

ELECTRONIC BOOK

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Originally published by

GN Press Inc. USA

Every Day, Just Write

Volume 14

Improvisations

October 8 - 26, 1997

Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

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October 8, 1997, 12:12 a.m.

Yudhisthira Maharaja wanted to know about Prahlada Maharaja from Sri Narada Muni. Only a qualified devotee can know transcendental subject matter. No puffed up, academic scholars admitted. Narada is *svrata*, "good vow" "he followed a good vow and had nothing to do with the material world.

Well, we're back at Geaglum. How bright and beautiful the colors were yesterday "the grass, the sky, the light on the fence posts "all from God.

Radhanatha dasa doing well (from his report) in his glass-blowing business, although he postponed his marriage. Am I supposed to say something to encourage him to marry?

"Am I supposed to not listen," said Merry MacGee, "when my husband practices his music?" I didn't know what to advise, but read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* by the light of the desk lamp with my remaining energy. After all, in Spain I told them to shoot for the rhinoceros "advised, encouraged. Time to tend to myself.

Enemies, friends "a peaceful fellow has nothing to say (he says) as he reads, as he begins another period of solitude and this book to proclaim it.

Taking his son affectionately on his lap, the demon king said, "My dear son, please let me know what you think is the best of all the subjects you have studied from your teachers." (*Bhag.7.5.4*)

* * *

5:02 a.m.

Now you see, man, I don't want other talks. I want Krishna conscious talks. I want to die thinking of our Lord.

But I do read essays on Emily Dickinson, one of the greatest poets. They say her fame is a "true citadel," which will only grow stronger.

Then there's that book on self-improvement. So much to read.

Or better yet, I can move my boxes around and rearrange what's in them.

As long as my head holds out.

A jack-in-the-box.

I didn't like the book someone gave me on Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura because I felt it told a different version of the history we received from Srila Prabhupada. It didn't say much about my spiritual master in it. Didn't include our Prabhupada as one of the dearest disciples of his Guru Maharaja. No, I don't like it.

Hare Krishna.

This stalwart fellow, the mouse in the hallway "a denominational poet of white skin and hair holes and follicles an exceptional person you are.

Maybe your own literary fame will grow, but not into a citadel or myth. rather, into something that will be torn down and replaced by rubber tires. Crows will sing your glories and magpies will visit. Your friends will eat toast and milk and butter and marmalade and frown at you with impatience.

No! quote the *Bhagavad-gita*, the dearmost confidential knowledge given by Krishna. The nondevotees can't understand it. Krishna is Supreme.

Krishna is Supreme.

They think this life of a hundred years at most is the only existence. That's called a poor fund of knowledge.

We think we are so important, don't we? If we stop what we're doing, can we hear the rain?

Is he annoyed about making my breakfast because I insist on eating so early? Will the woods and foxes meet for tea and crumpets? Will hundreds of ISKCON persons go to India for Karttika, leaving me behind? What will they find there? remember how you leave your room in the Guesthouse and go downstairs to Prabhupada's *mangala-arati*? Always uptight there. Just looking for a few minutes to walk to the temple without so many people wanting to talk. Too much social life makes pilgrimage too external. It's just too easy to be distracted from your purpose. Then there are the controversies. You hear about them even if you don't take part.

* * *

A Start

This music is background is foreground is entering your mind "heart of mind "you don't have to go so fast.

Don't have to do anything, listen though "it will come to the serious student of good music.

In a place where they drink and smoke and chat, a nightclub, he decries and I agree it should be listened to more carefully than that.

The musicians play anyway despite less than ideal conditions. They have learned to concentrate anywhere. They so much want to play in any ambience. They take it on.

Your beautiful enemies take from the air whatever you hear and feel

I'm cautioning you

feeding you.

Black men, white fools . . .

last of year is best time to sing.

Your ode "

today I began rereading the section where Prahlada sits on his father's knee, you know it well

you know it

the soprano sax. He played like that on *Love Supreme*.

* * *

Afro Blue. America too. Irish tune. Dance crash feet.

Now I've got to go hear quietly my own *japa*

Don't expect colors-pageants to equal or captivate anyone

I'm simply grateful I don't have a headache and can eat and sleep and be apart from the madness.

Grateful "I missed the visit of the *sannyasi* here
There's nothing to say
he says. The Way, the Pay, and Play of me in my reverence capacity
The clerk who saves his own words on cards and puts them away and putters, putters.
Putters
Beauty in music and color and form comes from God.
Drummers harass the other players to go on, push on with their offerings. Driving
them
this
this. Now the time is coming, we all have our own time to be quiet "not having much
to say
there is a space, a bend like that come back to this and learn and learn what master is
saying with even a few notes. Believe they are earnest as I
to worship God.
to worship God
here, here is the place I want to do it.
The bass, the clear note vibrato. The clear
playing together.
It just wanted a start.

* * *

9:45 a.m.

During my after-breakfast nap I conked out for two hours. One would think I had transworld jet lag. Now out for a first refreshing walk around Geaglum.

But before I left the house, I read a devotee's letter. It was filled with the dilemma of whether or not he should change his *aSrama*. My walk then filled up with his pro and con arguments. I failed to fully notice the autumn air and the thrill of being alive and able to walk on wet, woodsy paths. I didn't even notice . . .

the leaves wet
on the ground or
the wind,
what to speak of hearing the chanting
as the beads
passed through my hand.

At least I saw chestnuts and acorns. No big cache, but two small, shiny chestnuts, which I'm hoarding (all the green acorns have already been eaten).

* * *

2:45 p.m.

A productive day cut off by right-eye pain. It came around ten o'clock and I quietly endured it during Prabhupada's *puja*. It's certainly nice to be back with Prabhupada after a month away.

* * *

Early last night I dreamt of being in Vrndavana. I wanted to stay. People work so hard to arrive in Vrndavana "it is so wearing to the body "why should we leave so quickly? And it's too hard to enter the mood on a brief visit. Why don't we stay? Even as I thought this in my dream, the reality dawned on me that Karttika would start in a few days and many devotees would be arriving in Vrndavana. Then Vrndavana would become pressured and impossible. I decided to leave, to go to Mayapur, where it was quieter.

* * *

I Want to Talk About You

& Slow or fast. It doesn't matter. I like the tune. Now tell us what you want. I want to talk to You, Krishna. Krishna.

Krishna, Krishna, Krishna Beloved. They may be skeptics, but I want to be in Love with You.

The rhythm and richness can tell me that.

Musically. Insistent. They know what they're doing. The beat the vibrato.

Now tell us, Sir. This is the way. You take it as something casual, but it's serious. He gets interrupted by people talking and drinking, but he goes on anywhere.

The sheets of sound the clocking of my

Tourista clock

big batteries

all you put in boxes

Blip-Put it together

take it apart.

The real instrument. Every song he plays is "A Love Supreme." He's after God in music. Nothing else matters, all details of his life (Gaura-kiSora dasa Babaji) are lost except his intense *vairagya*,

his *vipralambha* in mood of Radha.

I can't claim that, can I?

Brief, brief it was, but I liked it "

blackberries, rusted color

of leaves on trees at Govinda-dvipa.

Tell us more

no motorboats

It was fun to return

and now

here's the solo with no help. He went home.

Ran out of time. Practiced the horn. They held their breaths. Some thought, "He's bluffing."

I like it, whatever he does. Heard he was friendly.

Yeah, give us people who love and play well

This is only the warm-up.

The real thing is in Heaven

spiritual world

write fast to the end

scratch and stretch
He tells it as it is.
He says, "I want to talk of you." It means
love music and serenade
I've got time to tell you this beyond my life's little details the Majesty that Nature sent
be kind
We do concentrate on Krishna in spiritual world. "

* * *

The Promise
& You want exact on-beat
for your own
jurisdiction
formalist/ Emily/ part and
parcel/ reduced fares
we're not going there! You yearned for longed for
ease
ease
chestnut

* * *

Now get it right. Hear him and let your
own pen flow
I don't know where it leads, love
white page Krishna appears here by writing. He
appears when I try
my relationship appears.
I'm just barely warming up

* * *

imagine, this one too is for God. respect it. Assume they know what they're doing.
Assume words flow "I'm not going back for nothin' not Blue Hour good time frustrated
sad
loins
sailor rOC
blues "all alone so ignorant didn't know my master,
few friends and they too . . .
no, now I'm enlightened
guru sage still gotta
Reason . . .

* * *

I'm sorry I said "Trane, you're wrong." I take back the words. Slash and crash you guys speak to me.

Yes

* * *

He stands adorable little boy, man. God of all.

Who can understand! This was the purpose. Go to the *vana*, go *there*. You've got limited time.

Black blues each moment "

love me, understand me "

and I love you but not

cut deep down to the nerve

He got locked up, Crazy Carl, on lithium. Last coda,

the buoyant cat's

gait be with you

Krishna Krishna

Krishna chant "

beads like

wood.

Sway "you belong

in saffron dress blue

no more sailor nightmare

please teach me to dream and

fight back for right

Love Supreme.

October 9, 8:45 a.m.

Salvaging the day's schedule after last night's devastation. Out the door to a sunshiny but cool day. The trunk (bonnet) on Manu's car is open. He's on his way to sell paintings. The literary magazine, "Discovering Our Voices," is going along well and will be out by November 1, he says.

"Will you accept submissions from devotees outside Ireland?"

He nods affirmatively.

Under the chestnut tree I stopped and searched and found five. Pocketed them, shiny and wet. Another new day. While bending down to search for chestnuts at the base of the tree, I chanted aloud as best I could, "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare" and fingered my red beads.

* * *

9:55 a.m., *Bhag. 7.5.5, tat sadhu manye . . .*

Read and relax, scattered mind. A boat is starting across the lake strait, which today is calm and clear. The oars dip slowly.

Prahlada Maharaja was not expected to say anything practical because he was only five years old, but he spoke immortal words. My mind goes to the Dallas memories I wrote of Srila Prabhupada installing Radha-Kalachandji twenty-five years ago, and how Prajapati Prabhu gave a dramatic reading of Them to the devotees in early September. They sent me the itinerary for Their installation anniversary celebration. No, today I don't seem able to pay undivided attention to what Prahlada Maharaja said.

I have heard these same sentences, thought I have heard them "too much." It doesn't penetrate as new insight. So? That means I must now consider the knowledge old, but still important.

Besides familiarity with the text, I seem to have a defense system built to protect me from complete surrender. That is, I don't fully respond to the purport even if I do pay attention. I don't know how.

". . . If one wants success in life, he should immediately understand from the right sources what his self-interest is and how he should mold his life in spiritual consciousness."

Am I not already doing that? What more can I do to mold my life? I'm too tired, I think, and not flexible enough to make any big changes. Don't want to do what the committees suggest, and prefer to seek chestnuts on the wooded path and think these things through.

"Settle in," Manu encouraged. I told him I had a bad night.

"That's proof," Manu said, that I can't do more.

Tat sadhu manye . . .

This helps.

"Part and parcel of Krishna." I read it without thinking or feeling. Some say it's better to read when you are preparing for a lecture, but I think that's just a quick fix. Volunteer yourself to represent the teachings as best you can, then study intently, looking to build your case. What about reading when you're not preparing for a lecture? What about reading simply to open yourself up to Krishna? What about searching simply for faith? We don't always have to look for our best reading in order to fire it out into an audience like a bullet.

Prahlada recommended that his father take *vanaprastha* and get out of the deep well. Srila Prabhupada invites elderly people to go to Vrndavana and "stay there in retired life, making advancement in spiritual consciousness, Krishna consciousness." (skip)

12.22 p.m.

1

Roundelay at last you're
speaking to me again not for
money.

* * *

"Now rest, you

fool." Why so harsh?

"Because

you're a Gerry Mulligan clone."

* * *

Too much!
Or,
Not enough!
We wanted to be devotees.
At 58 years old I have
settled in the country and
taken walks, picked daisies and
chestnuts, gradually built a repertoire
Reading and writing,
then something new, pure,
honest took place. "Hope
is the thing with feathers
that perches in the soul."

* * *

Doves On roof

& Please begin at your own pace, no matter what *his* is. He's fast and moanful, the calm background, the drums fast . . .

He's athlete-young. You can hear *that*? But the rain "does it seem distant when you want access?

What's the stimulus?

I don't want to have to explain it. A secret world, juice.

Moans take awhile to decipher. Language must be learned and I work to merge my art with his and

give it to Krishna.

And yes, Nature is direct as it is. Doesn't take stimulus to push smoke up a chimney.

Who's living there?

Young girl growing up.

Old village guru.

Shy tough guy

beside his car.

* * *

Bit of fiction.

Get it? I get it. You want to make music near undecipherable. More light!

Drops and

drops of

studio musicians "

artists meeting together to say what they'd like to do for Krishna. Pics in new form.

They want to go beyond the illustrations of Krishna

as much as we like them.

"We fear Srila Prabhupada wouldn't like what we do but we must do it and find the way he will accept it."

They understand,
talk,

say, "If somehow now our art isn't Krishna conscious, then we'll have to add elements until it *is*."

Roll, roll.

Worship Krishna on that horn "

Oh Lord, please accept the link. I saw white doves on his roof "dozens. How come they were satisfied to stay there and not fly? It's a menagerie. Another guy doing something for art for the Lord.

Conservative guru
lines and

108. I can't figure it out. How far will this go? Prahlada, calm down, man. There's no more recognized tunes, you see?

You just play as best you can and romp along. There's no freedom like it. Don't interrupt me. I say in time,

time

he'll find his way to

Krishna the cowherd boy who

killed demons. Fake *babus* smoke *bidis*.

Forgive me. This is the chant.

I like the freedom from Navy and home (used-to-be). Now it's freedom from self so I can worship the Lord.

Krishna, I expose "

flash "

my puerile self

the jack rabbit we

killed with our van. Little pepper pop-up squeaks. Ask forgiveness for crunching him. What does M. know?

TKG said to his disciples, "You'll be rewarded for austerities of living near a temple." What can I tell mine? If you read my freedom templates, "Doves on roof,"

I can't save you "no one can. You go to God yourself.

The musician has freedom and that luscious high tone. He's searching. Someone said he has no malice in him. He plays with link to precedent bop, but broke with it too. He can *play* (mirthsome, frolic, joy of kids in field, search). Moan,

moan is part of

Beauty.

We Krishna conscious people have our own story I'd like to tell.

Rain a curtain

down over Inis rath Island.

They're not afraid of the rain. Indoors.

Reaching and searching in an area you don't know
what you're saying "not that

it's already been charted like a Lewis and Clark discovery. What next? The trail is dry and empty and filled with dangerous animals and Indians.

I must admit most brothers don't inspire me as this searching does, this expression into life and God the breath, the rhythm, the movement comes from Him. And the philosopher knows the answers from books. *Pious and humble*, Shinn said, is what Srila Prabhupada passed on, and we should learn it, not money or cockiness. Please, countrymen, think tenderly of me. I'm glad for that.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

I wanted to go to the shed today, but it was raining when I awoke. Now it has stopped, but that gray-laden swollen cloud sky could rain again at any moment. Better I read indoors.

I'm really hampered or harassed by "don't *like*" the notion that Srila Prabhupada taught mere basics, is sometimes mistaken, that ISKCON devotees often stick to his presentation more fanatically than practically, and haven't always realized something deeper. Kick it off! I admit it's a poison in me. It clouds my vision. I have to fight for truth "to say that he truly touches my heart, gives me Krishna. I know of that *other* viewpoint, such as the one presented in the large biography of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. The author tries to minimize Prabhupada in a variety of ways.

* * *

3:30 p.m.

I'm in the shed anyway. Got a pen with peacock blue ink and rain on the roof. "Be blessed," Srila Prabhupada said to devotees in a Los Angeles 1973, arrival talk. He also said: "Don't leave Krishna consciousness. Be true devotees."

And in Mayapur he told the devotees not to keep Lord Caitanya in a room, but to allow Him to go out and expand all over the world. This is Krishna consciousness, yes? We don't have to be guilty or ashamed of our small contributions, but simply add our mite to Lord Caitanya's preaching, in our spiritual master's movement.

Krishna won't force us to surrender. He'll tell us, "Surrender unto Me," then leave us the choice of whether or not to follow. We may say we want to surrender, but we first have to find our love above duty. There is no question of force (although in his purport to Bg. 3.30 Srila Prabhupada writes that even if we are forced to surrender, that's bona fide "as if in military discipline").

Oh,

I get it.

"Thank you for coming to such a remote place," Bhakti-rasa dasa said as he drove us through Newcastle at 4:15 a.m..

"I'll keep coming as long as you are here," I said, and meant it.

* * *

O *bhagavata* speaker, why do you raise your voice in such a dramatic way? Why orate? I'll stay awake.

Raindrops on the open window. Fingers, could so easily be broken.

Heaven has happiness, but sadness too. The long day of devotional activities, announced by the guru "all must attend. The day culminates in a *harinama* downtown. Will I go too?

Good leaders. People have been here twenty years, he said, and I am in the shed no better than the rest but I have to be myself.

Krishna said no feverish false ego and no lethargy, but do your duty for Me.

Okay, Lord, I get the point. I'm not king number 1. I am who I am and then when I go, who knows what I'll become?

O Krishna, please be kind to me.

You have already defeated me, so when I hear voices, I write them down "those sounds and the calm, calm, lake, I

take the pulse of lush green grass and the pitter-patter of rain the swish of the grass as I forge a path here.

On the way back to house, if his door is open, I'll drop in and say, "Hello, how's it goin'?" although I'm mostly alone and happy that way.

* * *

Peace Walk

& There is sweet ominous. You're not listening as much as rushing off to the place. I don't have much time. "Alabama," he said, "is an interior place musically." He responded when he heard of injustice to his people. The truth of mankind, the threat now of all people running around mad. We take shelter of police.

But Vaisnavas teach "listen, we're all servants of God. Breathing. Peace. Peace. He dares to suggest. We got a long way to walk and walk. Together we can go. Not everyone is gonna like this. They make noise. Italian gangsters talking over the sacred music.

Again the coda

I don't know what I speak

we all want peace

we insist it must be God conscious. Invite us to a meeting and we'll spiel out that. People don't like the sectarian message of organized religion. Do I? Do I truly follow my spiritual master? require any adjustment in time?

ISKCON America agonizing over this: who are we and how to present ourselves?

End. I'm nervous. I'll do one more. He's praying to God! Get it? Yeah, to Supreme Lord. The only way. His paean peon.
Pen writes fast not enough."

* * *

Serious Work

& Oh, old times on S.I. the oak trees out front and mom and dad couldn't know what I heard in Miles' horn. They "allowed" me to hear. This was the box I played the LPs on . . . Gone, but am I reaching back?

Although the family scene is gone. So there.

I must say I'm glad. Krishna, he said, isn't easily known, but He will talk with you. Face to face.

Talking on horns? Rayarama dasa went to Sun ra concert to ask him to appear free at a Hare Krishna benefit. Rayarama said, "Jazz is impersonal because it doesn't say 'Krishna,' which has to be chanted. It only says bop-de-doo, etc."

I didn't really agree. It's not impersonal, although it may be inconceivable as it rides on Krishna's energy

Krishna the source of all

In jazz a solo builds

wails

pauses

thinks

improvises

and pop ditties sneak in and talk,

the musician tries to evoke soul and emotion.

What you call music "you tell us of structure and techniques on an instrument "but it's not *only* that. It's emotion, which for us is Krishna consciousness, while walking in the morning in that senior citizens' park in Baltimore. It's time past and present.

Writing to evoke Krishna from the page. I couldn't tell him, "Writing is where it's at." Instead: "You can find it in any service. Krishna will appear in the agricultural field or on book distribution." But that's generalizing. I know it as my page fills with black ink marks.

Swiss Chalet "

and now the drum solo. I too have a turn. Each of us. This is the way.

Crisp and bright, musicians take a break. Each chorus or phrase or portion of music must be new, driven by genius and practice and

God behind it

allowing it

singing through them

and accepting the offering of tribute

Oh Krishna, I love Thee and not otherwise.

This paean to a midnight beat I offer to You in memory and now go on chanting Hare Krishna.

October 10, 12:10 a.m.

The teachers Sanda and Amarka inquired mildly of Prahlada as to the names of the Vaisnavas who had instructed him. When the teachers spoke of enemies, Prahlada replied that the Supreme Lord's external energy creates the distinctions between friend and enemy and thus people are deluded.

Think of Makhanlal accosting me with that: "You wrote of ISKCON's enemies in your Vyasa-puja book, but Prahlada Maharaja doesn't approve of friends and enemies."

That guy with Afro hair playing his horn. The reviewers said after his solo he babbled and shouted something similar to what he had just improvised on his horn. That's how he exposed his techniques in accessing his creativity. "If you like self-expression, this is for you," they said.

The boy is not a fictional cartoon "the cute little fellow on Govinda dasi's slide show. Srila Prabhupada approved. Yeah, to give us an idea of it. I can't do better. Thus the intelligence of children is spoiled. Babble-shout.

Then what happened? (As if we haven't heard.)

Then a gold pen stopped working and the fairy godmother burped. The Dallas guru spoke, the Geaglum guru quaked. The Quakers Oatsed.

Come on, he said, I don't like the diff "*vidya vinaya sampanne*, Srila Prabhupada quoted. I'm trying to prove at my worst that I'm not bad. Trying to open a chest of drawers. Acorns and chestnuts stored there by vipers.

Trying to rob a bank like Dillinger, to arrive at a memory of sitting with my spiritual master on the plane and watching that movie.

Trying to recall

music a la Mulligan "and I don't mean Mrs. Elizabeth Mulligan playing the piano at P.S. #8. I can't imitate the understanding that everyone is part of Krishna, but that doesn't make it false. When people do me wrong, don't look for enemies.

And don't cheat disciples so that at death, they will be angry with me: "You didn't bring me to Krishna!"

"At least I didn't lie."

Yes, you did. You claimed to be guru.

But I said you'll have to arrive at the truth yourself.

So much is expected of the man who dares to receive the worship.

"A Vaisnava sees other servants to be so advanced that he has much to learn from them." Start at least with seeing the spiritual master as master.

Do you really know Krishna? Are you a leader? A few would ask. So what's the answer?

"I don't know Krishna; I only know my Guru Maharaja," Srila Prabhupada said while lying in the hospital bed in 1967.

Me too. I do know that he came and taught me and that I've followed him ever since, right?

Shouldn't over-emphasize my failure to follow him more fully. Admit I do follow him, do accept him.

SK book in shed. Mert's is here too. If I want to look at them. Bizarre dream of me serving scholars. This early hour is sacred time.

All servants are on the same platform as parts of God, and God is the one Master. Why make distinctions among the servants? Better to see them as my teachers,

my *prabhus*. The actually enlightened spiritual master, of course, is special, although he is also one of the Lord's servants.

Each one thinks he's God, so all the gods must make friends and enemies. Vaisnavas feel the oneness among the servants and try to teach it to others. Don't you know that God is in everyone's heart? That makes everyone special. "Everyone should be allowed to render service to the Lord to the best of his ability, and everyone should appreciate the service of others." (*Bhag.* 7.5.12, purport)

Please, Lord, dictate to me to serve You. *Tesam satata yuktanam*. I'll decorate my book with Your sayings.

* * *

Well You Needn't

& Head foggy, but I'll go anyway. Foggy, bumpy, the funk, the Monk.

Serious. Guy happy swings "they've got that.

They, me, Mickey Mouse. Gee.

Jesus Christ. Guru. Word . . .

Krishna fun. This way, please:

I'll ride with rouse. Squeaks exquisite.

Bee-rivet. Bhu said if you gain knowledge for material pleasure, you'll have to come back next life entangled.

Solo

virtuoso

plain and humble. To Swami. One man surrenders "each lecture is a monologue of forty minutes. I call that virtuoso.

Even a small poem or smile

isslam-bang reality. Don't avoid what you actually see.

He (Jimmy) said no more surprises in jazz for him, tired of it.

Emily too wanted Surprise.

But what about thrill of the same walk, down lanes I've been on every day? Don't have to chase to

a new place.

Discover chestnuts

math/ division

this too is sameness . . .

* * *

Draw a pic or make a word or somethin' in between.

O Nat King Cole

Christmas

blipped-blop charts

Rock-sock friendly

guys say life is hard enough.

As if it doesn't matter.

This is the way I want to ring chimes. Listen, he's good, good and
I am too
pickin' berries
my hands stained with ink
brown "green "red "blue
no time to tell you even a little of it. I'm working hard with only one right hand.
Krishna, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Visnu-bhakti, the tree-cut-downer Prahlada ax handle
"Swami sends us out and we be the best preacher we can, his men. I tried throwing
myself after a passerby, "Hey, buy a BTG" in Cambridge.
Now you'd never recognize
Krishna is *murti* for me.
They are laughing at absurd
hari-kari of me
No, I think I've got to do this
for You
another way of love, to keep the beat and not abandon the rear. The beat is divided,
flowing in, never to be given up, those chords, rhythms.
Surrender.

* * *

Dreamt I had a job assisting scholars with big degrees. They would come to the
library to study or to hold conferences among themselves, and it was my job to speak
with them, to bring out different things about the writer's life and to ask pertinent
questions. Sometimes I was able to affect them. Although they were atheistic, I spoke to
them about the importance of reading scripture. When you read scripture, you learn to
miss the person, God, and then you hanker to be with Him. When I said the word "God,"
one scholar spit.

* * *

8:45 a.m., "Welcome to the reality of Ireland"

Too rainy for a walk. I could go out in my rubber pants and jacket, but then I'd have
to take off my eyeglasses and my beads would get wet. I'll take an umbrella. Puddles
reflect the gray sky light. Muddy brown water shining in puddles, tinkling with new rain.
Hedge-lined lanes. Me "singing" my *japa*.

I found no less than two dozen chestnuts, all shiny and wet, some just rolling out bare
and precious on the ground, others within yellow or green pods. The coverings are easy
to squeeze open. You can't call them brown; their true color is chestnut. I think of
coming back later to gather them, but no, some squirrel or child may steal them. Do it
now. I stuck my gloved hand into the puddles and pulled out one after another.

Spotted a pheasant in the dark parts of the woods. In the clearings, crow passing
overhead and the sky all the way down to the horizon a rich, Krishna-fresh rain cloud.
Grass vibrant green.

* * *

10:10 a.m.

Fog in head. M. on phone. He's going tomorrow to see an old man who placed second in an all-Ireland melodeon contest. My chestnuts are drying. What about your Krishna consciousness? Rupa Gosvami writes, "Somehow or other, fix your mind on Krishna."

I think I over-exerted myself by walking and picking up chestnuts. Also, my knit cap was too tight. Now the vice, like an inner cap within the skull. Outdoors there is a bright blue sky mixed with heavy gray clouds. A golden sun opens them up. Always changing. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare.

* * *

11:34 a.m.

Writing on a page, I don't even know what it is. Do you know what that's like? The sunshine flits on then off, and the wind blows at the rooted grass. All this is part of Krishna consciousness. Music charms, Srila Prabhupada said, and another time he spoke in Calcutta, then in Tokyo in the '70s. He called them *mudhas*. There must be a Mixer to mixtures, but rascal scientists say there is no God.

Gray water today. I can't do much due to pain. *Prakrti* restricts me.

What did he say? In Calcutta his voice was harsh, demanding, straining over the sounds of the crows' cawing. He said education means unemployment. First produce food grains, even before *dharma*. In Tokyo the room was quieter. Ink spots. Xavier Cougat, man with pencil mustache. Sharp, acerbic put-downs ""Skip this one." Somebody smelled money and the result is

boring,

boring,

boring.

The result is my head prince
feels like pince-nez.

On LSD I walked toward the ocean and "envisioned" jazz men "Albert Ayler and his screeching horn "thought of the white forefather, Teddy roosevelt and others pounding their fists "and saw how much I had inherited black soul "was no longer listening to the beat of white politicians whom I saw stranded on a stretch of sand out at sea
and the music . . .

But I wasn't happy

didn't like

the angry screech of the haves and the have nots.

Where was *I*? Thought I might have to reincarnate as a seagull. That was before I met Swamiji.

* * *

If you know you will only stay in a room for two minutes, you won't bother to decorate it. Similarly, they know they have to die "we can't stay here "but they spend their whole life building skyscrapers. He said that.

Interrupted but writing anyway. I ignore the presence of another. Door blows open. No one in sight. Fifty-seven days here, they say.

Give me micros and bread and rice and *dal*. Give me no news, but a few letters.
Single-minded I am not. I can read *sastra* aloud in an attempt to transform myself.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

Waiting. I wrote in a medical log about the effects of Esgic. Also mentioned that I don't like atheistic arguments. I listen to them, then fight back. And even if Srila Prabhupada sounds harsh sometimes, I benefit from hearing his voice. I recall it later and record it here. I'm a performing musician.

Sunlight. I told you that already, so that's a repetition. "Nalgene Trail Products" has a blueprint of a cougar on a rock on their hard plastic water bottle. Wind on blades of grass fluttering. Said that too. Oh, and I'm still waiting for the pain to release me.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Prahlada says just as iron is attracted to a magnet, so "my consciousness, having been changed by His will, is attracted by Lord Visnu." (*Bhag. 7.5.14*) Bhurijana Prabhu said we are spontaneously attracted by material desires, but they lead us to trouble, so we have to restrain ourselves. The self isn't satisfied by mundane talk, just as the desert-like tongue is not satisfied by a single drop of water. We need to bathe our tongue in the Ganges flow of *hari-katha*.

