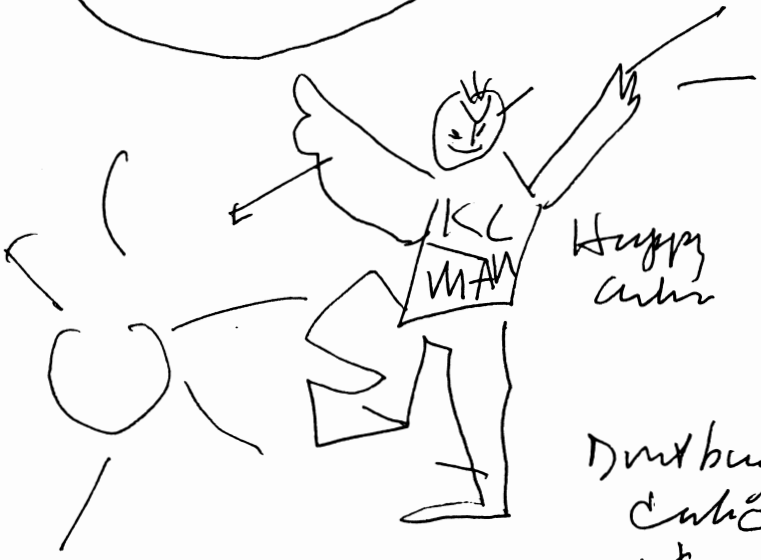
We did this last year and
the year before. Came to
Stroudsburg, Gītā-nāgarī,
then Baltimore,
Caribbean, Europe. It's our
routine. Can't you see you
are acting under the modes,
you are not the doer?
Chant, Prabhupāda says, even

with offenses. You will improve.
Do it more sincerely.

This is the time to say
Kṛṣṇa and *bhakti* and
avoid words like grease
and feces and even
Fate, overruled, biopsy.
This is the time to
dedicate your race
to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

It's 7:11 as in the name
of that store. It's time—
blast apes and demons in
yourself.
You better get rid of garbage
and stop taking in new.
Drawing Kṛṣṇa is fine (7:12)
and writing is okay but do it
in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that all.
As Cāṇakya says, the beauty
of a scholar is not his face,
but his wisdom,
the power to forgive.
Be like that (unlucky 7:13)
I don't mind you.
Draw and goodbye.

Dear God
let me pray
sincerely &
not for a 22
taper or even
Van Kunten but
that you will give
me some
clemency
please clear my mind
so I can fulfill your
& heard Guy


KC
MAN
Happy
Cake
Don't bug me
Cakey
&
Cutters

February 3, 1995

Since about ten o'clock yesterday a headache started coming, then it came up and I couldn't get it down. Went to bed by 5 P.M. It went away overnight. Of course, I missed afternoon's work. Couldn't do the interview about Cāṇakya and couldn't do evening painting and so on. But happy to wake up at twelve okay again. Did all my morning work including drawings which were all about Prabhupāda.

One after another. During one drawing I even saw that if I wanted I could be angry, invent anger at Prabhupāda as if to spite him for his master-ship over my own will. I could now take revenge in drawing him in an unflattering way. But when I saw this opportunity I didn't take it and I asked Prabhupāda to please forgive me for not being a good artist and for not having appropriate emotions. But he knows that somehow I want to enter *bhajana*. I have to ask myself, "Why are you doing this? Why are you drawing a picture of Prabhupāda?" We don't need more they're already so many expert ones. But then I thought "No, I'm going to do it. I'm going to draw those nose lines and those bags under the eyes and all those wrinkles. I'm going to prove to myself, and others may see it too, that Prabhupāda is wonderful and great even under my hand and even in old age. The age on his face, everything. I have faith that renditions of Prabhupāda will shine with his greatness and I'm not taking advantage of him and using him just as a subject for art." But in case that bad feeling is there, I took that out also in another painting where I

drew myself painting Prabhupāda and showed my own foolishness. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Other news—today is Dāmodara's birthday, eleven years old. I just behold him as a sweet, delicate-looking person, very quiet, and wonder how he endures with the rough-neck Americans in his school. But Baladeva says that actually Dāmodara's very naughty, at least at home. Does outrageous things with a deliberate kind of naughtiness, "Just to test their love for him." He gave me an example that he'll demand his mother to make him a pie, but when she makes it he just takes one bit of it and then walks away. He says the parents actually love it. So Baladeva asked one day, "What shall it be today, will you be Damo or Demo?" Dāmodara thought it over a moment and then said deliberately, "Demo."

What else? I do like to draw the lines. First to do the curve at the top of Prabhupāda's head, sometimes looking at the print copying and sometimes just saying the hell with that and drawing it my own way. It seems like I have to pay dues and draw in a copying mood and then I'm free to do my own impressions. Then I know the root, the ground better, of what is Prabhupāda's face composed of in terms of lines. If I could know the lines in my sleep, I mean dream them or know them thoroughly, then maybe I could start to evoke the actual expressions of pity, mirth, anger, transcendental wisdom in Prabhupāda's face. For now I just go over the map from the top of his head. I've learned to do the ears last after the oval of his face. Then the eyes, the nose. The eyes is just a wild guess on my part. I don't know anything about art—how to make eyes shine. And how to evoke the eyes of a *mahā-bhāgavata* anyway? That's my whole advantage in drawing. Nobody can evoke Prabhupāda or Kṛṣṇa anyway. So what's the harm if I try? Just like the inadequate prayers we make. So then the mouth, the famous mouth slightly down at the corners. The full upper lip shed like a elongated heart. The bottom lip to match and then under it that little uplifting ridge, and then under that the chin. Prabhupāda has a strong chin. And then his neck aged but everything is all right in the whole.

So I hope to do more and more, taking the pleasure in drawing the form of the pure devotee, His Divine Grace, his hands, his body, and so on.

Baladeva has been pushing me almost like a slave-master to do more and more paintings and

keeps on bringing more supplies, more than I can use. But it's bliss. I like to be driven in this way. I also, even though I may start with so much doubt, get fired up. I want to keep going and keep going. I certainly went beyond my limits yesterday, and I'm trying to be more careful today. Give me a little more energy, I plead, let me do a little more. Yes, this writing is taking a back seat for these days but soon I'll be back at it and then I'll be lucky to preserve even a small pad with black markers to continue my drawing life.

Okay, we're coming around the bend now. See the four tail lights and Madhu is already out of the car taking some photos in this area. It has to be cold enough before you can photo the exhaust. Well, today he's got it, it's below thirty. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. And the sky is decently light too, although I don't know if his camera can catch it.