Everyone in Vrndavana is attracted to Krishna. We have to become free from material dirt before we can become attracted to Krishna.

But what about literature or music or the many things in this world that attract us "the complexities of family life, even management and leadership in a religious institution? Is our contact with them all based on pure attraction to Krishna? I contend that some things can be dovetailed in Krishna's service (*yukta-vairagya*), and that some things are perhaps more difficult to use. Whatever energy we have, and whatever contacts we have with the material world, we can convert those into offerings for His pleasure.

Though we must be careful. Do not let up on your hearing of one hundred percent pure *Krishna-katha*. Keep the mix of matter and spirit favorable to your devotional aspirations. Prahlada told his teachers that he couldn't help himself; he was naturally attracted to Visnu. He was looking for the topmost nectar "the source of nectar" and sometimes we must search in filthier places where Krishna consciousness is only implicit. Who can understand?

The teachers of Prahlada called for a stick to beat him. "The members of our Krishna consciousness movement are in a position similar to that of Prahlada Maharaja." (*Bhag. 7.5.16*, purport) They said Lord Visnu is the ax to cut down the sandalwood forest of the demons, and Prahlada is like a thorn tree in that forest "to be used as the handle on Visnu's ax. Srila Prabhupada wanted us too to volunteer as handles for the ax of Visnu-bhakti. We want to volunteer, although we sometimes arrive with our stipulated conditions. We're not always as functional as we should be, but we're still hopeful of being gripped and swung by the Swami's strong arm.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Low-flying crows. What are they up to? I'm in the shed. My inner fog cleared and so did the sky. Now it's quiet out here past the blackberry bushes on the wet-trodden grass. Only the wind is making noise, and this scratching pen. I'm not a machine, but a person, a man, saved for Krishna "yet I struggle to give myself to Him. Perhaps I am Tu Fu's gull hanging between heaven and earth. The poets (Keats, Dickinson) live a life of allegory and offer themselves up in the transformation of daily-ness into art. If I could find that vision in Krishna consciousness . . . regardless, I write.

* * *

Welcome to the reality of Ireland

2

The shed man has his own
version of Irish reality "
Rain and puddles, a twenty-minute
walk, he's always talking of
his aching head, his little life
of riley ""What a revoltin' predicament!"

* * *

Since I started . . .
Don't blame it on *that*.
Since I came to this world
I have never stopped spinning,
accumulating karma, it
spins off me when I write.

* * *

My ISKCON memories "I am
sorry I made so many mistakes. Still,
leftover temple president, the
story of me on the GBC another
chapter I'll tell sometime, but prefer
to speak of poet's surprises and
lovelier things
of the master or God.

* * *

For me it's *idam hi pumsas*.
I've already got my orders in a

#12 envelope from Gurudeva:
Serve onboard the
ISKCON rear Dept., check in
yearly with *sannyasa* ministry
and write required papers.
The good things I'd write
would be censorable but
when we die . . .
It's more important to be Krishna conscious
than right, beautiful,
metric, nonmetric, anything
else.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

I did everything in the shed except read scripture, but I wanted to do that too. Hear Krishna say, "If you surrender to Me, then at the time of death you can come to Me." Srila Prabhupada said it too. Don't think this one life is all-in-all. Don't be a *mudha*. Vaisnavas surrender to Krishna. Krishna says work for Me. You can't be a devotee unless you serve another pure devotee. Have a spiritual master.

I have the best. I won't be pushed away. I won't punish myself either. I did read twice today in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. More will come. Krishna will give us a chance, maybe at midnight. Prahlada in the hands of physically powerful adult demons. Although he's only five years old, he's fearless. No myth. A true boy, lived long ago. My head can't figure it all out, even though these are modern times and I'm supposed to be able to. The sky is controlled by God, I know that.

* * *

Driving Through France (Along The Bonne route)

& All these years a creative life is best. The wailing man has the same thing to say. Is it different with age?

Anyway, I say Krishna is going to tell the truth of the situation. Each person goes his own way. You have to see it for yourself. No tight units. Just each person trying to interact. We call it "the binding force" that holds the team together, but are they really together?

That has to be understood.

One after another

my master taught us

HiranyakaSipu means soft bed

and cushions and gold

Hisson was a devotee of the Lord. The son

was a devotee and Krishna consciousness is like that "some guy against a demon.

With our senses, *maya* (get this) is like the beautiful woman in the store window (or the well-dressed male mannequin)

or like a mirage in a desert. "Try to understand what is *maya*," he said. I heard it in the bathroom, listening while drying off. His words settle in. *Maya* is "what is not." We live for eternal soul what we cannot see or touch until we are purified. This is going over the same material we still didn't know.

* * *

Sir, autumn has arrived, that season of changing colors, thinning out, dropping leaves and chestnuts, and the sky in the puddles telling of cold weather to come "but not yet. Is that illusion "that we don't yet feel cold?

Christmas sales,

Oh, go to church I mean temple. He said "he said, I want to be a good fellow.

At the tollbooth: "*Merci. Au revoir.*"

In France, all I know is the highway and this guy came along.

He is the good-looking career-in-ISKCON fighter

words, demons "the difficulty is they don't want to fall into any pattern for too long and that's understandable. And good too "don't keep it for long.

The serious devotees were humble and pious, the prof observer said.

My mind a basketball and full of right sounds

if I go with it

the baseball bat

the crash of a popular drum *as in*

jazz but no longer that "

cascading piano

is not the old thing

it used to be

that's in the mine-ford

ending the time of France, Monsieur Allard "

one after another

mots de plus and

fresh bread."

* * *

October 11, 12:10 a.m.

I dreamt of being held in prisons, one after another, because I was a devotee. Now I read how Prahlada Maharaja's teachers rebuked and threatened him in various ways.

The mind can be the friend or enemy. In his song, "*Bhajahu re Mana*," Govinda dasa prays that his mind take shelter of Sri Nandanandana and give up the pursuit of material happiness.

No one is interested in the path of liberation, and *bhagavata-bhakti* is about that. People are after religion for sense gratification, or they skip religion and go to *artha* and *kama*.

For the second time in the narration, HiranyakaSipu takes his son onto his lap and asks him about what he has learned.

* * *

Pause in the reading and writing. Is there something else? You're a bit tired? You have only been at this for ten minutes so far. What else do you want?

I want to save my energy for a good sixteen rounds. I want to save my energy for prayer. I'd like to learn more about prayer, more about chanting, more about writing, but in the meantime, I tend to sigh and look for relief. My life right now is dedicated to tracing myself throughout the day. For example, life in autumn is sweet and perceivable on this land. You can see wet leaves on the ground. Leaves turn color, but the grass remains ever green. Showers are frequent. Fewer pleasure boats on the lake. My headache syndrome prevents me from a full day of reading and writing. As usual.

Anyway, this restless mind (spirit) doesn't want to analyze it all right now. Better I turn to *japa*. I can't think of another activity so suitable for these earliest hours.

The art of prayer "all the time turning to Krishna. He's sending religion (to the materialistic), but Prahlada is talking about devotional service for the pleasure of Krishna. Body, mind, words offered to Visnu. He surrenders to the Supreme Lord and then "uses his body, mind and words for the service of Krishna as Krishna desires." (*Bhag. 7.5.24*, purport)

These fine understandings and little perpetual debates as to how to actually serve Krishna "what is ideal? What is actually possible for me? What level enables me to serve strongly and combat *maya* for a long time (like the crocodile fighting in the water)? I have to discern it for myself, but the principle is "one should act for the satisfaction of Lord Visnu, not for the satisfaction of his own senses."

* * *

Welcome to the reality of Ireland

3

You can't write because you aren't
dipped deep recently into
Sastra, Krishna-katha,
you're admitting too much and
indulging in other things.

* * *

Anything you write will come out
flaky and the girls who write
poems and the men who read
them won't "like it.

They just want (I say) doctrine
from beginning to middle to end,
whereas I want *ars poetica*.

You're kidding yourself, conning
the readers, and the bottom of this
page is coming up fast like death.

A poet who lives thinking of Krishna
dies thinking of Krishna and
doesn't worry about the phase of the moon.

* * *

5:10 a.m.

Some people may come to the island on Sunday to hear me speak. I'm sure my talk will be straight. You can't get angry or cry or wear red or blue or pass air or belch or praise someone in front of the Deities. You should not sit with your hands grasping your ankles. Many things are considered offensive, but we can praise the pure devotee.

Not me "I mean, I shouldn't be praised. My bag of skin, pus, marrow, chile, and so on. They didn't know what chile was when we phoned the hospital. They were out for coffee before the next operation. No time to waste.

Time is money. Where is the emergency ward to stop the war, to keep the economy up, to assert our politics, to reconnoiter and take stock? We have our ideas and policies, he knows.

The little Krishna consciousness movement is moving along too in its own way. The reporters don't have to come down heavy on it because it is inconsequential. Otherwise, if a Krishna conscious person wanted to be world president, they might take a different stance. They would make sure everyone knew how crazy it would be to vote for a man wearing a *dhoti* and *Sikha*, or who consorts with those who do, or who dresses in the latest business suit but when pressed says he believes Krishna is God, a person, and that He is the father of Christ.

Al Zolyna's poem of him on the bus leaving Jaipur and seeing a naked beggar or *sadhu* lying on his back.

Just give us one more page on the radar screen, that www.forgoodies.com. You pay for it with Visa. It's only a hundred dollars a throw.

But we don't have the money. We are flying economy. We don't want people collecting, using my name or birthday as an excuse, although that's the professional way to raise money.

This man needs to lie down. The yellow daisies dying fast. Daylight savings time gone,

gone.

I'll have to wait a long time for another spring,
if I live that long in my sneakers.

The temple president is wearing white "the saffron president is gone.

The curtains are closed.

Don't exert yourself.

* * *

5:55 a.m.

I dreamt I was giving a lecture. Told the audience how we used to lecture in college classrooms, ask for questions, and tell . . . Then I felt that wasn't the right thing to say. Woke up.

No bicycle or chain.

Fortunately no rowdies or loud music
or physical pain right now.

One more letter left to answer to a friendly Godbrother who has gone to India for Karttika. Maybe tell him I've been left behind in the West with my Western mindset, and that I am learning to write poetry by writing it. I'll tell him that yes, India-going is good, but any peaceful place is good.

Count down the days of this plentiful stay, almost two months in Ireland at Inis rath "it's good. I like it. Even if I get headaches, I'll get good time in. Be patient, and each day do some.

Why am I fascinated to read of Dickinson's transforming power (of domestic into visions of private spirituality, revolutionizing words into new usages, etc.)? Because I want to do that type of thing in my own writing. I don't want to be blasphemous with Krishna consciousness or to create my own religion, but I seem to want to push as far as I can "to discover "myself, and yet be a true Krishna conscious person. I'll fail if I express myself, but I'm not a truly sincere devotee. It's a risk. Keep pushing "find new (to me, and maybe to the contemporary ISKCON world) ways to see and say Krishna consciousness.

"They shut me up in prose" "the jargon of ISKCON, the language of the purport/ *sampradaya* "and I can go through it and say the same thing in my own way, thus refreshing fellow devotees who want freedom. We can be free without leaving ISKCON. Although some may judge, "He essentially *did* leave ISKCON." I hope not. Didn't leave Srila Prabhupada and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

* * *

They Wail

& Wail the city beat. I'm happy and simple "I see a green and rainy world in Ireland. The cats of city and big time can put me down, literary critics too "boo, boo in dreams I see all these things.

There's no wailing on us. We're devotees. Gone to Karttika. Formal talks. The car is waiting.

I imagine in a meadow being smiled at condescendingly, or frowned at and *laughed* at.

I would like to be admired. That's it. "He's a deep devotee, a special sage to tell us what to do. He's hip, but

also he's *tres simple* and pure and humble and knows the scriptures."

All alone, all alone

the luscious talent any man or woman is given ought to be used in His service. *Idam hi pumsams*.

* * *

If I were in a band, I'd play Krishna.

M. said he was playing accordion and looked at a picture of Krishna-Balarama. Balarama looked off as if He wasn't interested, but Krishna smiled at him.

Maybe in the spiritual world they have accordions. I know they have music "lute, Victrola, lute especially.

And maybe boys beat drums
playbugles, buffalo horns

Straighten out that your music is not for Siva or self or hell, and you'd make a big mistake to follow musicians to hell."

* * *

8:32 a.m.

"Hearing from the text of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is considered the most important process of hearing." (*Bhag.* 7.5.24, purport) Chant the holy name; it's especially powerful in this age. There is no other way. "Therefore, even if one is able to perform other processes of devotional service, one must adopt the chanting of the holy name as the principal method of advancing in spiritual life."

I'll go out now in the rain and chant there too. Hear *hari-nama* whatever else you do. Don't expect it to overwhelm you, but always try to give your heart and attention to the Hare Krishna mantra. I've written on this often, on "the good old struggle," and maybe now I'm less intense than before. O holy name, you play it by rote. I'll not stop. Every day.

* * *

9:00 a.m.

Walked in full rain gear. It's pleasant enough out. The big event was to stop and scrutinize the ground under the chestnut tree. The trunk was padded with wet, tan leaves. Below it, I found quite a few of them, either naked and shiny or in their covers. Today I brought a book bag out with me and stashed them in there so I didn't have to sully my beadbag and sweatshirt pockets with mud. I was afraid I might be stealing food from birds and squirrels, but I think they get enough other things and can't count on one or two chestnut trees on Geaglum for their sustenance. Of course, what am I going to do with them? Just keep them idly like a miser, you might say. Look at their beauty through the winter either in a jar or in my hands.

Then I saw a gray hare coming my way. He saw me and changed directions.

As I was walking toward the outer edge of the property, a car approached. It was coming fast and I stepped as far to the left as I could. Then it slowed. Gobhatta was driving. We made quick *pranamas* and he continued, bouncing through the puddles.

The woods path still has enough of a leafy overhead that it serves like an umbrella and you hear it pattering or you walk in its tunnel over the dirt path littered with leaves. A wet rug. I did not abandon the chanting of the holy names even while I bent over to search the ground. O holy name . . . please don't leave me.

* * *

9:42 a.m.

"Even if you are a severe offender in many ways, you are freed if you take shelter of the Lord's holy name." (*Bhag.* 7.5.24, purport) Don't make offenses to the names. If you do commit some of the ten offenses, the remedy is to chant constantly."

From a list of offenses: ". . . to disrespect within one's heart the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* while externally, falsely accepting its principles."

* * *

11:53 a.m.

"Unfortunately, we have to put ourselves out . . ." I hear M. saying on the phone as I exit from the bathroom. I'm freshly shaved and tomorrow is EkadaSi. I memorize verses each day for five minutes to stay in the brook, the rill. *Manusyanam sahasresu* . . . all of the "*Siksastakam*," etc., so that I'll be closer to God and not a skeptic who doesn't believe *sastra*. They say Emily was like that, and she was suppressed by mid-Victorian codes for women which denied them physical delights. She couldn't swallow Christianity and the Bible, the harsh sermons she had heard, the talk *about* God. She wanted direct life and found it in her attic through the words she forged into poems . . . Wayward nun of her own religion.

Fun it is to be sward boss. He gets to talk words straight out of his gut unconscious. He's no skeptic, but fits his words to a *sannyasi's* meaning. He also wears blue rain pants in a downpour and stops to pick up chestnuts, neither delighting nor denying his body. It all culminates in making an offering to Krishna, then resting alone in bed amid the tumbling words.

He is not sure if it's fitting.

A Godbrother said he is going on an extended pilgrimage to Badarika, then to an Ayurvedic clinic, then to Ekacakra, then to Vrndavana for Karttika. I'm not going anywhere. I'm on the old sod (this particular patch of it owned by ISKCON). Life can be sad or just ordinary when no one is dying. Death is possible, however, and comes even to babies. We attend the funerals, and remember how easy or difficult our way has been.

O soul in the body.

Srila Prabhupada lectured, heavily amplified, before the Caracas boys and girls ready to be initiated. He told them that the soul is higher than the mind and intellect. He'd been talking with psychiatrists, who were unfavorable. He said, "I told them the remedy for the world's ills is to develop spiritual life." Who wants to hear that nowadays?

He said there are four regulative principles to follow for those who wish to avoid sin. Spiritual life has been made easy through the chanting. This is the real life within the body. Make the iron red-hot.

Rain sprinkles itself against the pane in thousands of drops. The blades of grass and the strait's wavelets number in the millions. The square inches of sky and clouds are uncountable. My life duration is measured as less than any of these. Even the millions of years of Brahma's life is nothing compared to eternity.

Without being attached to this life, we should leave something for others in order to help them on their own trails. People express themselves, and our contribution can be as simple as a moment of recognized experience and an honest statement of faith. This life

is not easy. Someone might say, "I have tried, but my mind is impossible to control, and to be honest, I don't always like to live with the devotees in this movement. They put trips on me." Yes, shared experience: "I know about that. Still, I have decided it is better to stay with the devotees than to live with the ignorance of the nondevotees." That's how we can help. We enter deeply into *sastra*, but not like those who simply memorize all the details before spewing them out again without tenderness or human concern. That's too chilling. We are meant to become pure by becoming free of false ego. May such a preacher also find God.

* * *

12:17 p.m.

Hereswith. Preempt. No time
between now and bread
to write a poem or
hear a tome, sing
and write on that.

So, a brief report will do:

Mervy ate tomatoes. His brother was a scholar. His sister wore her hair long and black, and the penny dropped for her when, after attending the Hare Krishna lecture, a book distributor met her and said, "You don't seem serious about Krishna consciousness." She decided to get serious "now chants eight rounds a day.

Then a family reunion. Stories until death scattered like marbles. Bring in the scholars to figure it out objectively, to assess the heart and art. Lightweight? Will it last fifty years? Throw it in the garbage? No, he's got disciples, see? And even if they don't understand, they take it that it's for them. A few really do like it, too.

Dates fixed now for Baltimore: come one and all through ice and snow to hear a monk's mood.

Snow will be there.

Karttika in the West means being in Ireland in a Western mindset, looking for Vrndavana in essence.

* * *

3:23 p.m.

We'll be reading Cc. *Madhya* 7 tomorrow, where I left off when I was here a month and a half ago. Lord Caitanya is a real person, and supreme. He indirectly tells the devotees how much He appreciates their loving dealings with Him, but He does it by criticizing them. I'll be glad to play the role of lecturer once a week. I'll speak every sentence in *parampara*.

Here Lord Caitanya is concerned with the etiquette of right behavior. I sometimes need to be released from the stricture of it. I want to find more and give more and reveal myself more than how I appear in outward behavior, because the strict, ideal image of the spiritual master-*sannyasi* isn't the *only* truth. Not that there is necessarily a wide divergence between a *sannyasi's* inner and outer life, so much so that he has to break his commitments to satisfy his heart. No, I'm not talking about that, but about not living a lie

in the name of image. By examining the real life, we can come closer to making the real life ideal. For example, if we understand ourselves as we are instead of who we think we are, we won't continuously take on duties which we cannot maintain. Then whatever duties we do accept we won't abandon. We will be able to struggle to maintain the standard, even if we do occasionally slip in consciousness. I find this to be an interesting topic and dynamic.

Thus if a *sannyasi* allows some disclosure of a truth that strikes others as less than ideal, and that helps others to face their own pretense, whatever it is, then that honesty can lead everyone forward to a purer state and a stricter following.

O Billy Boy,

I won't tell them

everything,

at least not right now. (It might

come out later.) I have nothing major to hide, though, nothing that would be called cheating. Just a private life.

Emily, they said, was lonely and read writers for companionship. I also use writers and remembrances of music to springboard (and that was something from my private life).

* * *

4:25 p.m.

Hypnotic Srila Prabhupada chanting Hare Krishna and *ceto darpana*. The words float onto the drawing paper, but no great shakes. Cc. lecture will go on tomorrow as long as I don't get a headache. I'll try to preserve myself. Within herself, Emily realized the truths. But no, she wasn't under the *parampara* as far as we're concerned. Life is not about concocting your own theology, but yes, you may develop your own realization of it. One devotee thought he could do anything. Not true. He got caught. No one should do something they'd get punished for, but it's good to take a chance to do something nice for Krishna. release the frozen and the dull (half-dead) nature of being a follower. Follow but . . .

no buts, he says.

* * *

Welcome to the reality of Ireland

4

Night soon "raining all day.

M. looks out the window.

He says, "A poor soul is rowing across,
standing up in the boat with
one short oar, like a spoon."

* * *

That's Inis rath.

They don't have money
or men, but it's quiet,
going on somehow "and that's
the wonder: Radha and Krishna
are cared for.

* * *

Over here the chimney pours out
smoke for the first time this season.
I ran through memorized verses
tad vijnanartham . . .
yasya deve . . .
yasmin vijnate . . .

* * *

Row across to Govinda-dvipa.
Gray all-clouds
Clock ticks slowly. Krishna
gave us peace
to use
in His service.

* * *

Off Minor

& This walk I take with Thee

you are my Nellie, my object of scholarship. I mean You, God. You, my minor and
major, my tenor sax solo. When I stand to blow my piece, it's You who's on my mind,
trippingly . . .

You're the joy, the sadness and the pain, but You're not to blame. I made myself this
way,
toothless.

A squeak of joy always on my lips. Blow it pure as prayer.

Wet leaves on S.I. on a Saturday morning after being on the town the night before.

Joy for being alive and following along with
him along the line,

waking all centers and saying we attest,

"God is good, all

good even to His enemies."

Tunes come spontaneously (a long, slow word off the cuff),"

and now the holy names to utter.

Oh there will be other gurus and that's fine, but

there will never be another swami like mine.

His celebration is mine . . . O God in the heart of all "

his way to sing.
Play in the melody you're given "
cascade down the keys while ladies, gray hair combed and looking earnest, and bears
patter secretly on four feet through woods, dumb and vicious, but they too . . .
And I am alone with Thee.
I know so little
although soul in heart "
sastra is my lawbook and
I scratch this music to charm them.
What can I say? I am too earnest, like a well-practiced bass player, strong arm and
fingers gripping for emotion.

* * *

Oh, mind, take cue "
spontaneous and
off minor, take us home to celebrate. "

October 12, 12:07 a.m.

"If one simply continues to think that he is an eternal servant of Krishna, even without performing any other process of devotional service, he can perform all nine processes of devotional service." (*Bhag. 7.5.24*, purport) We keep wanting to test the authenticity of Krishna consciousness. Is it because we feel a shortcoming in the genuineness? It *should* be real, but is *anything* real?

I feel my awakeness, my bodily existence as if they are real. Similarly, I feel Krishna's existence. Thus Srila Prabhupada states that if Krishna were a myth, why would serious sages like Vyasa and others waste their time writing commentaries on Him? Krishna is our friend. If we truly activate the sources of contact, ask to be with Him as we chant and read and worship, and make Him the center of any relationship we pursue with those practicing devotional service, we will know what is real.

"Friendship is better than servitude . . . When a devotee is pure in heart, the opulence of his worship of the Deity diminishes as spontaneous love for the Personality of Godhead is manifested."

HiranyakaSipu was angry to hear devotional service described by his son. That's another reality: when we express ourselves in Krishna consciousness, the demons and nondevotees become angry. This can make the devotee even more dependent on the Lord.

HiranyakaSipu at first blames Prahlada's teachers. He mentions that *rogah pata kinman*, "Diseases are manifest in those who are sinful." Srila Prabhupada says disease "is the most sinful and miserable of the conditions of material life . . . (*janma kama mrtyu jara vyadhi*) . . . The *smrti sastras* say . . . drunkards become toothless." (*Bhag. 7.5.27*, purport)

* * *

Don't insult us, say the teachers. Well, it's good to be up in the morning, toothless sinner. You're doing the right thing. Your pens are flowing and scratching and your brain is working. It seems right now that my death is not as immediately important as to live in Krishna consciousness. At least practice it. Don't give it up.

Prepare yourself to give the best class possible by bringing out the points in the *sastra*. Once a week, I go over in the boat and lecture. Sinful I was, and one should remember that. But then . . .

Krishna, Krishna,

my mind reels off like a dizzy man. Where *are* we? What was I saying? What shall I do now?

You were saying that *atma-nivedanam* is to give all and that you wanted to feel your own connection with Krishna as authentic. But you can't demand. Take in Krishna consciousness through the available sources. Be alert to it.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

An ant no bigger than the full stop on the typewriter. Don't disturb him. He's catching the rays from the desk lamp. He's so delicate he's liable to run into something that will crush him, such as my swiping hand, eventually. Now the truth is, Mert complains about his Abbot in his personal diary. It must have brought him relief. To read it now "does it feed my own discontent toward ISKCON's authorities? The structure "he saw much of it as politics. Here is one excerpt:

The O.C.S.O. has become a big, pompous, self-righteous autocratic body of monastic politicians, very conscious of its prestige and ready to exploit that prestige to the limit. The Order has begun to rate, and wants to. Yet there are some good tendencies in the new generation in Europe . . . not all in the direction of pomposity and self-importance, but of monastic spirituality.

When an article he had written was censored, Merton wrote about it in his diary:

The decision means little to me one way or the other, and I can accept it without difficulty. Less easy the stuffy authoritarianism of Dom Gabriel, who cannot help being an autocrat, even while multiplying protestations of love. I rebel as being treated as "property," as an "instrument," and as a "thing" by the Superiors of this Order. He definitely insists that I think as he thinks, for to think with him is to "think with the Church." To many this would seem quite obvious. Is it not the formula they follow in Moscow?

"*Journal of Thomas Merton*, Vol. 4, pp. 64 - 5

A little later he admits, "All of us are wrong in one way or another. . . . The truth is similar outside and above the spider's web that they have woven "with 'the best of intentions.' Why get caught in it?"

* * *

This morning I heard Srila Prabhupada say that the material energy comes from Krishna. I knew what example he'd give. He said, "As far as I am concerned, I think like this. I can perspire water to the amount of an ounce. So the body of God is inconceivable. I am also inconceivable. (And He can produce vast oceans from His body.)"

Syamananda is coming over to make me an EkadaSi breakfast. Then I'll meet with M. and take rest. I'll hope to be up for the Cc. reading.

The spiritual master should not be the recipient of advice or correction from his disciples or those who are not his disciples. One Godbrother is constantly correcting me for criticizing a Gaudiya Math *sannyasi* in the *Lilamrta*. I ride with it. I'm not attached to the particular passages he has said are offensive. Still, I know that ISKCON will never accept his version of that *sannyasi*.

I can write or read *sastra* and take it from there. I can also use my imagination and go over the rainbow to some little town. There, a village elder sits under the lamplight and plays the violin. Another plays the accordion. I think I saw them as we passed through that village on a dusty afternoon in the van. The flower pots were out and the altars dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. I think it was in early summer because May is her month. Yawn and sigh and be grateful I'm not a commuter. At least I have finished answering my mail.

This day goes down in history and slides off the plate.

You can say
things to yourself and
to your mind,
and if you practice it
for decades . . .

Will it help you at the time of death?

Deprived of love, recognition, and religious faith, he said of Emily, she learned to turn her deprivation into something wonderful through her poetry. Her poems speak of renunciation as an improvement over trying to satisfy the appetite, solitude, and work. Overcoming mundane reality.

And if you're too tired to roll over? The fire will burn you on one side or the other.

The fireman comes through the village driving a red truck. He swings the rig by manfully turning the steering wheel. The truck responds and the man in the back steers the rear so that it careens quickly around like a moving tower "a precarious moment. Only a true driver could handle it. It was a spectacle in a little village like Great Kills. And who was the driver? You guessed it: my dad. At home he smoked a pipe or cigar and sat in a green chair under a lamp to read the newspaper when we weren't in the TV room "our nuclear family. The problem was, we had no fallout shelter for when the bomb hit. We did have a dog. We lived in a museum case of *maya*. I found an escape hatch in my attic room where I could ascend to the sky or sink into the depths alone. Then Krishna delivered me. I live this story again and again. I'm sorry I am so slow. My new family gathers for *mangala-arati* and this is life's express lane.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

I want to speak more about improvisation, since this book has so much of it. The fact is, we need to learn to speak Krishna consciousness in a way that will interest others. We continuously repeat the same things from *sastra*, and it can become mechanical. We don't even have to think about what we are saying anymore. We don't even have to think about whether or not we believe what we are saying. We just *perform*. We form an argument, analyze the counter-argument, choose appropriate verses to support our side, feel a smattering of compassion for those who won't agree with us, and call it preaching. But we might not even be there in the expression!

Maybe that's not bad. Some people think it's fine. They think we're not *supposed* to worry about how we feel or how consciously involved we are in what we are saying. But I can't help caring about that. I want to break through, so I improvise. Free-writing has taught me the power the unconscious has to break through rhetoric and stereotype. And jazz as an image may not be holy, but it helps me to focus on sound, and on Krishna.

I like to think of music while I write, because it helps me catch the train of thought as it comes through the mind. I feel words from the periphery, from my reading, my memories, my point of view "feel catharsis, reflection, sensory perception "and find that I do believe in God and in the purpose of life.

I also find that I don't want to live apart from my master's mission. I feel my gratitude to him too strongly. Still, I have to reaffirm that conviction regularly. I want to feel it all the time, even when that sounds like too much work. I want to remain alive in my human application of Krishna consciousness and to feel my sense of love.

So I improvise and keep going for it. That's how I try to be Krishna conscious. I'm not ranging outside Krishna consciousness looking for Krishna. rather, I'm trying to find myself within it. If I am sincere, and I express myself, my writing will help others automatically and Prabhupada will be pleased. I care about that.

I say all this with confidence, but I can assure you that it's a confidence sometimes difficult to maintain. The fact is, I am different than Prabhupada. I do some things differently than he did. I write differently, express myself differently, lecture differently. Still, I trust his compassion. As he innovated to carry his spiritual master's message to the West, I innovate to touch my own heart and the hearts of others. I have changed so much since I came to him, but not in my essential obedience to him, not in my love.

So, dear reader, please understand, although it's so hard to understand another person. One says "black," and the other hears "white." But improvisation is something dear to me, or creative expression, and it can be used in Krishna consciousness. It has a private meaning, and because of my nature and age, is dignified, inward, yet capable of sharing with others who are sympathetic.

* * *

10:17 a.m.

Lecture went well, but I thought it would have provoked better discussion. The questions were good, I guess, but things just don't last. You are heard for a while, then people have to get back to their schedules.

Me too. returning to Geaglum in brilliant morning sunlight and clear, cool air. Tilaka is barking wildly at birds in the trees, but they ignore him or fly off casually.

Now back. Mail has arrived, including some books sent unsolicited. One book on writing seemed particularly useless since it taught beginners how to embark on a career as a fiction writer. One chapter was called "The Shitty First Draft." I'm not in the mood for more Kierkegaard or Archbishop Ramsey on Christian prayer. Back to this desk and its emptiness.

Chase those birds, Tilaka, but you'll never catch them. Two jars full of chestnuts on the windowsill and the lake water is blue. It's almost 10:30 and too late to start anything. Maybe time for a poem.

* * *

Welcome to the reality of Ireland

5

I walked to the quay, joking
and light like the October sunshine.
The boat wobbled and splashed,
but had good oars and it was Arjuna who
Rowed us across.

* * *

I entered the room surprised at how
many were waiting.
Some quick obeisances to
Radha-Govinda, no time for
devotion in front of the crowd.
Hurried into the lecture.

* * *

Lord Caitanya loves His devotees
but follows the etiquette.
"This is rich," I said, "how He
offers indirect praise through criticism,
says He doesn't want their attempts to
offer Him comfort. He is alone, a
sannyasi."

* * *

At the end I paused, but
didn't say: "I am not just a reciter
of the Absolute. I am a
person and *I give that in my books*."

I said it later in the cloakroom only to
Manu. Then my garland
broke into dozens of pieces
and I came back to myself "
no one knows.

* * *

2:51 p.m.

Shed. *Matir na krsne* . . . Materialistic people cannot understand Krishna. If they approach *Bhagavad-gita*, it is to adjust themselves or their concepts materially. Pahlada was sarcastic in response to HiranyakaSipu's demand, "Where did you get this knowledge of devotion to Visnu?"

"You can't know, father, because you are chewing the chewed and you don't serve a pure devotee." *Na te vidhu svarta gatim hi visnum*: those who follow blind leaders don't know that "the goal of life is to return home, back to Godhead, and engage in the service of Lord Visnu." (*Bhag.* 7.5.31) Sukracarya was such a blind leader. He couldn't understand the existence of the spiritual world beyond the material universe. I have higher knowledge simply because I have accepted the *parampara*. It's that simple.

Naisam ma tistavat: we must take shelter of a pure devotee if we want to become attached to Krishna's lotus feet. Sophisticated persons fail to take to Krishna consciousness because they refuse to accept a bona fide guru and the *Vedas*.

The demon father, upon hearing this instruction from his son, became enraged and ordered that Pahlada be killed. His servants struck Pahlada with their tridents while he silently meditated on the Supreme Lord. Srila Prabhupada mentions that demons attempt to kill the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but they are unable. "We cannot understand Him to be in a particular place, for He is all-pervasive." (*Bhag.* 7.5.42, purport) The Lord knows how to deal with them. Oh, do finish them off, Krishna. Give us full shelter at Your feet.

The demons were foiled in their attempt to kill Pahlada. This caused HiranyakaSipu great anxiety. Then the two teachers attempted to solace the king. They took Pahlada back to the school for further instruction.

* * *

City Living

& Hectic is city living, but I'm on
a farm. Listen,
he's fast and
I'm slow.

He's an intellectual "worked hard to get out.

In temple, raise your hand: "I'm not going too fast, am I?"

Yes, I said,

I tell him more until he understands it's what he heard a guy on the street say who
gave him a book
he didn't take. "

* * *

What reason

& They say they don't know "they're of the school
of Don't Know.

Or they believe in God.

But Krishna consciousness is
so universal-specific it could

Ruin your friendships, get you kicked out
of the club.

Then you have to join the worldwide web of 50,000 who were willing to buy books,
go

to a temple,

and say, "Yes, Krishna consciousness is good." India
has millions.

* * *

But if you don't want one, all right, I'll

just sashay down the stairs

with you and

if you don't want that,

I'll still be yours

if only in hopes

that you'll chant Hare Krishna

and get into *that* groove, that rap

this *sampradaya*.

That's what I was trying to tell them

in class this morning, but it

wouldn't come out and here it is

this late Sunday afternoon

while I sit alone, playing

the piano for love

of God with

my shaven-headed muse. "

* * *

4:12 p.m.

Someone asked, "How should we feel when we are called a fool by the spiritual
master?"

We feel okay because we trust him. We admire him so much that *any* intimate
association with him is nice. And we understand the instruction, or at least that he is
trying to instruct us. We don't consider that he has lost his temper due to passion or
ignorance. Anyway, aren't we fools? What's the pain of a little truth?

Intrigued, people think that artists and preachers create on the spot. They don't know that an entire lifetime goes into each piece.

* * *

Shed Poem

Poem of night and fright "
I'm not tired so out to work.
Wayne Shorter a name of
someone who blows hard on
his sax.

* * *

Again this day has broad
stripes of sundown and
again Krishna is the sum total
but a Person unto Himself.

October 13, 12:07 a.m.

Prahlada Maharaja's materialistic teachers tried to instruct him in the occupational duties of a *grhamedhi*. The real *dharma* of every soul is that demanded by Lord Krishna when He says *sarva dharman parityajya*.

Prahlada didn't like such instructions; he was interested in a spiritual education. During the tiffin hour, when the boys came to Prahlada to play, he smiled and taught them about the life of eternity, bliss, and knowledge. Devotees are compassionate and "preach the gospel of *Bhagavad-gita* all over the world."

Now *gurukula* is mentioned. I am saddened to think how the ISKCON *gurukulas* have failed. There are many viewpoints and existing models now of parents raising their children in Krishna consciousness, and many opt for available nondevotee schools because we have nothing else to offer.

Regardless of what we have available as a movement, it is essential that our children receive Krishna consciousness from the earliest age. This puts the weight of such education on the families as much as we have placed it on the schools. Our children will be lucky if they retain favorable impressions of Krishna conscious life given to them by loving parents.

In his purports to this section, Srila Prabhupada prescribes what *should* be done in childhood. Some devotees are frustrated to hear all the shoulds. They say we have failed whenever we have attempted to enforce the shoulds. They say we should be real.

Most parents and others agree that the shoulds cannot simply be abolished. They are the eternal injunctions of the Supreme Lord. rather, we need to figure out how to live them realistically, considering time, place, and persons. Then the shoulds will stand a chance of becoming actualities and a happy part of a Krishna life. Certainly for Prahlada Maharaja, his instructions were items of actual blissful life.

I am referring to *bhagavata-dharma*. Devotional service is natural because we have an eternal relationship with Lord Visnu. I remember how appealing this sounded to me when I first heard Srila Prabhupada present it. He said Krishna consciousness is not an artificial imposition on the mind. rather, it is the eternal energy of the living being. It simply has to be uncovered by the cleansing process of Krishna consciousness. It is a revival of an always existing relationship with God. Human life is the opportunity to awaken it. That, therefore, is the goal of education.

Sounds good. It *is* good. But how to achieve it?

* * *

Just looked at the prologue to Michael Ramsey's *Be Still and Know*. He argues that prayer is not an act of petition separate from life, and "we learn from a contemplative such as Thomas Merton that the movement of the soul away from the world into the life of God is a movement also into the world's heart." This is an important principle for me in my own choice to live apart from ISKCON's front-line activities. I contend that I am contributing to the preaching and helping to uplift fallen souls, even though I seem to have removed myself from that effort. I care for the world and want to be part of it, but in a way that makes sense in my own personal Krishna consciousness. Krishna consciousness doesn't require cutting ourselves off from the world to enter solitude, but it does require we find our humanness in our surrender to Krishna.

* * *

Straight And Chaste

(Go with it. Your holy purpose.)

* * *

& 1950s, '60s "then you got your way
you went in and out (of USN) "a free pass.
I mean, Elvis dropped off.
You don't have to explain
out of your power, but through fluid Krishna consciousness I imbibed so long ago "
then Hayagriva died, another brother grew fat, another went to jail, and another
bashed *sannyasis*
and me pristine, pressing the strings on a *tamboura* as if it were a guitar. He said
(ravindra the first), "Maybe you're the one."
Ha!
As if I'm the best.
At least I'm surviving
by God's grace.
on the clothesline
the clothes overhead "it's mystic in an instant
and I'm ready to talk on a moment's notice. This
is cool, he said, real cool,

and me thwarted and in the tower guest room in Spain
we all ISKCON transients die and take *tulasi* and Ganges and say good-bye, see you
in the spiritual world.

We're not sure but if that's true, that's important. You have to actually be a spirit
servant of God and enter His reality with cowherd boys.

That man phoned "Trane who said
"Man, I can't get no sleep."

"No, please don't cut me off. I play sax like you and I believe in God, I believe there's
a purpose to life." There's no faster man and wailer.

But God then must outwail all
because *it* comes from Him "
pearl buttons press and blow.

* * *

In the field the cows "
thousands of dollars of
fencing. Bombing planned by demon government heads, and military big hats tell
their men, "Drop it on Baghdad where the maniacs live."

Take a turn, my Lord
sweet and hard and all.

Krishna consciousness is the way we're going to get out of this "no other path. *Bhakti*.

* * *

Okay, give us the real stuff, *Krishna-katha*,
The *sadhu* sitting in the sunken garden at Yama-tota in Puri "but
white guys
had to leave.

The Hindus said.

Mosquito-bitten, I retreated and said,

"To heck with them. I'll speak American into my dictaphone. I know what they don't
and they

know what I
don't.

I said I'd stick with ISKCON
that accommodates Americans.

Hari-katha?

Lord Caitanya came here once. He entered the ocean and went to Konark, where a
fisherman caught Him. Internally He was with the *gopis*.

He stood on shore and watched their play "
intimate, straight, not watered down "

Krishna consciousness from the hip
of a GBC manager

of the *Gita*

of my lip "the mantra and

a good spiritual look straight from guru
until fade out."

* * *

3:25 a.m.

Jesus prayed to God the Father and derived much of his strength in that way at critical times in his ministry. His inner life indicated here and there in Gospels is significant.

Okay, here's *burfi*, here's polish for the Deity "here's two tracks in *bhakti*, *pancaratriki* and *bhagavata*.

Here's a dishrag on your head and plenty of water, inspiration, a wrist watch, two surreal pics in words: "Quiet please" (which you heard). Here's Bishop Ramsey and Ram Dodge van in Ohio, a North Dakota women's softball team "memory of Mahabuddhi "I owe love and respect "and I'm off to clean my body and mind and to hear Srila Prabhupada on tape.

* * *

6:04 a.m.

I'm telling you, mean HiranyakaSipu tried to kill his own son, but couldn't. Prahlada was dependent on the Lord and the Lord protected him. Now that's a pure devotee "he depends on Krishna and Krishna protects him. You can say that Prahlada would be great even if he had died a martyr's death. Sometimes devotees die. For example, Jatayu died, and Abhimanyu, and the devotees who fought on both sides at Kuruksetra. Bhisma died (when he wanted to). They don't always win in that sense, but they win in the sense that they think of Krishna at the end and go to Him. Prahlada was great because the Lord was drawn to protect him from dying. It's not that the demon killed Prahlada and then Nrsimhadeva took revenge. The boy saved himself by his pure dependence on Krishna. If I had tried that, I would have been killed.

I would never have tried it in the first place. My story is not deserving of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. I've just been carried along by the mercy of my spiritual master. Someone said about me, "You gave your youth and health to Srila Prabhupada." Plenty of devotees in ISKCON have done that.

* * *

I Mean You

(You're writing from a desk with a view of the lake strait, smoke rising from the boathouse chimney. Devotees get into two boats under a sparkling sun. I don't have to write on a particular theme. What does a bird sing? Life should be used to praise Lord Hari.)

& They play music

I write words

Prahlada teaches us what's

to come. We could waste our time in any variety of ways if we
put our minds to it, but

Krishna consciousness letting go is
never a loss and we search the shore
eternal gain.
Only, why didn't we do more?

* * *

Let go lament and
hold *japa* beads send words, songs of God,
to a blue-faced Deity carved in brass. Make up your mind:
where is novelty and lasting grace?
Hold onto what you want and don't complain.

* * *

Risk-taking the canon is
for me. No Civil War cannon to blow to bits a soldier's limbs,
O nurse!
Look from one book to another to find the truth of this boy
and his music, the berries
black
(why not pick your own?).

* * *

It's all to be accounted for in the end in the grip of death.
Boys! Don't waste time. Don't
waste time.
This is the soft beat we hear
by choice.

* * *

9:00 a.m.

Prahlada says material happiness comes without trying for it. We can't avoid happiness or distress. Life should be used for Krishna consciousness with the chance to get out of the cycle of birth and death. Distinguish right from wrong and avoid a life full of problems.

Daydreamer, how does this apply to you? One devotee told me that she's lonely even when the temple is filled with devotees. Relationships come and go, she says. True. I say I don't need them so much. Is that true? The I and the eye: my consciousness and the objective view.

Alone today with M. in Dublin. The mind can drift and rest, can seek what's best for it, and try to act. I need specific Krishna consciousness. I'm not in Vrndavana among those *sadhus*, residents, and ISKCON pilgrims. I'm here where I want to be though, and this book is good. I am now a recipient of Prahlada's teachings.

* * *

Welcome to the reality of Ireland

6

My Altar

Prabhupada sitting before me may
be angry if he chooses
but I see him as I choose
in a burgundy shawl
and an orange Swami hat,
Radha and Krishna nearby.

* * *

He looks up and I look down.

"No perhaps," he says,

"it must be fact."

Then fact: a little life offered by me
to your Krishna consciousness movement.

* * *

Lord Nrsimha standing astride "
can't knock *Him* over.

He will duck your dart and
deliver you a blow,
finally rip you apart.

He's covered
with silver armor and
surrounded by
a yellow and white *parijata* garland.

* * *

Jagannatha from Puri is God.

Photo of Panca-tattva
from West Bengal and NYC 1965.

Parampara gurus, Six Gosvamis
and two napkins
where the plates will go
under a hot lunch.

* * *

Sad and mild.

Waiting for some

clear thought
to better serve the Lord,
sits a peon before the altar
of Krishna worship.

* * *

2:43 p.m.

Vise in head prevented Tim from going to the shed. Instead, he had arranged for a conference of monks in his bedroom. Two showed up from Timbuktu. The subject was "Thomas Merton and the Ethics of Complaints Against One's Monastery and Order." No fistfights, no blues. White men not allowed if they think they are this body. Same for other races. This promises to be a sublime gab fest, and we recommend it to those who love interfaith gigs; others may pass it by.

You mean, he's really not well enough to go the little distance and sit in the shed where new things may occur?

Yes, it's a delicate scene.

Then better stay alive wherever you are. Cultivate late-life consciousness. Think about what you'd like to be doing as you exit from this world. Better build up an interest in that, and your tolerance. That's maturity. Can't expect things to go your way, you know. Wood knots in the floor boards "did you notice them before?"

Prabhupada is awake, and Radha-Krishna too.

Pink.

This is the diary of a lonesome critter layin' bare his soul. It is the emblem of an album by an all-star pit vocalist falling on his face.

All over the place.

Been born and passed on
not yet. Keep the
file open a little
longer.

Boxes of *hajmola* and Kleenex and pencils to use. I couldn't live long enough to use up all the "American" wood pencils I have. Or the pieces of paper. Unless I get an extension on my visa.

Moved to Oak Farms.

Where's that?

Is it possible there's a quieter place in ISKCON? I don't think so.

* * *

3:15 p.m., Shed

I made it out here without a scarf. Walked past Crystal Lotus Glass Studio, doors open, and "*Kiba jaya*" on the 1969 "Radha-Krishna Temple" album playing. I didn't look back. No doves on the roof, and I didn't even notice the goats. Saw a few blackberries.

Now that I'm in here in my little hermitage, it's time to concentrate on the Absolute. Here is my first attempt:

"A true *yogi* observes Me in all beings . . . "

Is it difficult to focus because Krishna said that so long ago and I am here now? Do I think Krishna is dead and I am alive? (Ha! He said of the many, many lives both He and I have had, He remembers all of them but I do not. *He's* alive and I'm not yet alive in the sense of spiritual awareness.)

Anyway, I admit everything.

" . . . and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees Me, the same Supreme Lord, everywhere." (Bg. 6.29)

The Lord is in every being's heart. He is not affected by living in the heart of a dog or a *brahmana*.

(This should be review, right?)

"A Krishna conscious person can see Krishna in the heart of both the believer and the nonbeliever."

That's it "a soul and the Supersoul in all beings. A devotee sees it. I have some sense of it, but fall easily back into selfishness. Still, *any* awareness is worthy, even if it's only of oneself.

I hear a bugle with the player making pseudo military calls coming from the island. Maybe it's Manu's father-in-law. Not Miles, that's for sure.

So we're servants of God. The Krishna conscious person sees Krishna everywhere. Think about that. Pray to Him. If you know how.

* * *

4:06 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada singing Hare Krishna up and down the melody with harmonium. I'm painting. I don't want it to be fake. By fake I mean imitating colors and not allowing them to come from my heart-self, my hope to create for Krishna. Whatever comes out always surprises me, even pleases, at least in terms of texture and loop and bend and the faces that appear from my serious desire to find the direct-indirect Krishna conscious message straight from the unconscious.

Bop scream

out. Don't write it,

hit it, he says. I says

decor counts

and ease and pause and Krishna words.

The eye is on me "the surveillance crew "and I want to come clean.

Wash the inks off your hands and give us a last two hours of happiness before night.

The bugle has stopped. It's getting cool in here. The *yogi* sees Krishna everywhere. Krishna, the Supreme. I look for him in my cell. In a dream. I am directed into a cell of headaches and pain where I do find the means to pray to Krishna as I never have before. It's through our lives, our embedded, enmeshed lives that we find Him. Chanting Krishna and seeing His form "drawing mad pics. It doesn't always create something beautiful, but can you understand what I mean by it?

* * *

The Lake Drink: As Seen From the Shed

The lake drink is running
Rippling to the right, all ripples "
a blue lake fringed with
weeds with plumes on top.
They turn palomino in winter.
God's energy. Material?
It's splendid.

* * *

The lake and the island "the beautiful
Deities, Radha-Govinda "served by
devotees. They leave me
alone on the mainland.
I serve but wish . . . sometimes
I do write and roll in a "white
man's game."

* * *

I joined the Hare Krishna mantra
I mean, movement, the
notorious group in the newspapers
and famous among anti-cultists. We
lost two decisions at the Supreme Court level
but one came down favorable when
the Supreme Court refused to handle
the George case.
I'm in *that* movement.

* * *

The lake strait doesn't actually move.
Its surface blows left like leaves rippling
on a tree. Words are hard
to manage and so is a temple or family.
Even a *single* life (the best kind) can be
difficult.

* * *

The lake is fine on a plane and
the island a dish and Krishna could
pick it all up with His left
pinky if He chose. He leaves me,
He demands me, He'll award

me, but I punish myself.

* * *

When
and
how
O Krishna? I am Your servant
in this movement.
I am just
saying, as my report card used
to say, "Could do better."
I know.

* * *

5:23 p.m.

Prahlada Maharaja speaks against attachment in household life. Even a *sannyasi*, however, could become attached to power and prestige. The real point is that "to return home, back to Godhead, one must be completely free from material attachment." (*Bhag.* 7.6.9, purport)

* * *

Stopwatch

(It's five minutes to 6 p.m. Madhu is out. I'm facing the lake strait. Three men "devotees, I guess "are hanging out by the boathouse talking. Now they're walking straight across the field toward me. They appear to be young lads "have a dog with them. They're devotees' sons. Let them pass. Back to my world now. They won't disturb me "I'm old enough to be their grandfather.)

* * *

& "Stopwatch" "I use one to time my rounds: six, seven minutes. It goes fast. Not a unit. Fast time click-click.

I race a round/ forget them, and go my own way. The time is faster than I could imagine

I go home, I don't eat. The animal crawls as fast as it can then breaks down: "No Tin Pan Alley" is its cry.

No more

time Art

and all that I give up for Krishna in all things. The little quiet life.

Ironic

no more SK.

Then why this dissonance?

I want the holy grail and beads to chant on,

But Mert complaining of superficial and businesslike monastery."

October 14, 12:04 a.m.

One more day, then Karttika begins. Won't make much difference in one sense. I'm still here, living The Sameness, now in autumn. It's a good Sameness, however, and I am in tolerable health and no one has died. I still answer my mail, and write and read the *Bhagavatam* three times a day. Prahlada is still telling his schoolmates that the Supreme Lord, Sri Narayana, is the original Supersoul, the father of all living entities; "Consequently there are no impediments to pleasing Him or worshiping Him under any conditions, whether one be a child or an old man. The relationship between the living entities and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also a fact, and therefore there is no difficulty in pleasing the Lord." (*Bhag.* 7.6.19)

He makes it sound so easy. Many statements are like that "they appear extreme on the spectrum, then seem to be countered by other statements. "Which is it?" devotees ask. "Is it easy or is it hard?" I know it's hard because I don't seem to contact God. If I did, how could I maintain my flylike existence and not be wholly absorbed in His names and qualities? But there's a way that God is present for us, a way we take for granted. He's life itself, and He is my self. He's the self of the self, the heart or inner center. Therefore, even when you love your self, that's a form of love of God.

Compared to pleasing your family, community, or nation, pleasing Narayana is easy. He's grateful and reciprocates. Don't say He doesn't, that you don't see Him. Even if you're not aware, devotional service never goes in vain. The simple endeavor of chanting and hearing the names of the Lord can make one successful in pleasing Him.

He's everywhere in all things, as His energy and as Supreme Person in the hearts of all. "Being covered by the external energy, to the atheist He appears nonexistent." (*Bhag.* 7.6.23)

Devotees realize the Supreme Lord because they surrender at His lotus feet. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada says that many people tell him it's difficult to realize the Absolute. "Actually, however, this is not so." We are all intimately related to Him. I'll repeat this argument in favor of knowing Him by virtue of a factual and intimate relationship. I try to remember how I first became convinced by Srila Prabhupada to practice Krishna consciousness. I'm still living in it.

But even devotees may ask, "Where is God? I'm doing this *yajna* at least minimally, so why don't I sense His presence more? And why don't I *strive* more for that?" Is it that we don't have His mercy? We are too absorbed in matter to know for sure. There are various explanations, but even they don't touch us to the core. We are too preoccupied with coping, getting through the day with small mileposts of enjoyment, rest, eating, and the satisfactions production brings. Lord Caitanya said it: "my fly-like existence."

Of course, the lament is itself purifying if it's made with heart.

Act in such a way that the Supreme Lord will be satisfied, Prahlada says, whether you see Him or not. Accept His rule in your life and the need to obey and please Him. "Show mercy to all living beings by enlightening them in devotional service, thus becoming their well-wishers." (*Bhag.* 7.6.24)

How can we enlighten others if we are not ourselves enlightened? Well, we can give beginning instruction. We can tell people to stop eating meat and point out how they are entangled and blinded by family or sex. These instructions are crucial. Give up enmity, intoxication. When we preach it's a way to gain Krishna's mercy for ourselves. More will come. Some of us preach more to those who are already practicing, and in my case, I try to share my life with them. "The Lord will immediately be extremely satisfied with one who engages in the service of preaching Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag. 7.6.24*, purport) This is confirmed by Lord Krishna in *Bhagavad-gita* 18.69, *na ca tasman manusyesu kascin me priya krtama*. We fulfill the mission of life. We attain satisfaction and help others to attain it too. Work for peace.

* * *

5:04 a.m.

"I have Thee," said the poet to God. Books came in the mail delivered last night. Some good ones. The idea is that I'm supposed to read them and feel inspired to write my own poems. In the future, if enough devotees were writing poems, we could form a devotional anthology and publish them, something like an anthology of Christina Rossetti, Manley Hopkins, Wolfe, names gone . . . souls who have left and come back again and again. We living can be arrogant about those who have died. We cast our sight at the dead as precursors, the old-fashioned, the gone, the annihilated, and think nothing more of them than what they wrote perhaps, which is already barely surviving due to our judgment. Those dead poets can't be here to taste a peach or to be robbed and punched, and so we think our experiences are better, more alive than theirs. But they already have new bodies with new identities, and that means they have new experiences. Do they still carry the poet's heart?

Someone is going to translate my book into Hindi. Another is moving from West to East. She is alone, she says, even in a crowded temple, because there is no one with whom she can share her realizations, no close friends. Do the friends we meet in ISKCON come and go like the people in the material world? Yes, I said, they do. As Prabhupada said, "Just a list of names."

The theme? We have each survived. And why? When will we finally see the central figure in our story? It's just a matter of time before we have to start again to come close.

Shall I admonish him for not being more dexterous to carry out his mission? No, I won't show that it matters much to me. It doesn't ultimately. The dog is still barking outside my window and Krishna is still in control. The dog barks at twelve and one and two o'clock in the morning, chasing birds or other things that move in the night. I don't think he catches anything though.

Krishna consciousness . . . came to South Africa. There are stories of devotees who were brave. They lectured and distributed books. He said he felt he was within a protective bubble because he was serving Srila Prabhupada. He was left unharmed through it all.

So it goes. Stocks go up and down; presidents rise and fall, backroom strategies come and go. Devotees prepare to deliver the goods, then drop bombs on unsuspecting heads. We've got the most fire power.

We've also got all the answers, don't we? Just come to our temple on a Sunday to find out "and for a free meal. When Morton Kelsey, author of a book on dreams, visited a Hare Krishna temple, he heard that people suffer due to their own misuse of free will. He wasn't satisfied with that explanation.

I *am* tired, so I will end this entreaty.

The watchmen are asleep. Guards stretch out under their quilts on cots at the side of the road in India. This is the age,

he said, to

offer fruits in season to Krishna.

Combed back hair of Horace Silver and Chico Hamilton. Good-looking guys going to the Fillmore, the ballroom

the Lindburgh airplane

in suspense over the ocean. He's

hungry for the peanut butter sandwich in the bag

but doesn't have time to eat it "hands

on the steering wheel twenty-four hours

alone with the roaring of a tiny engine.

Remember Shirley Temple in her youth and old age.

Stop and consider New Mayapur.

Stop.

The griefs are addressed.

Krishna, I'm exhausted and running out of energy. I praise You by falling at Your feet, and resting there. I know You will protect me.

* * *

6:10 a.m.

Krishna and Tommy and Stevie didn't know they had an eternal relationship with God as their best friend. It seemed so unreal,

something priests or high school teachers

might talk of: "Go to church, pray to God." Who wanted that?

We wanted only to run with girls in cars and

Rock-'n-roll, or to live for other idols "all secular.

The last thing we wanted was the kind of spirit you can't see unless someone like Dr. A. could ignite the fire of imagination through Shelley or Keats and some unseen life-force appeared.

Garbage.

Well, all that's changed. Now we've got palpable Krishna. He's also unseen, but a Person. As much as me or you.

The Buddhists say personhood is insubstantial and will be disappear.

We ditch Mayavadis. (Sorry to be rude, but we don't have much time left and I have to clear the table.)

Krishna is a person beyond all defects of ordinary persons. He is perfect and complete. *Om purnam* "one plus one equals one.

Or equals whatever He wants to make it.

* * *

8:30 a.m.

Srila Prabhupada wrote me in 1972 that it was good to prepare a lecture in advance, as I had told him I was doing. Then he added that I should be prepared to speak at a moment's notice. That phrase, "At a moment's notice" is also the title of a book that recently arrived here.

Steady downpour of rain and me suited up from head to foot in rain gear. I also have an umbrella. Walked to the edge of the property and stopped when I saw the black and white cows passing through the empty gate into their pasture. My eyes met theirs and looked from cow to cow until I finally saw the smaller form of a human being leading them in. I abruptly turned around and walked back toward Hare Krishna territory, into the wooded path, my private little half lap. Saw some covered chestnuts, but I'm no longer collecting them.

* * *

9:30 a.m.

"Nothing is unobtainable for devotees who have satisfied the Supreme Personality of Godhead . . ." (*Bhag.* 7.6.25) We say officially, "I'd like to attain *Krishna-prema*," but even as we say it, "I'd like to" sounds weak. We have to desire it intensely (*lobha, laulyam*). We have to be ready to *die* without it. We even have to be prepared to give up our hypocrisy to attain it. Perhaps as in my case, we want peace or ease. That's no way to get the rarest gold. Do we want a free pass? rather than continue lying, I opt for truthful statements, even though they fall short of what a pure devotee would say. Maybe truthfulness will lead me onward.