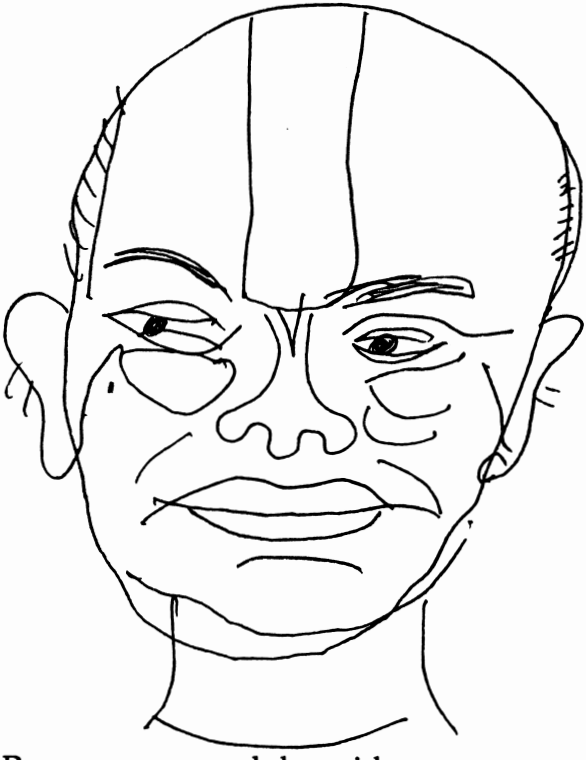
Had some interesting dreams last night. In one, I was dispatched along with Ravīndra-svarūpa to do some kind of emergency GBC type work at the St. Louis temple. We had *iṣṭa-goṣṭhīs* and tried to clear things up to convince the devotees of something or other. Lost in travel arrangements, typical dream or nightmare.

In another dream . . . I forget, I forget. Oh yes, in another dream Madhu suddenly came to me and he was in great pain and almost crying that he had hit his head. I put my arms around him and began to tenderly feel the area where he had been hurt the way you would with a child. I asked him, "Is it here? Is it here?" He said, "Yes," and he was afraid

it had been damaged. I felt the soft parts. It was a little soft, but nothing was cut, and I thought that maybe he would survive all right. It was nice dream to have felt protective in that way, although I hope such a tragedy won't happen, or it won't be so bad.

Now I remember in that dream when I was wandering. I was wandering around the city with just a little money and met different people hanging around outside buildings with no home. After I was dispatched from St. Louis, I met some older ladies and one of them didn't know I was famous but later she understood. But nobody led me home.

Car Pome February 3,1995



Pomes penny each he said
dread getting stuck in
Guyana! (Pancakes today
promised here in Stroudsburg and
warm rooms, freezing outside).
Well, in Guyana as long as I
had a pencil I could draw
the Lord and write sonnets
of no flair with Kṛṣṇa
and talk with devotees and
read his books.

Window frosted over: 7:00
What day of the week?
Weak health, the
conspirator . . .
I talked with my headache
but he didn't yield. My con-
clusion is he wanted me to rest
in bed a full seven hours so I did.

Headache, can't you go away
sooner? He seems to say Not
as long as you are too foolish
and work outside your limits.
Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa,
isn't it all karma?

What's the Cāṇakya *śloka* for
today? It's Don't get divorced
and also the snake can be
charmed but not the envious
man. Yes, he too can be
pacified with Hare Kṛṣṇa
mantra. Prahlāda prayed May
all envious persons become
calm in *bhakti-yoga*.

Trees, patch
of suburban forest,
man in Cartwright suit
drawing words quickly,
a sprinter so long as he doesn't
tick off that valve in his head.
Kṛṣṇa, I promised, half-
pledged this morning that
sometimes this year I'll take
another *japa* break at
least 2 weeks of 32 rounds
instead of neglecting it
in favor of more "creative" *bhajanas*.
Yes, I'll settle for *japa* and learn to be
more humble—entering mantras and
not getting them out of the way so
I can get on with fun and art.
When you do 32 you can't rush
through so quick and you are resigned
to *japa* as a major part of your day.

Now it's 7:07, like in the air-
plane Boeing, then by 7:47
I'll taking breakfast with
pancakes and molasses; better be
careful to honor your prayer to
Prabhupāda. Then 8:00 in bed
again, up by 9, chant more
japa . . .Sweet day and only 5
like this but if I live long
enough we'll take some *japa*
and writing and reading retreats—
O Mr. Artist,
there is time for you too.

I won't forget—the world
comes crashing in but I'll be
in trance. At least
before I get pushed over
the rapids or slugged on
the head I'll remember
Gadādhara,
Acyuta,
Nṛsiṁha,

Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,
His Divine Grace, India's
message of peace and goodwill,
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,
and my jokes and pens and jazz
tunes—I say
don't add to the pile of
stuff mundane
if you can help it—
This morning I painted hearing
"Gaura Prabhu,"
"*Gurvaṣṭakam,*"
and "*Yaśomatī-nandana.*"
7:11 means I can go
back a little earlier. Today
they're having a sale
on pomes and paintings.
I hope.

Feb 3

February 4, 1995

It's completely fresh snow, fresh tracks to make this morning. It snowed overnight. I don't know how many inches, maybe four at the most. They say it will continue to snow all day. It's snowing right now. I came out a little early. It's dark, but because of the white snow you can see very easily, and the trees are full of white too. The first thing I noticed was my own lack of thrill, lack of child-like wonder to be walking in this winter wonderland. One is more inward perhaps and just doesn't waken up so much to nature. Sorry to be so dead. Because it's actually Kṛṣṇa's picture, as Prabhupāda said. You're allowed to enjoy it, you're allowed to see the beauty.

Maybe some of the soberness of that Cāṇakya *śloka* that I worked on today is getting through to me. He says that life is so precious that you can't get a minute back even if you paid millions of dollars for it. So I don't want to waste any time thinking of anything that I'll have to chew on later that won't be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Of course, you sometimes have to come to a genuine Kṛṣṇa conscious realization in order to actually realize it. But that's a different thing from dallying in the material nature with material music or material books unnecessarily . Or any kind of time spent that's not more Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Anyway, here we are plotting over the snow in our Kangaroo boots which are water resistant but are not waterproof. I was more aware of that than of the thrill of snow—my boots are not so snow worthy. The red light on this dictaphone is red as

Kāliya's jewel. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.

Maybe there's also some lack of wonder because I'm not so sure how long I'll keep up this streak of drawing and painting. I'm doing it still but feeling a little inconvenienced that I'm sort of locked into it and might want to do more writing. Maybe I'm not so satisfied. I would like to write and read but I feel a little bit coaxed or boxed into the drawing output by the fact that Baladeva is pushed forward and supplied me so many materials. But I don't make that an excuse. I can stop if I want. But I may have to undergo the change of gears to actually do some writing in these last days. Aside from that, there's also the prospect that if I worked more, doubled my output on Cāṇakya *ślokas,* I could finish the whole thing while we're here. There would be no problem in doing that and then I wouldn't have to do that in Baltimore where we go next.

Another explanation for my lack of thrill is that after all, I'm not seeking so much satisfaction by snowy landscapes. I'm seeking satisfaction in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on my beads, and I don't find that satisfaction. That leaves me with an inner kind of sadness, or at least lack of transcendental excitement. I'm aware of my committing the offense of inattention. So even though I'm cheerful and I like to engage in various activities like drawing and writing Cāṇakya and so on, I'm also aware within of this most important lack. Therefore, even when I go out and see the splendid whiteness and walk in solitude for awhile making fresh snow tracks, it doesn't remove that inner spiritual lacking. If I could chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in pure love, then it

wouldn't matter whether I was walking down a busy street of Manhattan, or in a picturesque snowy field alone.

All things considered, maybe it's best that I do continue drawing Prabhupāda and *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in these remaining five days. It's such an unusual set-up for me to vent all my creative expression in this way. Surely I'll get back to writing after this. And after initial reluctance, it's always nice to start to copy the form of Prabhupāda with my magic marker, taking direction from a photo. I'm particularly poor on doing his hands, and yet that's also an act of devotion. In my mind I'm thinking, "Just see how fine his hands are, how his fingers are long and shapely." Even while I'm unable to do them nicely I can appreciate his actual hands. As I become more and more familiar with the aged marks on his face, the bags under the eyes, and so on, I don't see them as something unattractive. Neither attractive or unattractive. It's just the map of his face—my spiritual master. And by drawing him, I try to evoke the whole which is always some mood of either gravity or compassion, slightly amused, satisfied and so on. And I become more familiar how he went from place to place and sat in the same way. The *vyāsāsanas* were different, but he was the same, speaking *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in those brief years that he was with us. From place to place he went. You get nice realizations like that when you do surrender to drawing again and again without any pretension that you're a good artist and without seeking praise from others for it being "primitive art" or devotional art. It's just you

meditating on his form again and trying again. And you get your own satisfaction. It's not a pat on the back from somebody else, but your own thinking, "Yes, I can see Prabhupāda coming out of that painting that I did."

I know that other primitive artists have done Prabhupāda and I have disapproved of it. I'm no different than they. It's not that I'm an unique primitive artist. I should try to appreciate better when I see other devotees' paintings of Prabhupāda or Kṛṣṇa when they're done awkwardly, to see whether there is some devotion there. Therefore, I want to paint with devotion. You can also do wild free things too if you let yourself go.

As I look down at my body while walking, now the coveralls are covered with snow. The tan outer wear is turning white. I'm like a walking snowman. It is very nice. Solitude is quieter. Of course, the highway is still making its noise because

they've cleared the roads in passion so that not a minute or a dollar would be lost. But even that seems at least a bit muffled or so it seems.

It's much harder walking when you have to plough your feet through the powdery snow. Now I'm walking back from where I came, retracing my own footprints. They're already not so fresh but covered over partly. Now I see the car ahead, but only the interior light is on. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.

It's probably too dark still for Madhu to take snow pictures. But it is beautiful the way it's all coming down so silently and heavily. If you don't have to worry about getting somewhere for some appointment of travel, you can enjoy it. And the best way to enjoy it is an early morning walk. I am thankful that this walk has been special despite my disclaim in the beginning. Crunch, crunch. It's quite delicious and white all over your coat and hat. White. Wet. Eyelash. Snow covering up license plates and trees and everything.

Car Pome, February 4, 1995

Snow tracks. I'll keep
my world,
world of devotees where I
draw with pen the form of
my spiritual master. You can
call it stylized rather than
unique soul-expression, but
at least it's him,
recognizable to me and
I reunite this way.

He watches me and says, "You
are trying to draw me? But a
sādhu is heard, not seen. This
is just an old man's body."
No, I say, you are not an
ordinary man. If I think that
way, it's blasphemy. Yet I try to
draw him with all creases
and sags. Even pray that one of
the sketches can come really
evoking him. It would be
by chance or luck or God's
grace—because I don't have
the talent or training.

Our world snow, ISKCON,
devotees, not the world of
a poet who ends his poem
"All alone in Baltimore,
she put a shotgun in her mouth."

Ironic, understated, horror that
is material life, a dream we
wake up from for the next birth
of repeated sufferings.

Our world is different. We
should tell others. Christians
call it, "Good News." Christ is
risen. Well, Kṛṣṇa's holy name is
risen in Kali, hear the good
news, *harer nāma eva kevalam.*
This is the way.

7:09

7:11, I never get it right.
The drawing of his face.
Snow melts on windshield,

wipers push it off. Get back
and greet remainder of this day.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. You said it.
Śukadeva was 16 and naked
and the girls were naked also
but they saw he was as innocent
as a child. But when Vyāsadeva
came walking by . . .
I read that this morning.
Why don't you read more?
You really ought to.
That's your world, where you
belong. The sages asked
relevantly—How did Vyāsa
get his inspiration and from whom,
to begin the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa?*
It is transcendental to all His previous
works. You won't be happy
unless you read it every day—
even if you go on drawing
your Guru Mahārāja's form.
You need to read,
everyone does.
At least I do.

February 5, 1995

Yesterday it snowed for most of the day and it snowed a little bit overnight. Also yesterday I came to the end of this art-producing wave. At least for this time now at Śamīka Ṛṣi's. I don't know exactly how it all happened. It may have had to do with physical fatigue but also just a kind of satiation that occurred. I wanted to get free of being a slave to art so I just decided that's it. I also wanted to get all my work done on the Cāṇakya *ślokas* and so I've done that. Working last night and early this morning I've finished my written commentary. Now with the few days left here I can clear away some mail and I hope get back to reading Prabhupāda's books a little bit and to doing writing sessions.

It seems rather strange that perhaps in reading this narrative I was so intent and excited about drawing and coloring with crayons and paints and now I've just stopped it. But that's the way things go with the flow and ebb.