Can I satisfy the Lord by truthfulness and writing practice? *Bhag.* 7.6.25 continues to state that devotees are transcendental to the modes, so there is no purpose in their following *dharmā-artha-kamā*. "We devotees always glorify the lotus feet of the Lord, and therefore we need not ask for anything" "including *moksa*."

" . . . he is simply satisfied by rendering transcendental loving service at the lotus feet of the Lord and glorifying Him everywhere by preaching, which is his life and soul." (*Bhag.* 7.6.25, purport) Sounds like Srila Prabhupada himself.

* * *

Still raining. I see the smoke blowing out from the chimney. Just write, play.

Prahlada is not interested in material religion. "I consider surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Visnu to be transcendental." (*Bhag.* (7.6.26) The Absolute Truth is above matter, so material acts cannot be the goal of life.

Sivarama Swami teaches that we are not on the transcendental platform as stated in *mam ca yo* (Bg. 14.26). We're situated in the modes. I mean, just look at us! We're fallen. We must learn to deliberately practice goodness. It becomes a . . . challenge. (I forgot what I was going to say.) It becomes abstract whether we are material or spiritual. Who cares? Let's just try to be devotees. The *goal* is transcendental. When I chant, is it ever transcendental? If not, then am I not performing *bhakti*? But Srila Prabhupada

teaches pure *bhakti*. Does he teach it as a distant goal? Are we all practicing only *prakṛta-bhakti* or *jnana-miśra-bhakti*? I don't know. In the end, Maharaja assured us that we are transcendently situated when we chant Hare Krishna and honor *prasadam*. Mercy, please.

* * *

Rain pours down, soaking the already sodden earth. Still, I see devotees climbing into the rowboat. Not me. I'll stay indoors today with my jars of chestnuts. O Prahlada, teach us *daityas*, please. We can understand this confidential knowledge, Prahlada Maharaja says, if we take shelter of Narada's disciplic succession. Once again it's difficult, but it's easy if we take shelter. Should we say, "I have not taken shelter of Srila Prabhupada"? No, I want to say I am taking shelter. In that case, am I transcendently situated? Some painful admissions may be necessary: I haven't attained pure love of Krishna or even attention when I chant the holy name.

Prahlada wanted to impress on the demon boys that "they should not be disappointed." Yes, that was Srila Prabhupada's mood. Don't be disappointed when you hear how difficult and rare it is. We can attain it: *vedesu durlabham adurlabham atma bhaktau*.

Then Prahlada explicitly and proudly states, "I received this knowledge from the great saint Narada Muni, who is always engaged in devotional service." (*Bhag.* 7.6.28) We are impressed at his wonderful spiritual connection. He is in the best lineage. I am too. "I received this knowledge from the great saint A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, who is always engaged in devotional service and who singlehandedly brought Krishna consciousness to the West and developed it worldwide (including a revival of it in India) in just eleven years. I am his *cela*."

Raining harder, if that's possible. M. is going out later in the morning to visit an aged melodeon player. Listen "to the rain.

* * *

12:02 noon

M.'s gone in pants and a sweater to see the old guy who plays the melodeon. A woman wrote from a prison hospital to tell me that she is in contact with a close follower of Kirtanananda and that he too is in a prison hospital. What else?

Take the A train. A boat cruising by instead. Manu will bring my lunch today. Heard HarikeSa tell Srila Prabhupada a fantastic (unbelievable) story that one of Prabhupada's disciples was a former C.I.A. member. One day when he was in Vietnam, he was knocked unconscious by the army. They operated and removed all his teeth, replacing them with transistors. The C.I.A. then programmed messages into his brain and conducted all his mental activities. If he disobeyed, they would kill him through these teeth transistors. Srila Prabhupada said, "He's had trouble?" And, "Now he has artificial teeth?" Hard to take it seriously it was so grotesque. They didn't go to the moon. Cheaters.

They'll bring in lunch, and I'll offer it to Srila Prabhupada and to Radha-Krishna. I don't know how things work in the spiritual world or here in terms of *bhakti* conveyed to

and through guru, but I know the main ingredient is sincerity. Of course, you have to know the science (*Sastra*), but even too much of that . . .

* * *

3 p.m., Shed

"And of all *yogis*, the one with great faith who always abides in Me, thinks of Me within himself, and renders transcendental loving service to Me "he is the most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all. That is My opinion."
(Bg. 6.47)

* * *

The kids, all about five years old or less, come out to see me walk by. They were calling to me today. They thought I was someone else because I was wearing pants (rain pants in the blowing wind and rain). Perhaps they had only seen me wearing a *dhoti*, the guy to whom their parents bow down. I got a flash of the persona I am to them, a kind of freak in a way, who exists to receive formal *dandavats*, although receiving those *dandavats* is dependent on my wearing that orange *dhoti*. Well, kids, I'm human and I can wear pants. If that means I don't receive *dandavats*, so be it. They ran from one place to another. When I looked back they were grouped, watching me stumble and stride down the path toward the shed.

* * *

Highest *yogi* "meditates on original form of Krishna. He's fortunate to have come to the path. Worship Govinda, who is "the perfect child, husband, friend and master, and He is full with all opulences and transcendental qualities."

This highest peak is attained only by *bhakti-yoga*. *Yasya deve para bhaktir*. They serve free from desire for material profit.

* * *

4 p.m.

If we forget Krishna on a given day, that's a calamity, said Srivasa Thakura. But if our son dies and we are able to worship and serve You and receive Your mercy on that day, it is very good. That's from Bhaktivinoda Thakura's poem, "The Dissolution of Grief."

That's good. Where's your poem like that?

This is the modern age. We are broken into fragments. Don't write like that no more.

Rain blowing horizontally, but it's not cold. Dublin, he said, is a friendly place. You can give people *prasadam* and they'll take it. He said in London, if they are a little sophisticated they'll think, "What's this, he's giving me food?" They won't like it.

It was upset today, my schedule. Trying to get it right.

You're just playing "

Shut up, Gremlin or I'll fork you over to the Thought Police. I want to die in good consciousness.

That could be soon.

Yes, that's why I don't need to know the latest brilliant analysis of Emily's poems. Straight Krishna consciousness only. We've already had the *dharma* delivered. Don't need to guess into the void.

* * *

rain Horizontal

Rain horizontal and
a man ripping rotted wood
from an old roof.
Joey brought me lunch and smiled,
almost silly, but with real teeth.
All I said was "Thanks," then sat
down to eat while hearing a brother
speak into my ears. Am I cruel?
Judgmental?
I ate but offered first the tiny plates
with full meals to the miniature forms.
I live on the dole called *guru-seva*.

* * *

They think I'm a guru and I
perpetuate the myth to
get my room and board,
bored, not because I wish I were
listening to the big bands
of the 1940s. A mistake "
I thought it might be
something esoteric. Wrong take.

* * *

So I ate and ate until
I was filled up, then doused
all with radiator water so
you'd be relieved that this
was only a mythical poem, filled
with symbolism.

* * *

O horizontal wind and rain, I heard
a devotee needs a transfusion.

* * *

He's Joe Camel Banned

& I know this tune well enough. The tune is straight.

Now Steve steps up
with pen in mouth, no
drought.

Keep Cool. He's Joe Camel in NYC banned graffiti. I want this the
way I want to feel "

mighty cool pure small
words look

grandstanding.

In the old days he had lots of juice . . .

* * *

The *Gita* slips out of my hand I

Read that this is the way. Mom,

I'm jiving up and I'm nodding in all my bones It's the only way to hear it not detached.
Thinking of 'Trane's big sound. Critics spelled it out for me and I believed what they
said.

This is new man returned after woodshedding all those hours and years, finally he
burst out of the old mold.

The critic said he was struggling with a new concept, the
critic said "

Oh, damn those
critics!

"Be alert" I wrote on a pic.

What *are* you doing!?

Incredulous *normal* people say they don't know that each has to find their own way.
The crowd and the critics and the fellow musicians, you'd better go back to where you
came from, Tottenville high school kid. JK came into our world.

I can't tell one from another or like them each.

How did Bill Evans get a job with them? Came out of his introspective shell, said the
critic.

I prefer the clear-bodied sound
of my egg
alone
silent.

This you have to understand: I don't want to be a bad boy or crazy. Old times are
good. They have a vocabulary. Krishna in all things. You know that.

* * *

Krishna, O God
these old-timers

they daid and

I's alive.

Please, Srila Prabhupada, take me

as I am, writing full this day.

O Sivarama Swami, you're smiling like I'm crazy and the others say, "Down, down." "

* * *

6:13 p.m.

The *daitya* boys asked Prahlada how he'd been able to associate with Narada. As we listen, we consider how we too can hear the pure devotee's instructions no matter where we are situated in the material world. We simply have to tune in. Prahlada heard from Narada when Prahlada was still in the womb. Then, can I hear from Srila Prabhupada even though he has passed away from this world? If I believe he is eternal and liberated, then I have to believe he is able to communicate with me. And as a writer I ought to know that one can communicate through one's books.

Making some sense finally, and paying attention. Prahlada tells the interesting story of how the demons fled and the *devas* captured Prahlada's mother. They wanted to kill her unborn child. Narada assured them they would fail. He told them that the child was a great devotee.

My mind goes to the time when Kirtanananda was hit almost fatally on the head and fell into a coma. A GBC man criticized him even then, saying, "No great devotee has ever died the victim of a violent attack. If he dies, it will be proof that he's ordinary." His followers became disturbed. They felt no one appreciated their master's work. I sympathized with them. Why remember it all now? I'm not sure.

Come back to Kayadhu, Prahlada's mother. Narada took her to his *aSrama*, where she served him and he gave her instructions. Srila Prabhupada raises the doubt whether it was improper for Narada to keep a woman at his *aSrama*. Narada is transcendental to mundane categories. No one should imitate him. Don't think of Narada as an ordinary person.

Pen writes black in good hand. Krishna's blessing. I'd like to see the moon tonight. It should be near full, and tomorrow night perfectly full. Karttika begins. Hare Krishna.

October 15, 12:13 a.m., Karttika begins

Reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* is our daily work. We can call it solace, play, worship, prayer, obedience, and a builder of faith, but if we have only the sense that it's work, then begin with that. A person's got to work.

Spotless *dharma* Narada taught. The first word in the verse (7.7.15) is *rsi karunika*. As soon as I see it I think of someone I initiated and to whom I gave that name. We were out of touch for years. When he started writing me again from California, I didn't know who he was. Hard to make a genuine connection with so many disciples. It's a burden "I feel it now on (in) the head. Then I thought of a *bhaktin* who says I turned her down three times for initiation. She considers initiation a formality, and she likes to serve various Vaisnavas.

Each person is unique, sincere, entangling. I can only do a certain amount for each of them. To be honest . . . the relationship is a bit of pretense. The idea that I'm carrying them. For some it may be true.

Rsi karunika . . . Narada taught spotless religion to Kayadhu and Prahlada in his mother's womb was the main recipient of his teachings.

The highest mission of life is to go home, back to Godhead. Start on the path from the beginning of life. Make it real; I say this to myself and my disciples. *Please* be real. Get beyond rhetoric. You may have to repeat it to yourself.

"One must understand one's relationship with God and then act accordingly." (*Bhag.* 7.7.15, purport) I'm situated rightly, but can't seem to go further. I know I need to make progress, but I'm afraid of the pressure I will feel to increase. It's as if I'm saying to Krishna, "This is as far as I can go now. Please reveal Yourself to me. Please show You love me just as I am. I don't feel capable of more right now. I'm getting old and tired. I can't pretend."

Youth provides the energy, but youth also brings naivete and pretension "we think we're better devotees than we actually are.

Signs of exhaustion, but also signs of a creative spirit, writing to penetrate falsity. Seeking to improve through inner resources. I know ultimately we are not self-reliant; unless Krishna helps us, we cannot do anything. But we do act (with God-given powers), and this brings satisfaction.

Write endless commentary on scriptures and how you feel.

* * *

"I'm Getting Sentimental Over You,"

& Can secular jazz men pray? "Can a white man be a 'Haribol'?"

That's what the kid "black Guyanese" taunted at me on his black-nation ferryboat.

This whitey tired out. Jesse Jackson said, "We picked cotton for you, and now we will run the country for you!" And .

what do I say? Take me and
make music and feel it in your soul
if you dare to descend with me, dare
to be awake to

Return to an idea so precious
so passionate, committed,
contagious "a prime collision of taste and
sincerity.

Squeak. I remember the blunt-full sound
of Charles' horn "his quick blips I now take
and offer to God, my
heart warmed at this instant of my life,
forming my own sweet tune. We're all different,
I know. Some like cigars and sin and gin

and some like Hare Krishna.
"No," we say, "*everyone* must love Hare Krishna."
That's the trip we put on them. But I say get this:
I'm a monk and here's my tuneful accompaniment
to a devotional poem "for Prabhupada
for Krishna
no deviant chant
or change in the liturgy.
I'm okay "you?"

* * *

5:21 a.m.
What do you want to do?
Go outside at this time in spring, bright dawn.
I can't.
Chant extra rounds with joy.
I can't.
Answer mail.
I don't want to, but
I can. Especially that one where she says she thinks I know her, but she isn't sure
whether I care for her spiritually.
Careen. I'm not . . . qualified.
I wish I were, but
I can't.

* * *

6:25 a.m.
Prahlada said, "If you can place your faith in my words . . . "
Someone said that this section reminded him of Srila Prabhupada teaching us. If we
could place our faith in him . . . Or in Zonal Puffed-Up Days did I say, "You should be
like the demons and I'll be Prahlada, so place your faith in me"?
Despite a twinge I write on "
no U.S. Marine on Guadacanal
but just as determined.
Determined to communicate "and they say writing has a radical need even beyond
that. To create a reality into which she could escape was Emily's aim, according to the
scholar. That's his trip. No one knows for sure because she didn't speak beyond her
enigmatic poems.
I want ease/ access, so I'm returning that favor to others, but I won't be handing out
tickets to a velvet, logical heaven. At least each sentence a stab, a solace.
We pretended the Swedish bitters relieved a headache. Child's play.
Remove obstacles
like the stone over Christ's grave.
Where is the biography on Paul,

"the man who invented Christianity"?
Where's my stall for
selling rice?
Why did he leave a
simply wonderful two weeks
in the kitchen?
If you allow ignorance around you,
you'll fall into it yourself.
"That's why I holler at
my servants," said a guru,
"so they and I rise above *tamas*."

* * *

12:25 noon

Head pressure wise, but took Esgic early enough and it calmed down. First pill in eight days. After lunch I'll speak briefly with Sraddhavan, who is here from Australia, and later with a devotee here from England. Because I'm a good guy and do my duties. I don't talk much of guru identity in this writing. Enough I guess "it comes and goes like everything else, remarks.

Art, art for Krishna.

Snow job. American slang hits it hard. One slang scholar said slang actually boils down to obscenity.

The boats at Prague, the swans at Coole. On my walk I saw a large swan sitting by herself on the land. How awkwardly she waddled, eating grass. Then I peered from behind a tree as she walked down to the water's edge, entered the water "for a moment she resembled a boatman using a pole to push off "then into the graceful pose and motion I know so well. Swans at Coole, Yeats in his blousey bowtie. I picked up a few more chestnuts "couldn't resist. New ones are redder and have more gloss. They are wet, clean, and vibrant. The ones in my room have already begun to look old.

Talkin' to my Man in

heavens above. Let me relax and use this painfree time to write.

Prahlada, your statements are best, if I can simply receive them purely, even if only briefly.

* * *

4:17 p.m.

In Bg. 7.1 Krishna is speaking directly. He says we should know Him free from doubt. Spoke almost an hour with young, square-jawed devotee from England. Her voice was innocent and sweet, the voice of a committed devotee. Madhu present. I suggest she think for herself and face the implications of her decisions. I was polite and careful, and still am as I report it.

She said that the Hare Krishna movement is now illegal in russia and Poland, and perhaps in her own home country. Is that true? She heard from devotees that there will soon be floods and cataclysms, Ireland will be covered with water. Is it true? I gave my

standard answer: we depend on Krishna regardless of what happens, and no place is safe. She smiled when I said that, as if I had dispelled a myth, but I really believe there ought to be peace and I want to live in that place where my writings will be preserved or at least distributed "at least in some small quantity "some high and dry place in a boat, an ark, an archives.

Oh gee, cornball, you are now establishing the right to improvise.

She said she wants a spiritual master who can teach her what attitudes to take in Krishna conscious matters.

Yes, I said, good.

She said in the beginning of spiritual life she will need more instruction.

She's right.

I've been a devotee for thirty-one years, I say. Isn't that impressive, just the longevity? Like the rings in a tree (you can see them when it's finally cut down), or the long and numerous skins of a snake.

Krishna has taught in the first six chapters that the living entity is a nonmaterial spirit soul. In the human form, he or she can attain self-realization. Scientists, damn them, think that's gibberish. We say there is spiritual form "head, body, smile, action, residence, love, and service. "What?" They can only believe in microscopes.

Beyond the instruction of soul is the instruction of the Supreme Being. Krishna is all-attractive. He is the best person, the brain behind all. Krishna says He can be known beyond doubt:*asamsayam samagram*.

Kid goat bleating. White doves on Pahlada's roof. Atma working in foundry. It's his, so he has fixed the roof. Proprietorship turns sand into gold. A mom in a *sari* walks with her child. The woods, the green pastures, the quietness here. Does this look like a land that will be flooded?

The mind is fixed in concentration on Krishna through nine methods of *bhakti* (or any one of them). First and most important is *Sravanam*. *Tac chrnu*: "Hear from Me." *Bhagavad-gita* means hearing from Krishna. Accept at least theoretically that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Isn't it best to hear from Him directly? Anyone else speaking represents a small aspect of the Whole.

This shed has many small midges on the windowpane; a sign of the season. We love our lives in Krishna consciousness, Guru-seva wrote me. Aye. That's why I do pics. I want to celebrate.

Tomorrow is Madhu's birthday. I wrote notes asking two people to make him sweets or something. What can I give him? Write a letter of appreciation at least.

One big fly in here too. It's getting dark. Karttika beginning.

Srnavatam sva katha Krishna. Bhag. 1.2.17 - 21 as recalled by Srila Prabhupada on the Boston Pier, 1965. Hear about Krishna from the Vedic literature, and that itself is pious activity. Krishna will purify us; He's in our heart. Thus our dormant love for Krishna will develop, free of lust.

It is sweet how the boys and girls come to Krishna consciousness and the elders guide them, and it's rotten when the elders desert. We expect some boys and girls to come and go (revolving door) even after initiation. And hard times, persecution of our religion, struggle to attain more than cult status "eventually the devotee swallows all that as part

of the greater dedication. Who expects smooth sailing? We expect to always be able to serve the Lord *ahaituky*, and we're happy. That's all.

* * *

First Evening of Karttika, 1997

1

It's too dark to write
a poem petty.
I have no genius or maybe
little luck, so hurry inside and
listen to the music,
duck clouds, say a shy hello
to that mother, Mary or Maria,
if they are not your disciples
and look to see what is hanging
on the wall in the foundry.

* * *

"What's that?"
"It's the first dollar we earned."
What's that?
That's when you were
younger. Don't you recognize it?

* * *

What's that ringing in your
ears? It's Krishna Kris
Kringle, the independent brain behind
all, a person.

* * *

2

Those atheists went off in
their small rowboat with
hunters' dogs (one golden)
didn't know, missed the
party we had with cake and
ice cream offered to God.
This is Ireland "not
Vrndavana's sand and mystery "
but still we can light a
candle made in China

with wicks that remind me of
1 - 1/2" fire crackers and floods
me with recall.
Just say I remember the
Swami and Karttika '66 "
to increase my devotion.

* * *

Off Blue

& I remember Lord Yadunatha
the tune "who wrote it?
Pilot looks over at crew, dictates
words
plays his way.
It was 1955.

I can't tell you everything. This is off-blue, this time in my life,
that phrasing,
but I held the tune,
the blue-white song sky
girl and guy . . .

"Bring me closer to You, Lord," M. was singing as I entered. I don't know what's best
for me and what I like best, but
we all grow old and die. No,
don't blanch or flinch
unless you want to.
The spokesman says, "*Here it is,*"
and I say "Peanuts,
no phony true."
This slow line suits us.

* * *

Tuberose. I'm one in humanity but
they cut you out if you're white- or black-skinned.
Plum lips, no more black body weight-lifting camera eye "
don't rub lens *ever*.
Elongate "time is running out
Krishna, Krishna, Krishna is our cliché our
fine "it doesn't matter. Just love it. Just *love* it, that's all.

* * *

We refrained, no matter where they sent us and
believed in spreading Krishna's words,
but the blanched effort of a timid soul kept indoors . . .

No! Out into the streets! The parks! And sing! Take the risk for Swamiji. He'd like that.

Or find a suitable venue for a respectable presentation and advertise.

Keep hoodlums out if you can, although
all is ordained

and "the judge is very intelligent."

Swami, we depend upon you.

Tell us what God wants,
how to attain His grace.

I gathered my proofs so they will give me
an "A", pass

on improvisation to forebears "bare paws

Krishna, Krishna, the best. And now I promise you at least I'll never quit saying
"Krishna" for the rest of my life. Please give me Your service and I commend my soul to
You, but not quite yet. Drumroll, please."

October 16, 12:20 a.m.

Wrote a letter to Madhu, then walked around the rooms here happily like a
mechanical man *domesticus* doing my little operations "washing face, cleaning eye
glasses, offering Srila Prabhupada his dictaphone, sitting down to read and write.

I *like* these homely rituals and the ease I feel in performing them. Krishna's grace that
brain and body function at all, and this peaceful environment. In my letter to Madhu I
stated my appreciation for his service, which I sometimes take for granted. Ultimately,
my thanks go to Prabhupada and Krishna for giving me such facility. I shouldn't gripe
that I'm not getting enough or getting exactly what I want. They already give me full
facility. Let me use it to do my best service, although my service is inevitably small and
flawed.

* * *

Prahlada Maharaja said to his friends, "If you can place your faith in my words,
simply by that faith you can also understand transcendental knowledge . . .

" (*Bhag.* 7.7.17)

I want to think like that about Srila Prabhupada's words. I struggle with it sometimes,
but I pray for such faith. In the name of psychological health I sometimes "allow" my
doubts to exist, I state them, even examine them, but I shouldn't justify them or indulge
in them. I have to fight to keep faith "*Sraddha*" by regularly hearing and by surrendering
to guru's will.

By hearing from Narada, Prahlada "became fully convinced of the existence of the
supreme power." I don't have to see Him or touch Him or demand extra revelation. To
hear is sufficient, and to serve with love (*yasya deve para bhaktir*). Srila Prabhupada
also quotes *atah Sri Krishna namadi* and *bhaktya mam abhijananti*.

Prahlada blesses his school friends: "All become faithful like me. Become bona fide
Vaisnavas." I wish to become like Srila Prabhupada. Compassionately, he also wants me
to do that. Srila Prabhupada represents the whole *sampradaya* to me. I pray to Lord
Krishna, who is in my heart, who reveals Himself in the scriptures and in acts of

devotional service "all of which I have learned from Srila Prabhupada "to please grant me faith and devotion unto His dear servant, Srila Prabhupada. Only in that way can natural love of God awaken in me, to the success of my life.

After blessing his schoolmates and requesting them to hear with faith, Prahlada informs them that the material body undergoes six changes. "However, there are no such changes for the spirit soul." (*Bhag.* 7.7.18)

* * *

Improvisation

(It's sacredly early to be "hearing" this improvisational sound, but I want to keep up the practice and transform it. I don't want my prose to become bop prosody but to develop into a Krishna conscious train of thought of feeling.)

* * *

& I depend on them and You, dear Lord, as I move along,
as in a car,
Christmas at Gita-Nagari
with friends.
Floods in Eire?
All the accordions too
underwater? With these phrases.

* * *

Moving fast through muted sound, or open "the beat
demands a work out
although I like to please people.
Tight bud in spring "don't you know
that's winter comin'?"
Alone in house, back against pillar
jive not with me
but abide, dear Spirit. I am
"convinced of supreme power" and
Prahlada is real for me.
"Trane developed over the years, but I want to
grow to maturity, disciplined
a free boy in sweat pants with microphone
singing "O Lord," and tight in Krishna consciousness.
Eye and I. "

* * *

Dreamt I arrived in a big city and was trying to get to the temple. My car got behind Baladeva's car, a limousine they had arranged for me. I asked him, "Are we near the temple?"

"Yes." I got in. Instead of taking me to an ISKCON temple, however, I was taken to some other temple. I realized where I was while still standing at the gate, so I apologized to the devotees who had gathered and said, "I have to get to an ISKCON temple." I then got into Baladeva's car. We set off again, but it was hard to find the place. Something kept going through my mind about body and soul. We were caught in heavy traffic.

When I awoke I remember appreciating Baladeva, even though he made some mistake in the dream. He wasn't sufficiently in touch with my mood. Still, I want to appreciate the devotees who are serving me, give them guidance, and keep them in touch so we can progress together. Yes, I want to go to an ISKCON temple and not to another. Somehow that took persistence. And it does. Make this dream into a ballad?

* * *

4:41 a.m.

Thinking of things to do other than write. Abhaya dasi writes that she sits to read my books or Prabhupada's books and feels the sweetness, then jumps up after awhile and does something else. She says she seems afraid to take in all the nectar, and she compares herself to being at the shore of an ocean and playing there shivering, stepping in and running out, enjoying it but not really participating deeply. She thinks I'm deep, but I told her I also run in and out.

Can't push on right now because of a lurking sensation behind my right eye. Can't cushion the pain with a pill because I already did that yesterday. I wanted to meet with devotees today, and I had planned to push on with my work here, going to the shed. Sometimes I have to stand by and stop for pain. No walk either. Just sit and pray, or sit and feel. This life is valid too.

* * *

I liked the tape of Madhu playing with the master melodeon while the man's wife made comments. The guy is very old, and his brogue is so thick I could hardly understand it. But he got on fine with Madhu, who sometimes played with the master's melodeon.

I couldn't see any trace of the full moon last night. I didn't even look for it in the earlier part of the evening. I looked out around 3 a.m. though, and the night was a bit illumined, yet the moon was nowhere in sight.

Tell your truth, devotees. One devotee says she wants to write her life story, but knows it will anger the so-called animal charity people who kill animals. She was a veterinarian. Well, tell your story and don't be afraid, even if some things will upset the apple cart.

* * *

Dreamt I was in a department store in Denver with a group of devotees. One devotee was nervous, and thought we should be trying to preach to the crowds of people moving through the store. Then I spoke to KeSihanta, who asked whether I understood the truth of Krishna consciousness by intuition. I replied that I couldn't concentrate and didn't know the answer. Immediately after that, someone began cutting down huge trees behind us. The devotees disapproved, "Tsk tsk, tsk." I saw that my sentiment was real, but there was a note of artifice in it. We didn't feel *that* bad about the trees crashing down.

I never feel quite genuine in the different manifestations of ego in dreams, even when I take a good role as a devotee advising others not to try to manipulate crowds or when I disapprove the cutting down of trees. The only real moment in this dream, it seems, was when I admitted that I didn't have enough strength to explain why I accept Krishna on intuition.

* * *

6:20 a.m.

Trying to spend my free-form time (4:15 - 6:30 a.m.) well. Wrote a letter to Abhaya dasi, wrote a little here, dozed, dreamed . . . then I couldn't regain my interest in the things I was doing earlier, so I settled for reading Rddha dasa's memoir of *Srila Prabhupada in South Africa*. It stirs the smoldering ashes of my preaching spirit to hear how Srila Prabhupada traveled at such an old age. He felt such compassion for the people, and even a family feeling for the Indians there "but the whites and blacks as well. He was so potent. At the airport he stood on his seat and addressed a crowd of Indians gathered to receive him. Rddha dasa praised Pusta-Krishna Swami in his book. He seemed extraordinary after hearing the praise. I also felt that we each need to feel that we were intimate with Srila Prabhupada, as Pusta-Krishna Swami is presented in this book. I try to feel that intimacy from the 1966 angle. Why even try to prove such intimacy? Why need to feel it? Srila Prabhupada was a world-traveling guru. I for one couldn't keep up after a certain point in time. Now I look for intimacy by trying to understand his self-sacrificing role and to become his servant, and I honor his followers, even today, who risk themselves as he did to spread Krishna consciousness. They are the heroes of Krishna's army.

* * *

9 a.m.

Today is warm and what we would call in North America, muggy. Here it's humid, but rarely so warm.

I sent two notes to devotees here, ISani and Radhanatha asking them to prepare a party for Madhu's birthday. They are already onto it, and they'll have a surprise meeting for him at eleven this morning, at which time they'll ask him to sing some of his songs. I'm supposed to sneak into the room for the surprise moment. It's at the same time that I'm usually worshipping Prabhupada, but I can arrange that. The only problem is, I've already started to get my daily headache. Let's see what happens between now and then.

I read in a black man's poetry a line that was a clincher: "If you're going to half-step, then don't step at all."

For me, I have to half-step if I'm going to step at all. Or let's say my full steps are not what they used to be. I have a keen sense of doing whatever it is I want to do before time runs out. If I want to pick up a few some chestnuts, if I have a sentiment for it, then go ahead "because there are only a few trees and there are only a few days in the year when I can do it. After that, they'll be gone. The seasons flash past just like that. Do you understand?