There's deep snow. The drifts are there. Here in The Woods there's a faint sign of tracks that were here before, but everything is fresh again for me to walk over. And it's whiter today because there is so much snow and also because the sky I can see is cloudless and is already light blue. So if you're not a dull stone, wake up and look at all this beauty coming from Kṛṣṇa and go on chanting. It's quite hard to walk. Some parts there's no trail at all and I just go all the way up to my calf in the snow and practically fall down. So I didn't go my usual route but walked down the hill and back up. It looks beautiful—the whiteness and then the dark forest and a light blue sky overhead. I just hope Madhu got

some film yesterday because he had run out of it. There's so many nice pictures he could take. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.

But whether words can serve your purpose in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I looked up at the sky and tried to signal to Kṛṣṇa that I just want to be a devotee. As You gave me a little inspiration to paint and then took it away, if You wanted to take away my writing drive also, if that were better for my Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then I'm open to that. After all, we really have to clear our slate. That's the purpose of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You can't take it with you. Can't take your money or talent, whatever you've got you should use for Kṛṣṇa. So many aphorisms running through my head from Cāṇakya, the authority for ordinary life. We also have authorities for transcendental life. But you can quote so many sayings and *ślokas*, but then you still have to change your life, change your consciousness.

It's early yet but I've terminated my walk because I couldn't walk the full way. Also it's quite a chill factor this morning and I'm just looking forward to seeing that car and getting into it. In the meantime, we can walk back and forth here and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa to the trees.

You're a little bit quiet. By accident your beads bump against you and you hear their friendly rattle. Wouldn't want to stay out here long. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa. What is it today? Sunday. There's just three more days of this walking and then we have to pack up and go. Nice to see the snow this last time. You got to pray. Prabhupāda says it's hard at the end so you have to practice now. You can't demand a notice. You've got your

notice already, of mortality. So engage right now the way you want to be engaged at the end. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare. Cāṇakya Paṇḍita says time is so precious. It wants to pass. Once a moment is passed you can't get it back even if you were to pay millions of dollars.

I'm standing near the entrance of The Woods waiting for Madhu to come in the car. It's possible that he won't be coming at all. Maybe he couldn't drive in the snow-drifts. It's easy for me to walk back home, but the only thing is I won't be able to write Car Pomes. You can't write a car pome after you get into the warm house, it just won't work. So what I'm thinking of doing while I'm waiting for him is to start composing on my tongue. So we can call it "Walking back home pome."

Walking back home pome

Slip and slide
preserve your hide
trees so cold you could die out here
they know how to survive
hardening up to early winter.
What ruins this winter scene
is any person walking.
And even now as I talk I see someone,
just a stranger like me out for a nice
  winter walk
but he or she ruins my mood.
Want the world all to yourself?
Just for a little while, just a part of a morning
to be alone and think of Kṛṣṇa
  this snowy day.

Evergreens heavy with snow
they must be suffering or tolerant
as Lord Caitanya says.
My own fingers tingling but I can walk
  and go inside.
Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa warm the soul.
Turn your back on materialists don't care
  what they say.
Ah, now the illusion I am alone again.
Look out from this woods but not for long.
Let's start back home.

Brilliant bend of road. Reddish
leaves dead still on the tree from last year
Everything is special this morning tingling

with first light on the snow. Who could
speak it?

Standing at a crossroads of three roads. Each way I look is brilliant country setting. The tire tracks make it even better. Or at least it's real, and I am too. A tiny soul walking home.

Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa

Car Pome, February 5, 1995

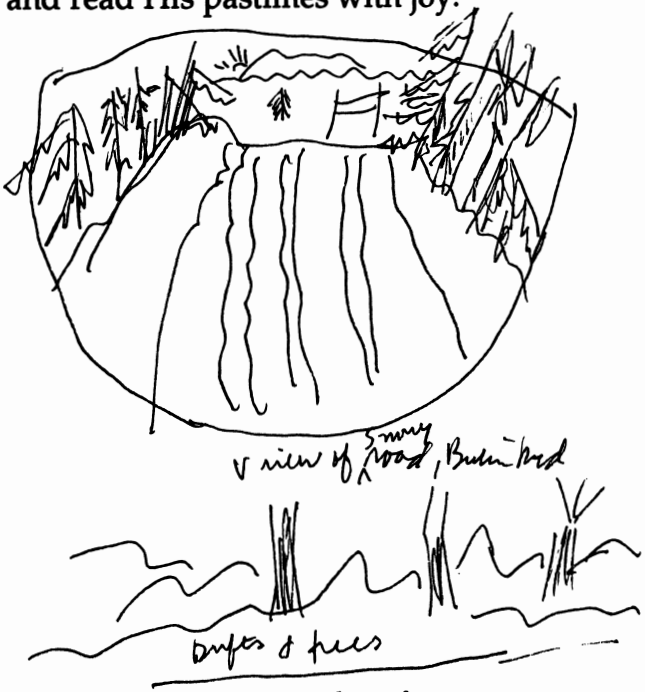
He arrived late because
couldn't get into snow-bound car.
White powder blows across
road, from the trees, this
bright blue morning, Feb. 5
7:03, 1995 will never be back.
It's gone click at a time.
Did you spend it saying
Kṛṣṇa?

Don't have to be educated
except to love Kṛṣṇa like
Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī.
Many in Vṛndāvana don't read
many books but they are
elevated, you can tell
by what they say, where
they live, what they do.
Snow ice Stroudsburg
playland of Poconos
is frozen hell
compared to Vraja.

But I play in it awhile
seeing Kṛṣṇa in white ice
and piled roads
Sunday morn deserted.

Blessed be the lives He shelters. May we learn what He teaches from our Guru Mahārāja. I have nothing new—but it'd be new for me if I could feel,

not just speak or write, but be attached to Lord Hari
and read His pastimes with joy.



Blowing snow dust from
wind, sittin' in here with
cold feet. Go back and apply
yourself in acts of service.
On the surface you are,
not yet deep but at
least me and my companions
are busy putting together a
collection of Cāṇakya's *ślokas*
as quoted by our spiritual
master. Life ends, you know
not when, so before the end
better give up your possessions
to the cause of *Sat*. (And I

don't mean Satsvarūpa dāsa) although
if you give it to him he'll spend
it on what? A jazz tape,
a ride to the Andes, a
new pair of boots before the
old wear out?
Give it to Kṛṣṇa.

Last days here,
cruise, 7:12, you will
have to live and die, can't
escape, don't know what
happens to self but *śāstra*
says you keep your own
so I believe that,
live by it and let
supreme authority judge
but please give me mercy—
he says
and Gurudeva replies, "You've
already got the mercy,
why don't you accept it
and serve better in His
movement?"

Snow cold rejoice you
are taken care of. And
pray for more actual
surrender.
To God.