* * *

12:25 noon

We bunched together in the kitchen and as M. entered, we burst into "Happy birthday to you!" "with an added devotee-stanza, "May you never take birth again!" He played accordion and sang a few songs, including a new one asking Krishna to bring Him closer. Cake was distributed to all. So observed Samuel Pepys. As I left, I said, "Now the fun begins when the old guy leaves." I watched myself make merry old-man laughter, he-he-he, with a high-pitched sound. It happened when I said M. went to sing in a pub. What is this merriness in the company of devotees? One devotee seemed nervous, fingering her beads as if she'd rather be in the midst of a standard ISKCON program and wondering if it was *maya* to hear a *brahmacari* play Kerry slides. Others glowed with family feeling. I also said that M. sacrifices his interests to take care of mine, so it is nice that he's now able to express himself through his music.

* * *

3:35 p.m.

Sitting in my room while rain blew and it was dark outside at 3 p.m., names and persons started passing through my mind "those who have very little connection with me now: Prsni, Prtha and ViSoka, sankirtana, two of them (no, three of them), Partha Dhanurdhara, and then Godbrothers of the past "VrakreSvara Pandita Prabhu . . . What are they all doing now? Grassroots reformers who are now gurus and GBC . . . I began to feel depressed. Didn't see a reason to write more today. At the same time, the pain began to ease, as it tends to do in the late afternoon. I decided to come out to the shed and get a different outlook, be closer to the rain for awhile.

* * *

Krishna speaking in Bg. 7.2. Very few people interested (Bg. 7.3). Professor: "What's with the jewels?" He thought of Christ and *sadhus* without wealth. Or jewels as baubles, stuff a foolish king or dandy would wear. What's with the jewels? They want a God-like figure shorn of wealth or even shorn of body and face "just a "Spirit." Professor, what's with the faceless Spirit? What's with the void and just you as God, Sir?

* * *

4:38 p.m.

The abstract concept can get tiring too. The *Gita*, and Krishna within it. Srila Prabhupada in South Africa "I spoke about that already. He stayed in South Africa for nineteen days to lecture to hundreds in the Indian sections. Now it's different; apartheid broken up and Krishna consciousness flourishing "stories of secret police coming up to devotees, little miracles taking place. The early history. How it grew, the names, Pusta-Krishna Swami, Partha-sarathi Prabhu, the Tent Campaign. And now roisterer is in heaven

the pics of Sats kept in a draw at rutgers with Peewee Russell's.

Did you notice the white mold that grew on and in between your chestnuts in the glass jar? I wiped it off, that white goo . . . But it will be back.

I canceled the disciples' meeting scheduled for Saturday. Too many headaches and not enough solitude.

* * *

Currant Jam

(Blues to go with the rainy day, later afternoon, head barely coming out of a fog.)

* * *

& ragged New Jersey is where he lived, but
it's all imagination. Get that off your chest "that racial
pain. Now this realm is mine to say and I say
"Krishna-oriented." We're looking to get down to something serious.
Tell us, little starched man. They "these few "like me
to sit above them as hometown guru, but I say even here
I need a part-time tent to
hear the music
of words bouncing
and to rest my head on the rhythm section
of my Krishna consciousness.
No one else has to understand, not
even me.
Eager. M. takes advantage of an ear and plays his music
and I do too with no gun at your head but
I like you to read it and proclaim,
"You've got something here! Why didn't we think of it?"
Yes, and I smile, thinking this is real it's
the currant jam
on a blackberry-stained freckle-faced kid with tongue out
digging into
her yogurt for
her daddy to see.

Little Sita.

* * *

This rhythm is currant black jam and
a free walk through a cornfield,
it's me and you
it's heart, soul used too often
trying to say
"Krishna, Krishna" on my page, O
Krishna, please appear here, Lord of all. What word do I know other than You?
No one hundred-year-old guru would approve of this song, I'm sure,
but the meaning, and Krishna, *bhava grahi* "He knows me,
knows I'm in earnest.

* * *

I respect musicians although I go my own way
without their approval. I paid for this right
and can do what I want. I want to
walk to a bass line home on a currant-gray day
feel the rain on my face, "Hello, Vayu!"
and no empty cheer. I don't want
to be in the world alone like a crazy man. I need devotees.
But Krishna, Krishna
I seek You in solitude, in rhythm
and blues.

October 17, 12:05 a.m.

Prepare *Caitanya-caritamrta* for the Sunday class. Can I show off my learning and devotion? No, I can simply present and fluff the cotton. Last week we read how Lord Caitanya exchanged loving feelings with the devotees by indirectly praising them. He said they obstructed His desire to strictly practice the austerities of *sannyasa* life. Thus we receive a glimpse of His activities with His devotees. When I went to Puri, did it enhance my ability to see into that mood and to feel I was in the place where Lord Caitanya enacted such pastimes? At least I read *Caitanya-caritamrta* while I was there. The current scene at Jagannatha Puri, as well as my bodily and mental coverings, obstructed me.

Now Karttika. Should I say that Karttika in the West is not as potent as Karttika in Vrndavana?

That's not likely to be true if those remaining in the West concentrate upon the essence of devotion.

Sarvabhauma asked Lord Caitanya to please give His attention to Ramananda Raya while He was touring the south. Yes, I have a class prepared, if Krishna allows me to give it. I won't take it as a mere exercise but as a chance to impart important instructions

from the pages of *Caitanya-caritamrta*. Be a via medium. This doesn't mean I have reached an ideal standard "the chanting quota, practicing renunciation on a preaching tour, begging permission of Vaisnavas with no consideration of their social position, appreciating special devotees such as Ramananda Raya, etc. "but by speaking on it I may correct my ways, and at least become purified by hearing *Caitanya-caritamrta*.

* * *

Off Minor

& Yes, they played it before and I heard it "Lord Caitanya walking in Puri. I mean, going south, alone. Bhagavata dasa said, "The *dhama* varieties unfold like Miles' solos." Always new tunes revealed

gutsy blues part of life.

Oh, but we are sublime and above it,
we say, and we hear in goodness.

I preserve and reserve the right to say,
"Yes, it's so."

I too was a tough guy, no goodness, and have come a ways

I sang a song of self, of battleships and destroyers and their escorts gray in the harbor,
parked in Navy yards.

Sad it was, a low hour, when this delicate, corrupt flower had to board them, but Rilke
said such suffering was good

for a poet aspirant
and after all

I took the music of improvisation with me.
Even a lonely fellow has secret friends and
vices and loves

"My *maya* is Irish music" "Kirtana-rasa dasa.

"My *maya* is Momma."

"Even though a devotee, I engage in illicit sex."

"I eat porn."

Corn and crackerjacks "what do *you* do?"

Hey mate, I don't *cultivate* it!

But what *do* you do?

Nothin'.

I accept the dryness of the desert.

I get my *ananda* in *kirtana*.

I like to control devotees and get back at the demons.

I observe holy ladies with effulgent faces and firm forms.

I get sad at downfalling brothers.

I am serious always and don't shake my head from side to side as you do in mayic
trance.

O Krishna.

As I said, we each have our vices and we take the chance
walking down a dangerous, broken glass-strewn mugger's haven.

Well, that's the world we live in and we all have to experiment with it to understand our own music, I suppose. Each note " how to find it and offer it to Krishna? Each note of our lives must become a clever and passionate statement of our whole life, full felt, played, before it finally breaks down and dissolves. That's what it's all about, but felt in Krishna consciousness, while chanting your quota with attention and love.

* * *

What they felt in the minor key:
She gave birth in Puri
he walked in the Gita-Nagari woods
at Karttika they lit candles
strummed chords and
then everyone died as leaves drop from tree. But before they died, they observed love and dryness and *caturmasya* "just a little "and
oh, so much rain.
That's the way it is."

* * *

5:20 a.m.

"May you never take birth again," he said. But we may have to. *Janmani janmani*. The devotee says that's okay. Labor to get out sentences. In the meantime . . .

I dreamt our little family kept a huge bear on a separate boat. Then he moved onto our boat. I didn't want him to come down the hatch where I stayed, although he was friendly. Then a dream of Jayadvaita Swami and BTG. The bear appeared in that dream too, and I told Jayadvaita Swami not to be afraid.

* * *

Merton complained, sometimes bitterly, about the silly, petty, dumb management of the monastery, and the wrong quality of life there. At other times he accepted it and found fault with himself for his lack of compassion. Life never changed entirely. He mused whether he would live to fifty-seven or fifty-eight years old, but he didn't. He died suddenly in Bangkok while attending a conference. In 1960, while wondering if he'd live until 1973, he wrote in his diary, "What foolish perspective we get onto, by believing in our calendars. As if numbers were the great reality, the sure thing, the gods of life and death."

I could talk to someone about my own soul. "Get the work done," I told my editor.

* * *

8:45 a.m.

Rain on the walk. An audible patter as I walk under the trees on the "primrose path." Puddles stay overnight and for days afterward without evaporating. Predictable head fog

starts at this time of the day. Prabhupada says nothing is prophetic; everything can be predictable from past experience.

The fog prevents clear reading.

During breakfast, I listened to a tape of Srila Prabhupada saying that everyone *must* follow God's order, just as we must follow government law whether we like it or not. For example, there's a law that states that everyone must die.

It doesn't seem probable that I can stop reading books like Merton's diary, but then I have to regularly shake off his persona. I'm not Merton at Gethsemane. I'm me, here and now. Collecting a few chestnuts under the tree helps me to remember that. Of the chestnuts I find on the ground, which to keep and which to pass up? I put two likely ones on top of a mossy tree stump and tell myself that I'll come back tomorrow. If they're still here, I'll take them.

In another lecture I heard from Honolulu 1975, Prabhupada said that the drama on Prahlada's life the devotees had just performed was not done well in terms of stage presentation, but the feeling was successful. He said Krishna wants to see that "He is *bhava-grahi-janardana*."

Who could appreciate why I save chestnuts? They are useless, unpublishable, unedible, unworshipable; they are simply shiny and whole and shaped by nature, then polished with a brilliant varnish. They appear for only a few days in a brief year. I might as well try to save rain puddles or visions of crows or times that headaches went away, or times when headaches came. But there's something behind it.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

Canceling the rest of today. Esgic couldn't keep out the pain this time, so prepare for a long night. Neither could the mist and rain filling an all-gray sky help.

Tilaka is putting up with the wet day. Her coat is soaked, but she lives with it. Can't come indoors to dry off. At least she gets ample meals, and she has ample time to trot aimlessly from place to place over her acres, yapping and whining at birds and cars with a sprightly bounce to her walk. Old age hasn't set in yet for her.

Hemmed in by pain. Time to go. Whatever I have, I want to offer it to Krishna.

October 18, 12 a.m.

Prahlada teaches his schoolmates that the soul is eternal while the body undergoes six changes. "One who understands this truth should not be very much anxious about the maintenance of his body. There is no possibility of maintaining the body permanently or eternally." (*Bhag.* 7.7.18, purport) Materialists want material proof of the existence of the soul. We say it can't be given since it's nonmaterial, although the soul's existence can be inferred by reason and self-examination. The main method of learning about the soul is to hear from the *sastra* and the guru.

I read attentively for about ten minutes on the familiar topics of the eternal souls (Supersoul and individual soul) and the perishable body, perishable universes. Even while attentive, however, I paused to write a few Post-its "one about our travel in

December and January. Then my mind wandered to Bhakta Kevin, Vraja-kiSora dasa, Baladeva. Then I lost my concentration altogether and the subject seemed impenetrable. I was inside it, then suddenly found myself on the outside. That's how it is. I can fight to get back in, but it will take a lot of mental exertion and I'm not sure I'm up to it anymore. O Krishna.

The individual soul is the cause of the body, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the cause of the unlimited universes. It is foolish and ignorant to think that because we are equal in quality with God (*aham brahmasmi*), we are equal in quantity. One who thinks like that has to undergo many lives full of material experience before he can understand that the Supreme Cause, Krishna, is everything. It's a simple truth: we are tiny and God is great. A pious person could attain it right away and be educated by a bona fide spiritual master.

I read in Merton's journal how astounded he was to read the *Upanisads*: "Tremendous discovery. The *Brihad-Aranyaka Upanisad*! Everything for a long time has been slowly leading up to this, and with this reading "sudden convergence of roads, tendencies, lights in unity! A new door. (Looked at it without comprehension nine months ago.) Yesterday's disgust with the trivial, shallow, contemporary stuff I am tempted to read! No time for that." (*Merton's Journal* February 4, 1961) The *Vedas* can certainly enlighten and educate any aspiring religionist. They support the Bible and Koran for those trying to understand spiritual truth beyond matter.

Unless one takes to *bhakti-yoga* under the direction of the spiritual master, one cannot understand the existence of the soul within the body. The first lessons are to give up the conception that "I am the body and everything belonging to the body is mine." We must understand that the soul is within the body and is transmigrating from one body to another (Bg. 2.13).

* * *

Improvisation on the Upanisads

& The truth of the *Upanisads* "go there to where it comes.

The geologist knows and I know "the gold-soul. They can know it in Africa or anywhere. From a Hare Krishna person, a devotee in saffron.

Hey Harry! (You mean the Harry's have knowledge?!)

Hey, what's a monk like you doin' in a place like this?

I'm in my room alone, not in some mental-spiritual space with 'Trane "on my terms I remember him.

Oh, cold in chest, oh, listen *Frere* Bro. You are a Franciscan monk, a Buddhist barefoot, Emily nut, worshipping the God of the *Upanisads* and Vrnda, Aranyaka,

baka-waka

he made fun, Murray, of Damapada.

He liked the drumming, though, but

not the mighty one,

friend, He

who brings the pain

although yesterday

I too opted for a pill
(to serve Him better).

* * *

This improv wants me to move faster
to
hark
heark
Hierach

Arc de Triomphe

Radicals of rheingold. The titles under-lying ISKCON reality.

We're here, not there (Vraja), in autumn rain, amid chestnut trees
and nuts and temple visits.

I celebrate alone-keeping. O nurse, massage my head and
feet and keep me warm.

The shed, to shed

head with colors

that scream of suffering, then it's wail a prayer in sound.

In the meantime, people's faces inquire of me, "Who do you think you are?" I respond
with a *sadhu* persona, which is all they know. "Take me to ISKCON," they say, and we
all bow down

to the GBC

but I keep my soul

while singing a sonnet

of the Hare Krishna mantra.

* * *

4:25 a.m.

No candles burning last night. "I am neglected," the guru said to himself. Then he
consoled himself: "It is better this way." I would start demanding that people serve me. I
would think I need things done immediately when I probably don't need them at all.

In "Prarthana," Narottama dasa Thakura laments that he does not reside in Vrndavana.
He laments that he is not attracted to Lord Caitanya's pastimes, and he claims his heart is
harder than stone. He is not attracted to associate with the Six Gosvamis. Aye,
Narottama, your lament leads us forward. Let me feel my own shortcomings, my petty
faults, my lack of greed for the Vraja life.

Lately I have been thinking of devotees whom I initiated and with whom I have little
or no connection. As the names accumulate, I wonder what it is "what's going on. I
recruit a few new ones who still think I am relevant for them, but the fact is, for many I
am no longer relevant, or never was. Some are not even practicing Krishna
consciousness at all, and some practice casually. In those cases, I understand why they
wouldn't want to deal with the spiritual master. Others, however, continue their Krishna
consciousness, yet have little to do with me. I'm not going to run after them. Still, I think
about it. I don't live for their convenience and they don't live for mine.

It's hard to write. Instead I bite at a hangnail or play with a piece of paper. Did you know they painted the walls in here orange? I can't file a complaint against the Department of the Interior. I could say Udall is to blame, or Gerry Maggan and the office of High Coutter "the place of French words. This is how to avoid writing, she said. read a book, fall asleep in a nook, and write down a less-than-a-minute dream fragment.

Enough. Look smart. Stand to attention. Salute the stars and stripes. Don't forget who you are and the need to be a hundred percent devoted. It will soon be Govardhana-puja.

He was ironic without Socrates, although he didn't know much. He knew how to give a simple lecture and how to draw a few stick figures on a pink background, however. He also remembered names of a few disciples.

Sir, when you go to the Caribbean, will it be rich? Will it be summer? Warm? Will you have something to say? Yes, I will mount the pillow they provide and say, "I have come here from the North and West to bring a message of hope and cheer."

"Gosh, Fred," said Usa, "are you really serious about taking to Krishna consciousness?"

"Yes. I may not get my head shaved, dearie, or require you to wear a *sari*, but I think I will start seriously reading these books in the evening instead of . . . "

"Then what will become of me and the children?"

"You may all engage in Krishna consciousness along with me."

"And if we prefer not to?"

The stage is set for yet another domestic drama. Will Fred take to Krishna consciousness and leave his wife? Will he be able to convince her to become a sect member too? Will the ladies of the local temple win over Fred's wife to the life of devotion to Krishna? Stay tuned and find out.

* * *

He gave me mint tea. That was enough. He's giving the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* class today and we will not have our usual business meeting. Then I will be on my own and that's all right too. It will be all right.

* * *

Swami controls his senses.

With women doesn't stay alone.

All people are one to him in spirit.

Money is okay, but he doesn't slave for it.

I worship him as a rep of Krishna.

Now that this one's over, thank God you're painfree or pain-filled. It doesn't matter: just thank Him in your bare feet and take a rest.

* * *

5:52 a.m.

Starting to think about what to carry to the Carib and the U.S. "which container for the earplugs, which pens, what to ask them to get for me in the U.S. No, dig in here. I still have a month and a half left. Of course, I can't do much in a given day, but try to read and write. I'm no Merton diarist.

Oh, radicals of writing
Swami kind, Swami tough
great general, you
don't do wrong.

Tell them what we may do in the West outside Vrndavana.

Householders *can* discover Goloka Vrndavana in their homes. Vrndavana is not inaccessible, but it takes consciousness. Some say you have to live in a holy town like Vrndavana, but that's not true. Wherever you are, that is Vrndavana. Yes and no.

The truth of haunting melodies. Just a few notes from the heart sets a tone. I walk in wet silence to the shed. Yes, I'm going to go out there after breakfast and the rest and draw with paints and crayons. I'll also read a verse or two from *Bhagavad-gita* and just try to be alone with that.

I have no radical writing today, nor any radial tires, and of course, no radio. Just a radiator that doesn't work.

* * *

8:25 a.m.

Like clockwork I develop head pain each day after coming back from the walk. Today I won't walk and perhaps I'll be able to avoid the aftermath. And it's too dark to read in the shed.

Prahlada is teaching his schoolmates that the soul is within the body. I read two verses and purports. Krishna, Krishna lead us on.

* * *

I'm Sure Glad (A Little Walk)

& I

Lead me on Lord. It's Sunday and
we should be in Church but
here we are instead at the train station
Reading an agnostic book.

No, those days are over. I am reading Prahlada's teachings
to his friends and walking in the rain.

O head wise, don't visit me today, okay?

Worms out wiggling, ready to cry
in their season as I can pray
on any day. That's the way
it is.

* * *

II

Yesterday "forget it, I suppose, or drag it up if you have to "any sadness or lethargy, those moments "but Krishna asked me to shake it off, so I did.

Maybe if I walk real slow and easy, no pain will bother me and I'll taste the air of a pleasant outdoors. Amen.

* * *

O Krishna, I'm so testy as I conjure up *maha-mantras*. I'm no mystic "don't even try for it "only want to serve You,
the Supreme mystic,
the best.
I pray for time
and hope,
a melody of blues.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

Krishna the Supreme is the cause of both big and small souls. We know Him through His energies, both in this world and through His spiritual energies (pure devotees) in the spiritual world. "Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both the origin and the dissolution." (Bg. 7.6)

It's unseasonably warm and sunny after three or more days of rain and constant overcast. My head is finally clear after three days too. Pain is temporary, always. Devotees come and go to the island. Bhaktin Alexandra says she is inspired by many Vaisnava gurus. Prahlada penned up one of his goats in a small ring that was once used for training young bulls. Today I claimed to have discovered how to edit my improvisation poems. Who discovers anything on their own? Actually, Krishna is the origin of everything. He is everything directly and indirectly "the goats, the literary ideas, the music, the sunlight, the water, and yes, also the pain and wrongs.

You know, now that I understand that, I haven't tried to become a better or sharper *Bhagavad-gita* scholar. I have gained a certain mellowness perhaps, some kind of self-satisfaction, as I tend my own project and grow older.

The Absolute Truth is the Supreme Person, the cause of all causes. Knowledge of the Supreme Person is the only way to attain liberation. He is the smallest and the greatest. Srila Prabhupada so confidently quoted this verse, "*Mattah parataram nan yat . . .* There is no truth superior to Me." (Bg. 7.7) I quote it here on a mild day. That's what I use my right hand for. My tiny brain cannot comprehend the full extent of what that means. There are so many things we cannot know about Krishna and about this world. We really have very little power. We don't even have control over our own deaths. We come and go like flies, like seasons. We live a little longer than insects, but that's no great achievement. Still we defy Krishna's existence.

"Krishna is the taste of water, the light of the sun and the moon, the syllable *om* in the Vedic mantras, the sound in ether, and the ability in humans." (Bg. 7.8) Simultaneously one and different.

All these midges cling to the inside of the window pane. The windows are open and it's a nice day, but they don't realize they can leave. They prefer to die indoors. Maybe they think it's warmer in here, drier, safer.

"What can you give to the people of South Africa?" the reporter asked Srila Prabhupada. He replied that he was teaching from the *Bhagavad-gita* the knowledge of the self within the body. If you don't have this knowledge you can't act for your self-interest. People who take the body as the self are like people mistaking a shirt and coat for the person inside. I appreciated what Srila Prabhupada said, although the materialists think he's speaking only "philosophy" (not practicality). Why doesn't he address real, urgent issues? But he does. It takes intelligence to understand the implications of spiritual philosophy.

The reporter then said the masses could not grasp Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada agreed, but said the masses would follow the leaders. *You* become Krishna conscious and help others "it is the duty of the press reporters to propagate it. "Krishna consciousness is active in every sphere."

* * *

4:02 p.m.

Hot one day, cold the next. Men with guns and dogs in motorboat. Bodes ill. Big cruiser out this sunny day. Devotees row the narrow strait humbly under God's eye, the beautiful sun. rusty leaves on island trees. In the shed I mix paints, but the peach seems too harsh, like a wallpaper color. I want something softer. The randomness doesn't seem to jell quite right today. I want it to be effortless, to feel random, yet to have something *right* about it "just the right words blended in. Time to go back to the house.

"Why approach me as spiritual master," Harvey said (to Sue), "unless you think I'm someone special for you?"

"You are one of *many* special for me," she said. "Is that wrong?"

"Twas a nice day. Leave it at that.

In the morning he gave the *Bhagavatam* class and they rowed him back. I saw it all from my window. We began cooking the feast on Saturday afternoons in Allston (Glenville Avenue temple). We were always worried about those teenage toughs. Now only the rain catches us by surprise.

The powerboat cuts the mirrored calm. Krishna chant, flies and bugs and cough in chest. This is an illusion of summer; the cold is actually moving in. It will be dark early.

In this world, he said, pain is illusion, but it is still terrible. That it's temporary and not permanent is the illusion, but that doesn't make it any easier to bear. Unless you're Krishna conscious.

* * *

Such a nice day I'd like to linger, but the collie's yapping reminds me of the time. I can't stay out; the sun will go down. Besides, if I go back to the house, maybe there will be new letter to answer or something to tend to before it gets too late.

You mean . . .

Yes, I could do that too. And besides . . . I can't stay out here forever. Even if death is awaiting me outside that door, I have to go.

You'd chant Hare Krishna, I suppose.

Yes, I would hope so. If it's not death, I'll count my chanting in the morning. The evolution of man, they say. And a bum carries in some rolls of toilet paper. "In a church," he mumbles, and Swamiji accepts.

* * *

A Tiny Speck

& That beat I remember from years ago "
the man played it one way, then learned
something alone
while practicing
practicing
woodshedding
to be better, truer
amid the bugs out there
in the dim light.
It's all right. Here
we have Krishna consciousness straight from the woodwork.
I'm not remiss.
Krishna consciousness comes from the heart. I know that sounds
tired, but I can't throw it out because it's truth.
O happy boy you'll
end in death, so
get rid of excess baggage. Even a small package
can hold you back.

* * *

Love of Krishna in Vrndavana even here in this
T-shirt weather at Geaglum while water-skiers
wave by, gone berserk. Sit back, dazed, and watch. It all fits in.
There is no final thing we have to do because Krishna is truth. I mean,
except surrender.
Look, there's no way I can make this a
brown-sweater-relaxed-in-house-slippers kind of poem.
We are all grown up,
tiny sparks of the whole.

October 19, Midnight

There are many books and authors to consider, but Krishnadasa Kaviraja says if you study them all, you'll find Lord Caitanya's contribution to be the most wonderful. He teaches how to attain eternal life, bliss, and knowledge. Today, we'll read how He wanted to take His tour of South India.

Before that, however, we will continue our reading of Prahlada Maharaja's teachings "his expression of what he learned in the womb from Narada Muni. He says we should search for the soul through *vivekena*, mature discrimination. If a skeptic says, "I searched, found different body parts, but no soul," then we can only remind him that a sober man will avail himself of Vedic instructions, such as can be found in the *Upanisads*. There he will learn that the body has grown on the basis of the soul. A materialist cannot fathom it because he sees only matter. The tiny soul is found only by those who are sober and who have purified minds.

Reaching ahead, I see there are many verses in Prahlada's teaching. I'll have to consider them each carefully.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

I woke up from a dream, not wearing my eyeglasses, and looked up and saw the picture of Radha and Krishna on the wall. There's a desk lamp in the room and no other light. I thought, "Why were you dreaming of going to Staten Island? Why not Goloka Vrndavana?"

I'll be talking in the temple if my head doesn't fog over, about observing Karttika outside Vrndavana. Where is my sincerity? Try to keep writing, keep writing.

* * *

Keep writing even outside Vrndavana. The laugh is on me because my pants were ripped in my dream, and the city was congested and *wild*; no one seemed to know how to direct me from where I was to Staten Island. Pitiful! Because in real life or dream, if I actually reached Staten Island, I'd still be a stranger and lost. There is *nowhere* on Staten Island where I have friends or home. I haven't had a home there in thirty-five years, so why the hell do I dream of it as home?! *This* is home, this ISKCON place. If I could fall on the ground and have people surround me at night with lanterns "they'd recognize me, "Hey, it's Satsvarupa. Take him to the temple." I wouldn't be in ecstasy but miserable, amnesic, comatose, unappreciated. Take him home, cover him with a quilt, give him a warm drink. Friends.

Then the temple president and the local GBC would walk in and say, "You have to attend *mangala-arati* in a few hours, then do this, do that." I'd be without my Madhu and other friends. Still, I could function unless ISKCON had completely changed and people like me were not wanted anymore. Gurus and *sannyasis* out of date. The laugh is on me .

..

* * *

"I was happiest in the Brooklyn temple teaching *bhaktins* under so and so. But my visa ran out."

I was happy on a Nebraska farm.

The Mayavadi swami in South Africa challenged Srila Prabhupada, "With all respect, how can we say that a dog understands he's a dog?"

Srila Prabhupada replied, "Because he barks."

* * *

The mix, the blend, the weaving of colored strands. Do it on your outdoor porch in Bengal or with your pen there in Australia. Learn to write under all conditions "underwater, at a hospital bed, in a temple room, on a Ratha-yatra cart. Try to experience the altered states of consciousness that come when you write in a variety of situations. Then you'll enter the art of the mix.

But isn't that radical? Isn't that going more for writing than for Krishna consciousness?

No, it's writing and seeking Krishna consciousness in each instance.

Oh.

* * *

9:55 a.m.

Did Lord Caitanya chant on beads? Why did Lord Nityananda pick Kala-Krishnadasa to be the Lord's servant? Why is it a qualification that the *brahmana* wouldn't talk? Tell us more about Lord Caitanya. I tried my best within the time limit and with my meager resources. I joked, dramatized, plowed through aloud reading of a long purport, tried to hold their attention.

Who is that fellow with long hair and baggy pants? Never catch him in a *dhoti*. His wife effulgently young "is she pretty? I dunno, I didn't sneak a look.

He reads their minds as they ask their questions. He asserts his own position, claims it's okay to be outside Vrndavana during Karttika provided we go within ourselves. Then he sprinkles a little dew. Did you see that fellow wearing the classic New York Yankee's baseball cap right in the temple room? They chuckled, I gestured, I fell back on reason "but somehow expected more audience response than I received. So foggy this morning the devotees started out from Belfast but turned back. Collie and black cat on the pier. Arjuna started up the Evinrude engine. A dry place for me to sit was arranged. Someone dropped an oar. Jokes along the way, and silence too.

I didn't say, "Karttika is for writing every day, building determination." Little pictures squirt out. How can I claim this is Vraja-bhava?

He asked, "What's the special feature of *Caitanya-caritamrta*?"

"*Madhurya-rasa* "Lord Caitanya as Krishna in the mood of radha, and plenty of philosophy." Told of Srila Prabhupada's explaining to Hayagriva plans for a play about Lord Caitanya.

Lord Caitanya said, "I'll go to South India with your permission."

"Just stay three more days."

This indicates He (and even I) won't be with you always, so you should appreciate whatever time we can share together. Trying to tug at heart strings. That's the point. I wanted more proof that I succeeded. In any case, we accumulated the evidence that Lord Caitanya counted a quota of holy names, *nama-ganan*. Sixteen rounds is for ISKCON.

* * *

12:20 noon

Srila Prabhupada speaking in his room to Gurukrpa and Pusta-Krishna. They're both back into their Krishna conscious practices now and aligned with ISKCON. They were dear to him then and still are. Prabhupada is saying that world leaders are pigs. Freudian philosophy is for animals.

Too heavy for me in my pro-intellectualism? Freud was a bold pioneer, they say. He discovered the royal road to the unconscious in dreams. But yes, he was obsessed with sex. Srila Prabhupada had his number. And Darwin's: "He has accepted speculative ignorance as knowledge." I don't have a problem with that. The whole world is filled with rascals. Pusta-Krishna says Christianity and Islam teach that there is no soul. Srila Prabhupada says such religions are a farce. They cut the throats of animals, so what kind of people are they who lack such compassion? "If you cut my throat how much pain I'll feel, yet you cut the throats of innocent animals "and say you are religious. There is no religion in the world except Krishna consciousness." Do I object? Too smashing? No, it's all right.

As long as I get lunch.

Extra devotees around today. The scenes I like to see, so simple and peaceful and uneventful in a good sense "smoke coming out of the boathouse chimney, the collie running around foolishly, the green, wet acres, the empty lake except for Hare Krishna rowers, the island waiting, Radha-Govinda "and me in my perch, a little longer please, Lord, more writing and reading.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

Krishna is the seed of everything. Krishna is also compared to the root who maintains everything. The pale golden weeds blowing in the marsh in front of this shed. That plant that carried a flaxy pod is mostly gone. I see green, matted wild grass (like the matted and uncut hair of a *yogi*) and pale weeds and rushes right to the edge of Lough Erne.

Krishna is everything, "but I am independent." Krishna says, "Deluded by the three modes, the whole world does not know Me, who am above the modes and inexhaustible." (Bg. 7.13) We shouldn't doubt Krishna's existence just because no one knows Him. His very nature is too subtle, pure, and great for most ordinary persons to perceive. Yet simple, pious people accept God on faith simply by hearing from Vedic authorities. Krishna speaks and we can hear.

I wanted to say more in the temple today about how we can observe Karttika outside Vrndavana, but there was a Godbrother from the Manor sitting in front of me. Did that hamper me? No, it's probably because I don't yet have a deep program for observing

Karttika. I wanted to say that wonderful things can happen at this time. For me, what's happening is my improvisation poems (strange as that sounds "a new writing project) plus the general deepening commitment to EJW and the simple, quiet life. Perhaps that's what I wanted to say "something about the quiet life available at Inis rath-Geaglum. I said very little, and no one asked me further. Let each find a project for the month to help him or her develop love for Krishna. I do feel that we are not left out by remaining behind in the West. "Everyone" goes to Vrndavana for Karttika, and so many are there that they may spend more time socializing than developing their inner lives. I said that, but nothing about the substance of inwardness. For Abhaya it can be writing her book, for Madhu or Uddhava, it can be the Hare Krishna festivals "but for everyone, "Krishna, Krishna."

* * *

4:24 p.m.

Carry more paper towels to the shed. On Sundays everyone on Geaglum goes to the island for the feast. M. leaves for Dublin tomorrow. There's nothing he can get me there to tide my loneliness. The satisfaction of eyes and ears and touch don't quell the soul's hunger. Bhurijana said that (on tape) while I ate the big lunch Sraddhavan cooked for me. Gimlet "can we penetrate? round green things. *Kerela*. Veg-potato pie triangles, tough *capatis*, a savory cake, two chutneys "I ate it all while he explained *Bhag*. 1.1.2 with such dramatic flourish.

My paintings today didn't satisfy me. I knew I was holding back, and they came out as disconnected splotches. I connect them after the fact, by intellect. Bright (too bright) question mark-shaped splashes of ink. I'm fading with the daylight, and my hands are splashed with color.

* * *

Getting Into My Way

& He knows the way to do it best, a muted horn like only He can play.

I am on my own. Those dreams,

dreams bring me back

to places I don't want to go, not

Really. I struggle helplessly and can't get out.

And so I wake.

Because my momma didn't teach me "

and my father neither "no spiritual science.

Leave *behind* that past, Swamiji says. Don't bother

with it. Rather, mold your life

and become perfect

Is this an ideal? Like as if I can say,

"Now I will remember Lord Yadu."

Yes, like that. You can say. Prabhupada says.

Don't be prejudiced by critics who claim it's fake.

Try to express something of your own, like that muted horn

tasting signs of the times, feeling the beat
and no mistaking it.

* * *

Sunday gray. Don't waver in your quiet determination.
O Krishna, Krishna, will You take me at death?
I fear I'm not doing my best but this is my life,
the one that I'm living,
all that I know
despite the holes on the side of the page and the white
fields of lined paper, me
a worm on the page
living for this.
O Krishna, You understand.

* * *

Krishna, Krishna, it's about to end in the middle of
Your song. A young boy from Denmark
and another from Ireland, and I don't know what
it will be like to grow up like that,
each isolated in self-conception
and never *sure* Krishna
loves you. You twist-shape the
philosophy to mirror your unrest and
end by saying only,
I do love You, Lord, and I want
I want
I know "nothing of what I really want.
Only Goloka. Please take me
away from me and those painful next lives "
at death at least let me
Remember You."

October 20, 12:10 a.m.

Prahlada taught that the soul is always distinct from the material body. The spirit soul doesn't have to enter temporary bodies, but he does so out of ignorance or forgetfulness of Krishna. "When one is Krishna conscious, he can realize that material existence, whether one is awake or dreaming, is nothing but a dream and has no factual value." (*Bhag.* 7.7.27, purport) This dream called material reality is full of pangs (pains). The suffering is real, yet not real. We can wake up from it and live in the spirit soul's reality. Finally, this means taking our spiritual body in the spiritual world and thus rid forever of the ignorance of taking one body after another. "Without the mercy of the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, one continues in ignorance and is thus subjected to material distresses in various ways." (*Bhag.* 7.7.27, purport)

* * *

I spoke yesterday of Karttika as a time of inwardness, and hinted that such inwardness could be attained in the West as well as in Vrndavana, if we . . .

What? Make vows? Eat no sweets? Light a candle each night? (I didn't last night because Anandamaya was here to measure my Krishna Deity. I took rest late too, and those are my excuses. Oh, and I had to wash the pots because M. didn't . . .)

Someone asked, "Isn't the West for preaching and Vrndavana for *bhajana*? Isn't preaching the *only* reason we stay in the West? And isn't it through preaching that we can make our Karttika observance even better than the Karttika they celebrate in Vrndavana?"

O Krishna. Today they're holding a gala ceremonial wedding at the temple, and the couple's nondevotee relatives are attending. That's preaching too.

SK quoted Martin Luther in *For Self-Examination* as saying that real faith is demonstrated not by writing a book about it or by thinking it over in quiet hours or even by preaching in a church. Rather, real faith is demonstrated by preaching on the streets. Kierkegaard confesses to his readers that he's too weak and pampered to make this sacrifice. He says he will at least work in the field of deepening inwardness. That strikes me as true of myself as well. Yet unlike Kierkegaard, I don't just apologize and hang my head. rather, I claim such deepening of inwardness as a preaching field. It's a great challenge, although different than the challenge faced by the preachers on the street.

* * *

Almost I Prayed

& Sashay onto a dance floor with a pretty girl? Oh no, drop her at the door.

Many

a romance shattered

E. B. White said

he couldn't dance "

too nervous, sweaty, and the girl

only a dream anyway "

too many pimples and him

feckless, romancing

yourself, in love with your own early days.

Let the horn player tell all.

* * *

High school dance bands in a decorated gym.

Crepe paper sags from the ceiling.

I told all that.

* * *

O 'Trane, yours truly felt the romance of
material life that you players celebrated, but now I say
this life also, this Krishna conscious life,
can feel unique romance,
Real love. If man so loved the world "
Christ so loved the world too "
God felt it and gave us Christ, Krishna came
as Lord Caitanya, gave us Srila Prabhupada
our chanting beads and dance
beyond the dance floor.
Krishna's mighty chant
brings down the house
a love supreme.

* * *

O 'Trane, you lipped
your horn of plenty and evolved
to a driving art form
formless
trying for love of God
not far away.
You played it for the nightclub audiences, didn't
forget the people, our suffering, starting with this fool.
People listened to your sonnet.
"I want to talk about You," you said.
I stood alone, no rhythm.
O Krishna, You killed KeSi and danced with girls
pure spirits
mischievous You
and Your devotees in love
committed "
I heard it from another sonnet.
I am old and almost I prayed.

* * *

4:14 a.m.

Prabhupada's voice comes across softly, not strained through the loudspeakers. I like it better that way. He's saying that we have given up designations. Unless these Americans did that, how could they be willing to associate with a poor Indian and live in India? They have given up material designations. We accept now that we are the eternal servants of God and that you, our spiritual master, are the representative of God. Sometimes we harbor doubts and still think in terms of designations, but we want to

return to our rightful place as the servants of the Lord's devotees. It is because of their good hearts that people want to become Krishna conscious. Those hearts allow them to subordinate themselves to the supreme power. They have faith that this person will not mislead them. They have faith that their experience with Prabhupada will be different than following the wrong leaders.

I can write until I collapse. When I get pulled away from this, trust that I will have time to reflect on what's happening. Even if I only have a minute, that would be enough to say good-bye, to leave off the tapes that haven't yet been copied or the poems that haven't yet been edited. I'll never complete it all. When I am pulled from my body, I hope to simply acknowledge the fact and let go. I hope to feel I have done what I could in my allotted time. It was not perfect, it was sometimes impurely motivated, but because the process itself is purifying, I made progress. My writing conveys Vedic truth, so it is valuable simply for that reason.

I found a good angle, me and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. He opened the Beat bookstore City Lights, and I became president of the Boston temple and then a member of the GBC. Oh, I climbed the ladder, true, but I also climbed back down. I fell off the roof and walked away to tell about it. Now I wake under a portrait of Radha and Krishna on a swing. During Karttika I and hundreds of devotees are left behind from the goings-on in Vrndavana. I console myself that it's all right because we can think of Krishna wherever we are by using everything we have and everything we are for His pleasure.

"You look thin," said Li Po, "from agonizing over poems." Tu Fu in the big straw hat was involved, wandering, returning to his family. Again war separated them and again they returned after years of suffering.

O pip-squeak, June is the fall of everyone. The rhythms know what they have to do. We fight off words that come to demand that they're necessary. I don't know what that means either. It's a person choosing to do what he wants or to do what he thinks best.

Is he going to bring the mint tea? There are seven ways in which we can preach by writing and seven ways of success for highly effective people. Eight brass hoops to jump through too, and golden rings to pull on as you go around the carousel. They vied for the best author of the year. She won both awards and he won none. He was saddened, but was allowed to sit in on her readings. The river has no friends, he said.

Did he learn anything through all that?

I'll let you know later. Hare Krishna. The lamp post quivered when he was drunk, he said. Was he going crazy? Is it a disintegration of the poet when he can no longer write essays or make a transitional sentence? Is he now postmodern?

Leopards and dandelions "craziness comes from Krishna too. I was going to say that forgetfulness of Krishna is no excuse. Put it in your old kit bag with you and go to the lake's perimeter where he found the rosewood box with the manuscript inside. I don't know what will surface, but I ought to open a store and sell wristwatches and Prabhupada's books.

* * *

6 a.m.

Dream fragments. Some tyrant marching through town. Big sideburns. We say to each, "A bullet could kill him." Some of us are rounded up to hear his speech. I'm on an honored stage with others, like reserved seats to hear the tyrant. Other representatives of his are speaking first. I walk out. I try to go downstairs to reach my office, but the ways are blocked. Workers are talking about the new philosophy of the new government.

In another fragment the police venture out in a car on a lake which has a thin layer of ice. They are approaching our side of the lake. We hope they will sink and finally they do.

Prahlada says Krishna consciousness dissipates ignorance by burning the root cause of material life to ashes. rain lashing outside behind the curtains.

Don't think in a way contrary to your constitutional position. The recommended process is the one personally explained and accepted by the Supreme Personality of Godhead. "That process is the performance of duties by which love for the Supreme Lord develops." (*Bhag. 7.7.29*)

Don't worry, Krishna says. "Do not fear." Take to the process of surrender to the guru and perform devotional service under his direction. This will lead you to develop attachment for Krishna. It's a tall order to offer the guru all the respect one would offer the Supreme Lord because we don't even offer much respect to Him. We see the guru more than we see the Lord. Don't find fault in him.

"But what about my intellectual honesty? What if I *see* faults?"

Consider them material and don't hold onto them. See his perfection as he is fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness. Whatever we have in our possession should be dedicated to the spiritual master. This doesn't mean we have to destroy our possessions or abandon our talents. Live fully for his cause and his devotees. This is a disciple's duty, "but the offering should be made to the spiritual master with heart and soul, not artificially to gain material prestige." (*Bhag. 7.7.31, purport*)

Also, use discrimination when associating with devotees. A *sadhu* must adhere completely to the standard of behavior. If he is initiated he should be offered respects, prayers, and service befitting a Vaisnava. "However, one should not associate with him if he is not a fit person."

Who is fit? Am I? Are you? What if I just don't like someone? Is that a kind of discrimination, or is choosing our association based exclusively on someone's behavior?

* * *

Syamamayi, who lives about twenty minutes away from Inis rath with her two daughters, wrote, "By Krishna's will I gave out three books in town the other day. Sometimes when I go to the local shop the school boys mockingly call to me, 'Hey Hari dude' or, 'Hari Hari Krishna.' They really get into it. I feel happy about that and hold my head up."

* * *

8:30 a.m.

The devotee controls his senses. But when he hears the *lilas* of the Supreme Lord he experiences various bodily ecstasies, hairs on end, tears, voice falters, "dances . . . sings loudly . . . cries. Thus he expresses his transcendental jubilation." (*Bhag.* 7.7.34) By restraining on the material side, he's able to release love and ecstasy in the spiritual way. If you invest your "*bhava*" in material pursuits, you can't expect to conserve it for pure Krishna consciousness. Some persons, unable to experience spiritual *bhava* and not able to wait for it to manifest, opt for "feeling alive" in any way available.

* * *

Free Karttika

& Fast and frenetic word descriptions "it's a forbidden road as in a dream or movie theater: why should I be *here*?"

Because I didn't want to be with brothers in the pressure cooker
behind a wall and
Resorted to this alone angle
and pooped out.

* * *

Got a medical cert
from the bass tune-in
but now he's restless and
full of desires.

* * *

Narada is not what we think and our thoughts
are stale, limited in ways
you can't even imagine. Yet they are what they
are and Krishna is in all things.
So I'm in Vrndavana, writing in the *goSala* to cows being wildly milked
their calves heaving nearby "India "catching the senses' eye.
I'm in Selkirk, alone reading Robinson Crusoe school books.

* * *

I come from a place I know not, the Krishna conscious fountain of youth
and I really do remember Vrndavana but being
there means
a perfume salesman will beg for baksheesh "you rich s.o.b.
He's got your number. And the mice come out from behind dictionaries when I light a
candle. *That* Vrndavana
too is the way to go home.
rassler, this is my free-time in the mind/ are you a bopster?/

No, I turned down H. because I knew
I couldn't trust him.
It was always true. Now these last songs.

* * *

Ha, the piper's hot.
Artists not afraid of the poor house, but nurses his head
in private. Esther Brook, Esther Williams, bemused boy allowed "and
Bhagavata dasa and wife seeing me, a *sannyasi*, tripping down the stairs with
my *danda*, never swam the Ganga but gave
an awright class.
"Thanks for Karttika."

* * *

This is a recap of the time I was in Kapoor Square, the
Riot "behold pic visions of words and words with colors
and Christ appeared on the wall.

* * *

Calm down and tell us. I want to confess I sat quiet and
coughed a little the slightest
disturbance I noted with
a geiger counter, a
seismograph
tears of an earnest poet measured
in private during a Karttika theme.
He still doesn't venture into Irish towns, no one yells at him, "Hey Hari dude!"
Hey, Momma Ducks, you held your head high despite it, expected some town elder to
intervene but no one did. Our rosary Club was glad . . .
O Krishna, love of You is found in the brambles of a Sant Colony field where ants
live and crickets, and kids play ball.
O Krishna, You lifted that brown earth, but if anyone now
gets a headache and fever, they take him to the Rama-Krishna Mission Hospital
and if he's delirious and falls asleep hearing (through iron-decorated grates) the
pigeons, parrots, monkeys, bell,
sonorous bass fiddles, the *bhajan*s again and again "
not, "He's polluted himself with non-Vrndavana sounds," pronounced
the *kaviraja* psychic, who could read it on his palms "
a cascade of sound, feet walking on *parikrama*, smell of hogs, gutters, houses, fires,
then see Govinda Maharaja walking, no politics in the black gook running through the
gutter. The untouchables pick it up and pigs squeal. Whitey's here with his money and
wants to

get out, stop coping to live, feeling the heat, the memories, the old demands, the pain.
He forgets to light his candle
and can't go down, so spends
nights alone in a Karttika observance
in North Ireland.
O Krishna, I improvise these words
looking for mellower dramatics
than what I really feel.
O Krishna, Hare Krishna
I chant extra in Karttika
with sorrow, I have, although
it's hard
to understand."

* * *

11:55 a.m.

Even in this lifetime a devotee can finish his material activities, "for his body is spiritualized." Then he achieves the Lord's lotus feet. These are special words and concepts: "spiritualized body," "shelter at His lotus feet." We can't understand them through material analysis. We must accept them as they are handed down in *parampara*. How much we realize depends on our spiritual advancement. We can accept these statements on faith even before we experience them, however. Even as a neophyte we may assert, "My body is more spiritualized than it used to be. I'm taking shelter of Krishna's lotus feet at least to some extent."

* * *

Wedding today on the island. The "Share" barge brings the wedding guests across the lake. I see it from my window, but no one bothers me. Gray-black crows cruising, walking. Their heads and wings are black, the rest of the body gray. They strut around on the grass under the dark sky and in the buffeting wind. According to *Bird Life in Ireland*, this is the hooded crow.

* * *

3:05 p.m.

Devotees are dear to the Lord. I've read of great saints (Therese of Lisieux is one) who felt long periods of dryness, even doubts. Thus they felt no bliss. They felt their exchange with the Supreme Beloved had gone underground or into a night. They believed in it despite the lack of immediate favors. I have to be like that if I don't feel Krishna or Srila Prabhupada's presence. Forge through on beads and in reading "and in writing "and don't live for the luxury of the sweetness of spiritual reciprocation. Besides, *some* reciprocation is always present because spiritual life is solid and real.

The doubts come and say, "Maybe this is all illusion. Where is Krishna? This is sectarian. How could Krishna be God "or *anyone* be God?" They say, "You are

following this now because you're afraid to give it up. You are afraid to face death without your hope of a next-life reward. You don't *actually* believe. You've been doing this ISKCON thing for so long that you're also afraid to try something else. Where would you get your room and board? You're too old to change."

Rant on.

In *Bhagavad-gita* 7.17 Srila Prabhupada asks if surrender to Lord Krishna brings liberation, why don't leaders and teachers do it? He replies that the true leaders, such as the *acaryas*, do accept Lord Krishna. Those who don't accept Him are, according to *Bhagavad-gita*, *duskrtinas* and *mudhas*. The faithful and learned accept Krishna. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna. There is no way out of this.

* * *

3:55 p.m.

It's dark. The ferry-barge just unloaded its wedding passengers onto Geaglum. I'll start back soon. My head isn't clear. God, Krishna, Krishna "the day's marks go from wet ink to dry. Always I pray to read and write longer "tomorrow, early. Grateful always. Pray to Him. "Just a boy "He's true God."

* * *

4:23 p.m.

Met three people on the way back from the shed. First Prahlada, and we talked about his living in the boathouse. He says it's small in there, and that everything is gradually developing for him here, but it's all right. I said, "Gradual "that's the mood at Inis rath."

"Very gradual!" he quipped at the slowness of the place. Anyway, what does it mean to be fired up? Who is really moving? Does it mean you make a lot of money, grow a big crop, and end up with something to show for your labors? He let me go.

Then I met Sacinandana dasa, a devotee from the Manor who has some affection for me. He said the wedding was a success. Twenty-five people who would never come to a temple shared Krishna consciousness before the Deities, honored *prasadam*, etc. He asked if I stay in my room all the time. "Do you get up at twelve?"

"Yes."

But he jumped from one thing to another. He said he heard from Manu that I was sick, that I was shaking and that my kidneys . . .

"What?" I said. "No, that was just an acute attack." It came off confused. "I only have chronic headaches."

Afterwards, I thought I must have left him with the impression that my health is all right, which isn't true. Also, I had heard that his own health is poor, and I forgot to ask him about it. I did speak a little about his spiritual master. But the subject changed so many times that nothing reached any depth.

Then I met Bhaktin Mary, the sister of the woman who was married today. She was smiling, happy as usual.

Head in vise, throat coughing, back in this room.

* * *

Prying Out His Secrets

& If you let me
I'll tell you how I rolled off
and became a devotee/ it's all in my books.
Don't drag me now into a ditch.
"Do you just sit there in your room all the time?"
I thought he'd drag me out or criticize . . .
I just stay there and hear the soul beating
drums to a bass line
left-over bombs of Philly Joe Jones.

* * *

6:20 p.m.

Prahlada says there is no difficulty in worshipping the Lord. Srila Prabhupada says the Lord is compared to the sky: it is vast, yet within our reach. Hear of Him and touch Him immediately. By comparison, going to hell requires endeavor. If one wishes to go back to Godhead, however, it's not difficult (*Bhag.* 7.7.38). Sounds easy, so let's try for it. All we have to do is to continue our present course. Don't claim we have no relationship with God.

"To go back to Godhead, one may live alone anywhere, in any condition, and simply sit down, meditate upon the Supersoul and chant and hear about the Lord."

We have to go up and down to higher and lower planets, taking new births. I hear it and act with the life I have now. Srila Prabhupada taught us to live our present life responsibly, always thinking of our permanent good. He also taught us to do something to help others come to Krishna consciousness. The movement should be maintained, despite the difficulties. We live with lies and suffer for that, but push on anyway and try to be true.

(As I write, Janmastami's small boat with the outboard plies over the water. It's dark and he's got a headlight. The boat looks like a toy. He's got a friend who came to see him from Denmark. They're crawling around together in the water on this chilly night.)

October 21, 4:10 a.m.

Prevented from rising at midnight by head pressure. It may be something in addition to my usual syndrome. It may be connected to the chest cough, which may be connected to a flu "which is definitely connected to the mortality and misery of the physical body. The night's dreams were also under the influence of bodily pain.

In one dream, I was with Prabhupada. He said, "You are like a monarch. You have taken a comfortable service. I haven't seen any change in you since you took *sannyasa*. You live comfortably, you say, because of your illness." I drew closer to him in order to explain that I was really sick. I also wanted to hear further from him. Gradually, the image of Prabhupada began to resemble the image of my Godbrothers, and I became skeptical.

In another dream, I was with an old school friend in uptown Manhattan. I had a very painful headache, even in the dream. I tried to explain to my friend how I can't live on medication when the pain comes because it creates too many other problems. I said it's a pity for the sufferer that he cannot always relieve the pain with medication. Suddenly my friend turned into a woman, representing the pain, and said, "Am I truth but ugliness to you?" Then I woke up.

* * *

10:28 a.m.

Took an Esgic over an hour ago, but the headache has taken its own course, changed from a top of the head vise to a right-eye growing root. I took the Esgic only after the headache had been going for at least nine hours, which lessens the chance of it working effectively.

In pain and unable to write. I often imagine writing through pain. I fear it will aggravate the headache and prolong it, so I prefer to wait. Let the silence on the page tell its own story.

* * *

12:30 noon

Somehow my head finally cleared, and I headed out for the shed. On the way I met a bunch of little boys, led by Bhadra's son, who shouted, "*Haribol*" and ran over to me. I embraced the two youngest ones, then continued on. A little later I met Prahlada walking from the direction of the shed. He was carrying a shovel. I asked him what he'd been digging. He said he's been planting trees. He said he has planted 15,000 oak evergreens! He has also planted chestnut trees and what he calls acorn trees. I mentioned how I had read in the bird book that whatever deciduous trees we have in Ireland today were planted by people hundreds of years ago and that we should be grateful to those people. In the *Vedas*, tree-planting is considered a pious act. He laughed and said, "Then I'll plant plenty of them!" I laughed too and said, "I don't know if I'll be around to see those oak trees," but we both felt the goodness of his doing something that even he won't be around to see developed. He did it for the pleasure of the devotees in the future. After such a heartening talk, I arrived at the shed, hoping to plant a few seeds of my own.

* * *

The day has cleared now "a buffeting blue sky and (for now) sunshine. Don't need to turn the heat on in the shed. A handsome cruiser passed and all power to it.

O blue, dark, rippling cold, there's no more summer this year. read a little *Gita*.

The whole art of successful Krishna consciousness is based on submissive aural reception. I think I used to hear submissively, and I wonder how I achieved it so easily in those days. Within a few months, a small group of us came to accept what the Swami and the *Gita* had to say. We accepted the descending process of gaining knowledge, then accepted everything that went with it "including the concept of multi-headed demigods, "A planet of trees"? Yes, even that we believed. Undisturbed by doubts. Had I really

attained that so early? Has it been damaged or lost? Has it simply dwindled? At any rate, I must work in the present.

Fourteen thousand trees "just think of it. All that goodness. We don't know what will happen. Someone may come and destroy them later. It doesn't matter; we plant them anyway and pray that they will be offered to the proper person and accepted. We hope in this way to save our own necks. Nothing wrong with that. If we read the *Bhagavatam* hoping to become devotees, that's not selfish. Unless we become devotees, we can't help others.

Krishna places a curtain between Himself and the nondevotees (Bg. 7.25). That explains why most people can't see Him. He chooses not to manifest Himself and He has the power to "hide." Scientists and others busy themselves with Krishna's inexhaustible energies. They can't even figure *them* out, what to speak of finding the person behind them. I take heart from such statements as to why knowledge of God is so esoteric. It's meant to be that way. Yet Lord Caitanya has opened the gates and make it accessible for anyone who desires it. It is not God that is covered, but the cloud of *maya* covers our vision.

* * *

3:55 p.m.

Bitter chestnuts can't be eaten. They're only ornamental, he said. She is going to write a book on gardening in the form of letters to her spiritual master.

"I like the way you carry yourself." Back to Virginny. Just shy and joshing. Now, now, watch that eye. It'll flare up again if you sit in the sunlight.

No more birchbeer here, or rye or rum, thank God. No more . . .

Monk prays, and they laugh at him. Devotee preaches and they scorn him and threaten to attack. SK said he was not brave enough to preach on the street, but at least he was honest and worked on himself in private. That's something too; if we could read *sastra* alone before God, we would be impelled to act upon it.

* * *

A Favorite Theme

(Just told Syamananda that I had a long headache and now that it's over, I appreciate life. He said, "Yes, we don't appreciate it when we have it." Someone said that the night Srila Prabhupada passed away.)

* * *

& Oh, sunny day
I'm just a listener from my
own place
oh, life You gave us
and You'll take away
we can't argue with You to
give us a few more years

to plant trees
sow them
here. Be good and when
you go the parson he says,
"I never met such a pleasant man."
He blew his horn was
ornery "only human "but
made music that's mine
short, shorter time
each to each and
saying *haribol*.
He tricks people into taking *prasadam*,
believing we're not a cult
and then carries himself to the lecture hall.

* * *

There he wails "improvises
like he did before, finding
something new in his heart "
attributes it to God, imagines,
sublimates
Nietszche
spills over and reforms, repents, sings
sing on the stand, asks
half-sincere, "How was your evening? Mine
was trouble."
How much *sastra*?
How much devotion?
Then off to bury him amid
flies and toads and big field mushrooms the
cow asleep on her side
belly big with Irish grass,
dreaming sentimental.

* * *

hey, this *Gita* verse says He's covered by a curtain!
Like an actor He reveals Himself to the pious, to
whomever He wants, He's the cowherd boy few know.
O Uncle Sal, only the Pandavas
and a few others
know.
Maybe a few on the *parikrama* trail.
Lord Caitanya gave us the chant to make it easier to know Him
than to go to hell.

* * *

After this, will they play Charlie rouse and Monk at my wake?

October 22, 12:10 a.m.

Mail arrived yesterday "approximately forty-five letters plus periodicals and newsletters. I don't want to get into a total marathon to answer it as much as I'd like to get through it. Answering mail is also a good excuse not to read the *Bhagavatam*, right?

Prahlada is teaching his friends what he learned from Narada. It's hard news for the materialists, how their endeavors are fruitless and are the cause of their own suffering. One *should* give it up; burn all desires at the root. Nature's law is that "as soon as one begins acting according to his plan [for material success] his life of distress immediately begins. Therefore, one should not be ambitious to dissipate the unhappy conditions of life, for one cannot do anything about them."

Practicing devotees often become confused about this, or waffle it when they explain it, because we are not always sure if our activities are spiritual or material. Should a householder work to earn money for his family? Isn't that part of his devotional service? Can't the *sannyasi* and ISKCON leader make plans and then use things in Krishna's service? Shouldn't he, for example, try to change the public's low opinion of the Hare Krishna movement? Srila Prabhupada states, "One should work for self-realization, not for economic development, which is impossible to improve." (*Bhag.* 7.7.42, purport)

But the lines aren't always clear. We know we're not supposed to be like penniless *babajis* who simply sit at the side of the road to beg while they chant Hare Krishna all day. We are supposed to maintain the worldwide Hare Krishna movement, or live according to our capacities and according to time and place in our *prabhu-datta-deSa*. Still, we don't want to become hypocrites or materialists by mistake.