February 6, 1995

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nine degrees so we're dressed a little warmer. The roads have been scraped, even the roads in The Woods so I'm able to walk (crunch crunch) my usual route better than yesterday. After today there's only two more days here.

Yesterday I came awake again in drawing and coloring, but this time I did it with words. I started writing on the big boards similar to the way I used to write poems in colors. I'm writing prose and poems, what comes to mind and "illuminating" the page. Then sometimes I get an idea to draw something a little more extended so I leave the board and go to another big sheet of paper and write on there. It's fun, something to do to take advantage of this situation where I'm so spread out with an artwork area and Baladeva so willing to follow up—get me materials or take care of the sheets and boards once I finish marking them up. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

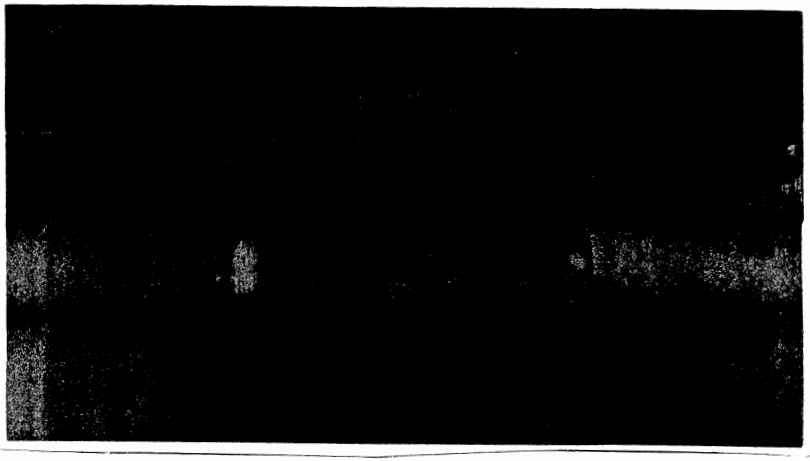
This morning I read for an hour. Oh, that was really bliss, I felt so good and strong afterwards. Some of my drawings mentioned nourished. I even drew a picture of a mother nourishing her infant and I said, "This is Mother *Veda* nourishing one child." So you can see how reading can be building you up in so many ways allowing you to express your Kṛṣṇa conscious art with something to say rather than "Oh, I wish I had something to say." I spoke about Mahārāja Parīkṣit coming to hear from Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare, and drew some simple pic-

tures. Main thing though is to let your hand go freely and not think I'm making art products, greeting cards, pieces to sell, pieces for people to hand in their room, books to make or whatever. That won't help you, but just do your reading, do your chanting and then write.

Chanting also to get the round done. I know that story. Crunch crunch, white snow. Now I'm at the end of one road, so turn around and come back and chant another round. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Walking up hill. Took my eyeglasses off because they got fogged and frosted. Heavy highway sounds —bumping tires, heavy trucks. The sky's got no clouds and it's so early though still the trees are very dark. Tree tops, blue sky this cold morning. Turn to Kṛṣṇa He's the warmth in the cold. He's the life, the *prāṇa* that allows you to live. Prabhupāda said you can't oblige Kṛṣṇa. You can't make Him act in a certain way that He should give mercy to someone and not somebody else. No control over Kṛṣṇa, that conception is *karma-kaṇḍa* But Kṛṣṇa is actually independent just like a cloud may start to rain in one part of the sky where as other clouds don't release their rain. Kṛṣṇa can rain down in one place and not another place. He's not under anyone's dictation. It's also best that we don't pray to Kṛṣṇa to try to change his mind from something that He wants for us. But better to ask Him to let us appreciate and understand fully how He's dealing with us, especially understand that full mercy is available. Sufficient mercy in the form of *Bhagavad-gītā*, guru—*hari guru vaiṣṇava bhagavad-gītā*, sufficient mercy you can just take to it. Even bodily pains, adverse situations are another kind of mercy. Pray to do what Kṛṣṇa wants us to do. To

find out what He wants and then pray to do His will and not our own and be happy and fulfilled in that. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.



Coming around the bend. Today he's got the bigger car of the doctor's, and it's sitting there with two bright red lights. I can't see so well without my glasses but I sure can see those red lights and the car. Man approaching the car, that's me. Yeah, I'm a man, not a boy. Not a big, rough man, but a man on earth, fifty-five years old. February already skidding quickly into 1995, January already gone. February moving along. Today is Advaita Ācārya's appearance and we're fasting. I'm getting closer to the car. Closer to Valentine's Day, to Denver, to the Caribbean . . . Madhu is waiting in the car, and some car pomes too. If Kṛṣṇa will allow me, let them be in devotion with a real voice. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Car Pome February 6, 1995

9 degrees is serious you
could die in it except for
the heating systems.
Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Śukadeva a
pome's got to heat . . .
No time to waste.
Why did Mahārāja Parīkṣit give up
his kingdom when so many
were depending on him?
It's 6:55 MON 6 (Feb).

He wanted to hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from
Śukadeva and
he was cursed to die
within 7 days. I've picked
out passages on virtues of
hearing *Bhāgavata* for a class
Friday night. They've heard it
before, that's okay. They need it.
As advanced devotees don't tire of
hearing the nectar of *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, so
we don't tire of wanting encouragement
in the good old struggle
to read something daily, to
remember that it's more important
than other things we do.

So I drew a man reading
at a desk.
That's a favorite of mine.
They say you should read

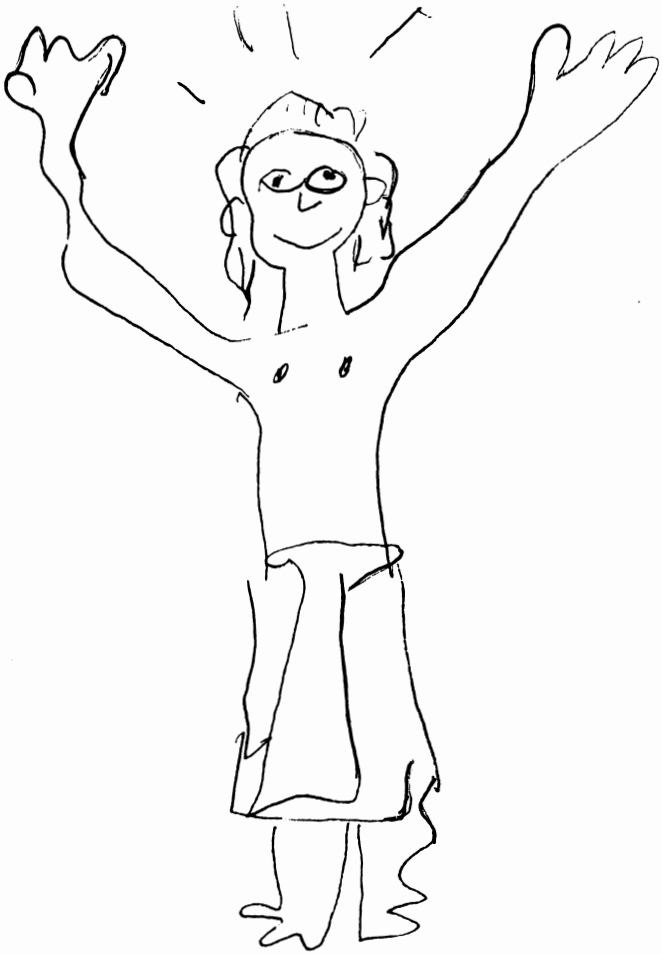
holding your finger under
the sentence and move it from
left to right. I do it sometimes.
Go slowly, look at Sanskrit and meanings.
Stop to think and feel.
Good ideas comes. You are grateful.
An hour slips by.

You can go back early today if you
want, beg out on this car
pome, "Couldn't think of more
to say . It was cold."

The futility of any life outside of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, such as WB Yeats. Just read a poem that said Yeats took monkey glands so he could have sex in old age. Disgusting guy on bills of Irish currency and gold coins. Poem of poet visiting Yeat's grave. Thought I'd pass it up front to Madhu because it mentions many Irish places. I'd say, "It shows futility of life." But I would interrupt his *japa*. Go ahead, share it. Later we can refer to it. While he reads, I'll take another stanza.

Okay, he's reading it and I am here Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa. We have to leave here and I'll be a better man for it. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Śukadeva. I've got to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*—it *is* like a fix for a drug addict and Śrīla Prabhupāda said that analogy does serve in a certain sense. I feel weak if I go even half a day without a good shot. Yeah, so be it.

Now go back and do other work. Oh you're supposed to . . . draw something



That's a devotee. Now let's go back to warm house

and you can ready the
last Cāṇakya *śloka*
about 7 mothers and
after no breakfast
try to lie down and
dream so you can write and do
more work. For Kṛṣṇa.

All glories to Lord Caitanya/*harer nama eva kevalam*.

February 7, 1995

From 10 A.M. yesterday all day I had a headache. Talked with Baladeva about possibilities of trance-work for strategies and ways to manage headache pain. Then finally took recourse of the one thing that I know works and that's a lot of rest. Went to bed by 5 P.M., got up at 12. Didn't feel like writing-drawing on the big boards. Went to my desk thinking I would free-write, then instead I wrote commentary for the last Cāṇakya *ślokas*. I think that finishes it now finally. The last one was, "Don't feed milk to a snake, it only increases his poison." When I first got up at midnight, I prepared a lecture on the importance and the pleasure of reading *Bhāgavatam* to be given this Friday night in Baltimore at Kṛṣṇa Bhakta's house. That is, if I don't get afflicted with one of these headaches. So let me try to think ahead of time I won't have headache, how I'll be all right and maybe that will help. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare. I don't have to be *so much* a victim to circumstances.

The snow is crunchy-crunchy from some snowfall late afternoon yesterday. Now I'm at the end of my first stretch where I face a little house. It looks just like a gingerbread house of a storybook. I can see smoke coming out the chimney and the cheery light on the front porch and the snow on the roof. Who knows, however, what *māyā* the residents are in. Turn your back on it and start walking the other way, back into the fresh snow scene. Snow powdering on the boughs of the evergreens and the bare trees. Bare trees' naked arms uplifting in angles from the trunk. Words can't capture the essence.

I do like those *Bhāgavatam* verses. So many of them you could spend a lot of time with. Just try to get near them at different times of the day even. You've got your cards, have verses on cards—favorite verses. The sages at Naimiṣaraṇya, Mahārāja Parīkṣit, Śukadeva Gosvāmī. How important it is—our *bhakti*—to hear about Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental activities, and damned to the atheists.

This morning I also had a revival of drawing and painting with colors. I suppose I always would like to do that. If I have the energy, can just go to it. What I was doing today was just take a magic marker and start scribbling and out of the lines as they whirl around in circles and angles something starts to appear that you recognize and then you start to go with that. One I did in orange magic marker, like a lion's muzzle came out first and that made me think of Nṛsiṁhadeva. But then the

bottom from the neck down was more like a bosomy woman. Then I thought Nṛsiṁhadeva is a better image to develop, so I went with him and made it a kind of friendly, somewhat cartoon cuddly Nṛsiṁhadeva. Makes me think that I tend to favor the friendly images when they come. I also want to finish it off quickly, some large, simple figure that will look attractive as a painting. That's all right, but I think you ought to try to do it more to express the unconscious. And if a woman comes out, then finish up the woman. If something scary comes out then don't just change it deliberately if there's an energy there. Also if what you're doing is scattered and doesn't come together to make a pleasing picture, that's not a reason also to go for some more legible image that comes out of it if you really want the paintings to be your thumb print or your image of what's going on. But I thought, "Well, what the heck there's nothing wrong with trying to make a nice picture and with steering it to Kṛṣṇa." So that's okay too, but keep the other in mind if you want this to serve deeper interests, let it come out.

It's clean, it's cold. The tree line is very dark, but above it the sky space is bright by comparison. At first it's kind of light-ish then it turns bluish and I see a star in the sky even at this hour. Turn around, see everything, it's so nice and soon you leave here. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

Heading around the last bend you hesitate to say the same old thing, "I see the red stop lights." But come out with it, this is your life. Snow-bound,

pretty, but cold as death. Keep walking. Stay away from poison. Something looks like sled track here too. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, somebody having fun. Back to the house and see what happens. How much time you get to serve Kṛṣṇa and to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and a writing session. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa .

Car Pome, February 7, 1995

Too dark to see clearly
I scribble anyway
with a thumb and an opposing forefinger.
Don't be so dumb incoherent.
Uh . . . I . . . Uh . . .
just want to say . . .
Kṛṣṇa is God
and I love Him.