" . . . the perishable body embraces the living entity and then leaves him aside." (*Bhag.* 7.7.43)

Things related to the body are finished at death. "Compared to the ocean of eternal happiness, they are most insignificant." (*Bhag.* 7.7.45) This is clear and convincing. Give up material attachment and work for Krishna consciousness and the goal of eternal life.

People work hard to attain sex pleasure, and thus they prepare themselves for another material body. We cannot expect anyone to know this; the world is in such ignorance. No one knows about transmigration, or at least they don't accept it. Therefore, whatever they do is ignorant of their real self-interest. Merely becoming a speculative philosopher or psychologist won't liberate us. To solve the problems of life we must approach a spiritual master.

* * *

Endure With God

& A guy with letters to answer, duties, fears ("they're out to get us sect members")
"takes a few minutes, to live

sounds in sad time "turn to God.
O people why do you torture each other?
Why can't we all be decent?
It takes strength to endure.
Bittersweet we had to leave Prabhupada he left us
to go on our own, bereft.
O merry widow, is life still joyful?
Prahlada said there are no enemies, and yet
we fight.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

Letters, voices. I couldn't answer them all. I'm not the best, only one of the rest. I lost my voice in hoarse reply. "Dear so and so, you have cooled toward your guru." "Dear so and so, you have imbalanced to hide the truth." Mother Teresa died in Calcutta and Acyuta dasa was asked by the Italian Consulate to translate for the press. Got good pay for it. I'll ask him to tell me the story.

Angel foment "his mouth trembled. The baby that was sick is now well, but the husband has fallen spiritually ill. Say something, guru!

Okay "please be like Narada. Speak truths and ruths. Be humble and jumble, ride out on a wavelength. "I'll be in New York City when you are, in December. I have to go there to establish my website."

Sva-jati "speak only to those you love. Navina-Nirada Prabhu was here and said, "The main ingredient in book distribution is surrender."

Uncle House collapsed; his roof fell in. "You wrote," she said, "in *My Search for Books*, and it was exposed that you as a real person are ordinary like a neophyte devotee."

What do they expect? Is it so ordinary, though? Can't they see I was a Salinger lover and hip to Rilke? Oh, a devotee is an old devotee in need of a bath. Put a pig in a poke and you'll be happy. Stay away and you'll live dreams.

Ticonderoga pencils *ki jaya*. On May 2nd the Amherst center will guest His Holiness Bedelvers France of Utah, New romance. The topic will be "New Age Desert Spirituality; Is It Possible in Las Vegas?" He is just back from a tour of the Orient.

"Dear incense customer," said one letter, "we are back in business at the same low prices." I coughed in remembrance.

Then I was satisfied
to fall asleep
having exerted myself
for Thee.

* * *

Dreamt you could have a wish fulfilled. I asked my mother, "What is your wish?"
"To get fat," she said.
"What?!" I said.

"That was my wish for you," she said.

"But what is *your* wish, mother? To join Mother Theresa in heaven?" (Heaven for Acyuta dasa making \$200 a day.)

Oh, you jester, you. Dreamt what else? They were getting on a subway car, the devotees. Suddenly I remembered that I'd left a lot of money exposed in the station. I ran over and collected it before the train pulled in. Not enough time! "Give me a book bag!" I yelled. They gave me small bags. I began stuffing them with the money. I missed the train.

The mail: he went to Vrndavana. I replied with the basics, but couldn't squeeze out some extra personal touch "too much like squeezing toothpaste out of an empty tube.

We are happy in Nelcro, but I don't think I want to marry the girl to whom I'm engaged. Any comment? He's getting slack and she's hard to get along with. Ordinary questions get ordinary answers. They viewed the radio show where the guy was about to be executed and then preached to *nama-hatta* members (read the enclosed essays).

Oh, please, I'd like to be better "and you?"

* * *

Morning walk. Dew "or is it frost?" on the grass. Another shiny moment. A bare tree looks ready for winter. Krishna's picture. Sunshine cool. Thinking when I go back to house I can't avoid answering mail with it all sitting there. It would be better if I could pore over each letter and compose an answer with care. But that's hard. I feel my energies are best used otherwise, facing my own blank page. Please forgive me. Still, I should be prepared to say something to each of them, even if when I say it there's an inner grimace on my face. Of course, when they hear this they will be horrified: "We shouldn't write him letters. He doesn't like to answer." I *do* want to answer; it's my duty. It's just the volume, and sometimes the contents. Every letter is a sensitive life, and it's a lot to take in at once. Who could do it justice?

* * *

10:45 a.m.

I calmed down and did a better job on answering the last of the letters. One at a time, speaking to them, letting them know that I don't want to be entangled in material, relative things. I tried to cut through the verbiage, both theirs and mine so we could both focus on who we really are and how we can practice spiritual life.

* * *

3:10 p.m.

Those who want to come to Krishna are described . . . I write down some versions of what I read. read and softly pray. Partly I just rest the voice that just answered all the mail while I'm out here in the shed. I have one more assignment left from that mail pack: I need to write an essay on "The Meaning of Vyasa-puja" for the Vyasa-puja book of a Godbrother. His disciples requested it of me.

Somebody has lost his faith, somebody wishes to be initiated by that other guru, someone wants to debate the *rtvik* issue, someone is innocent, someone has low self-esteem and wants to know what to do about it. What do I think? I think grass and lake water.

The, "greatest violation of God's law" is to give up your "constitutional position as subordinate to God's law." The two young sons of Bhadra and Sile ran toward me down the puddle-strewn lane. The oldest called out, "Hare Krishna! Hare Krishna!" I turned to see him and his toddler brother in the rear, their uncut hair framed by the sunlight. That boy is so young he can't run very fast, but he lives in an atmosphere of love and peace. The boys wear only light sweaters, whereas I wear a bulky winter coat.

"Hare Krishna!" I raised my arms. The boy stopped short, not sure what to do. Yesterday I hugged him, but I don't want to do that every day. I say, "You left your brother behind," and then walked on, relishing the feeling of *japa* beads running through my hand.

"Those in full consciousness of Me . . . can understand and know Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, even at the time of death." (Bg. 7.30) They never forget Krishna. "Naturally [they are] thus promoted to the planet of the Supreme Lord, Goloka Vrndavana." The devotees don't care for the different processes of elevation; they go directly to serve Krishna. "In such a situation [they] take pleasure in hearing and glorifying the Supreme Lord in pure devotional service."

* * *

4:40 p.m.

Nature is beautiful in October. Met Syamamayi and her daughter picking blackberries, "the last of the year." Her daughter's mouth was stained with them. Tangy clean taste.

* * *

What A Friend We Have In Jesus

& *They* say he's the only one. *We* say there are many incarnations and Krishna is the source of them all. But they're right, we have such a friend in that holy Lord's son who goes with us wherever we go. O Lord, Krishna.

* * *

In Trinidad yard next door they
wail out their reggae
while we argue
"What a friend I have in him."

* * *

I thought of him in previous days
(oh, what a friend)
I worried and he solaced me
and God gave me strength
and saved the day
although I was prone to think,
"What have you done for me recently, Lord?"

* * *

O Lord, I sing to You
and beat it out.
They say
they've got bebop "a
friend in Jesus
and he complies being all-good
in his contemporary way
although they like to consult him
in his original robes and beard
as in the Gospels.
For me I've got the simple boy
Krishna
and His music, which I am not
yet worthy to hear.

* * *

Mob Job

& Hurry, it's an emergency joke
external battle raging with
European governments who can
prohibit *seks*
(they didn't
close ours). Stand up for rights, 700,000,000 Indians are on our side. "How many
troops?"

MobJob

Then I forgot the raging battle because
I was supposed to meet to
grimly decide how to preserve my ashes
but I slipped out, saw
visions of a lady with a white plastic bag
picking last berries on a mainland
near a lake in Northern Ireland.
No, no, this is not form. You get your ass into that meeting.
(No, I won't.)"

October 23, 12:10 a.m.

Prahlada said, "My dear friends, everything depends on the disposition of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, so depend on whatever He wills. Worship Him in devotional service."

Try to see and feel the presence of God at all times. The Lord's will works in our lives in every circumstance. Consider suffering and cruelty, and like the geologist, find the gold of Krishna's hand even in the dull earth. Prahlada says, "The Lord is the most dear, and He is the supreme controller."

We deny that Jesus Christ is the only son whom God sent to save all souls. Let's say Jesus did die to save us all and that he has succeeded in his mission. We also take advantage (I hope in a devotional sense) of his act of redemption. We are connected to him as we are connected to all pure devotees. We do not ignore his teachings, but follow them. Some liberal Christians would call us "unknown Christians," or followers of Christ, but we do believe that God the Father sends numerous "sons." That doesn't diminish the greatness of Christ. rather, it magnifies God's greatness. Prabhupada has brought to our attention the Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, and His instructions in *Bhagavad-gita*, where we learn the science of the eternal soul, about its transmigration, and about how the soul can be liberated from matter. We also learn of the Lord's pastimes.

Srila Prabhupada also emphasizes the importance of preaching, "because all living entities without Krishna consciousness are suffering the pangs of material existence." Christ, too, was a preacher.

* * *

4:35 p.m.

"You're going to be chastised, young man," said Murray to me over the phone after he read my book. Was that *Sagittarius*? I'd mentioned in that book that he lived as a poet supported by his wife, who was a high school teacher. He said, "You're going to be chastised." I thought, "What does he mean? Who will do it? Does he mean I am getting away with murder living as if the details of other people's lives were simply grist for my writing mill?"

Well, he was right. I was chastised by the material nature. I was chastised by the red hen of *maya*. I was played out. In the course of human events, Ben Franklin frowned and Tr and FDr and McKinley and my father all pounded their fists on tables while Albert Ayler screamed through his saxophone and I said, "I can take this. This is the music of cacophony to express our times."

"I'm not a white man," Murray said, although he was basically Caucasian. He considered himself a Jew.

"I'm not a white man either," I said, although I had white skin and an Irish-Italian ancestry. What did we mean?

We meant . . . They read *Memories* and said, "I could write a book like that and maybe I will."

Well, it wasn't so easy. You have to be a genius and have someone who will print it for you.

You are going to be chastised, old man. You'll not get away with all these wisecracks and jokes at the expense of the ISKCON gurus, yourself being one of them. You are expected to play the role of an advanced *sadhu*, worthy of blessing babies at home programs. If you sometimes expose yourself as just an ordinary Joe, then we will take action against you. We'll throw you sixty miles from Jagannatha Puri to Alalanatha or even further to upstate New York or into the jungles of Berbice.

No, please, anything but that! Wherever I go, just give me my microcassettes or at least my pens and paper.

He sent his only copy in the mail, but it got lost. All right "justice. It finally happened. My effort lost. I console myself that *bhakti* is eternal.

And so, dear friends, at this late hour of EJW, while on microcassette 12, I hereby name this volume "Blackberries." It's already a leitmotif. I saw the shiny berries when I first arrived. Sita was picking them. Yesterday I saw a bag full of them in the hands of young Abhidheya. *Blackberries* it is, the berries of my youth and my old age. The American berries were juicier than these North Ireland ones, but there's something special about these ones surely.

One thing about any blackberries is that they are not to be pawed into like a bear, the juice smeared across your face and mouth. They are to be offered first to Prabhupada and Radha and Krishna. Yes sir, I like them berries, but only as *prasadam*. Then I will *not* be chastised, young man. rather, I will be spared the worst (although that doesn't guarantee entrance to Goloka Vrndavana at the end of this life. Committed too many offenses to expect that.)

O Krishna, we live as if we don't think we will die. We don't will one thing only and thus our hearts are impure. Willie Mays is not going to bat for us. We have to stand at the home plate ourselves. The pitcher has a mean fastball called Death. We can hardly lift the bat we're so out of practice. Will we really be spared?

O Krishna,

Krishna,

Your ankle bracelet has slipped off. A Russian devotee made his way to Vrndavana and joined the twenty-four-hour *kirtana*. The person I was going to initiate decided I was too distant, so she is going to another guru. The bottle is marked, "For malaria and Alice in Wonderland; eat me," and we get smaller and fit into reticules or even vacuum cleaners. In Vrndavana it doesn't matter, as long as we are there mingling with the dust.

Yudhisthira is out west and doesn't chant his rounds, but he is a good person. Other persons who were with the devotees in their childhood have become state troopers, Air Force captains, lawyers, and sweeties and stevedores. I don't think any are improvising musicians.

O Krishna, Krishna, I had better end this before I slip off the log.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

This is the time when I grow sleepy. All that good stuff produced at Saranagati cabin
"surely it must . . .

Silver gowns
guru's frowns

he ate the moss and deceived me when he said, "I love being alone for long periods.
Madhavendra Puri is my hero." If Madhavendra was his hero, how come he got married?

Heavens, Prahlada dasa said. I'm reading Ernest Hemingway. He said, "I'm a writer,
but I have low self-esteem and figure I'm uncultured compared to you and your
knowledge of American writers."

I responded, but he couldn't keep awake to hear what I said.

* * *

Billy Boy

& Are we allowed fun?

Yes, but it's got to be controlled.

We can paint a fence for Krishna or
watch old-time *kirtanas*.

* * *

A serious mouse ran out of
the house at Gita-Nagari
he remembers 'cause
he jumps at little rodents
tail and furry body moving.

* * *

A nervous line ex-Navy man
doused Burrough's conman
in Jack's Jacksonville.
We'll get you a cabin
she said but
didn't know I'm
dead to that.

* * *

Listen, Krishna consciousness is too serious for you.
Where's the horn?
Billy Boy, she's a
young thing and cannot stand

her mother.

* * *

Emily, I wish you wuz more religious or straightforward.

God we love

Catholic said I dig Hinduism and it can

help in New Age but I

converted to Catholic

Christ is the only way.

We say no

Krishna is Billy Boy

and *raso vai sah*.

Relax until you get a headache and I say to you we can go on this muscle until the end.

Snails and bass bow.

* * *

My master

my Swami is the one and

asking when I'll get serious

and see aura out the corner of my eye.

There is no way but *bhakti*.

* * *

Then the whole thing climaxes

in just a trio "this life.

Cry "Krishna!" so He can understand.

* * *

10:12 a.m.

The time is late or early, depending upon how you look at it. I have head fog. The Wicklow community has broken up. The diary of the old fellow is in progress. They asked for an accounting.

"Oh yes, well, you see, I traveled a bit, but because of the pain, stayed mostly here to write and read and chant."

What we want (they said) is an account of money received and spent "in detail. We also want to know about your dealings with women. And we want to know about your *sadhana*, when you chant your rounds, how you follow the morning program, read Prabhupada's books (and what else you read), and so on.

He obliged them with a merry fist on the head and shut the door in their faces.

Now judge for yourself.

* * *

12:26 noon

Happy life "is it an illusion? "It's a big world out there," said M., when I told him that the mail contained the usual: pending marriages, pending divorces, people waning in spiritual life, quarrels, suffering.

Merton on solitude:

The monk searches not only his own heart: he plunges deep into the heart of that world of which he remains a part although he seems to have left it. In reality he abandons the world only in order to listen more intently to the voices that proceed from its inmost depth.

(*The Climate of Monastic Prayer*, p. 35, quoted from *Be Still and Know*, by Michael Ramsey)

SDG on solitude:

"I wants to be alone."

Mert read of a Kentucky hillbilly living for fourteen years as a hermit in the mountains "because of all the wars." Mert said he was a contemporary desert witness even if he didn't know it.

P. wrote, "Do you sometimes wish that Prabhupada spoke more in favor of inwardness? You know, Prabhupada was a man of action." I almost felt as if his remarks were a trap; I didn't take the bait. Srila Prabhupada gave plenty of encouragement for an inward life. He was not a man of action like Napoleon or Churchill; he was a fierce preacher supporting inwardness "the soul within the body. Outer good works were useless, he said, so we should just chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

3 p.m.

Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that at the time of death, bodily functions will be disrupted. It's doubtful we'll be able to chant, "Thus disturbed . . . one may not be able to remember the Supreme Lord." King KulaSekhara therefore prays . . .

My taking Esgic is based on a different principle: I seek relief now so I can go on with my service *while living*. Living is different than dying. Living means to get your work done before you die. Still, to *endure* pain is to practice for death.

Heat on in shed. When I'm away from the house, M. rehearses his songs with his new amp, even introducing each song with a little speech. He leaves tomorrow for five days. I'll enter more silence. I should try not to make such a distinction between a painfree day when I get a lot done and a day when a headache comes and I'm disrupted. I have already used up my Esgic quota until Sunday. Let pain come, then, without dread.

"remembrance of Krishna is not possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Krishna consciousness in devotional service." (Bg. 8.5, purport) Practice if you want to achieve success at the end. "Therefore, one should constantly, incessantly chant the *maha-mantra* Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama

Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare." There may be many impediments, but one should tolerate them as a tree tolerates and continue to chant Hare Krishna.

* * *

Everyone's got their ecstasy, their duty, their opportunity to serve and remember Krishna, and their pains. I met Anandamaya on her way to work. "Every day," she said she goes.

* * *

4:04 p.m.

Jiva jago. They have the green barge operating again. Now it's carrying a tractor from the island to the mainland. Ponytailed man and son onboard. Last blackberries on bushes are small and tight. Probably won't be picked. A sieve full in my kitchen to tide me over the alone days. Doesn't everyone have little sparks of good? Hope never asked a crumb of me.

"You cannot follow . . . Don't go beyond me . . . Where is Karandhara?" The drummer speeds up and can't follow Srila Prabhupada's singing. Using water in jar to dilute the paints, I get a new effect. I'm always looking for that. Why not, as long as it's not weird or sinful or too hard to do. There are infinite shades of color and infinite combinations of those shades. Why work always within a small spectrum?

Boat, little figures at a distance "a landscape painter keens his eye to capture it. Monks paint crucifixes.

Sir, will you be able to come to the island for the haircutting ceremony?

If you have puffed rice, yes. And cucumbers in honor of our memory of Swamiji.

We can have. Would you bless the baby's choosing of books or money?

No, that I cannot do. I have to go through my tomes. I'm very busy because I'm running out of time.

* * *

Now it's getting too cool here again. Twice I heated the little space. This time I won't. I'll just go back to the house. Don't worry, my sister Madeline is not there (why *would* she be?). I doze in some part of my brain and think back over forty years. How long does a man live, anyway? A disciple said of Prabhupada, "I placed his body in *samadhi*, but his body is ISKCON" "seems too corny a rhetoric, and I don't like the image either. His body is itself. "Comparisons are odious," a haiku person said.

Three little boats at once. Late October is special. On Saturday night, the clocks go back. In *Self-Examination*, Kierkegaard admits he can't face the Word of God alone, and he rebukes those who pretend and cover the Lord's words with scholarly interpretation. He says it's fearful, the surrender which God or Christ asks of us. Better to say we can't do it and to ask for forgiveness than to lie to God, and worse, yourself.

* * *

4:52 p.m.

The verse and Prabhupada's purport state that everyone, "Even birds and lower animals and sinful living entities can revive their original, eternal spiritual life . . . [in] *bhakti-yoga*." (*Bhag.7.7.54*) They can join the *acyuta-ghotra*. The only goal of life is to render service to Govinda and to see Him everywhere. "When he sees a tree or human being, the devotee sees them in relation to Govinda." Govinda is the original source of everything. So ends the chapter of Prahlada instructing his friends.

* * *

Only The Aficionado

(White oars dipping into lake as I write this. I'm here, inside this body. O Govinda.)

* * *

& Govinda is the cause of all causes "
don't stop me now and
I'll tell you
there was once a monk on an island who read *Srimad-Bhagavatam* in red-headed
solitude and asked, "Is it wrong if I see Krishna in me when I speak?"
"Hey, don't be *that* confident."
The bit is in the mouth
of the horse
the cannon ball is not to kill
but to explode in ether
showering flowers
over calm boats rowing and
we are to tell of Govinda from the text the
cause of all whom
devotees see in the book.

* * *

I'm on the right track
to the Artist Supreme.
I give it my love
and I get it back
not sad lifts on a sea of sound
terrific from God
those virtuosos
we know from the *Vedas*
practitioners
learning to blow from the spirit
beating through their blood.

* * *

And out comes sound it
can only come from God.
Only an aficionado knows, not the prof who can't hear it, the
Rocker says too fast, maybe too
intellectual, not sexy enough,
driving home but who
wants to go?

Those looking for the screaming Gospel roots of
God whompin' "

"Take a break, will you? Man, where'd you get all that energy?"

I spotted a song from my past, can't remember my roots, don't
Read to criticize, but that horn
this horn.

Govinda.

October 24, 12:12 a.m.

I noticed my knee-jerk reaction when reading the mail. I found fault with leading
Godbrothers, and envied the contributions they are making, cutting them down for no
good reason. I know that aside from this *aparadha*, I do have an abiding respect for
them. I admit to my faultfinding tendency, but know that it's something superficial. I
need to scrape it off.

Prahlada's preaching was effective and the sons of the demons took his instructions
seriously. If you hear from a pure devotee (*sat*), "those instructions will be very pleasing
to the ears and appealing to the heart." (*Bhag.* 7.8.2, purport) Yes.

* * *

Dreams and schemes. Don't be ashamed of repetition, nagging yourself for spiritual
improvement, retaining old habits, or perhaps you should be ashamed. But more
important is to be honest and to maintain hope in Krishna's mercy.

When HiranyakaSipu realized that Prahlada had changed the boys into devotees of
Visnu, he became extremely angry and decided to kill him. HiranyakaSipu demanded to
know where Prahlada had received the power to defy him. (Here HiranyakaSipu shows
his frustration. This is the first time he has ever met someone who is not afraid of him. It
is a crack in his own power. Still, he is confident that he can kill Prahlada.)

Prahlada replied that there is only one source of strength for all. We have control by
the strength of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

* * *

Reading scripture alone. Why don't you face it?

I do. I admire it, I study it repeatedly. I at least "go through it" again and again.

But what if I can't attain deep attachment to *Srimad-Bhagavatam*? I mean, the kind of
attachment that makes me swoon whenever I hear it?

That will be my misfortune. Still, the *Bhagavatam* is my rock, my anchor.

* * *

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble, such is a witches' brew. Eye of newt, heart of frog, remember? They applauded when the witches did their scene so well. In my dream last night, a movie set with all the actors, famous and insignificant, and a variety of disruptions. What does it mean? Life is a stage? Where is the reality? We who take part in the illusion are condemned, even if we are recognized as dedicated artists. I don't know what such dreams mean. Illusions within illusions and trouble undertaken for no good cause. The grand show of material life: "A player who struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more . . . it is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury and signifying nothing."

* * *

Our Lady

(Hurry along. Time is brief. Life is full of incongruity, but allow your heart.)

* * *

& When jungle drums began and drowned the chatter of fools
and materialists, our lady, the supreme Lady
Krishna's Radha "the Truth.

* * *

There's no lady in *this* world but
she who carries a bag of tricks, grows old
on us, then dies.
Cleopatra was excellent for a
while until her salad days were over. Then she
too had to become a crone.
A crone's okay but I'm just saying . . .

* * *

I read the book, Tenth Canto and auxiliary by
the Gosvamis.
In Mathura I heard
from Srila Prabhupada I heard
about the *gopis* . . .
Now where is my spirit?
Our Lady, the Catholics say, to address the mother of God.
We say Radha, the Mother of *bhakti*.
Fine, but what do we *feel*?
I feel hope for painfree days to sing always the glories
of our Lord and His Lady in Vrndavana, to

pray, and receive blessings and more.

* * *

I feel the hard-centered blackberries on my tongue and in my mind
I feel the snake of time spurring my need
for quiet home-growth.
I'm a late-autumn berry reaching the last.

* * *

So although I feel out of joint sometimes
not quite in synch
I play on the white page stage
through the lines I gambol
and ask the Lord to allow me time
to be with Him in His names.
O holy name
there'll be a time
when I'll grasp my red beads
and there will be no more pretending.
Whatever I have I won't need to avoid
and I will call out to Our Lady
alone, leaving my tentative connection
to this world behind
not to seek nothingness but
eternal variety in Krishna.
Please give me that chance.
This poem was brief it
was
Krishna.

* * *

5:12 a.m.

That's his trip. Let me tell you about *my* way. I get up and dance. See? And I sleep after I eat. I don't go out and walk if I think it will bring on pain. I eat *iddlis* and *dosas* and doesy-does, but not after lunch. After meals I sing sonnets.

But the toast will be served to the mayor as soon as possible. The Clintons will dine with their hats on and shake hands with Hare Krishna devotees, although they won't know it at the time. The Mad Hatter will be defrocked. Matthew Fox in reverse. Hitler's campaign was thwarted by his madness and mistakes, but only after he almost conquered the world. They blame God.

The knower of the Absolute Truth (someone said) cannot be compassionate toward others because He thinks all He can do for them is to shove down their throat what He knows is best for them. There could be another version of that. Within the Absolute

Truth there are gradual treatments that the Knower can give them. and He *is* merciful and human to people on different levels.

The knots, the birds, the fisherman's wharf. He said, "Can I go there without my wife?"

"You instructed someone not to wear pajamas, and because of that he caught malaria."

I replied, "Wait a minute, I never told him that."

"Yes," they insisted, "here is the letter you wrote in 1978. It is stamped with your signature. If you did not actually write this letter, then it is yet another scandal."

Confess

to whatever you said.

* * *

The Detroit Tigers no longer exist, and there are no more dodo birds or Brooklyn Dodgers. Anyone who lived in their bodies and have now departed from them "those particular combinations are gone from the earth along with yesterday's date, which is October 23, 1997. While that date was going by, what did you do with it?

I practiced the art of free-ride,

I listened to speeches by my spiritual master,

I did *not* listen to the voices of worldly moralists.

Lord Caitanya kept walking when the devotees fainted. He remained neutral. He is not to be judged by their partial view. He went to give His mercy to other persons. He had to leave one set of people behind in order to do that, no matter how hard they prayed for Him to stay.

Gone with the wind. Now I am slowing down. I want to say normal things such as people say when they are up at bat. I can write wholeheartedly and not be a wise guy, cynical or ironic. I can speak earnestly, because I mean it.

I am reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and have just completed the first three verses. Now we will speed up and learn the story of how this book came to be written and how it was spoken the second time. We will hear how Sukadeva Gosvami came to hear it and all these things will be developed one after another. I will stop here and ask if there are questions or comments.

Yes, someone had a question. He wanted to know why Sukadeva Gosvami stayed in his mother's womb for sixteen years before taking birth.

I answered that well and went home on the train.

That's all right.

Then the whole thing whirled around like a cyclone "all the houses and people, men and *jins*, angels and birds and beasts (who were eligible for *bhakti*, according to Prahlada Maharaja) got whirled up as when Trnavarta swept up Krishna, but this was the cyclone of time. The only objects on earth that remained undisturbed were the house of Sat's archives and Prabhupada's books. The attendant there chuckled and said, "It's a miracle indeed." No one else thought it was funny. The survivors assembled and marched on the archives building intending to destroy Sat's books. The archivist was ready for that. He said, "I expected as much." He quickly selected a small number of books, placed them in

a rocket, and pressed the button that sent them hurtling from the silo, heading for the nearest safe planet where such written works would be preserved and better appreciated.

But it turned out the writings were meant for earthlings. Demigods were not interested in such childish nonsense. Neither could they understand the local references or the slang.

When Sats heard this, he consigned himself to his fate. Decided he had been relieved in order to better chant Hare Krishna.

But perhaps he was not kind enough. That was held against him. And he was not single-minded. He had material desires. He was given another material body in order to fulfill them.

No one should think that the author was perfect. He was the first to admit it. Still, he asks you to please chant Hare Krishna. Please lead the life of a Krishna conscious devotee. We can't do better than that. Stay free of sinful existence. Don't miss the point.

* * *

Swami is the name of the
controller of senses. It doesn't mean
he controls his wife. When he went home
and met their men group he
said I have become a swami, meat
is not allowed. Instead of being
well-received the swami was thrown out.

* * *

See? He said all right to the Supersoul
in his heart and was not afraid of heaven or
hell, wanted only to dovetail in service,
an ideal swami.

* * *

8:33 a.m.

M.'s getting ready to leave for the Hare Krishna festivals in Swansea and Cork. Anandamaya just drove off in her car with the collie in pursuit. Arjuna and someone else are rowing over to the island. I'm at my desk reading. Prahlada Maharaja tells his father to be equipoised; the only enemies are the uncontrolled mind and senses.

HiranyakaSipu demanded to see the Supreme Being whom Prahlada always described. "A devotee who has developed a genuine love for Krishna can always see Him everywhere, whereas a demon, not having a clear understanding of the Supreme Lord, cannot see Him." (*Bhag.* 7.8.12, purport) HiranyakaSipu announced that he would now kill Prahlada: "Now let me see your most worshipable God come to protect you."

The Lord first made a fearfully loud sound, then appeared in the form of a half-man, half lion. HiranyakaSipu realized that this form was meant for his death. (God can do whatever He likes.)