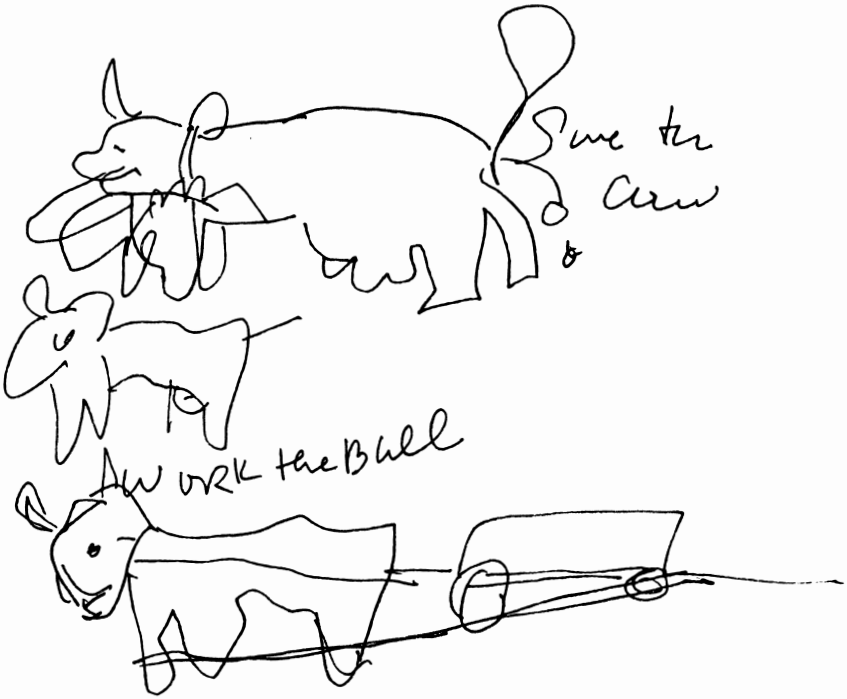
Words come off periphery
of consciousness like snow
shoveled—by whom?
Kṛṣṇa is God and I love Him
and He loves me. He wants
me to know Him and
serve Him and love Him
in this world and the next.

Yes, who made the world?
God made it.
Who is God? Kṛṣṇa, also
known as Jehovah, Allah
Father, Abba, Christ
His son, Mohammed His
prophet, Buddha His
śaktyaveśa-avatāra.
But Kṛṣṇa is supreme all-
attractive, wise one who
spoke *Bhagavad-gītā* and
most beautiful form—flower
with aroma is Kṛṣṇa,
the Supreme.

And who made us?
We are eternal part and parcel
of God. How much can we know of
these mysteries?
Not everything. It is infinite and
we are infinitesimal. As He
desires, He reveals in our
hearts and that is in
proportion to our desire to
know Him and our purity
and our practice.

Question: How is it we were
able to come in contact with
the Lord's pure devotee?
Maybe *ajñata-sukṛti*.
But why does one person do
it and not another? Why
does one get inspiration
to do a favor to a
Vaiṣṇava?
That's God's causeless mercy.

Feet cold. Feet cold.
M. chants and it's quite early,
6:56 TUES. 7, because I
came out here early. But I'd
like to go back soon.



Bull the crap. Shit the shoot. Bull the talk and bill us later. We are devotees but we know that doesn't mean free pass or you can do any damned thing you like. No, no. You got to be *more* strict than a *karmī*.

Now no more
now still more
you got the secret they

(others, nondevotee poets)
don't want.
Still it's the fact—you may
be famous for it in the future—
as those who had sense to take
to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and accept the Swāmi
as guru.
Not likely we'll be popular.
So to hell with it.
Don't worry about it.
Write for devotees, for guru,
for God, for self.
That's plenty to satisfy.
And craft you can borrow
and learn and come out with
cute words,
honesty, phrases,
sparks ignited by looking
at the world.
However
you start,
just be sure you steer
(on ice nowadays)
to Kṛṣṇa
and your teacher—
and by "guru" I don't mean
Maharishi Mahesh
but pure devotees of God
who teach us eternal relationship
of *bhakti*
and not "All is one in void-
light."
Yeah, we know the secret,

so be humble
and hard working.
Now my feet are too cold
and I want to go back.

February 8, 1995

This is the last morning and this will end this side-record of my thirteen days at Śamīka Ṛṣi's. He's selling his business as of June 1st, and would like to move out as soon as possible after that when he sells his house. So it's not likely that he'll be here next year, and I have no reason in the world to come to Stroundsburg, Pennsylvania otherwise. I know this little record has been repetitious, but I offer it up as a little literary piece of prose and poems in a winter setting.

We go on from here tomorrow unknowing of what's going to happen. Everyone is like that. We have our plans but we're like children stunned with unknowingness just wandering around and looking from thing to thing, from place to place. We get lost but we know that Kṛṣṇa our father and protector is with us, is behind us. There's danger at every step. Kṛṣṇa says that for one who surrenders to Him (Murāri), that ocean-wide danger of birth and death is shrunk up to the size that a calf makes when he sticks his hoofs into the muddy earth. That doesn't mean there will be no danger at all. You'll meet with tight episodes, certainly more headaches for you. But you should know that you're getting a minimum and that these bad times are also potential good times if you can use them in the right way and see it as Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare. Don't be a defeatist. You can try to minimize the headaches, of course, by these new suggestive strategies of "trance." But I want to do something more than that, want to be able to think in a Kṛṣṇa conscious way during those long stretches when I can't do my

regular work. Think about it: Why can't I write now, why can't I read now? I'm being withheld from my normal work by the pains of the body. That's certainly should be an opportunity for looking in a different direction. What do you mean when you say, "When I get a headache, I can't chant Hare Kṛṣṇa"? That's something to be overcome isn't? Try to chant, try to chant especially when you're not able to do other things. I'd like to work on that.

Forest dark and above it the lightening sky. First light and then blue. All these colors provided by Kṛṣṇa through His material energy.

So cold this morning the nose is tingling. Handwarmers doing double duty keeping you warm in that extension of the body. Last day.

Madhu's hassling with British Airways to change our tickets once again to get a better routing down to the Caribbean and out, to Europe. If all goes well . . . like I say it's best to just take the position of an unknowing child and not expect that anything is really going to go the way you're planning it, although it may. In fact, I do count on it to happen as we plan it. But it's my "secret" to myself that I wouldn't be surprised if things don't turn out that way at all and there's some major adjustment I have to make. Learn to live with things no matter where you are, by chanting, reading, like writing. And then although outwardly you'll express disappointment or bewilderment when your plans can't go through, and you'll even feel like that, disappointed. But within you'll think to yourself, "I knew this was likely to happen. So now let me switch to that other plan to remain Kṛṣṇa

conscious in the same way and take advantage of this new situation, write about it if you can, draw a picture about it, and if nothing else chant Hare Kṛṣṇa."

Big claw marks I see in the snow here. Unless I knew better I'd say it was a bear but there are no bears around here. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare. Walking down hill, clear air.

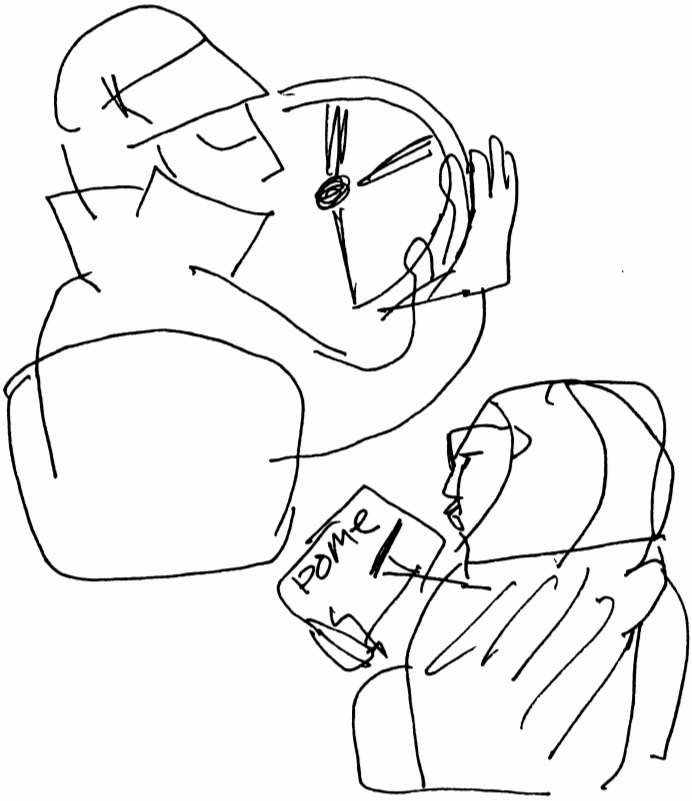
Heading around the bend through the pine trees I see the jewels—those two agate-like red lights like rubies on the head of a serpent. The car is half obscured with very frosty . . . frothy carbon dioxide exhaust . . .

(Tape recorder cut off here, I think it got frozen.)

Car Pome, February 8, 1995

My pomes satisfy self
no other criteria ink
flows in praise of God
my master taught me and
I repeat, "Squawk!"
This parrot goes from branch
to branch repeating the calls
of *Bhāgavatam* nature—
how a God conscious king finished
up his last attachment to
the world and sat for 7 days
without food or drink and
no fatigue, listening and
alert, questioning the sage
16 year old Śukadeva . . .

My pomes have passage
through. "Rich man's sons
don't work," said Śrīla
Prabhupāda. These poems are
authorized and needn't get approved
from McMillan Mcboss or
anyone.
I rifle, my emotions—but I
need to be strict.
And yes I can learn from others.



Last time seated here
in frigid white out-
side I dedicate a
page a life to my
Gurudeva's mission.

You mean you can serve this way?
Yes, ain't it a delight?
This knowledge is the *rāja-vidya*
and it's most confidential and pure and
gives direct realization of the
self, that's the essence of religion.
It's joyful and easily performed.

6:58 WED 8
Well, Wed. I am married
this day. The witness is the sun
(not yet risen),
snow is priest and the bride
is—well I don't know.
Maybe I'm the bride
or I'm the foot stool on which
she rests her feet.
Maybe I'm the photo album or
the photographer of this
here WED Feb. 8.
The Feb. means fever.
Means Valentine's Day and
Lincoln and Wash. And Mādhva-
ācārya and Ramānuja in Feb. and
2 Ekādaśīs and I go stay in JG's
room in Balt.

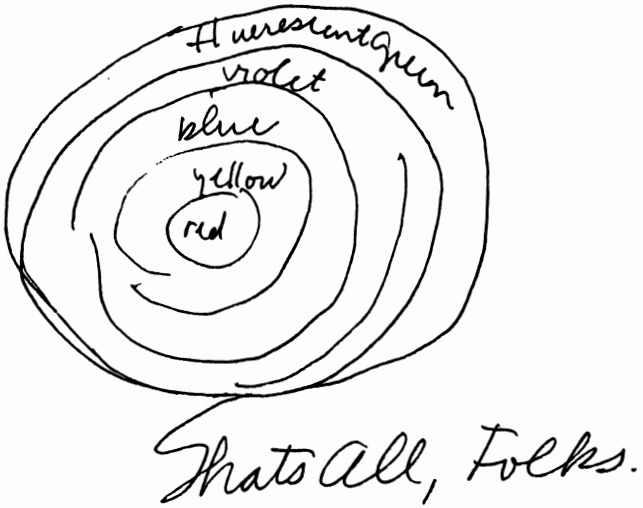
My pomes are different
than theirs, tell simple life,
huh? Brown overalls—some-
one could cut you down to size but
you don't go where they do that and
learning to negatively hallucinate,
that is, don't hear what they say and
do remember Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda
and kind words, "Keep writing."
As for amnesia, I'd like to
forget the sex urge, no more
stirring—that would be fine.
Don't think of it, or if it comes,
turn your face and spit,
like Yamunācārya, like

16 year old Śukadeva,
like young Parīkṣit, many many
Vedic heroes, *brāhmaṇas* and fighters
(like Bhīṣma)
gave up sex for good.
I can too by
his grace.

Hurry it's 7:07 WED 8
say goodbye.
I
planned the ending. Ice melts
and drips from my cap. They
said they're making pancakes this
morning, one last time before
we travel tomorrow.
Offer the pancakes and syrup and butter
to Śrīla Prabhupāda who's dressed in scarves,
his real form.
He will save you. He will accept
your offerings and remind you not
to add layers of nonsense
to the nonsense you've already
done. Not even a little?
If you like, pal, but you
have to pay the price. Try
getting rid of political and sexual
memories on your death bed.
It's no joke.

Good-bye. For awhile.
Keep writing and drawing,
if never again in Stroudsburg,
then somewhere,

as the soul goes,
guided by Fate and
the spiritual master.



(Bugs Bunny and Co., wearing *tilaka,* converted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, do salute this WED day white freeze. Ask forgiveness, Sats, and say, "I meant no harm." With serious face, we give the driver the order and drive home to *prasādam* pancakes and a last day with packing to travel and finish-ups.)

SDG 7:11

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			JAN	26 arrive Honolulu	27	28 2
29 3	30 4	31 5	FEB 1 6	2 7	3 8	4 10
5 11	6 11	7 12	8 13	9 travel to JG's	10 Kosac Bhakhai & lectures	11 Avra & Sidd[illegible]
12	13 JG	14 JG	15 JG	16 to Denver		