* * *

12:02 noon

Slowed down by the right-eye sensation. "He" says you can't rush on with your projects right now. If you like, you can pay attention to "me," to pain. See if I speak to you. In any case, I can't read right now, or even write a poem. I can't ignore the sensation. Neither can I subdue it with a pill because I have already taken my quota this week. Pain is my natural state.

A leaf rippling, then turning, twirling over and over like a baseball card falling through the air.

* * *

2:55 p.m.

Pain, but not hurt. Not able to work yet, and not able to think that pain isn't a waste of time. Forced to face limits by bodily pain, yet wanting to open to the transcendental possibilities of Krishna consciousness.

A boat slowly going by. The brick boathouse sits quaintly, faint smoke rising out of the chimney. Don't hold your breath. Today is a special day, although I am curtailed, and the experience goes beyond words. reminds me of that book title, *When Worlds Collide*. It's all up to Krishna.

The door opened, I heard it. Then it closed. Someone put something inside. I waited and then opened my inner door to see what it was. It was a plastic container filled with blackberries. Good. I needed some more to see me through the four quiet days ahead.

I can't see Krishna everywhere as Prahlada did. My eye pain is a symbol of my inability to see with eyes anointed by the salve of love. It limits me, shrinks my day, and I must learn to accept it "to see Krishna even there. And in Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare uttered, uttered.

* * *

5 p.m.

The Lord allowed HiranyakaSipu to slip out of His grasp. The demon thought, "He's afraid of me." Srila Prabhupada said when demons seem to enjoy in this world as if free of karma, it is Krishna giving them a chance to play. They are destined to be killed by the Lord, "but just to see the fun, the Lord gave him a chance to slip from His hands." (*Bhag. 7.8.27*, purport) Keep this in mind when you see the demons appearing to get the upper hand. We devotees (or at least those lined up in the devotees' camp) may become anxious, but we must learn to tolerate.

Then the Lord grabbed him for good, placed him on His lap, and "very easily tore the demon to pieces with the nails of His hand." As Lord Nrsimhadeva killed thousands of HiranyakaSipu's soldiers, Srila Prabhupada says the Supreme Lord could and may kill numerous atheists in the world today. This indicates mass destruction. Demons should be careful and become faithful to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We who claim to be devotees should actually become so.

* * *

Two adolescent girls, both wearing their hair in long braids, walk in the grass. I hear the sound of the grass swishing, then of six geese flying. It appears this headache is ebbing. Sneak in an improvisation.

* * *

The Source of Peace

& This minuet in *mandira* park, I
dance in Krishna consciousness,
happy for the day when I could
wait through pain then come
to sing this simple song.
O God of the twilight,
as a Lion-man, You ripped him good.

* * *

Alone, and happy for that. I work
and love to.
They spy me dancing
on a lonely quay,
the sun's last rays glinting
and swans fly by.
With Yeats and company
I sat and watched the calm waters
and knew
God in all.

* * *

Krishna, I'm not centered but
want that old peace, calm
You've given me ability to
worship You as calm center-
giver,
but I also know You're the
killer of demons.

* * *

This loose goose
this tight-as-drum
oath on beads he rose
back to Godhead

borrows
writing to make poems
for the mighty movement called ISKCON "gone to a center in Alaska yet? Detroit?
Wyoming? All over. There's no lack of sound."

October 25, 12:12 a.m.

"Because of His roaring, all the elephants in the world began to cry in fear." (*Bhag.* 7.6.32) If you get caught in this material world, even in your so-called innocence you may live to suffer and scream at a time like that, not knowing what is happening. A devotee would know enough to turn to Krishna. The varieties of miseries force us to remember Krishna and our purpose in life. There is no happiness here.

Many wonderful things are all part of the Supreme Lord's *tejas*, His illumination or brilliance, and all the wonders of creation become insignificant when compared to "His personal, all-defeating transcendental qualities."

The Lord sat on the ex-king's throne. "Because of fear and obedience, no one could come forward to serve the Lord directly."

* * *

There's a limit to how many blackberries you can eat. Actually, I can eat very few. I'm already belching from my breakfast quota. We try to enjoy and what do we get? Everyone has plans "the big hedonists and even the hermits. I plan to read, then write brilliant poems (*mama tejas*). I plan to enjoy solitude and a fruit breakfast. I plan to taste the quiet. I already know I'm likely to get a headache, but still I persist in planning for happiness. Floating downstream in the water like a twig.

* * *

"HiranyakaSipu had been exactly like a fever of meningitis in the head of the worlds." (*Bhag.* 7.8.35) The demigods were celebrating, and now they came forward one by one to offer obeisances and prayers. Lord Brahma prayed first. He said, "No one can estimate or calculate Your prowess and wonderful influence." It's good to remember that we can't understand the activities of the Supreme or that of His empowered servants. Srila Prabhupada: "Who can understand how Krishna is benefiting the entire world? The Lord is addressed as *duranta-Sakti* because no one can understand His potencies and how He acts." (*Bhag.* 7.8.40, purport)

* * *

Song To Nrsimhadeva
& Hand writ or smoke "
it comes from Him
no one knows His prowess
His extent. It's good to declare the
Unknowing and

I don't mean the "Cloud" of mystic darkness.
Be sure it's Krishna
although still we don't see Him
can only hear and talk with fellow mystics of
the *Bhagavatam*.

* * *

Coming before Lord Nrsimhadeva in the palace one by one they prayed
in fear and obedience, told frankly of the relief they felt from
the demon's death.
Thank You, they said, for freeing us from pain.
Oh, how we suffered!
Now we want to enjoy a peaceful life filled with variety.
Big men are only little fellows in the flood, all swept aside by time like the soldiers of
HiranyakaSipu under Your nails.

* * *

Singing for the faithful, the whole world may become so
if I could bewitch them
please them
with an incarnation of sound
because music hath charms
and powers "those songs for You
who knows the
emotions we feel? All are
due to the Supreme One and
may it please Him
may His will be appreciated
by us so we can say
it's good
this Krishna in my life.

* * *

The times when we thought we'd
died and finally did,
bluffed that we were pious only to enjoy with ourselves as center,
making a melody around ourselves "
this world is such a sorry place
but for the incarnations of the Lord
and His faithful servants,
mighty devotees and simple ones too.

* * *

O Nrsimhadeva, You have entered our lives
with grace even
in simple ways, major and minor
the chords of
Your names, chanting this morning,
the power we feel is ours
for awhile, then our lives thrown
by You through time. "

* * *

5:45 a.m.

Who is odd? The black man or the white? And why do they fight? I am neither black nor white. In Krishna consciousness we are no longer our bodies, nor subject to that misconception. Still, birds of a feather flock together, and until we find our like-minded friends, life can be difficult. I don't have so many of those types of friends. We each have to select our own society, and sometimes, if there is too little of such society, we may seek our friendship in the books alone. That's better than quarrelling.

Kiddos gain kudos for fast-talking. He wrote an essay against infamy. They will slowly form a good relationship with people who influence the government so that they can take the Hare Krishnas off the list of cults which might be prohibited by the Brussels Parliament. It is slow work. It can't be done overnight or by bribes. Also, the good reputation of our movement depends upon each of us and how we move in society, how we pay our bills, etc. The book distributors meet the most people, so they are the most responsible. I am not important because I don't meet anyone. But when I write books, then I become an important link in Communications. My books ought to be preened and prepared with that in mind.

He offended almost everyone he met by his irascible nature.

Now the class will assemble to take the merits for *bhakti-Sastra*. He will be chastised for making sly remarks. He is an offender plain and simple, although he offends by speaking indirectly. He pleads insincerity and incoherence, but we cannot judge by such good intentions; we have to judge by the results.

O ravenous ravens, they say, you are not serious enough for our interests. Your judgment floats down on cushions of feathers. The heavy Jagannatha Deity was lifted onto cushions and then broke the padding. Cotton stuffing came out with a crack! Did I tell you this before?

The children wrote their impressions of India. He said, "My dad sat on the shore of the ocean at Jagannatha Puri and a wave came and knocked off his sunglasses. Then we went to the place where Haridasa Thakura dance and chanted." What can a child know? The pilgrimage is lost on him. Maybe later he will at least be curious to want to go back. He may have collected a *bakula* leaf and saved it. I didn't ask. Anyway, I can't speak for children. If I attempt it, they will most likely get angry with me when they grow up. I would prefer to live now and be forgiven for whatever I have done in the past. I think they call that amnesty. I'll offer it to others too. We didn't know the implications of what we were doing back then, yet we tried somehow to maintain our faith in Prabhupada's

order. We did the best we could, or maybe not, but we did it anyway for Prabhupada. We were ignorant. Brother, please admit the same about yourself, and by forgiving one another, may we then proceed.

Let's draw straws and see who should go into the kitchen to prepare breakfast. It looks like the artist will have to go. While he's away, we will revolt. No, I'm just kidding. We will talk on the difficult verse that says the guru takes whatever the disciple collects, and if he doesn't call the disciple for a meal, the disciple should not eat that day.

Some find this difficult to understand. Why? Srila Prabhupada explained it by saying that we don't follow this today. We simply chant Hare Krishna.

The principle is to follow the guru's orders as best we can. Kierkegaard too is all for honesty and our admitting when we cannot follow. He is also interested in remorse. The *Vedas* teach us not to bluff or to be impersonal enough to consider Vedic knowledge simply objective, as if it has nothing to do with our practical lives. Did you know that Krishna is speaking to each one of us in the scripture? Can we take it that personally?

The parts and parcels will arrive slowly. We have to be patient. Tomorrow we will speak on *avirbhava* or something like that, which means "blessings". There will be other topics too. I haven't yet prepared myself for that. In fact, I am *too* prepared in a superficial way, and not prepared enough in the deeper sense. I must be prepared to surrender if I expect to speak from the heart.

* * *

8:58 a.m.

Lord Indra says that the demigods were under the gloom of HiranyakaSipu's reign, but "now by Your presence, the gloom and darkness in our hearts have been dissipated." The people had forgotten the Lord's original instruction to practice *tapasya*. He now reinstates it.

I was thinking to tell someone "a Godbrother or someone "about Kierkegaard's words in *For Self-Examination* regarding how to study scripture. I'd say all this emphasis in ISKCON on higher education, curriculum, degrees, study, usually focuses on an objective reading of scripture. What we need is a subjective reading whereby a person reads alone, thinking whatever God says is addressed to him.

But who am I to speak of a reading reform like that? My own practice is feeble, not the reading of one feeling the presence of God's Word. It would be a farce for me to speak out as if I'm better. I don't know *how* to read scripture. I could admit that and sit on committees for deepening inwardness, but I don't think it can be done that way. As Prahlada said to his father, *matir na krsne*: we can't know Krishna either by group or individual study. Do we need more austerity? No, perhaps that's not it either. No new vows or restrictions, please. Maybe education in his books with syllabus, etc. is a good thing. It's better than undervaluing his books.

I could make a presentation to a group of ISKCON educators as I did years ago about the inward life of a preacher. In that context, I could go over the points Kierkegaard makes in that regard, the way Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu went over Boisen. Or perhaps do it with disciples. However, so many of them want only straight doctrine. They would be bewildered to see me drawing from Kierkegaard.

* * *

The residents of Pitraloka prayed that HiranyakaSipu was by force enjoying all the *Sraddha* offerings. The demon had taken away the powers of the residents of Siddhaloka. Now they were relieved. The wealth and wives of the Nagas had been stolen by the demon king. Srila Prabhupada says similar disturbances are created now by demoniac governments all over the world. Devotees spreading the Krishna consciousness movement have to face dangers and impediments, "but a faithful servant who preaches with great devotion to the Lord must know that Lord Nrsimhadeva is always his protector." (*Bhag.* 7.8.51, purport)

* * *

Upfront

& Blue nights the sad
time

movement of one soul, danger stalks
you read that in (with your imagination).

Cobwebs on barbed wire "it's dew actually, see the sunlight cutting the fog at 10 a.m.?
Finally we can see lake water.

It's me looking for the clear notes of self-realization,
a tentative approach of higher exploration
notes in woodshed on a hill.

My best moments? Don't be afraid
to look over your shoulder
or to hear the *devas* say,

"Thanks, Lord. Things are in order again.

This demon was a million times greater than Hitler and he ruined us,
but You have restored everything" "
and then to repeat and

Repeat

until I can't bear it
and retreat to vary the sound.

I could

go on
taking a turn to blow some, crimping
cramping

looking for my own style
of driving cross-country to sing
at a festival
to sell a book "

dare I compare?

No, it's just a writer bluesing his wished-I-was-better
on this solo entrance. But
he learned it from his Swami

and wants to present it new
Repeated, but new,
now meatless
sexless
intoxless
accepting dew and sunshine
as God's mercy by which
he's able to eavesdrop on life
drink a little water
work and take his place
with the others.

* * *

Salutes to the late night
and this day
a creature in God's
immensity
seeking
inner wisdom
through His name."

* * *

12:08 noon

This here book is for Krishna conscious persons "to nourish them. We have such a wonderful thing to share. Krishna is all-mighty. We want to realize the truth. If we spread what we learn, Lord Nrsimhadeva will protect us "and the Hare Krishna mantra comes straight from Krishnaloka.

I'm having a clear day and want to celebrate. Be joyful.

Waiting for lunch. I will be satisfied with whatever it is. I know I'm fortunate.

Someone wrote me recently sympathizing with an elderly lady, a disciple of mine, who is partially handicapped. The elderly devotee remarked, "One of these days I may be carted off to a nursing home." The other devotee felt bad that in ISKCON, no older people have security unless they're *sannyasis* or gurus (or family support). I'm in that privileged category who receive medical care. Should I feel guilty? Should I reject it? Work for ISKCON's medical and welfare system? (There is a GBC department, Health and Welfare, but I don't know what they're doing.) Should we send all our old people to live in Vrndavana or Mayapur in the temple?

I'll continue to take the care I receive, but I must feel the obligation to provide something in return. The best way I see for me to do that is to provide instruction and to set a good example myself. Even if that doesn't repay what people have offered me, at least I will have expressed my gratitude for it. It's also best if I don't demand too much, use too much, or depend too much on others. Srila Prabhupada said on a morning walk that ideal Vedic life is neither in the city nor the village but in the forest. A

forest *sadhu* can beg a simple meal, "two *capatis*," and then his day's business is finished. He is free to go on chanting Hare Krishna.

A devotee: "But if we tried that it would be artificial?"

Srila Prabhupada: "Yes."

* * *

2:43 p.m.

Very quiet except for the hammering. Calm "like a mirror. No pleasure boats right now. Sunny, warm Saturday afternoon. Tonight the clocks go back an hour. Flies buzzing trapped inside this small shed. Let us read a few verses about thinking of Krishna at the time of death.

This *life* creates our next life. Our next life is an accumulation of acts and states, not only the last ones. Or say, the last states will be influenced by the previous ones. I'm thinking of the inner purpose in what I do. I eat, but am I serving Krishna, thinking of Krishna? I write ItM poems, but am I serving Krishna in my writing? Merton wrote that he was forgotten "that he did not want to strive to be remembered.

I sometimes say my preaching is for the people of the future, but be careful about that line of thought. I say I want more influence, a bigger sense of accomplishment "I want to please Srila Prabhupada and Lord Krishna more than I seem to be doing at present. "Yes, in the future my writing will be better appreciated." That's what I say, and this is what I mean by it.

I am speaking about me, but each of us has to be humble about the service we are rendering. What about the point that our activities and thoughts in this life create a future life? Are we spending our time closing the doors and windows to this world? I know I'm not. I am learning and using things of this world for my service of writing "my dreams, my "music," the concept of art. But the direct purpose of remembering and worshiping Krishna and of serving the *sankirtana* movement should not be far removed. " . . . the chanting of Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare/ Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare is the best process for successfully changing one's state of being at the end of one's life."

We may think that the best course of action would be to stop everything and to *only* chant Hare Krishna. That's not possible for me, and I doubt it's really possible for many. Krishna never advises anything impractical. He tells Arjuna, "You should always think of Me in the form of Krishna and at the same time carry out your prescribed duties of fighting. With your activities dedicated to Me and your mind and intelligence fixed on Me, you will attain Me without doubt." (Bg. 8.7)

I'm a *sannyasi* and should be free of material duties. Well, I am. At the same time, I'm using matter in Krishna's service. I feel as daring and active as Bhakti-caru Maharaja, who is using the medium of film in his preaching project, "Abhay." Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura wrote a verse about how the *sadhus* appear to be acting like *visayis*, but they are engaged in *raganuga-bhakti*. "One's memory of Krishna is revived by chanting the *maha-mantra* Hare Krishna."

* * *

Trick the mind into thinking of Krishna, reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and chanting Hare Krishna mantra. I'm going to do it. Be active in service and you'll be able to think of Krishna at death. If death comes with only a moment's notice, if we are practiced at thinking of Krishna in our present activities, we will be able to instantly turn to Him, knowing that we are serving Him. Thoughts of Krishna won't be far away. That's the hope.

"Think of Me and chant My names."

* * *

The calm lake. The dull buzzing fly. Last blackberries presented to me in a bowl. They're smaller, but still good. Had them with rice pudding at lunch. No mail today. Clean clothes for tomorrow. If I had enough energy, I'd clean the bathroom floor. Stay close to *bhakti* whatever you do. The curlicues of the unconscious movement of my hand blend with Srila Prabhupada's *bhajana* playing in the background. His words bring out my words on the drawing page.

* * *

4:05 p.m.

Quiet this Saturday night. Was I a Chinese monk in a past life? No, at least that's not who I am now. I'm a *Gita* and Prabhupada man. My address is a room in Manu's house. They don't deliver the mail regularly. This is just a persona.

Sitting around the table with Kierkegaard and Mert and Miles, but then they fade and I am left alone, hanging on to the hope that my intentions will deliver something good. I won't get stuck with this as karma.

A man's got to . . .

Black rowboat across the brief strait. I'll be going to the island tomorrow if all goes well.

I never chanted rounds with devotion. More secrets I can't confess. "I'll teach, but who will listen?" M. going away for the weekend to a Hare Krishna festival.

"You mean you just sit in your room "is that it over there?" Later he wrote me a letter saying he didn't mean to pry.

No pumpkin or jack-o'-lantern, no orange and black crepe paper or cardboard skeletons, and certainly no "trick-or-treat." Glad to be away from that, and New Year's Eve too. But preachers risk. Been over this a thousand times and more.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

The Supreme Lord was angry because His devotee had been blasphemed. Prahlada was fearless through everything, both with the demons and his torturers, and before the unprecedented, fierce form of Nrsimhadeva. Brahma asked Prahlada to please go forward and appease the Lord. Srila Prabhupada advises us also to "chant the holy name of Lord Nrsimhadeva . . . thus there will be no fear." (*Bhag.* 7.9.5, purport)

October 26, 12:35 a.m.

Lord Nrsimhadeva "became ecstatic in affection" toward Prahlada when He saw the boy prostrated at His feet. He raised Prahlada and placed His lotus hand upon the boy's head. By Lord Nrsimha's hand on his head, Prahlada became completely cleansed of all material desires. His heart filled with love. He achieved *brahma-jnana*, spiritual knowledge and was able to make beautiful prayers. "With a fixed mind, he began to offer prayers in love and with a faltering voice." (*Bhag. 7.9.7*)

Srila Prabhupada states that the ability to fix the mind attentively is a yogic *siddhi*. On my previous reading of this verse and purport I wrote in the margin, "I desire this "in chanting, reading, praying."

* * *

6:28 a.m.

Dark out. Breakfast of fruit and yogurt. Get a little more rest before class. Busy clerk, artist, prayer-maker, reader, writer. The soul is within "the real self. That self has nothing to do with outer things. I have to control my mind to make it the best friend. Arjuna said controlling the mind is harder than controlling the raging wind, despite the fact that Arjuna had the strength and discipline of a military man. Krishna teaches us how to keep the mind engaged in devotional service even while performing our prescribed duties. We Hare Krishna devotees who are full-time in ISKCON supposedly *have* no worldly duties, so we can think of Krishna all the time. We don't even have to dovetail anything; we are simply merged in the will of Gaura-Nitai, Radha-Krishna. True?

Maybe for some. But many of us wish to serve, pray for advancement in surrendering, but honestly say we don't know how to achieve *prema*. It seems too much to give up *everything*. Then we dovetail our activities into our attempt to please Krishna and serve His mission, trying to leave behind punch lines and hidden agendas.

* * *

Lax Pax, is he still in Athos, Greece? Corfu? Cairo? Moved to a mountain? On the isle of self-exile? Praying in a simple way, natural, in an empty house, whitewashed?

You can ask your questions.

Today I'll tell them we can be Krishna conscious even outside India, but it requires effort. We must make that effort or we'll be overwhelmed by the heavier modes present in the West and the fact that Krishna consciousness is an insignificant religion here with no support. We're simply allowed and tolerated by the dominant culture. Wherever a fully engaged devotee lives, he should make that place a *tirtha*. The ISKCON temples are there for this purpose, and for those who prefer, we should worship the Deity in the home.

Then I'll read *Caitanya-caritamrta*, how Lord Caitanya honored Ramananda Raya. I have Post-its to mark my way. It's a performance, not so naked or deep, but I have faith in the process of gathering to hear *Caitanya-caritamrta* and how this is better than anything else we might do. Even if we fail to hear properly, it's still the best activity.

* * *

10:17 a.m.

Hare Krishna. Tired out "spiritually? I gave the class and forgot to record it. It was lively. They laughed when I spoke about "*avirbhasa*" (blessings), and how when a *mataji* asked me to bless her newborn child, Madhu replied, "He doesn't give blessings to children." Lord Caitanya asked Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya for his blessing. I repeatedly spoke how we should see all devotees as potentially advanced, regardless of their social position, gender, age, even *aSrama*. I don't really care much about ISKCON's institutionalized application of such respect, and I don't work practically in ISKCON to help along the institutional reforms, but the topic was discussed in the purports and verses, so I spoke on it. I came off sounding like I was advocating something.

I also spoke on how people make fun of Hare Krishna devotees, since Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya said he used to make fun of Ramananda Raya. That touched a nerve in me "I'm sensitive to hoots and derisive remarks from the nondevotees. No one asked any questions or commented on that. Their questions were all about how to treat advanced or less advanced devotees. I said . . . I

said . . . I pressed the point.

And now it's over and I'm back in my room.

Krishna-bhakta dasa is in Ireland. He rowed with us in the boat to and from the island. I didn't ask him to, but that's his way. He took the opportunity to tell me how he's going to give money and personally work to renovate a few rooms in the temple. Caitanya-candrodaya is here from England-Russia-Mayapur, braving the austerities of Inis rath, where he says he'll stay for a couple weeks to celebrate Govardhana-puja and Srila Prabhupada's disappearance. He's a sweet person. He didn't jump into the boat.

I said, "Don't honor the great devotee and then kick the devotee's dog." Why all this championing of underdogs? I myself am a top dog and want special treatment.

All right. Anyway, there are obvious manifestations of those who are advanced, but some cases break the stereotypes. A person new to the temple *may* have more saintly qualities than a *sannyasi*, but give each person the benefit of the doubt "assume the *sannyasi* and *grhastha* are following the rules and that they should be honored.

Fog in head? Only a little. Cool and misty "late autumn. It's a lovely time of year. The lake was perfectly calm as we crossed and while KB bent my ear.

* * *

12:30 noon

I'm not allowing myself an Esgic today despite right-eye pain rising. I have to spend some days coping without the crutch. Glad to be alive, anyway, and to live in Krishna's shelter.

* * *

The Promise

& The time is autumn and I'm in my tracks

The dream: in some kind of car race

and I went up the stairs in Katan Avenue house, Hindus let me take the room for myself.

Yeah, I needed it "
get headaches.

* * *

No hot dogs but in the dream people were nice, I
like it when humans are nice
but it's not only so.

* * *

I want to go alone more
serious on this EkadaSi "
act as a sadhu
even if I'm not one.

* * *

Crow
gray-hooded crow
mag-raven
the stream of Tusca
streams of Erin
of Derge of Druid
I am the only one in my head.

* * *

Calm down and give us the truth.
After all, you don't have fever-flu spouting uncontrolled
what girls you loved while *sadhus* shake their heads:
"He was bluffed by a good
piano player."
Lost his chance to fly to Vaikuntha-Goloka
for what?
Lush's life spent over a glass
of whiskey and a chance to tell a bitter story
how he missed the boat, had to
come back to the material world to play
and it wasn't the same?
O Krishna they
brought me yogurt and plums
and grapes but all I wanted
was a simple life

alone
and the peace
to chant.

* * *

I promise
to be faithful
to chant sixteen rounds,
to follow four rules
to do *some* kind of preaching
and to give up when I'm told
"that's enough"
by indisputable authorities.

* * *

God, what big
words you have
to laugh
to earn
the truth of a
promise
to Him.
O Krishna
I promise to grow old
singing and
to bless little puppies
and to bless
the children.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

A Vaisnava, even though fully qualified, thinks himself extremely low when offering prayers to the Lord. "Unless one is meek and humble, to make progress in spiritual life is very difficult." (*Bhag. 7.9.8*, purport)

We cannot satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead with our so-called qualifications, including the qualification of mystic power. He is satisfied only by devotional service. I think about this in terms of my writing. Krishna's incarnations and empowered agents can write rings around me and other nondevotee writers. Write well and die poorly "what good is that? They can visit your grave later and sit there and smoke a cigarette. Your books will go out of print, critics will re-evaluate your value, and it will all mean nothing, not even to you, who will be long dead. Prahlada asserts that the only qualification for pleasing Krishna is to render Him devotional service. It's all that gives life meaning.

* * *

6:10 p.m.

SK in *For Self-Examination* "narrow is the way in Christ's life. It began narrow, continued narrow, and ended in suffering. Narrow means surrender, sacrifice, and demanding of oneself. Don't relax, deceive, or compromise. Kierkegaard says preachers often say that the way is narrow, but live differently. Me and my primrose path.

I admit I take it easy. The headaches seem to force me. I find some things in Srila Prabhupada's books that allow me to justify it. I pray for sincerity, that sincerity will carry me through. Still, Prabhupada, too, demands that we work hard for Krishna and live without compromise to our principles. If not, *maya* is stringent and will punish us, forcing us to take birth again in the material world.

I can't follow such a narrow way, but instead try to dovetail everything in Krishna's service. I don't leave the bounds of my *sannyasa* vows. Fortunately, the *bhakti-marga* has been broadened by Lord Caitanya's mercy. He's made the road as wide as possible for the people of Kali-yuga. Just this much "four rules and sixteen rounds" we must follow. From there, we surrender utterly, gradually or all at once, and are taken back to Godhead by His grace.

* * *

At 6:15 p.m. I part the curtain and see that it's completely dark outside. Can I remember the 10 p.m. sunshine of the summer?

* * *

SK says about himself that a person with great talent has a vocation. At first he delights in using his powers. He asks God, humbly, for more, and his wish is granted. Then at some point he says, "That's enough, thank you," and God says, "This is only the beginning of what I have to give you." The talented one turns pale and realizes that it has been ordained from the beginning that he is to suffer, that his life is a sacrifice (*he* is the sacrifice).

I am ready to suffer for my vocation as a poet-musician for Krishna. I want to convert sound to the Lord's service and find new accessibility to Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada assures us, "Don't kill desires, but purify them." The way is narrower than we think, though. I have so much to learn.

Appendix

Writing Plans, Ideas, Projects To Do

October 9

EJW 14 off to a good start:

- (a) first poem today
- (b) ItM going well
- (c) a little talk into dictaphone on walk
- (d) dreams

- (e) typing; can do more
- (f) build up "Writing while reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam*."
- (g) in shed, etc.

* * *

October 10

My ambitious plans often get curtailed by the onset of a headache. Keep practicing. read of Emily Dickinson and fancied myself an immortal artist being studied by scholars and biographers. First do something worthy, and then daydream. Work humbly with no reward. Even if you attain perfection in art, you could fall dreadfully short of spiritual perfection. What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his immortal soul?

* * *

October 15

A little more into writing EJW than into reading *Srimad-Bhagavatam* right now. In the summer during EJW 11, I was more into reading *Bhagavatam*. The shifts are okay. Welcome the writing passion when it comes "build up pages "dare to break through to new ground.

* * *

October 18

What is EJW? Much of it seems to be the diary tracking life at Inis rath. It's an art of *mixture*, a willingness to free-write in a quiet way. My advice is that I write as much as possible, wholeheartedly, even in small increments.

* * *

October 19

What is EJW? It's my daily life "writing it as best I can. Themes, of course, get repeated. ItM makes me want to increase the volume of regular EJW so there will be quantity. It also makes me want to express myself wholeheartedly.

* * *

October 20

I was feeling something "was it doubt? Is a change about to come? Dissatisfied with EJW? Then I see that I'm tracking the day from morning to afternoon and don't find this objectionable. Each day is valuable, and tracking it gives the reader an impression of a real person living in a real life in a real place.

* * *

October 23

Things are going well from my point of view. I'm attaining frequent free-writes with a mix. The ItM is a flowing part of my routine now. Different times in the day to write in different ways "midnight with the *Bhagavatam*, shed with the *Bhagavad-gita*, shed after drawing pictures, sometimes typing free-writing, and so on. Try to do more and wholeheartedly; let it come. On the walk, pray to make it Krishna conscious.

* * *

October 24

Frequent headaches means on some days I can't write. That shapes what I do write during pain-free times. An urgency to get *something* into writing. Short pieces. A life of limits both outward and inward.